

## First Reconciliation Catechesis

The primary goal of sacramental catechesis is the formation and transformation of the person. The process is concerned with leading the person into the sacramental mystery he/she is about to celebrate that he/she is formed, shaped and transformed by that mystery. *“The course of catechesis is characterized by dedication, initiatives, and positive results for the education and growth in the faith of children, young people, and adults.”* (GDC 2)

*“Catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to precede First Communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation.”* (NDC 135) Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is distinct and separate from the preparation for First Holy Communion.

Four to six sessions of preparation immediately preceding reception of the sacrament are recommended.

Liturgical celebrations have an integral role in sacramental catechesis since “catechesis is intrinsically bound to every liturgical and sacramental action” (GDC 30). Thus, the liturgy “is, therefore, the privileged place for catechizing the People of God” (CCC #1074). Through the prayers, symbols, gestures, music and actions of the liturgical prayer, the faithful receive formation intimately connected to the catechesis that follows.

Catechesis for First Reconciliation should include the following:

- Contrition
- Confession
- Penance
- Absolution

Through preparation, parents and children come to know more personally and to experience more fully the love of Jesus and His mercy and forgiveness that leads to the fullness of life. Children should acknowledge God’s unconditional love for us. (NDC 135)

### Specific Objectives

Children should:

1. have the ability to distinguish right from wrong.
2. have the ability to express sorrow for failure to love and turn to God.
3. be accountable for their actions.
4. recognize their need for forgiveness.
5. explore the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers and Scriptures of the Rite of Penance (NDC 136).
6. understand how to celebrate the Rite of Reconciliation (NDC 136).
7. understand that sacramental confession is a means to obtain pardon for sin.

Because continuing lifelong conversion is part of what it means to grow in faith, the catechesis begun in the early years is to be continued and developed throughout the child’s life. In this way children continue to develop a deeper awareness of the sacrament of God’s love and mercy.