

Coming into the Catholic Church

A Preparation Catechism for Baptised Children

First Confession - Reception - Confirmation - First Holy Communion

For validly baptised children who have reached the age of reason

My name:

My parish:

A note for parents, catechists and priests

This catechism is for a child aged seven or over who received a valid Christian Baptism outside the Catholic Church and now wishes to enter full communion. The child is already Christian; Baptism is never repeated.

Preparation honours the grace already received while leading the child to profess the whole Catholic faith and prepare for First Confession, Reception into Full Communion, Confirmation and First Holy Communion. The exact celebration follows the approved rites and the judgement of the parish priest.

IMPORTANT This book must not be used until the parish priest has established that the child was validly baptised and that this is the correct pathway. A child baptised Catholic, a child whose Baptism is doubtful, or a child baptised or chrismated in an Eastern Church may require a different arrangement.

Pastoral principles

Grace already given. Valid Baptism has already united the child to Christ.

Full communion. Reception brings unity in Catholic faith, Sacraments and pastoral communion.

Freedom and readiness. The child is accompanied without pressure and expresses a sincere desire.

Family and parish together. Family, sponsor, catechist and parish help the child live the faith.

A sacramental life. The goal is Sunday Mass, prayer, Confession, Communion, charity and perseverance.

How to use the book

Work through one conversation at a time. Begin with the truth in the Remember box, read the short teaching aloud, discuss the Talk About It question, and let the child answer in their own words before learning the short Catholic answers. Finish with prayer and the practical action. A conversation may be repeated or adapted: understanding, Sunday worship and Christian living matter more than speed. The book supplies the lesson; the family and parish supply the journey.

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LESSON 1

God Calls Me to Follow Jesus

REMEMBER God created me out of love and calls me to know, love and follow Jesus Christ in his Church.

God made every person in his image. He knows us, loves us and calls each of us by name. Our deepest happiness is friendship with God in this life and for ever in heaven.

Jesus welcomes children and calls them to be his disciples. A disciple listens to Jesus, trusts him, turns away from sin and learns to live as he teaches.

God does not force faith. His grace comes first and helps us answer freely. Coming into the Catholic Church must be a sincere response to Christ, not something done only because other people expect it.

Talk About It: What do you think Jesus is inviting you to receive and to begin by coming into the Catholic Church?

(Let the child speak freely. Help them name friendship with Jesus, truth, the Sacraments, prayer and belonging to his Church. Avoid supplying a rehearsed answer too quickly.)

Learn these answers

1. Why did God make you?

God made me to know him, love him and serve him in this life, and to be happy with him for ever in heaven.

2. Who is a disciple?

A disciple is someone who believes in Jesus, learns from him and follows him.

3. What is grace?

Grace is God's free gift of his own life and help.

4. Does God force anyone to believe?

No. God gives grace and invites us to answer freely.

5. Why do you wish to become Catholic?

I wish to follow Jesus Christ and live the whole Catholic faith in his Church.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, thank you for calling me by name. Help me to know you, love you and follow you freely and faithfully. Amen.

THIS WEEK Make the Sign of the Cross each morning and ask Jesus to guide your choices.

LESSON 2

The One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

REMEMBER There is one God in three divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

There is only one God. He is eternal, all-holy, all-knowing, almighty and perfectly good. He created all that exists and holds everything in being.

The one God is the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The three Persons are not three gods. Each Person is truly God, and all three share the one divine nature.

At Baptism, water was used with the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The Sign of the Cross reminds us that we belong to the Trinity through Christ.

Talk About It: What does the Sign of the Cross tell us about God and about your Baptism?
(It professes one God in three Persons and recalls that the child was baptised into the Trinity and now belongs to Christ.)

Learn these answers

1. How many gods are there?

There is one God.

2. Who is the Most Holy Trinity?

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: three divine Persons in one God.

3. Is each Person truly God?

Yes. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each truly and wholly God.

4. Are there three gods?

No. There is only one God and one divine nature.

5. In whose name were you baptised?

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THIS WEEK Make the Sign of the Cross slowly, naming each divine Person with attention.

LESSON 3

Creation, Sin and the Promise of Salvation

REMEMBER God made all things good; sin wounded human life, but God promised a Saviour.

God created the visible and invisible world from nothing. Human beings were made in his image, with intellect and free will, and were created for holiness and friendship with him.

Our first parents disobeyed God. Original sin is the fallen condition inherited by the human family. Personal sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed or omission against God's law.

God did not abandon sinners. He promised salvation, formed the people of Israel and prepared the world for Jesus Christ. God's mercy calls us to repentance, but it never makes sin unimportant.

Talk About It: Why do we need both God's truth about sin and God's promise of mercy? *(Truth helps us recognise what harms our friendship with God; mercy gives hope, forgiveness and grace to begin again. Neither should be separated from the other.)*

Learn these answers

1. Who created the world?

God created the world from nothing and made it good.

2. What is original sin?

Original sin is the fallen condition in which we are born without original holiness and justice.

3. What is personal sin?

Personal sin is a deliberate thought, word, deed or omission against God's law.

4. Did God abandon us after sin entered the world?

No. God promised and sent a Saviour.

5. Who is our Saviour?

Jesus Christ is our Saviour.

PRAYER Merciful Father, you made me for goodness. Save me from sin and teach me to choose what is true and right. Amen.

THIS WEEK With an adult, name one accident, one temptation and one deliberate wrong choice. Explain the difference.

LESSON 4

Jesus Christ Our Saviour

REMEMBER Jesus Christ is true God and true man, who saved us by his Cross and Resurrection.

The eternal Son of God took a true human nature from the Virgin Mary. Jesus is one divine Person with two natures, divine and human. Mary is rightly called the Mother of God because her Son is truly God.

Jesus taught the truth, healed the sick, forgave sins and announced God's Kingdom. He freely offered himself upon the Cross as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

On the third day Jesus rose bodily from the dead. He ascended into heaven and reigns in glory. He will come again to judge the living and the dead, and his Kingdom will have no end.

Talk About It: Why must we say that Jesus is more than a good teacher or example?

(Jesus is the divine Son made man. He does not merely show a better way; by his sacrificial death and bodily Resurrection he conquers sin and death and saves us.)

Learn these answers

1. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God made man.

2. Is Jesus true God and true man?

Yes. Jesus is truly God and truly human.

3. Why did the Son of God become man?

To save us from sin and bring us into friendship with God.

4. How did Jesus redeem us?

By his suffering, death and Resurrection.

5. Did Jesus truly rise from the dead?

Yes. Jesus rose bodily from the dead on the third day.

PRAYER Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me and lead me to the Father. Amen.

THIS WEEK Read a Gospel account of the Cross or Resurrection and tell someone what it reveals about Jesus.

LESSON 5

My Christian Baptism

REMEMBER In valid Baptism, God freed me from sin, gave me new life and united me to Christ.

Baptism is the gateway to Christian life. Through water and the word of Christ, God forgives original sin and every personal sin, gives sanctifying grace and makes the baptised person an adopted child of God.

Baptism joins us to Christ and creates a real bond of unity among all the baptised. It also leaves an indelible spiritual character, a permanent sign that we belong to Christ. It can never be repeated.

A Baptism celebrated outside the Catholic Church can be valid when true water, the Trinitarian words and the proper intention are present. The parish priest must examine the record and circumstances before arranging reception.

Talk About It: If Baptism already made you a Christian, why is coming into full communion still important?

(Baptism gives real Christian life and unity with Christ, but Christ also wills visible unity in the faith, Sacraments and pastoral communion of the Catholic Church.)

Learn these answers

1. What does Baptism do?

Baptism forgives sin, gives new life in Christ and makes us children of God.

2. Does Baptism join us to Christ?

Yes. Baptism unites us to Christ and creates a real bond among Christians.

3. Can valid Baptism be repeated?

No. Baptism gives a permanent spiritual character and can never be repeated.

4. Are you baptised again when you become Catholic?

No. The Catholic Church receives a validly baptised Christian without another Baptism.

5. Who establishes whether a previous Baptism was valid?

The parish priest investigates it according to the teaching and law of the Church.

PRAYER Father, thank you for the grace of my Baptism. Help me live as your child and remain faithful to Jesus Christ. Amen.

THIS WEEK Ask an adult what is known about your Baptism: its date, place, minister and sponsors.

LESSON 6

Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the Creed

REMEMBER God's revelation comes to us through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, faithfully taught by the Church.

God reveals himself so that we may know and love him. Sacred Scripture is the written word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and entrusted to the Church.

Sacred Tradition is the living transmission of the Gospel from the Apostles in the Church. Scripture and Tradition form one sacred deposit of faith, not two competing messages.

The Pope and the bishops in communion with him exercise the Magisterium, the Church's teaching office. The Creed gives a faithful summary of the central truths Christians believe.

Talk About It: Why is Catholic faith more than choosing only the teachings we happen to like?

(Faith receives the truth God reveals. The Church does not invent revelation; she guards, explains and hands on the apostolic faith.)

Learn these answers

1. What is Sacred Scripture?

Sacred Scripture is the word of God written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. What is Sacred Tradition?

Sacred Tradition is the living transmission of God's word handed on from the Apostles.

3. Do Scripture and Tradition belong together?

Yes. Together they form the one sacred deposit of the word of God.

4. What is the Magisterium?

The Magisterium is the teaching office of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him.

5. What is a creed?

A creed is a summary and profession of the faith revealed by God.

PRAYER Holy Spirit, help me receive God's word with faith and understand what the Church faithfully teaches. Amen.

THIS WEEK Read the Sunday Gospel before Mass and listen for it when it is proclaimed.

LESSON 7

The Catholic Church and Full Communion

REMEMBER Jesus founded one Church and gave her the fullness of the means of salvation.

Jesus founded his Church upon the Apostles and gave Saint Peter a special office of unity. The Pope, Bishop of Rome and successor of Peter, serves the unity of the universal Church. Bishops succeed the Apostles.

The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him.

Christians separated from full Catholic communion may possess many gifts of grace and truth, and Baptism creates a real bond among us. Full communion includes unity in Catholic faith, the Sacraments and communion with the Church's pastors.

Talk About It: What is the difference between saying that other Christians possess real gifts of grace and saying that all Christian communities are the same?

(We gratefully recognise what is true and holy in other Christians, while also believing that Christ entrusted the fullness of revealed truth and sacramental life to the Catholic Church.)

Learn these answers

1. Who founded the Catholic Church?

Jesus Christ founded the Catholic Church.

2. What are the four marks of the Church?

The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

3. Who is the Pope?

The Pope is the Bishop of Rome, successor of Saint Peter and visible source of unity for the Church.

4. What does full communion include?

Unity in Catholic faith, sacramental life and communion with the Pope and bishops.

5. Do we reject every grace received outside full Catholic communion?

No. We thank God for every true gift of faith and grace and bring it into Catholic fullness.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, you prayed that your disciples might be one. Lead all Christians into the unity of truth, charity and full communion. Amen.

THIS WEEK Learn the names of the Pope, the Bishop of Nottingham and your parish priest, and pray for them.

LESSON 8

Prayer, Sunday Mass and Christian Life

REMEMBER A Catholic lives in friendship with God through prayer, Sunday Mass, the Sacraments and charity.

Prayer is lifting the mind and heart to God. We adore him, thank him, ask forgiveness and place our needs before him. Jesus teaches us to pray with confidence, especially in the Our Father.

Sunday is the Lord's Day, the weekly celebration of Christ's Resurrection. Catholics participate in Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation unless a serious reason excuses them.

Faith must bear fruit in love. At home, school and parish, a disciple speaks truth, forgives, serves those in need, respects every person and tries to choose what pleases God.

Talk About It: If someone watched your family for a week, what signs might show that Catholic faith and Sunday Mass really matter?

(The child may name prayer, a crucifix, Scripture, Mass, reverent speech, forgiveness, care for others and the way family decisions are made.)

Learn these answers

1. What is prayer?

Prayer is lifting our minds and hearts to God.

2. What is the perfect prayer?

The Our Father is the perfect prayer because Jesus taught it to us.

3. Why is Sunday holy?

Sunday is the Lord's Day, when the Church celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus.

4. What is the centre of Sunday for Catholics?

Participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

5. How does faith become visible?

Through worship, obedience, truth, forgiveness, charity and service.

PRAYER Father, teach me to pray as your child. Make Sunday Mass the centre of my week and help my faith bear fruit in love. Amen.

THIS WEEK Pray the Our Father each day and attend Sunday Mass with attention.

LESSON 9

The Commandments, Sin and Conversion

REMEMBER God's commandments teach love; when I sin, Christ calls me to repentance and conversion.

The Ten Commandments teach us to love God and our neighbour. Jesus fulfils the Law and gives the Beatitudes as the pattern of life in his Kingdom.

Temptation is an invitation to sin, but it is not itself a sin. An accident or mistake without free choice is not the same as sin. Personal sin requires some knowledge and consent.

Mortal sin involves grave matter, full knowledge and deliberate consent. Venial sin wounds charity without destroying the life of grace. God calls every sinner to sorrow, confession, amendment and renewed friendship.

Talk About It: Why is it important to know the difference between temptation, an accident and a deliberate sin?

(It helps form a truthful conscience without fear or scrupulosity. We take responsibility for real choices while not blaming ourselves for what was not freely chosen.)

Learn these answers

1. What do the Commandments teach?

They teach us to love God and our neighbour.

2. Is temptation itself a sin?

No. Temptation becomes sin when we freely consent to what is wrong.

3. Is an accident the same as a sin?

No. Sin involves a choice of something known to be wrong.

4. What three things are required for mortal sin?

Grave matter, full knowledge and deliberate consent.

5. What is conversion?

Conversion is turning away from sin and turning back to God.

PRAYER Holy Spirit, give me light to know what is right, courage to reject sin and trust in the mercy of Jesus. Amen.

THIS WEEK At the end of each day, thank God, remember your choices, ask forgiveness and choose one way to do better.

LESSON 10

Jesus Forgives Me in Confession

REMEMBER In the Sacrament of Penance, Jesus forgives sins committed after Baptism and gives grace to begin again.

After rising from the dead, Jesus gave his Apostles authority to forgive sins. Bishops and priests continue this ministry in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

A good Confession includes examining our conscience, having sorrow for sin, intending to turn away from sin, confessing honestly, receiving absolution and completing the penance.

Because you are already baptised, you prepare for First Confession before Reception into Full Communion. Confession is private. Parents and catechists help you prepare but must never ask you to reveal your real sins.

Talk About It: Why should Confession lead to trust rather than fear?

(The sacrament is Christ's merciful remedy. We approach honestly and reverently because Jesus knows our sins, loves us and desires to forgive and strengthen us.)

Learn these answers

1. Who forgives sins in Confession?

Jesus Christ forgives sins through the ministry of the priest.

2. What is contrition?

Contrition is sorrow for sin with the intention to turn away from it.

3. What is an examination of conscience?

Prayerfully remembering our sins in the light of God's commandments.

4. What must we confess?

We must confess all mortal sins remembered after a careful examination; venial sins may also be confessed.

5. What is absolution?

Absolution is the sacramental forgiveness Christ gives through the priest.

PRAYER O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen.

THIS WEEK Practise the steps of Confession with invented examples, never with real personal sins.

LESSON 11

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

REMEMBER At Mass, Christ's one Sacrifice of Calvary is made sacramentally present.

At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and commanded the Apostles to continue it in his memory. He gave the Church a true sacrifice and sacred banquet.

Jesus offered himself once for all upon the Cross. He does not suffer and die again at Mass. The same sacrifice is made sacramentally present in an unbloody manner, and Christ offers himself through the ministry of the priest.

The Mass has two principal parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. We listen to God, offer ourselves with Christ, adore him and are nourished by his Body and Blood.

Talk About It: How can Mass make the Cross present if Jesus died only once?

(The historical sacrifice is not repeated. By Christ's power, his one eternal offering becomes sacramentally present so that the Church can unite herself to it.)

Learn these answers

1. Who instituted the Holy Eucharist?

Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper.

2. What is made present at Mass?

Christ's one Sacrifice of Calvary is made sacramentally present.

3. Does Jesus die again at Mass?

No. His one perfect sacrifice is made present in an unbloody manner.

4. Who offers the Mass?

Christ is the principal priest and victim; the ordained priest acts in his person, and the Church joins the offering.

5. What are the two principal parts of Mass?

The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

PRAYER Eternal Father, I offer you my prayers, work, joys and sufferings in union with the Sacrifice of Jesus made present at Mass. Amen.

THIS WEEK At Mass, listen for the words "Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours..." and offer yourself to God.

LESSON 12

The Holy Eucharist and the Real Presence

REMEMBER In the Holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ is truly present: Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

At the Last Supper Jesus took bread and declared it to be his Body; he took the chalice and declared it to be his Blood. He commanded his Apostles to do this in remembrance of him.

At the consecration, the whole substance of bread becomes the Body of Christ and the whole substance of wine becomes his Blood. The Church calls this change transubstantiation.

The appearances of bread and wine remain, but Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present. Therefore Catholics adore the Blessed Sacrament and receive Holy Communion with faith and reverence.

Talk About It: Why do Catholics believe the Host is truly Jesus even though it still looks and tastes like bread?

(We believe the word of Christ, who is Truth. The substance changes by his power, while the appearances remain available to the senses.)

Learn these answers

1. Whom do we receive in Holy Communion?

Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

2. What is transubstantiation?

The change of the whole substance of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

3. What remains after the consecration?

The appearances of bread and wine remain.

4. Is the Eucharist merely a symbol?

No. Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present.

5. Why do Catholics adore the Blessed Sacrament?

Because the Blessed Sacrament is Jesus Christ himself.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Eucharist. Increase my faith, hope and love. Amen.

THIS WEEK Spend a few quiet minutes before the tabernacle and make an act of faith in the Real Presence.

LESSON 13

The Profession of Faith and Reception

REMEMBER I am received into full communion by freely professing the Catholic faith and being received by the Church.

Because your Baptism is valid, you are not baptised again. You prepare to make a Profession of Faith, declaring that you believe all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.

The profession is not a promise that you understand every mystery perfectly. It is a sincere act of faith: you trust God's revelation and accept the Church's authority to teach it faithfully.

The priest then formally receives you into the full communion of the Catholic Church. You are now bound to the Church in her profession of faith, Sacraments and pastoral communion.

Talk About It: What does it mean to make the Profession of Faith freely and sincerely?

(The child is not merely repeating words. They personally intend to accept the Catholic faith and live within the communion of the Church.)

Learn these answers

1. Are you baptised again at Reception?

No. Valid Christian Baptism is never repeated.

2. What do you profess?

I profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.

3. Must you understand every mystery perfectly?

No. I must sincerely accept the Catholic faith and continue learning it.

4. Who receives you into full communion?

The priest receives me in the name of the Catholic Church.

5. What follows Reception in the ordinary celebration?

Confirmation and First Holy Communion follow according to the approved rite.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, keep me faithful to the truth you revealed. Unite me fully to your Church in faith, Sacraments and charity. Amen.

THIS WEEK Read the Profession of Faith slowly and ask about any word or teaching you do not understand.

LESSON 14

Confirmation and the Gift of the Holy Spirit

REMEMBER In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens baptismal grace and seals me for Christian witness.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, and at Pentecost the Spirit came upon the Apostles with power. The same Holy Spirit strengthens the baptised in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The minister lays hands and anoints the forehead with sacred chrism, saying the sacramental words. Confirmation gives a permanent spiritual seal and is received only once.

The seven traditional gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. They dispose us to follow the Spirit faithfully and bear witness to Christ.

Talk About It: How is Confirmation connected with your Baptism and with the mission Jesus gives you?

(Baptism begins the life of grace; Confirmation strengthens and seals it, equipping the child to live and witness to Christ more firmly.)

Learn these answers

1. What does Confirmation do?

Confirmation strengthens baptismal grace and gives a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

2. What are the essential signs of Confirmation?

The laying on of hands and anointing with sacred chrism using the sacramental words.

3. Can Confirmation be repeated?

No. Confirmation gives a permanent spiritual seal.

4. Name the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

5. Why does a priest ordinarily confirm someone he receives?

The Church gives him the faculty and duty to complete the person's sacramental initiation.

PRAYER Come, Holy Spirit, fill my heart with your grace. Strengthen me to know, love, defend and live the Catholic faith. Amen.

THIS WEEK Choose one gift of the Holy Spirit and ask for help to practise it in a real situation.

LESSON 15

Receiving First Holy Communion

REMEMBER In Holy Communion, Jesus gives himself to me as the food of eternal life.

After Reception and Confirmation, the newly received Catholic normally approaches the altar and receives the Holy Eucharist for the first time in full communion with the Church.

We prepare by faith, prayer and reverent participation in Mass. We observe the one-hour Eucharistic fast from food and drink, except water and medicine. Anyone conscious of mortal sin must receive absolution before Communion.

The minister says, “The Body of Christ.” We answer, “Amen,” meaning “I believe.” We receive reverently, consume the Sacred Host immediately and return to our place to adore and thank Jesus.

Talk About It: When you answer “Amen” to “The Body of Christ”, what truths and promises are contained in that one word?

(It professes the Real Presence, assents to Catholic faith and expresses the intention to receive Christ reverently and live in communion with his Church.)

Learn these answers

1. What does your “Amen” mean?

It means: I believe that this is the Body of Christ.

2. How long is the Eucharistic fast?

One hour before Holy Communion, except for water and medicine.

3. May someone conscious of mortal sin receive Communion?

No. The person must first receive sacramental absolution.

4. How do you receive the Sacred Host?

I receive reverently and consume the Sacred Host immediately.

5. What should you do after Communion?

Adore Jesus, thank him, offer myself and pray for others.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, I am not worthy to receive you, but I trust your mercy. Prepare my heart and keep me close to you. Amen.

THIS WEEK Practise the approved manner of receiving with the catechist, using an unconsecrated practice host.

LESSON 16

Living in Full Communion

REMEMBER Reception is a beginning: Jesus calls me to persevere in the worship, faith and charity of his Church.

After Reception, you are fully a member of the Catholic Church. Full communion is lived through fidelity to Catholic faith, participation in Sunday Mass, worthy Holy Communion, regular Confession, prayer and obedience to God.

The grace of Confirmation is given for mission. At home, school and parish, you are called to practise virtue, defend the truth with charity, serve those in need and share the hope of Christ.

Formation never ends. Continue reading Scripture, learning the Catechism, asking honest questions and taking part in parish life. When you fail, return to Christ through repentance and Confession.

Talk About It: What might show six months after Reception that full communion has become a real way of life?

(Look for Sunday Mass, prayer, Holy Communion, Confession, parish belonging, continued learning, growing virtue and charity towards others.)

Learn these answers

1. Is Reception the end of becoming Catholic?

No. It is the beginning of living in full communion.

2. What should remain at the centre of Catholic life?

Sunday Mass and the worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist.

3. What sacrament forgives serious sins committed after Baptism?

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

4. How do we bear witness to Christ?

By truth, holiness, charity, service and sharing the faith.

5. Does Catholic formation ever finish?

No. We continue learning, praying and growing throughout life.

PRAYER Lord Jesus, keep me faithful to your Catholic Church. Help me worship you, receive the Sacraments worthily and serve you throughout my life. Amen.

THIS WEEK Choose a simple Catholic rule of life: daily prayer, Sunday Mass, regular Confession, continued learning and one act of charity each week.

Appendix A

The Journey Step by Step

This pathway is personal rather than calendar-led. A child is a baptised candidate, not a catechumen. The parish adapts the preparation to the child's age, capacity, Christian formation, family circumstances and spiritual progress.

Stage	Name	What it means
1	Enquiry	The child and family meet the parish priest, ask questions and begin worshipping regularly with the parish.
2	Baptism established	The parish obtains a certificate or other reliable evidence and establishes the validity of the previous Baptism.
3	Formation	The child learns Catholic faith, develops prayer and Christian habits, and becomes at home at Sunday Mass.
4	First Confession	Because the child is already baptised, the Sacrament of Penance is received before Reception.
5	Discernment	The priest, child, family, sponsor and catechist consider faith, free desire, understanding, conversion and readiness.
6	Reception	The child makes the Profession of Faith and is formally received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
7	Confirmation	The newly received child is ordinarily confirmed by the priest who receives them, using sacred chrism.
8	First Holy Communion	The child receives Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist and enters fully into Catholic sacramental communion.
9	Mystagogy	The parish and family help the child deepen the Sacraments received and persevere in Catholic life.

NOT A SECOND BAPTISM The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens belongs to the unbaptised. A validly baptised child is accompanied as a candidate for Reception into Full Communion and is never treated as though Baptism had not occurred.

Appendix B

First Confession Step by Step

The priest will guide the child. The child does not need to memorise every word perfectly. Confession is private, and preparation should be calm, honest and hopeful.

- 1. Prepare.** Pray to the Holy Spirit, examine your conscience, be sorry and intend to turn away from sin.
- 2. Begin.** Make the Sign of the Cross and say, “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. This is my first Confession.”
- 3. Confess.** Tell your sins simply and honestly, especially every remembered mortal sin.
- 4. Finish.** You may say, “For these and all my sins, I am truly sorry.”
- 5. Listen.** The priest may give advice and will assign a penance.
- 6. Contrition.** Pray the Act of Contrition sincerely.
- 7. Absolution.** Listen to the words by which Christ forgives your sins through the priest.
- 8. Thanksgiving.** Complete your penance and thank Jesus for his mercy.

A child's examination of conscience

Ask the Holy Spirit for light. Be honest, not afraid. Think about sins you freely chose after your Baptism.

- Have I refused to pray, deliberately missed Sunday Mass without a serious reason, or treated holy things without reverence?
- Have I used God's name carelessly or spoken disrespectfully about the faith?
- Have I disobeyed, lied to or deliberately hurt my parents, carers, teachers or others?
- Have I been cruel, spiteful, violent, unforgiving or pleased when someone was hurt?
- Have I cheated, stolen, damaged something deliberately or refused to put right harm I caused?
- Have I deliberately looked at, shared or said something impure or degrading?
- Have I been jealous, greedy, selfish or unwilling to share?
- Have I excluded, bullied or humiliated someone in person or online?
- What good could I have done but deliberately refused to do?

CHILD SAFETY Something done to a child without the child's free choice is not the child's sin. If anyone has harmed, threatened, frightened or asked the child to keep an unsafe secret, the child should tell a trusted safe adult so that protection and help can be given.

PRIVACY Parents and catechists must never ask a child to reveal real sins during practice or after Confession. Use invented examples. Personal sins belong in sacramental Confession with the priest.

Appendix C

The Profession of Faith and Reception Step by Step

The exact rite and wording come from the approved liturgical book. The celebrant will guide the child. These steps explain the meaning of the celebration.

- 1. Invitation.** The priest invites the candidate to profess the Catholic faith freely.
- 2. Profession of Faith.** The child declares belief in all that the Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.
- 3. Act of Reception.** The priest receives the child into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
- 4. Welcome.** The Church gives thanks for the child's Baptism and welcomes the child into Catholic communion.
- 5. Confirmation.** If the child has not already been validly confirmed, Confirmation ordinarily follows Reception.
- 6. Holy Eucharist.** During the same Mass, the newly received child ordinarily receives First Holy Communion.

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH “I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.”

The child should understand the meaning before learning the words. The profession is made freely and sincerely; it is not a performance or an examination.

THE APPROVED RITE GOVERNS This guide does not replace the liturgical book. The priest determines the appropriate Mass, readings, sponsor, parish participation and any adaptations permitted for children.

Appendix D

Confirmation Step by Step

- 1. Renewal of faith.** The candidate has professed the Catholic faith and is ready to be strengthened in it.
- 2. Invitation to prayer.** The priest invites everyone to pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- 3. Laying on of hands.** The minister extends his hands and asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit and his gifts.
- 4. Anointing with chrism.** The child approaches with the sponsor and is anointed on the forehead with sacred chrism.
- 5. Sacramental words.** The minister says, “N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.” The child answers, “Amen.”
- 6. Sign of peace.** The minister gives the sign of peace, expressing communion in Christ and his Church.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom helps us value God and the things of heaven above everything else.

Understanding helps us grasp the truths of faith more deeply.

Counsel helps us judge rightly what should be done.

Fortitude gives courage and perseverance in difficulty.

Knowledge helps us see created things in relation to God.

Piety moves us to love and worship God as his children.

Fear of the Lord fills us with reverence and dread of offending God.

Eastern Christians. A child validly chrismated in an Eastern Church is not confirmed again. Refer the case to the parish priest so that the child's Church sui iuris and correct canonical pathway can be established.

Sponsor and saint. The sponsor is a practising Catholic who has received Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist, is ordinarily at least sixteen, and will pray for and support the child; a parent does not act as sponsor. Where a saint's name is used, choose a saint to imitate and ask for intercession. Keeping the child's baptismal name is also a good choice.

Appendix E

A Child's Guide to Mass and Holy Communion

Part	What I do and understand
Introductory Rites	We gather, make the Sign of the Cross, acknowledge our sins, praise God and pray.
Liturgy of the Word	We listen to Sacred Scripture and the homily, profess faith and offer intercessions.
Preparation of the Gifts	Bread and wine are brought to the altar; we offer ourselves with them.
Eucharistic Prayer	The Church gives thanks; by the Holy Spirit and Christ's words, the gifts become his Body and Blood.
Communion Rite	We pray the Our Father, ask peace and prepare to receive the Lamb of God.
Holy Communion	The minister says, "The Body of Christ." I answer "Amen", receive reverently and consume at once.
Thanksgiving	I adore Jesus, thank him, offer myself and pray for others.
Dismissal	Christ sends us to live the Gospel and serve our neighbour.

Receiving the Sacred Host

- Approach calmly with hands joined or prepared according to the approved manner of reception.
- When the minister says, "The Body of Christ," answer clearly: "Amen."
- Receive the Sacred Host reverently on the tongue or in the hand according to the approved practice and parish direction. You may stand or kneel.
- Consume the Sacred Host immediately in the presence of the minister.
- Return to your place and pray quietly in thanksgiving.

BEFORE COMMUNION I am Catholic, properly disposed and have fasted for one hour from food and drink, except water and medicine. I approach because I believe that the Sacred Host is truly Jesus Christ and desire to receive him.

Appendix F

Prayers to Learn and Pray

Sign of the Cross

PRAY In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Father

PRAY Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

PRAY Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

PRAY Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Act of Contrition

PRAY O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit

PRAY Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Amen.

Before Communion

PRAY Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

After Communion

PRAY Lord Jesus, I adore you and thank you for giving yourself to me. Keep me close to you and make my life pleasing to you. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

I BELIEVE I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honour your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

The Beatitudes

Jesus teaches:

- The poor in spirit receive the kingdom of heaven.
- Those who mourn will be comforted.
- The meek will inherit the earth.
- Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied.
- The merciful will receive mercy.
- The pure in heart will see God.
- The peacemakers will be called children of God.
- Those persecuted for righteousness possess the kingdom of heaven.

The Precepts of the Church

The precepts name the minimum pattern of Catholic sacramental life. Catholics are to:

- participate in Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from unnecessary servile work;
- confess serious sins at least once a year;
- receive Holy Communion at least during the Easter season;
- observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church;
- and help provide for the needs of the Church according to their ability.

Appendix G

Summary Catechism

1. Why did God make you?

God made me to know him, love him and serve him in this life, and to be happy with him for ever in heaven.

2. Who is the Most Holy Trinity?

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: three divine Persons in one God.

3. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God made man.

4. How did Jesus redeem us?

By his suffering, death and Resurrection.

5. What did valid Baptism give you?

It forgave sin, gave sanctifying grace, united me to Christ and made me a child of God.

6. Can Baptism be repeated?

No. Valid Baptism can never be repeated.

7. What are Scripture and Tradition?

The one word of God handed on in written and living form.

8. What are the four marks of the Church?

One, holy, catholic and apostolic.

9. What does full communion include?

Catholic faith, the Sacraments and communion with the Pope and bishops.

10. What is prayer?

Lifting our minds and hearts to God.

11. What do the Commandments teach?

They teach us to love God and our neighbour.

12. What is mortal sin?

A grave offence committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent.

Summary Catechism - continued

13. What is Confession?

The Sacrament in which Christ forgives sins through the ministry of the priest.

14. What must we confess?

All remembered mortal sins after a careful examination; venial sins may also be confessed.

15. What is the Mass?

The sacramental making-present of Christ's one Sacrifice of Calvary and the sacred Eucharistic banquet.

16. Whom do we receive in Holy Communion?

Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

17. What is transubstantiation?

The change of the whole substance of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

18. What do you profess at Reception?

All that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.

19. What does Confirmation give?

A special outpouring of the Holy Spirit that strengthens and seals baptismal grace.

20. Name the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

21. What does "Amen" before Communion mean?

I believe that this is the Body of Christ.

22. How long is the Eucharistic fast?

One hour before Holy Communion, except for water and medicine.

23. What remains after Reception?

A lifelong Catholic life of Mass, Sacraments, prayer, faith, charity and mission.

Appendix H

Readiness and Parish Guide

Readiness does not mean perfect memory or mature theological language. It means a sincere personal desire, sufficient understanding according to capacity, developing conversion, Sunday worship and a real beginning of Catholic life.

Area	What readiness looks like	Ready
Baptism	Reliable evidence establishes a valid Christian Baptism; any doubt or Eastern affiliation has been resolved by the priest.	☐
Free desire	The child personally wishes to become Catholic and is not being forced or pressured.	☐
Faith in Christ	The child knows the central Gospel and believes in Jesus Christ as true God, true man and Saviour.	☐
Catholic faith	According to capacity, the child accepts the Trinity, Scripture and Tradition, the Creed, the Church and the moral life.	☐
Full communion	The child understands the Profession of Faith and wishes to enter communion with the Catholic Church.	☐
Confession	The child understands sin, contrition, confession and absolution and can make a simple, private Confession.	☐
Confirmation	The child understands the Holy Spirit, sacred chrism, the sacramental seal and Christian witness.	☐
Eucharist	The child distinguishes the Body of Christ from ordinary food and believes the Real Presence.	☐
Sunday life	The child and family have begun a stable pattern of Sunday Mass and parish belonging.	☐
Practical readiness	The child can make the Profession of Faith and receive the Sacraments reverently with suitable adaptations.	☐
Perseverance	The family understands that formation, Mass, Confession, Communion, prayer and parish life continue afterwards.	☐

Parish working checklist

- Obtain the baptismal certificate or reliable evidence; investigate matter, form and intention if validity is uncertain.
- Confirm the child's canonical status. A child baptised Catholic is not received into full communion, and an Eastern Christian may belong to a Catholic Church sui iuris upon reception.
- Confirm parental consent, the child's free desire and any relevant questions of parental responsibility.
- Record the child's full sacramental history, including any previous Confirmation or chrismation.
- Appoint a suitable sponsor and verify that the person fulfils the Church's requirements.
- Arrange First Confession before Reception, preserving the child's privacy and freedom.
- Discern readiness personally; do not make completion of pages or a fixed date the sole criterion.
- Use the approved rite for Reception into Full Communion; do not improvise liturgical wording or actions.
- Confirm the priest's faculty and obligation to administer Confirmation when he receives the child, unless competent authority directs otherwise.
- Prepare the child for worthy First Holy Communion and any necessary medical or accessibility arrangements.
- Enter Reception, Confirmation and First Holy Communion correctly in parish records and notify the place of Baptism as required.
- Arrange Mystagogy and continuing family and parish accompaniment after the celebration.

SAFEGUARDING Preparation must respect the child's dignity, capacity, privacy and safety. No child should be shamed, frightened, publicly tested or pressured to receive a Sacrament. Follow current Diocese of Nottingham safeguarding policy and parish procedures.

Sources and doctrinal references

Sacred Scripture. Short quotations and references follow the English Standard Version - Catholic Edition.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Especially nos. 74-100, 811-870, 1210-1419, 1420-1498 and 1691-2557.

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The profession of faith, the Sacraments, Christian morality and prayer.

Second Vatican Council. *Lumen gentium* and *Unitatis redintegratio* on the Church, Christian unity and the real bonds created by Baptism.

Code of Canon Law. Especially canons 11, 96, 205, 840-845, 883-885, 889-891, 912-919 and 987-991.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The approved rite for Reception of Baptised Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.

Liturgy Office of England and Wales. Guidance concerning Reception, Confirmation and Eucharist in the celebration of Christian initiation.

Diocese of Nottingham. Current sacramental, liturgical and safeguarding direction.

Traditional catechetical sources. Definitions informed by the Roman Catechism, the Baltimore tradition and Joseph Deharbe, adapted to current terminology and discipline.

Doctrinal and canonical standard

Valid Baptism is never repeated. A baptised Christian received into full communion makes the Catholic Profession of Faith. A priest who, by virtue of office or diocesan mandate, admits a baptised person into full communion possesses the faculty to confirm that person and is to use it for the person's sake.

A baptised candidate should be prepared for sacramental Confession before Reception. Reception, Confirmation and First Holy Communion are ordinarily celebrated together according to the approved rite. Particular cases, especially Eastern Christians, doubtful Baptisms, previous Confirmation or complex family circumstances, must be referred to competent authority.

Where terminology, liturgical books or practical instructions change, the current approved rites, the law of the Church, Diocese of Nottingham policy and the directions of the parish priest govern.