

Saint Luke the Evangelist

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Discipleship is a lifelong journey.

Lifelong faith formation provides opportunities and experiences throughout the entire life span to strengthen our relationship with and knowledge of God. A commitment to lifelong faith formation serves to enhance our understanding of Scripture and of our Tradition. It sustains us in living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

With our Parish focus on lifelong faith formation still in mind, today we consider preparation programs for the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION – As we consider the Sacraments of Initiation and Reconciliation, it is important to reflect on the Church's understanding of these Sacraments, on the worship life of the community and on the individual's (or family) faith response.

BAPTISM

BAPTISM PREPARATION: Baptism is the external sign (Sacrament) celebrating the entrance of a person into the Christian community. Baptism celebrates God's forgiveness and adoption, and initiates a person into a life-style of lifelong worship, religious instruction, and service with the whole Catholic community.

In order for a child's Baptism to be fruitful, parents must give, under Church Canon Law, an assurance that upon the child's Baptism, the child will be given every benefit of Christian and Catholic upbringing.

This responsibility of raising a child in the ways of faith begins immediately after Baptism and extends all the way into adulthood. If parents are not able to give this assurance or make this solemn commitment to the Church, they should consider delaying Baptism until they are prepared to make a serious commitment to undertake these responsibilities.

Under Canon Law, the Parish is permitted to Baptize the children of parent(s) who are registered members of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish. The Rite of Baptism is always celebrated in a Catholic Church except in an extraordinary circumstance. Parents are expected to be participating in the life of the Parish community; newly registered families are typically asked to participate in Parish life for at least three full months before any date for Baptism can be scheduled. Participation in this case is defined as regularly attending Sunday Eucharist. If parents have recently moved into the Parish and not registered, they must obtain a letter from their former Parish Pastor indicating that they are practicing Catholics.



I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Parents must receive the benefit of adult catechesis (religious instruction) concerning the responsibilities of Catholic parenting from the Church. Our Parish offers this instruction once a month, and welcomes parents, siblings and Sponsors. Parents will also have a chance to meet with the Pastor before the Baptism of their child. The Parish also has excellent resources to assist couples in their new role as parents.

RECONCILIATION

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREPARATION: First Reconciliation preparation typically takes place in Grade 2. Weekly attendance at the Sunday

Liturgy, together with the completion of the home-based program engages children's hearts and minds through multiple prayer opportunities and unique interactive elements. Emphasis is on the beauty of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and engages both children and families in this important time of preparation. A Sunday retreat experience for the entire family culminates with the celebration of the Sacrament.



EUCCHARIST

FIRST EUCCHARIST PREPARATION: First Eucharist preparation this year takes place in grade 2 (the Canon Law of the Church states that the minimum age for reception of the Eucharist is 7), with the reception of Eucharist for the first time celebrated in late spring. Eucharist will move with the celebration of Confirmation beginning next year (see below). By 2021, in the Diocese of Manchester, Eucharist will typically be received for the first time when a child is 8 years old or in the third grade at school. Weekly attendance and completion of the sacramental curriculum, and attending a Sunday retreat with at least one parent is required. First Eucharist readies children to come to the Lord's Table with joy and reverence. The home-based curriculum explores the sacraments of initiation, liturgical seasons, and Eucharist-related Biblical stories.

CONFIRMATION

What is Confirmation?

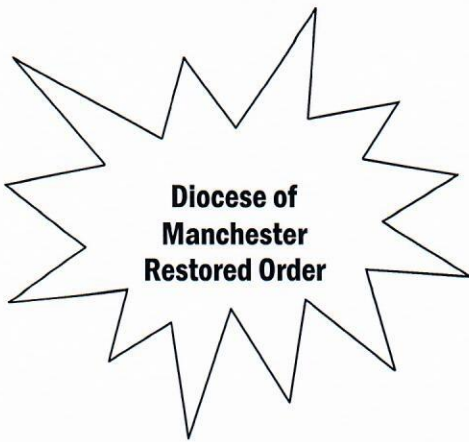
Supernatural realities are often hard to pin down and define exactly. The Sacrament of Confirmation has often been poorly understood as a Sacrament of maturity or young adulthood that occurs sometime after Baptism and sometime before high school graduation. It has been described as enabling a person to become a “defender of their faith,” or as a way for a young person to “choose” or “Own” their Catholic faith. These understandings are unfortunate; for there is a profound richness to this sacrament that deserves better understanding and explains its special celebration within the Church. The Catechism is quite clear about the meaning of Confirmation: *Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.* (CCC 1316)

Confirmation is organically linked to the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist. Together, all three constitute the Sacraments of Initiation. In the words of the Catechism, these sacraments “*lay the foundations of every Christian life.*” (CCC 1212) They initiate because they provide an entrance into the fullness of life in Christ that is not unlike the entrance into life that accompanies every human person. By birth, we enter into life as a baby, and then through a process of development and nourishment, we grow into the fullness of life as an adult. The Sacraments of Initiation follow a similar progression. In the words of the Catechism: *The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these Sacraments of Christian Initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.* (CCC 1212)



It is for this reason that these three sacraments should be thought of as being unified together and organically linked to each other.

The relationship between Baptism and Confirmation is especially close. The Sacrament of Confirmation actually completes and deepens the grace of Baptism. Like Baptism, Confirmation is received only once, for it leaves an indelible mark on the soul. Like Baptism, Confirmation is a free gift of grace that comes from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.



CONFIRMATION & RESTORED ORDER: Our Diocese is restoring the order in which the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated. Restored Order means returning the three sacraments of Christian initiation to the logical order in which they were designed to be celebrated: first Baptism, then Confirmation, then Eucharist. By placing Confirmation prior to the reception of First Eucharist it makes it easier to view the Eucharist as the summit of Christian initiation.

As of 2021, the standard age of Confirmation will be students in the third grade, and Confirmation will be celebrated at the same liturgy as First Eucharist. As a result, the preparation and reception of the sacraments of initiation will occur with Baptism in infancy, Confirmation and Eucharist in third grade. Although not a sacrament of initiation, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be received in the second grade.

Visit
www.catholicnh.org/parishes/formation/lifelong for
more information on the Restored Order of
Confirmation & Eucharist

The Sacrament schedule for our Parish for the year 2017/2018 will be as follows:

- ➔ Grade 2 will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in January, 2018 and First Eucharist in May, 2018 (dates TBA). Preparation programs for these Sacraments are home based and will culminate with a family retreat and in the celebration of the Sacraments.**
- ➔ Grades 8, 9, and 10 will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in April, 2018. There will be Confirmation preparation sessions after the 10 a.m. Mass with a retreat (dates TBA). Grade 8 students will continue their Religious Education program with Sunday dismissal from the 10 am Liturgy. Students from grades 9 & 10 are required to participate in Sunday Liturgy and are encouraged to participate in the Youth Ministry activities as scheduled.**