

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
Parish guidelines for
First Reconciliation

Holy Trinity Parish works in partnership with families as they journey with their child toward the first reception of this sacrament. This journey is not only to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, but also, to experience in daily life the revelation of a God who is good and full of tenderness, who forgives us and calls us to forgive. Preparation begins in September, using RCL's text, Reconciliation. This sacramental program: a) is rooted in solid sacramental theology, b) includes the elements of ritual, prayer, Scripture, doctrine, and reflection, and c) is centered in "the community, which lives, celebrates and bears witness to the faith" (General Directory for Catechesis 68). The focus of this preparation is not only for "first" Reconciliation but more importantly for a lifetime of being healed and forgiven in the sacrament of Reconciliation. Such preparation is not only about cognitive learning but especially about a period of spiritual preparation.

"Jesus began His risen life by giving His apostles power to forgive sins. The Sacrament of Reconciliation continues His work of forgiving and reconciling...Frequent participation in this sacrament, even though one has not committed a serious sin, is a highly desirable way of celebrating ongoing conversion and making progress in holiness." (National Catechetical Directory).

Policy statements from the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas and the National Catechetical Directory say children must receive the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation for the first time prior to their first reception of the Eucharist. First Holy Communion is celebrated during the Easter season. At Holy Trinity parish, children prepare for and celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation during the fall. It is encouraged that the children receive the sacrament at this time, but if parents feel that their child would have a better understanding and appreciation of the sacrament later, they may delay the reception of reconciliation.

Expectations

FROM THE NATIONAL CATECHETICAL DIRECTORY

It is expected that the child will understand the following truths:

Catechesis for children seeks to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life.

The child has an understanding of sin, the difference between good and evil.

God is merciful and loving; and that His gift of faith is a call to conversion from sin.

Everyone needs this sacrament, for pardon and peace, and to celebrate our unity with the healing, merciful Christ and His Church.

FROM THE PARISH

The parish has four guidelines to be followed in sacramental preparation for our faith community.

Respect the natural ability, age and circumstances of individual children.

Provide a formation process for the children within a partnership of parents, priests and teachers/catechists.

Provide sacrament preparation programs which demand the involvement of parents, priests, and teachers/catechists.

Provide for the liturgical celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation

**+++We also ask that children celebrating Reconciliation know the
Our Father, Hail Mary and Act of Contrition.**

FOR THE FAMILY

Families have an essential role in the preparation of their children for the reception of a sacrament. Through the baptism of their child, they accept the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It is within the family that children have first come to faith and it is within the family that they will continue to live out their faith. Preparing for a sacrament may seem like an overwhelming task. You may wonder: "Are we capable? How do we do this?" The parish offers support to families through appropriate materials and gatherings. The scheduled sessions are an opportunity for both parents and children to deepen their understanding of the sacraments.

Instruction

To be admitted to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, each child in 2nd grade (or older) must participate in spiritual formation. This can be done through our Holy Trinity Grade School, Growing in Faith Together, GIFT-home study, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd programs, or by other means. **Specific sacramental preparation is in addition to this foundational learning.** Please contact the parish office or check the website if you need information about registering for a particular program.

A parent-child text, **Reconciliation**, along with a Family Guide is distributed at a parent orientation/information meeting in the fall. Details on how the parish and the family will partnership in preparing the children for the sacraments are discussed at this meeting.