

**RECEPTION OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION and
PARTICIPATION IN THE MOST HOLY
EUCCHARIST**
GUIDELINES

It is the responsibility of parishes to provide programs for all children and parents preparing for the celebration of First Penance and First Eucharist.

- A. Children who have completed programs of preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in Catholic Schools are not required to participate in sacramental preparation classes in their home parish programs before the sacraments are celebrated. The Catholic school is also responsible for the parent preparation program.
- B. Children in home school settings are required to participate in the immediate preparation for the sacraments, e.g. parent preparation, interviews for sacramental readiness and practice for sacramental celebrations.
- C. Ordinarily, the celebrations of First Penance and First Eucharist should occur in the child's home parish. In special circumstances, permission may be granted (in writing) by the pastor of the home parish for the celebration to take place elsewhere.

Canon 897

The most august sacrament is the Most Holy Eucharist in which Christ the Lord himself is contained, offered, and received and by which the Church continually lives and grows. The Eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated through the ages, is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life, which signifies and affects the unity of the People of God and brings about the building up of the body of Christ. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it.

Canon 912

Any baptized person not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Holy Communion.

Canon 913

1 For Holy Communion to be administered to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and be accurately prepared, so that according to their capacity they understand what the mystery of Christ means, and are able to receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

2 The blessed Eucharist may, however, be administered to children in danger of death if they can distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receive communion with reverence.

- D. The rights of children to the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist can best be served when pastors, parents and catechists offer formation for these sacraments appropriate to the level and development of the child. Normally a full year of catechesis should precede the celebration of these sacraments.
- E. Parents have the responsibility to participate in their own catechetical formation so that they will be able to prepare their child for these sacraments in collaboration with the parish community.
- F. Parents, in consultation with the catechetical staff, discern the readiness of their child for the sacraments.
- G. The preparation and celebration for the sacrament of Penance is separated from and precedes the preparation for and celebration of the sacrament of Eucharist.
- H. The age of discretion both for Penance and the sacrament of the Eucharist is the seventh year. From that time on begins the obligation of fulfilling the precept of both Penance and Eucharist.

Canon 916

Anyone who is conscious of grave sin may not celebrate Mass or receive the Body of the Lord without previously having been to sacramental confession, unless there is grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess; in this case the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, which includes the resolve to go to confession as soon as possible.

Canon 919

A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine

Persons with Developmental Disabilities

GUIDELINES

Appropriate adaptations should be made for those with special needs.