

**Essential Teachings**

**First Penance/Reconciliation, Confirmation, Eucharist**

On the role of parents and the parish, the Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the privilege and responsibility of evangelizing their children. Parents should initiate their children at the early age into the mysteries of the faith of which they are the “first heralds” for their children (CCC 2225)

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents (CCC 2226).

WITH THE CATECHIST/TEACHER, THE CHILD WILL...

-AND-

WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PARISH/SCHOOL, PARENTS WILL ASSIST THEIR CHILD TO:

**First Penance and Reconciliation**

- Acknowledge God’s unconditional love for us.
- Turn to Christ and the Church for sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Recognize the presence of good and evil in the world and their personal capacity for both.
- Recognize their need for forgiveness, not only from parents and others close to them, but from God.
- Explore the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers, and Sacred Scriptures of the Rite of Penance and Reconciliation.
- Understand how to celebrate the Rite of Penance and Reconciliation.
- Understand that sacramental Confession is a means offered children of the Church to obtain pardon for sin, and furthermore that it is even necessary per se if one has fallen into serious sin (NDC # 36 B2).

*Conversion is a lifelong process, and catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is to be ongoing.*

### **Confirmation**

- Identify the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity.
- Understand the Sacrament of Baptism as where we first receive the Spirit.
- Explore the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives and within the Church.
- Know that one is sealed with the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Know the gifts and fruits of the Spirit and how we are called to be witnesses and disciples.
- Become familiar with the Rite of Confirmation
  - the bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation
  - its basic symbols (the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula),
  - Scripture readings about the Spirit (appreciating the Liturgy of the Word as a time when God speaks to us.)

*The full, conscious, and active participation of the faithful demands careful instruction in the ritual and its symbols. In the Proper Order, Confirmation preparation is integrated into the preparation for first Holy Communion.*

### **Eucharist**

- Recognize God's unconditional love for us.
- Know that God's greatest gift to us is Jesus his Son.
- Participate in the Mass, giving God thanks and praise.
- Have a basic understanding of the Eucharistic Liturgy as an act of worship in which the Church and all her members are associated with Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross for all.
- Know that God speaks to us through the Liturgy of the Word.
- Distinguish between the bread and wine and the Real Presence. The bread and wine are not merely blessed symbols, but "by the power of the Holy Spirit", they become the Body and Blood of Christ. Christ Himself is truly present.
- Receive the Body and Blood of Christ with reverence.
- Describe how the Holy Spirit acts in our lives, and Eucharist enriches us to use our gifts in service to others.

### **Mystagogy**

The Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, are the rites by which we become members of the Body of Christ taking our place in full communion with the Church. Candidates, when preparing for the sacraments, spend time in prayer and study. Yet, it is in embracing the life-long journey into conversion that we truly become faithful disciples of Jesus.

It is important to realize how significant Confirmation and Eucharist are to our faith journey and conversion. If we attempt to live our lives as Catholic followers of Jesus with the understanding of a 2nd grader, or a 6th grader, or a sophomore in high school, we are not truly living up to the call of Jesus to be His disciple. His call is life-long, and we need to update ourselves continuously and foster within our families, and within ourselves as individuals, a deeper understanding and appreciation of our faith.

Mystagogy is what the Church refers to when we are challenged to continuously “grow in deepening our grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it a part of our lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity” (Rite of Christian Initiation #244). It is a lifelong introduction into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message we have learned and above all through our experience of the sacraments we have received. As we grow and mature, we are called to “derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world” (Rite of Christian Initiation #245).

Throughout the period of preparation for the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, the pastor and catechetical leaders are to call the attention of the parents and the candidates to the need for Mystagogy – the need for on-going education and experience of our Catholic faith following reception of the Sacraments. Indeed, it may be a sign that a family is not ready for the experience of initiation if the intention is to neglect Mystagogy as their children grow and mature.

Mystagogy is a new word for many, but an important concept for our families. To become a domestic Church, parents need not only to seek preparation of their children for sacramental experiences, but to be committed to:

- On-going education and formation for their family;
- Participating fully, actively, and consciously in the Mass;
- Participating in the life and ministry of their parish community;
- Participating often in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This gradual living through the mystery of God’s love for us and discerning and committing ourselves to our role in the salvation story is something that comes to pass as we mature in Christ. This is the mystagogy of our lives. It is important to acknowledge and articulate that reception of the Sacraments of Initiation is not the end of our formation as Christians. It is but the beginning. It is crucial that parishes continually offer opportunities for ongoing education and formation for all ages and stages of life to help the initiated come to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the gifts they have received.

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## **Key References from the Catechism of the Catholic Church**

### **Reconciliation/Confession**

1. Show Jesus' forgiveness and healing through reconciliation 1423
2. Identify the nature of sin and understand the consequences of sin 1440-1472
3. State that we are welcomed back to God's family when we ask for forgiveness through reconciliation 1455
4. Identify the essential elements of Reconciliation and experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation 1461
5. Use the Ten Commandments as a guide for the examination of conscience Confirmation
6. Research and share the lives of the saints 2683
7. Participate and identify the rituals associated with saints 2683
8. Recognize the Holy Spirit as life giving through Confirmation 1289
9. Listen and discuss the story of Pentecost 1287, 1302 26

### **Confirmation**

1. Name and list the Gifts/Fruits of the Holy Spirit 1299, 1830- 1832
2. Know that Confirmation deepens and seals the Sacrament of Baptism and the call to share the faith 1288
3. Recognize that Confirmation strengthens the bond with the Church and its Mission 1288-89, 1293-1294
4. Identify the symbols, minister of, and parts of the Rite of Confirmation 1288, 1293-94, 1313
5. Identify the hierarchy of the Church; pope as leader, bishop as head of diocese, pastor as head of parish

### **Eucharist**

1. Recall the sacraments as supernatural signs of God's grace and love
2. Recognize Eucharist with the Last Supper, a meal, Jesus' sacrifices, and a celebration 1485
3. Explain that Jesus is present in the Eucharist 1485
4. Recognize that bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus 1339
5. Explain that we receive Jesus under the appearance of bread and wine through the Eucharist 1339
6. Recognize that the Eucharist is a remembrance of Jesus' death and resurrection 1341

**CONFIRMATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION**

<b>GRADES 1 &amp; 2</b>	
<b>GRADE 1</b> <b>CATECHESIS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow grade 1 curriculum.</li> <li>• With permission from their pastor, a child enrolled in the Hawaii Catholic Schools may be catechetically prepared through the school. HCS to encourage/model regular Sunday Mass attendance and active participation in parish life.</li> <li>• Include parent/child catechesis.</li> </ul>	
<b>FORMATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct regular prayer experiences for parent/child throughout the liturgical year.</li> <li>• Provide regular opportunities for family involvement in parish life.</li> </ul>	
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<b>GRADE 2</b> <b>CATECHESIS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow grade 2 curriculum with focus on “Essential Teaching” content for the sacraments of Penance, Confirmation, and Eucharist within the scope of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade curriculum.</li> <li>• Use resources for Confirmation/Eucharist preparation.</li> <li>• With permission from their pastor, a child enrolled in the Hawaii Catholic Schools may be catechetically prepared through the school. The parent/child attend sessions for the immediate preparation of the sacraments at their home parish. HCS to encourage/model regular Sunday Mass attendance and active participation in parish life.</li> <li>• Include parent/child catechesis.</li> </ul>	
<b>FORMATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct regular prayer/liturgy experiences for parent/child throughout the liturgical year.</li> <li>• Conduct a retreat experience(s) for parent/child.</li> <li>• Provide regular opportunities for family involvement in parish life.</li> </ul>	

<b>GRADES 3 – 5 CONFIRMATION PREPARATION</b>
<p><b>CATECHESIS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in religious education class at appropriate grade level.</li> <li>• With permission from their pastor, children enrolled in the Hawaii Catholic Schools may be catechetically prepared through the school. The parent/child attend sessions for the immediate preparation of the sacraments at their home parish. HCS to encourage/model regular Sunday Mass attendance and active participation in parish life.</li> <li>• Children “who were baptized as infants either as Roman Catholics or as members of another Christian community but did not receive further catechetical formation nor, consequently, the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist (may require) extended catechesis suited to their needs.”  <i>(Chapter 4 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist.)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>PREPARATION FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT</b>            (Applies to all candidates.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct immediate preparation sessions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cluster children in grades 3 – 5.</li> <li>○ Conduct parent/child confirmation sessions.</li> <li>○ Conduct a parish retreat experience for parent/child.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>GRADES 3 – 5 CONFIRMATION &amp; FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION</b>
<p><b>CATECHESIS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enroll in RE class at appropriate grade level.</li> <li>• With permission from their pastor, children enrolled in the Hawaii Catholic Schools may be catechetically prepared through the school. The parent/child attend sessions for the immediate preparation of the sacraments at their home parish. HCS to encourage/model regular Sunday Mass attendance and active participation in parish life.</li> <li>• Children “who were baptized as infants either as Roman Catholics or as members of another Christian community but did not receive further catechetical formation nor, consequently, the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist (may require) extended catechesis suited to their needs.”  <i>(Chapter 4 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist.)</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>PREPARATION FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT</b>            (Applies to all candidates.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold immediate preparation sessions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cluster children in grades 3 – 5.</li> <li>○ Conduct parent/child confirmation sessions (3 – 5 sessions) and First Holy Communion sessions (4 – 6 sessions.)</li> <li>○ Conduct a parish retreat experience for parent/child.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Diocese of Honolulu  
Office of Religious Education  
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<b>GRADES 6 – 8 &amp; 9 – 12</b> <b>CONFIRMATION PREPARATION or</b> <b>CONFIRMATION &amp; FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREP</b>
Enroll in parish youth ministry program
Hold preparation sessions when youth is suitably catechized.

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