

Policies of the Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

Policy # 120.13

## **Celebration of the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion**

Approved By: [Most Reverend James V. Johnston, DD](#)

Effective: [November 25, 2024](#)

The responsibility of providing adequate preparation before reception of the sacraments is listed in canon 777.

The catechesis and celebration of First Reconciliation must precede the catechesis and celebration of First Communion (cf., canon 914).

A child is to receive adequate preparation for the sacrament of First Reconciliation before a child receives the catechesis for First Communion. The catechesis of the two sacraments should be separate from each other so that the uniqueness of each sacrament may be fully celebrated.

The usual preparation for First Reconciliation takes place in the primary grade levels. Parents are encouraged to participate in the preparation with their child at home and in appropriate family or parent sessions. After the necessary catechesis is completed, the sacrament is to be scheduled and celebrated in the local parish. Parents should be encouraged to witness and join their children in celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.

The decision about a child's readiness for First Reconciliation is made by the pastor/parochial administrator, religious educators and parents. If it is determined that a child is not ready, no coercion should be made to keep the child with his/her "group" or "class". This decision is a personal one for the family. If the decision is made to delay the sacrament of Reconciliation, then the celebration of First Communion is also delayed until after First Reconciliation is celebrated.

Catechumens do not celebrate First Reconciliation prior to their baptism; baptism forgives sins. At an appropriate time after their initiation, they are to be encouraged to experience the sacrament of Reconciliation and are to be catechized in advance.

Validly baptized candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church are to celebrate their First Reconciliation prior to the Rite of Reception. They should receive appropriate catechesis.

Preparation for First Communion should be separate and distinct. Family and parent sessions are encouraged so that the child receives formation both at home and in classes. The celebration is to be scheduled in the local parish at an appropriate liturgical time. If there are concerns about a child's readiness to celebrate this sacrament, again no coercion should be used to keep the child with his/her "class" (cf., canon 913, §1).