

CHILDREN'S SACRAMENTAL

READINESS

for

FIRST PENANCE and

RECONCILIATION

and

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION



“Is the child ready to receive the sacrament? How do we know?” These are “Some Criteria to Discern the Child’s Readiness.”¹

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Children show readiness to celebrate the sacrament when:

1. They know the difference between right and wrong
2. They know the difference between sin and accidents or mistakes.
3. They are capable of saying, “I am sorry” on their own.
4. They are capable of reflecting on their actions when asked about them.
5. They understand that God will always forgive them.
6. They show a sincere desire to right wrongs.
7. They have the desire to celebrate the sacrament.
8. Prayer is a part of their daily life.
9. They and some family members regularly attend Sunday Eucharist.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Children show readiness when:

1. They have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion. (Canon 913)
2. They understand that when the bread and the wine are brought to the altar and blessed, they are NO longer ordinary bread and wine, but have become Jesus Body and Blood for us.
3. They show a sense of reverence for God.
4. They have the desire to celebrate the sacrament.
5. Prayer is a part of their daily life.
6. They and some family members regularly attend Sunday Eucharist.

To encourage the parents, please say, “Readiness for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation is an emotional and spiritual readiness as well as an intellectual preparation. The child’s readiness comes from the *experience of participating in the liturgy each week with his/her family.*”



PREP Coordinator/Catechist should always seek the approval of the Pastor.

To find out whether the child complied with the readiness list above, the Catechist or the PREP Coordinator can do a casual, informal and non-threatening *interview process*. Even though they are very young, many of them are surprisingly articulate when they talk about Jesus and their reception of the sacrament. The interviews are primarily for children's benefits and that of their families.² It is an opportune time to evangelize the family.

SAMPLE "FIRST CONFESSION INTERVIEW"³ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

The catechists/PREP Coordinator can change or re-word these questions and adapt them to the children's level of understanding. Establishing rapport and good relationship with the child is first and foremost.

1. Does God love you very much? **Yes, God loves me very much.**

Can you say the scripture John 3:16? **John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, not to condemn the world, but to save it."**

2. What is the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)? **The sacrament of reconciliation brings us God's forgiveness for the sins we committed after baptism.**

3. What is sin? **Sin is disobedience to God's laws.**

What is the difference between mortal (serious) sin and venial sin? **Mortal sin is a serious offense against God and it takes away God's life in our soul. Venial sin is not as serious as mortal sin.**

How do you find out your sins? **I find out my sins by remembering the Commandments of God and asking myself how I have disobeyed them.**

4. What must you do if you have committed a serious sin? **If I have committed a serious sin I must receive the sacrament of penance before receiving the Holy Eucharist.**

5. Why does the priest have the power to take away sin? **The priest has the power to take away sin because Jesus gave that power to His apostles and to His Church in the Holy Priesthood.**

6. What does Jesus do for you in the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)?

In the sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus comes to forgive my sins and brings peace with God and with the Church, which is hurt by my sins.



7. What must **you** do to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)?

(The Catechist can coach the child and lead the discussion to steps to reconciliation)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR “FIRST COMMUNION INTERVIEW”⁴

The Catechist/PREP Coordinator or Pastor can do this interview. The interviewer should make the child feel comfortable first, then encourage him/her by emphasizing that it is not a quiz but to make them ready to receive Jesus in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Coaching and a lot of encouragement are needed. Again, it is not only an intellectual exercise. Parents can be present during this interview.

1. How do you feel about your upcoming First Communion?
2. What do we believe happens to the bread and the wine?
3. When the priest says, “This is my body, this is my blood. Do this to remember me.” What do you think it means?
4. Why should we remember Jesus? Who is Jesus? Who is God?
5. Did you know that God is in your heart? How?
6. What is prayer? Did you try to pray quietly in your heart? **(The Catechist or the child can pray together here)**
7. How is Jesus with us now, everyday?
8. How is Jesus with us in the Mass? **(Child-friendly explanation of the Mass can be pointed out here)**

¹ *Call to Celebrate Sacraments Source Book*, (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Religion Publishing, 2007) page 33

² Hanus, Elaine “*The First Communion Interview*”; Catechist Magazine: January 1995; Peter Li Educational Group; Dayton, OH

³ St. Theresa Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Galveston, Houston, “*For First reconciliation*”, available from <http://sttheresasugarland.org/content.php?id=110>; Internet accessed 31 August, 2007

⁴ Hanus, “*The First Communion Interview*”

