

• Is my Child Ready?

POLICY: The candidate must receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation before receiving Holy Communion for the first time. (see CCC 1457; NDC 36,B2; Canon 914)

The candidate must meet the following requirements:

1. Must have attained the age of discretion, usually around seven years of age or above. (The parents and the director of religious education, together with the pastor or
2. pastoral administrator, must determine the child's readiness to receive the sacrament.)
3. Be baptized
4. Be Catholic (children and adults baptized in another denomination must make a Profession of Faith)
5. Be able to recognize the difference between right and wrong
6. Have the capacity for sincere sorrow
7. Be properly instructed

GUIDELINES: A candidate is ready to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation when the parents of minors, the pastor or pastoral administrator and the catechist have discerned that the candidate:

8. Is aware that God loves us unconditionally
9. Understands that Jesus died for our sins
10. Recognizes good and evil, our capacity for both, and the importance of right choices
11. Understands and can express sorrow for sin and forgiveness of others

Parents and the director of religious education, together with the pastor are responsible for determining when children are ready to receive First Penance and Reconciliation. Readiness for reception of this sacrament includes knowledge of the person of Jesus and the Gospel message of forgiveness, knowledge of sin and its effect, and understanding and experience of sorrow, forgiveness, and conversion (NDC 36, B2).

PARENTS OF MINORS (Children under age 18) POLICY

Parents have the right and responsibility to:

12. Be involved in the preparation of their child
13. Be models for their child in their faith life
14. Discern (with the pastor or pastoral administrator and the catechetical director) their child's readiness to prepare and receive the sacrament
15. In extraordinary circumstances (discerned with the pastor or pastoral administrator) designate another adult to fulfill this responsibility.

Catechesis for children, prior to their first reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, must always respect their natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances. Since the family is intimately involved with the formation of a child's moral conscience and ordinarily integrates the child into the wider ecclesial communities, parents should be involved in the preparation of their children for this sacrament so that they can affirm and reinforce frequent participation in the sacraments. They orient the child toward God and encourage continual growth in the understanding of God's mercy and love (NDC 36 B2).