

Archdiocese of Dubuque

Sacramental Policies and Procedures:
Sacraments of Initiation

Updated Policies

November 2007

Table of Contents

Initiation of Adults/Children of Catechetical Age

General Policies

Initiation of Adults/Children of Catechetical Age	
Policies 1-2	.....5
Initiation of Infants/Children Not of Catechetical Age	
Policy 3	.....5
Catechesis and Programs Involving Children of Catechetical Age	
Policy 4	.....5
Catechesis Through Joint Sacramental Preparation Programs	
Policy 5	.....5
Role of Parents in Sacramental Catechesis	
Policy 6	.....6
Liturgical Catechesis	
Policy 7	.....6
Liturgy as Communal Celebration	
Policy 8	.....6
Qualifications for Godparents and Sponsors	
Policy 9	.....6
Role of Godparents/Sponsor	
Policy 10	.....6
Godparent of Catechumen	
Policy 11	.....6
Sponsor of Candidate	
Policy 12	.....7
Minister of Baptism and Confirmation	
Policies 13-15	.....7

Baptism

Minister of Baptism	
Policy 16	.....7
Place of Baptism	
Policies 17-18	.....7-8
Baptism by Immersion	
Policy 19	.....8
Design of Font	
Policy 20	.....8

First Penance

Sacramental Preparation for Penance	
Policies 21-22	.....8
Role of Parent (Penance)	
Policy 23	.....8
Readiness for First Penance	
Policy 24	.....8
Occasion of Celebration of Penance	
Policy 25	.....9

First Communion

Readiness for First Communion	
Policy 26	.....9
Celebration of First Communion	
Policies 27-28	.....9

Confirmation

Confirmation Policies (see General Policies 13-15)	7
Preparing the Confirmation Liturgy	<i>cf. Youth Ministry Conference on FirstClass</i>
Confirmation Guidelines	<i>cf. Youth Ministry Conference on FirstClass</i>

Baptism of Infants/Children Not Yet of Catechetical Age

Sacramental Preparation for Parents of Infants	
Policy 29	10
Readiness for Celebrating Infant Baptism	
Policies 30-31	10
Celebration on Sunday	
Policy 32	10
Use of Oil of Catechumens in Infant Baptism	
Policy 33	11
Role of Godparents	
Policies 34-35	11
Christian Witness	
Policy 36	11
Baptism Outside One's Parish	
Policy 37	11
Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child Into the Church	
Policy 38	11

Persons With Disabilities

General Principles

Full Admission to Sacraments and Worship	
Policies 39-40	12
Means of Access	
Policy 41	12
Sacramental Preparation	
Policies 42-43	12-13

Baptism

Baptism for Persons With Disabilities	
Policies 44-47	13

First Penance

Readiness for First Penance of Persons With Disabilities	
Policy 48	13
Reception of the Sacrament of Penance	
Policy 49	14

First Communion

Readiness for First Eucharist of Persons With Disabilities	
Policy 50	14

Confirmation

Readiness for Confirmation of Persons With Disabilities	
Policy 51	14-15

Related Policies

Marriage and Christian Initiation

Marriage of Catechumens in the Church	
Policy 52	.....15
Declaration of Invalidity	
Policies 53-54	.....16
Access to the Sacraments of Initiation	
Policy 55	.....16
Validation of Marriages	
Policy 56	.....16
Marriage Preparation and Christian Initiation	
Policy 57	.....16-18

Christian Burial of Catechumens and Candidates

Policy 5817
-----------	---------

Orthodox Christian Candidates

Policy 5917
-----------	---------

Record Keeping

Policies 60-6117-18
----------------	------------

Photography and Videography

Policy 6218
-----------	---------

Glossary of Key Terms

19-20
--	------------

Bibliography

21
--	---------

Sacraments of Initiation Policies and Procedures

General Policies

Initiation of Adults/Children of Catechetical Age

Policy 1 The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is normative in the Archdiocese of Dubuque, as interpreted and applied by the *National Statutes for the Catechumenate* in accord with Canon 788.3. Every parish shall be prepared to welcome those who seek Christ and seek initiation into the Church through the implementation of the current order of initiation mandated for the universal Church.

1. The formation of adults/children of catechetical age, i.e., children approximately seven years of age or older, shall follow the general pattern of the catechumenate. Part II, #1 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* pertains specifically to children of catechetical age (Canon 852.1 and *National Statutes*, #18).
2. The celebration of the sacraments of initiation by adults and children of catechetical age is at the Easter Vigil (RCIA, #23).

Policy 2 Candidates (baptized non-Catholics) need not participate in a complete catechumenal process as would catechumens (unbaptized persons). “Their doctrinal and spiritual preparation for reception into full Catholic communion should be determined according to the individual case” (*National Statutes*, #30).

Initiation of Infants and Children Not of Catechetical Age

Policy 3 In the case of Baptism of infants and children not yet of catechetical age, i.e., children approximately seven years of age or younger, it is primarily the responsibility of parents or guardians to show a commitment and an understanding of the Catholic faith into which the child will be baptized.

Parishes shall be prepared to assist and guide parents in this responsibility. Parents who seek initiation of infants and children not yet of catechetical age must be provided formation opportunities by the parish to assist them in their parental role of living the faith and sharing it with their children.

Catechesis and Programs Involving Children of Catechetical Age

Policy 4 Parishes are to plan and implement programs to prepare children for the sacraments of initiation and to provide catechesis on the sacraments in later years for children, after their initial reception of the sacraments, to foster a deeper understanding of the sacramental life of the Church.

Catechesis Through Joint Sacramental Preparation Programs

Policy 5 Parishes in proximity to one another or clustered parishes may choose to offer joint sacramental preparation programs.

Clustered/linked parishes may choose to develop a common formation process. While some aspects of the catechumenate may be done within the combined parishes, others may be better facilitated locally. For example, while catechesis could be conducted together within the cluster, the rites may be best celebrated locally with sponsors selected from the local parish.

Parent meetings/parish involvement should jointly involve individuals from all programs offered (Archdiocesan Board of Education Policy 6150.4).

Role of Parents in Sacramental Catechesis

Policy 6 Parents/guardians are to be involved in the preparation of their children for the celebration of the sacraments. Therefore, parishes are to plan and implement programs, following the directives of the Archdiocese for the reception of the sacraments, designed to prepare and involve parents/guardians, sponsors, and the parish community in the preparation for sacraments, in particular with regard to Baptism, First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation.

Liturgical Catechesis

Policy 7 In order that the faithful of all ages may express, renew, and deepen their faith through meaningful liturgical celebrations, catechesis at all levels is to be directed to active, conscious, and authentic celebration.

Children are to be prepared for full participation through a gradual initiation into liturgical celebrations according to their age and religious capacity (Archdiocesan Board of Education Policy 6150.5).

Liturgy as Communal Celebration

Policy 8 The celebration of the sacraments involves rites which are meant to be celebrated in common, with the faithful present and actively participating and should, as far as possible, be celebrated communally rather than individually or quasi-privately (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1140).

Qualifications for Godparents and Sponsors

Policy 9 A godparent or a sponsor must be a baptized Roman Catholic who has received both First Communion and Confirmation. He/she must be leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith, be free to celebrate the sacraments, and not bound by any canonical penalty.

A godparent or a sponsor must be at least 16 years of age unless the pastor or the minister of the sacrament considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made (Canon 874.2).

Godparents and sponsors must also be ready to commit time and the personal care necessary to nurture and support the child in the faith.

A godparent or a sponsor cannot be a parent of the one to be baptized and/or confirmed.

Role of Godparents/Sponsor

Policy 10 Catechumens and candidates for full communion need the support and spiritual companionship of a sponsor during their formation. The role is ordinarily filled by a parish sponsor who could also serve as the godparent for the sacraments of initiation if desired.

Godparent of Catechumen

Policy 11 At the time of election, the catechumen, in consultation with the pastor and the initiation team, chooses a godparent in accord with the ritual norms of the order of initiation. The godparent can be the catechumen's spouse but cannot be the catechumen's parent.

Sponsor of Candidate

Policy 12 At the beginning of Lent the candidate chooses a sponsor for the celebration of Confirmation in keeping with the norms of the Church. The Confirmation sponsor can be the candidate's spouse but cannot be the candidate's parent.

Minister of Baptism and Confirmation

Policy 13 A bishop or priest who baptizes an adult or a child of catechetical age should also confer Confirmation. The celebration of Confirmation and reception of Eucharist should not be deferred.

Deacons are not ministers of Confirmation and thus may not baptize an adult or a child of catechetical age except in cases of necessity, since the newly baptized would not also be able to be confirmed.

Policy 14 A priest who receives a Christian into full communion with the Catholic Church receives from the law itself (Canon 883.2) the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it for the sake of the candidate. The Confirmation of such candidates should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to the Eucharist until they are confirmed.

Policy 15 A priest of the Archdiocese of Dubuque who reconciles a baptized Catholic who has not been reared in the Church receives through faculties for the clergy of the Archdiocese the faculty to confirm this Catholic member at the time of Reconciliation. When baptized Catholics have been catechized but are not yet confirmed, no priest can validly confer Confirmation without special delegation from the bishop in each individual circumstance.

Note: A baptized Catholic can be considered uncatechized when, though baptized as an infant, he or she did not receive further catechetical instruction nor, consequently, the sacraments of Confirmation or the Eucharist (RCIA, #400).

Baptized Catholics who have been admitted to the Eucharist are considered catechized (Faculties of Priests of the Archdiocese of Dubuque).

Baptism

Minister of Baptism

Policy 16 The ordinary ministers of Baptism are bishops, priests, and deacons. When there is imminent danger of death and no priest or deacon is available, any member of the faithful, indeed anyone with the right intention, may and sometimes must administer Baptism.

Place of Baptism

Policy 17 The celebration of Baptism is to take place in the parish church. Baptisms in private homes are not permitted except in cases of emergency. Anyone who baptizes in a case of emergency is obliged to notify the baptized's pastor so that the Baptism is recorded in the baptismal register.

Procedures:

1. Hospital chaplains should send a written notice of the Baptism to the pastor of the parish of the newly baptized for notation in the parish sacramental register.
2. Others who baptize in emergency situations should contact the nearest Catholic pastor so that appropriate notation of the person's Baptism can be recorded.

Policy 18 Baptisms are not permitted in chapels without approval of the pastor of the parish in which the chapel is located. A record of the Baptism must be recorded in the appropriate sacramental register of the parish.

Baptism by Immersion

Policy 19 Parishes should seek to offer immersion, since it is the fuller and more expressive sign of Baptism, as the preferred method of Baptism for infants and adults.

Procedures:

1. Education of the parish about immersion is necessary, especially for parents of infants at the time of baptismal preparation. Materials are available through the Office of Worship and Catechetical Services.
2. Each parish should examine its means to offer immersion as an option.

Design of Font

Policy 20 New church buildings and worship space will be designed with a baptismal font which allows for immersion of adults and infants. Renovated spaces should be designed with fonts which allow for the immersion of adults, but must provide for at least the immersion of infants in the celebration of Baptism.

Procedures:

1. In new construction, renovation, or designing of new fonts, renovation committees should contact the Office of Worship for specifications in developing preliminary plans.
2. Designs for all new fonts must be approved by the Church Design and Renovation Commission.

First Penance

Sacramental Preparation for Penance

Policy 21 Formal instruction for the sacrament of Penance must be separate and distinct from the preparation for First Communion so that the integrity of each sacrament is maintained. A child receives catechesis on the sacrament of Penance before his/her First Communion, and subsequent catechesis on these sacraments follows in later years.

Policy 22 Requirements for religious education programs are established by the Archdiocese and the parish.

Role of Parent (Penance)

Policy 23 The parents' right and responsibility to direct the religious formation of their children must be safeguarded and enhanced. For this reason, preparation for the first reception of the sacrament shall involve the parents, with guidance provided to help them prepare their children.

Readiness for First Penance

Policy 24 Readiness 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 (*National Directory for Catechesis*, #36, B, 2).

It is presumed that the suitable age for beginning the reception of the sacrament of Penance is the age of reason or discretion, that is, about the seventh year, either more or less (*General Catechetical Directory*, Addendum, no. 1).

The decision as to when the child will receive the sacrament of Penance is to be made by his or her parents and the parish catechetical leader, in consultation with the pastor (*National Directory for Catechesis*, 36.2).

In all cases the right of the child to receive absolution of his/her sins must be respected (*General Catechetical Directory*, Addendum, no. 5).

Occasion for Celebration of Penance

Policy 25 Children must receive the sacrament of Penance for the first time prior to their first reception of the Eucharist (*National Directory for Catechesis*, #36, B, 2 and *General Catechetical Directory*, Addendum, no. 5).

First Communion

Readiness for First Communion

Policy 26 Pastors, in consultation with parents, the director of the parish catechumenate or sacramental program, catechists, and other appropriate ministers, are to determine the readiness of the candidates to receive their First Communion after they have made sacramental confession, in keeping with the goals of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the norms of the *General Catechetical Directory*.

Suitable age for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion is called the age of reason or of discretion. This age “both for Confession and Communion is that at which the child begins to reason, that is, about the seventh year, more or less.” With the child’s capacity to reason, the development of a moral conscience is forming (*General Catechetical Directory*, Addendum, nos. 1 and 2).

Readiness requires that children “have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the body of Christ with faith and devotion” (Canon 913).

Celebration of First Communion

Policy 27 First Communion should be offered under both forms, i.e., the consecrated bread and wine.

Procedures:

1. Children and parents need to be catechized on the significance of both forms as part of sacramental preparation to appreciate fully the gift of the Eucharist.
2. Parishes should offer Communion under both forms as a regular practice each Sunday. Children celebrating their First Communion, as well as adults, should be able to receive from the cup on this occasion and on every Sunday.
3. Pastors/pastoral administrators should see to it that the parish is regularly catechized on the significance of offering both forms and the proper means for receiving Communion.

Policy 28 First Communion is best celebrated as a parish celebration on Sunday. Parishes are encouraged to celebrate this event at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass whenever possible rather than at a separate time.

Parishes are free to celebrate First Communion in ways other than one large group to encourage wider parish participation.

A parish celebration of First Communion more fully integrates the children into the Eucharistic assembly. Those preparing the liturgy should avoid adapting the Mass solely as a Mass for children since large numbers of adults are also present and worshipping (*Directory for Masses With Children*, Chapter II).

Confirmation

Minister of Confirmation

See Policies 13-15

Preparing the Confirmation Liturgy

Youth Ministry Conference on FirstClass

Confirmation Guidelines

Youth Ministry Conference on FirstClass

Baptism of Infants and Children Not Yet of Catechetical Age

Sacramental Preparation for Parents of Infants

Policy 29 Every parish or group of parishes shall ensure sacramental preparation for parents prior to the Baptism of their first child. Appropriate catechesis for parents with additional children should also be offered.

Procedures:

1. Baptismal preparation for parents of infants may take a variety of forms, but it should include some of the faithful and never be considered only the priest's or deacon's responsibility.
2. Sacramental preparation for parents is an opportunity of formation and pastoral care as well as catechesis to deepen the parents' appreciation of Baptism and their own vocation as Christian parents. In cases where parents are not themselves fully initiated, this is also an opportunity to encourage parents to complete their initiation and so provide an environment and personal example that will foster and nurture their child's faith.

Readiness for Celebrating Baptism

Policy 30 Catholic parents preparing for the Baptism of their infant are expected to participate in a process of sacramental preparation before the Baptism of their child. Godparents may also be encouraged to participate.

Policy 31 A request for infant Baptism cannot ordinarily be refused. However, a Baptism can be delayed until such time as the parents or at least one of the parents are/is ready and able to assume the responsibility entrusted to Christian parents in the rite. This occasion should be viewed as an opportunity for evangelization, not placing an undue burden on the parents but helping them to grow in the spiritual life from whatever level of faith they may be (Canon 868).

Celebration on Sunday

Policy 32 Infant Baptism should be celebrated on Sunday to emphasize the paschal character of Baptism.

Procedures:

1. When Baptism is celebrated at Sunday Mass.
 - a. Liturgical guidelines for celebrating the Baptism of infants at Sunday Mass are in keeping with the prescribed rites of the Church (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, ##15-30).

- b. Parishes may chose specific Sundays throughout the liturgical year on which to celebrate infant Baptism, particularly the Sundays of Easter.
2. When Baptism is celebrated outside Sunday Mass.
 - a. Members of the larger community should be present to avoid a “private Baptism mentality.”
 - b. To be celebrated well, parishes should ensure that music and liturgical ministries, i.e., readers and hospitality ministers, are a part of every Baptism celebration.
 - c. A homily is given by the priest or deacon.
 3. Unless there is a genuine pastoral need, Baptisms should not be scheduled during Lent.
 4. Baptism at the Easter Vigil
 - a. Normally infants would not be baptized at the Easter Vigil unless it is a child of an adult entering the Church. Easter Sunday and the other Sundays of Easter are appropriate times for scheduling the Baptism of infants.
 - b. When there are no adult Baptisms or children of catechetical age, the parish may choose to have infant Baptism at the Easter Vigil.

Use of Oil of Catechumens in Infant Baptism

Policy 33 Ministers of Baptism may elect not to use the oil of catechumens in celebrating the rite of Baptism of infants.

Role of Godparents

Policy 34 In the Baptism of infants, parents take responsibility for choosing a godparent or godparents who will serve as good examples for living the Catholic life. A godparent can later serve as the sponsor of the child when he/she is confirmed. The qualifications for godparents of infants or adults are always the same (see Policy 9).

Policy 35 Although the selection of two godparents is customary with infant Baptism, only one is required. A godparent can be either male or female. If two godparents are chosen, one must be male and one female (Canon 873).

Christian Witness

Policy 36 A baptized, non-Catholic Christian can be chosen as a Christian witness at Baptism provided there is at least one Catholic godparent.

Baptism Outside One’s Parish

Policy 37 Ordinarily infants are baptized in the parish community of the parents. When parents of a child seek to have the child baptized in a parish other than their own, the minister of Baptism requests that the parents obtain from their own pastor a letter which speaks to their sacramental preparation and readiness as Christian parents before the Baptism of the child is celebrated.

Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child Into the Church

Policy 38 Infants who are baptized in an emergency situation may be brought to the church at a later time to complete the baptismal ceremony, but omitting the pouring of water (“The Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child Into the Church” in the *Rite of Baptism for Children*, #165-185).

Persons With Disabilities

It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to persons with disabilities, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together. To exclude members of the parish from these celebrations of the Church, even by passive omission, is to deny the reality of that community (*Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons With Disabilities*, November 1978; revised 1989).

By reason of their Baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity in the sight of God and have the same divine calling. This principle has been affirmed in two key documents of the U.S. bishops.

The Archdiocesan policies and procedures which follow are based on the documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

General Principles

Full Admission to Sacraments and Worship

Policy 39 Catholics with disabilities have a right to participate in the sacraments and worship as full functioning members of the parish community. Ministers are not to refuse the sacraments to those who ask for them at appropriate times, who are properly disposed, and who are not prohibited by law from receiving them (Canons 213 and 843).

Policy 40 Parishes should welcome parishioners, especially those with disabilities, their families, and those who take the place of parents and work toward inclusion of all in the parish's sacramental life (*Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons With Disabilities*, November 1978; revised 1989, and *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #I-6).

Means of Access

Policy 41 Parish sacramental celebrations and liturgical rites should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active, and conscious participation according to their capacity (*Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons With Disabilities*, November 1978; revised 1989, and *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #I-3).

Procedures:

1. Pastoral ministers should consult with persons with disabilities and/or their advocates when making determinations about the accessibility of parish facilities and the availability of its programs, policies, and ministries.
2. Parish sacramental celebrations and liturgical rites may need to be adapted to meet the capacity and needs of a person with disabilities.
3. Full accessibility may not always be possible for every parish but shall remain a long-term goal of every parish. Parishes may decide to collaborate in the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

Sacramental Preparation

Policy 42 Parishes are to provide catechesis on the celebration of the sacraments for persons with developmental and mental disabilities (Canon 777.4 and *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #I-5).

Procedures:

1. Sacramental preparation programs may need to be adapted for persons with disabilities.
2. Parents of children with disabilities are to be involved in the preparation of their children for the celebration of the sacraments.
3. The Office for Ministry to Persons With Disabilities offers support for sacramental preparation for parishioners with disabilities.

Policy 43 In cases of infants and children, parishes are to provide catechesis for parents or those who take the place of parents of persons with disabilities on the meaning of the sacraments and the obligation toward the child as well as offering the strength and support of the community (Canon 851.2, and *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-11).

Baptism

Baptism for Persons With Disabilities

Policy 44 Baptism, the sacrament of universal salvation, is to be made available to all who freely ask for it, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving it. Disability itself is never a reason for deferring Baptism. Baptism may be deferred only when there is no reason for hoping that the person will be brought up in the Catholic faith (*Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-9).

Policy 45 Persons who lack the use of reason are to be baptized provided at least one parent or guardian consents to it (Canons 868.1, 852 and *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-9).

Policy 46 When a person who is disabled is of catechetical age and is to be baptized, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is used and may be adapted according to the need and capacity of the individual (Canon 851.1 and *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, #252 and #253).

Policy 47 Persons with disabilities who are able to fulfill the role and who meet the canonical requirements (see Policy 9) may be a godparent or a sponsor for those receiving the sacraments of initiation (*Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-13 and *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, #10 and #11).

First Penance

Readiness for First Penance and Reconciliation

Policy 48 Only those who have the use of reason are capable of committing serious sin.

As long as a person with mental disabilities is capable of having a sense of contrition for having committed sin, even if he or she cannot describe the sin precisely in words, the person may receive sacramental absolution (Canon 960 and *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-23).

Those with profound mental disabilities who cannot experience even minimal contrition may be invited to participate in penitential services with the rest of the community to the extent of their ability (*Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-23).

Reception of the Sacrament of Penance

Policy 49 Catholics who are deaf may receive the sacrament in sign language. They may also confess through an approved sign language interpreter of their choice, who is strictly bound to respect the seal of confession. (Canon 990 and *Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-24).

When deaf signing is not available, Catholics who are deaf may make their confession in writing, which is to be returned to them or destroyed (*Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-24).

In the case of individuals with poor communication skills, sorrow for sin is to be accepted even if this repentance is expressed through some gesture rather than verbally (*Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-25).

First Communion

Readiness for First Eucharist of Persons With Disabilities

Policy 50 The criterion for reception of First Holy Communion is the same for persons with developmental or mental disabilities as for all persons, namely, that the person be able to distinguish the Body and Blood of Christ from ordinary food, even if this recognition is evidenced through manner, gesture, or reverential silence rather than verbally (*Guidelines for Celebration of the Sacraments With Persons With Disabilities*, #II-20).

Procedures:

1. Pastors are encouraged to consult with parents, those who take the place of parents, diocesan personnel involved with disability issues, psychologists, religious educators, and other experts in making their judgment.
2. Cases of doubt should be resolved in favor of the right of the baptized person to receive the sacrament. The existence of a disability is not considered in and of itself as disqualifying a person from receiving Communion.
3. Catechesis in terms of the meaning of the Eucharist is often fruitful after the reception of First Communion. Parishes and parents should provide such opportunities to the benefit of the individuals.
4. When a consultative process of discernment has determined that a parishioner with a disability wants to receive First Communion but is not ready to receive the sacrament, great care is to be taken in explaining the reasons for the delay.

Confirmation

Readiness for Confirmation of Persons With Disabilities

Policy 51 All baptized, unconfirmed Catholics, including those with disabilities who possess the use of reason, may request and receive the sacrament of Confirmation if they are suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew their baptismal promises (Canon 889).

Pastors, parents, and those who take the place of parents of those with disabilities are to see to it that those who are baptized are instructed to receive the sacrament of Confirmation at an appropriate time.

Persons who because of developmental or mental disabilities may never attain the use of reason are to be encouraged either directly or, if necessary, through their parent(s) or guardian(s) to receive the sacrament of Confirmation at the appropriate time.

Procedures:

1. Parents or those who take the place of parents initially contact the pastor or person responsible for sacramental programs to begin preparation for Confirmation.
2. The Office of Ministry to Persons With Disabilities has catechetical materials adapted for persons with disabilities and is available for consultation.
3. Parents or those who take the place of parents are encouraged to work to provide appropriate catechesis with those in the parish who are responsible for sacramental preparation.
4. Such candidates for Confirmation should be included as much as possible in the existing parish Confirmation process, e.g., service and liturgical celebrations.
5. Pastors, in consultation with parents or those who take the place of parents, and catechists are to determine the readiness of the candidates to receive Confirmation.

Related Policies

Christian Marriages Involving Catechumens

Marriage of Catechumens in the Church

Policy 52 Because catechumens are already joined to the Church as part of the household of Christ, they are entitled to celebrate their marriage in the Church (RCIA, #47 and *National Statutes*, #10). While catechumens have a right to marry in a Catholic Church ceremony, they are not obliged to do so.

Procedures:

1. If two catechumens marry or a catechumen marries a non-Catholic Christian or unbaptized person, no dispensation needs to be granted for the catechumen (RCIA, #47). However, the prenuptial questionnaire should still be completed and filed with other parish marriage records. It should be noted on the prenuptial questionnaire that the marriage involved a catechumen. Where there is doubt about the proper procedure, one should consult the Office of the Judicial Vicar or the Office of Worship.
2. The same kind of pastoral care should be provided for catechumens preparing for marriage as for any individuals who marry in the Church.
3. “The marriages of catechumens, whether with other catechumens or with baptized Christians or even non-Christians, should be celebrated at a liturgy of the word and never at the eucharistic liturgy. Chapter III of the *Rite of Marriage* is to be used, but the nuptial blessing in Chapter I, #33, may be used, all references to eucharistic sharing being omitted” (*National Statutes*, #10).
4. When a catechumen marries a Catholic, the Catholic party is required by Church law to request a dispensation [disparity of cult] (Canon 1086).
5. The marriage should be properly recorded in the parish marriage record book.
6. Both parties must be baptized for the marriage to be a sacrament. Normally the marriage becomes a sacrament at the moment the catechumen is baptized, and thus there is no need to validate the marriage (Canon 1055).

Declarations of Invalidity

Policy 53 Non-baptized persons who need a declaration of invalidity from their previous marriage are free to enter into the catechumenate. Such persons cannot, however, be accepted for the Rite of Election.

Policy 54 Candidates (baptized Christians or baptized uncatechized Catholics) who need a declaration of invalidity cannot celebrate the Rite of Calling Candidates to Continuing Conversion until the declaration of invalidity is granted.

Procedures:

1. When a person first presents himself/herself for the precatechumenate, pastoral staff should conduct an initial interview to obtain the marriage information as it appears on an Inquirer Information Questionnaire (available from the Office of Worship).
2. If there is a previous marriage(s), inform the inquirer that a possibility exists that he/she might not be ready for Baptism or reception into the Church at the coming Easter because the processing of their marriage case may take some time.
3. Once a dissolution or declaration of invalidity of the previous marriage(s) has been obtained, the catechumen or candidate is now canonically free to be elected or called to continuing conversion.

Access to the Sacraments of Initiation

Policy 55 A catechumen or candidate who is divorced and not remarried and does not intend to remarry is not in need of a declaration of invalidity to be accepted for the Rite of Election or the Rite of Calling Candidates to Continuing Conversion and, consequently, the sacraments of initiation. However, the implications of future attempts to remarry without a declaration of invalidity must be carefully explained before the discernment for the rite is completed.

Consultation on these matters and presentation of marriage cases should be made to the Archdiocesan Tribunal, which is prepared to give special attention to these cases.

Validation of Marriages

Policy 56 In the case of an invalid marriage, when the catechumen's or candidate's present spouse is Catholic, the validation ceremony shall take place prior to celebrating the initiation sacraments (Canon 1158). One cannot enter the full sacramental life of the Church unless one is completely free to receive the sacraments. It is pastorally advisable to validate the marriage in the Church as early in the process as possible.

Marriage Preparation and Christian Initiation

Policy 57 When a catechumen or a candidate is engaged to be married, the initiation process shall not be rushed merely to allow for initiation before the marriage is celebrated.

Procedures:

1. Because marriage is a vocation, its preparation should not be neglected or weakened because of one's participation in the initiation process. It may be difficult to participate fully in both processes. For some, the preparation to celebrate marriage may take precedence over preparation for Christian initiation. It may be more appropriate to concentrate on the preparation for marriage and postpone or extend the catechumenate.

2. It is always pastorally prudent to refer the newly married couple to their respective pastor, who is responsible for seeing that the non-baptized person or the candidate has the opportunity to complete the initiation process.

Christian Burial of Catechumens and Candidates

Policy 58 Because they are already part of the household of Christ, catechumens and candidates have the right to Christian burial in the Catholic Church (Canon 1183; *National Statutes*, #9).

Procedures:

“The funeral liturgy, including the funeral Mass, should be celebrated as usual, omitting only language referring directly to the sacraments which the catechumen or candidate has not received. In view of the sensibilities of the immediate family of the deceased catechumen or candidate, the funeral Mass may be omitted at the discretion of the pastor” (*National Statutes*, #9).

Orthodox Christian Candidates

Policy 59 Ordinarily, an Orthodox Christian can only be received into the corresponding Eastern Catholic Church, even if the rite of reception takes place in a Latin Catholic church. It may be possible to obtain permission to be received into the Latin Catholic Church.

Procedure:

Because of the extreme complexity and sensitivity of these pastoral issues, parish ministers should consult with the Office of the Judicial Vicar.

Record Keeping

“Each parish is to have parochial registers of baptisms, marriages, deaths, and other events as prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop” (Canon 535.1).

Parish Baptismal Registry

Policy 60 The parish baptismal registry is a permanent record of each Catholic’s Baptism, reception of the sacraments, and changes in ecclesial status throughout a person’s life (Canon 535.2).

Procedures:

1. The pastor of the place where the Baptism is celebrated has the duty to record the Baptism without delay (Christian Initiation, General Introduction, #29, and Canon 877.1).
2. The following is to be recorded in the registry: name of the baptized, the minister, parents, godparent(s), witness (if any), the place and date of the celebration, date and place of birth (Canon 877.1).

3. When an adopted child is baptized, the names of the adopting parents are recorded. Names of the natural parents are recorded when required on civil records in the region. The recording of the names of parents, adoptive or natural, must be in accord with norms set by the episcopal conference. Parish ministers should consult the Office of the Judicial Vicar.
4. When a child is born to parents who are not married, “the name of the mother must be inserted, if her maternity is established publicly or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses. Moreover, the name of the father must be inscribed if a public document or his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses proves his paternity; in other cases, the name of the baptized is inscribed with no mention of the name of the father or the parents” (Canon 877.2).
5. If the Baptism was not administered by the pastor or in his presence, the minister of Baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in which it was administered of the conferral of the Baptism so that he records the Baptism (Canon 878).
6. These provisions of the law are applicable to both adult and infant Baptism.
7. Names of baptized Christians who have been received into full communion with the Catholic Church are to be recorded in a separate registry or in a designated part of the baptismal registry. This includes information on the date of their reception and the date of their Baptism.
8. When an orthodox Christian is received into full communion with the Catholic Church, parish ministers should consult with the Office of the Judicial Vicar on how the reception is to be recorded in a parish registry, either the separate registry or in the designated part of the baptismal registry as referenced in #7 above.

Registration of Conferral of Confirmation

Policy 61 To prove the conferral of Confirmation, the prescripts of Canon 876 are to be observed.

Procedure:

1. The names of those confirmed, the minister, the parents and sponsors, and the place and date of conferral of Confirmation are to be recorded in the parish archive (Canon 895).
2. The pastor must inform the pastor of the place of Baptism about conferral of Confirmation so that a notation is made in the baptismal register.

Photography and Videography

Policy 62 Since it is important that all who join to celebrate the sacraments and rites are able to worship without the distraction of photos and cameras, parishes may establish their own policies regarding photography or videography during the rites.

Procedure:

People should be informed of policies on photography in advance if possible.

Glossary of Key Terms

Age of Reason

Those approximately seven years of age or older who have attained the use of reason are capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognizing an obligation in conscience (RCIA, #252; *National Statutes*, 18; Canon 852.1). The age of reason corresponds with the term “of catechetical age.”

Candidate

One who is already baptized in another Christian faith and who now is preparing to be received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. At the time of full reception, a candidate will make a profession of faith, be confirmed, and receive the Eucharist.

Catechesis

A process through which individuals and communities are systematically taught so that they acquire and deepen their Christian faith.

Catechetical Age

Children who are approximately seven years or older who can make a personal response to God’s Word and gifts. Catechetical age corresponds with the term “age of reason.”

Catechumen

One who is not baptized and is preparing for full initiation in the Roman Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Church Design and Renovation Commission

An Archdiocesan commission which reviews and approves plans for redecoration, renovation, or new construction of worship space.

Clustering

The grouping of two or more parishes served by one or more priests. The parishes retain their separate identities but collaborate in sharing ministries and resources.

Discernment

The act of discovering one’s path of life through a process of searching the heart and therein finding God’s will.

Evangelization

Bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself.

Faculties

In addition to the rights and privileges granted to priests or deacons by reason of universal Church law, the bishop may grant permission or delegation to priests or deacons serving in the diocese to act in specifically designated roles.

Immersion

Administering Baptism while the candidate is kneeling or standing in the waters of Baptism. For infants, the child would be placed in the font as water is poured over the child by the priest or deacon.

National Statutes for the Catechumenate

Particular law for the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the United States as approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Penance

Penance involves acknowledging our sins, turning to God, seeking forgiveness, and taking the steps necessary for healing. Penance is a title given to the sacrament as well as an integral part of the sacrament itself.

Reconciliation

The name given to any action of healing relationships wounded in some way. It is commonly used as an alternative title for the sacrament of Penance.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The liturgical book containing the norms and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church for people who wish to join the Church. The term is used in a general sense to refer to the process of entering the Catholic Church.

Sunday

The first day in the Christian liturgical week, the original feast day, the heart of the calendar, the basis and nucleus of the liturgical year.

Sponsor

Sponsors are people who have known and assisted the candidates and stand as witnesses to the candidates' moral character, faith, and intention.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

An assembly of the Catholic Church hierarchy who work together to unify, coordinate, promote, and carry on Catholic activities in the United States; to organize and conduct religious, charitable, and social welfare work at home and abroad; to aid in education; and to care for immigrants. The bishops constitute the membership of the Conference.

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