MY CHRISTIAN INITIATION

Activity & Conversation Companion

For unbaptised children of catechetical age

USE BESIDE MY CHRISTIAN INITIATION CATECHISM

The catechism gives the teaching. This companion helps a parent, mentor or priest make that teaching personal, active and memorable.

Not another catechism

Ask. Show. Do. Talk. Pray. Then stop.

St Mary's | St John Bosco | St Edward's Parish

HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION

THE PRINCIPLE

The child is not being pushed through a course. The catechumenate is an apprenticeship in Christian life: faith, prayer, conversion, Sunday worship, parish belonging and readiness for the sacraments.

For each lesson

1. Begin with a question, object, story or real-life situation.
2. Do the short activity together. Most need only ordinary household or church items.
3. Open the matching lesson in My Christian Initiation Catechism and read only what is useful for the conversation.
4. Ask the discussion questions and let the child answer before supplying language.
5. Check the central truths without turning the meeting into a test.
6. Pray briefly and choose one real action for the week.

A VITAL SACRAMENTAL POINT

Before Baptism, the child learns repentance and examination of conscience but does not receive sacramental Confession. Baptism itself forgives original sin and every personal sin committed before Baptism. After Baptism, Penance becomes the ordinary sacrament of forgiveness for serious sins committed afterwards.

MENTOR, NOT LECTURER

You do not need to explain everything you know. Ask first. Listen. Use the catechism for the teaching. Explain what needs explaining. Leave difficult questions for the priest when appropriate.

A SMALL ACTIVITY KIT

Keep this simple. You do not need a box of craft materials.

Simple item	Useful for
Crucifix or small cross	Jesus, Paschal Mystery, discipleship
Bible	Gospel stories, Creed, Scripture and Tradition
Cup or bowl of water	Baptismal signs - never imitate the sacramental formula
White cloth + candle	Putting on Christ; Christ the Light
Olive oil or hand cream	A safe visual prompt for anointing - not blessed oil
Bread or ordinary cracker	A comparison object only; never used as if it were the Eucharist
Cards / sticky notes	Trinity, journey stages, Mass, choices and sorting
Two chairs / phone torch	Role-play, journey, rite rehearsal, light and conscience

NEVER SIMULATE A SACRAMENT

You may use water, oil, a candle or a role-play to explain signs, but do not mimic a Baptism by pouring water while saying the sacramental words over a person. Practical rehearsal should make the real rite clearer, not imitate it.

LESSON 1

God Calls Me

AIM

Help the child see becoming Catholic as a personal response to God, not simply something adults have arranged.

QUICK PREP

Nothing needed. Optional: write the child's name on a card.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: "Who knows your name best? What is different about someone knowing your name and someone really knowing you?"

THE NAME CARD

1. Write the child's name in the centre of a card or sheet of paper.
2. Around it, ask the child to name four things God already knows about them: something they enjoy, someone they love, something they find difficult, and something they hope for.
3. Ask: "If God knows all this and still calls you, what might he be inviting you into?"
4. Finish by making the Sign of the Cross slowly.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 1, especially REMEMBER and the paragraph explaining that becoming Catholic is a free response to grace.

LESSON 1

God Calls Me

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Talk about God calling through people, Scripture, the Church and the child's own desire.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

Why did God make you? To know, love and serve him, and to be happy with him for ever.

Does God force faith? No. God gives grace and calls us to answer freely.

Why are you asking for Baptism? The child should be able to give a simple personal answer in their own words.

PRAY

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

THIS WEEK

Each morning say: "Jesus, guide me today."

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Do not supply the child's reason for becoming Catholic too quickly. Their own free desire matters. If they struggle, keep the question open over several meetings rather than forcing a polished answer.

LESSON 2

The One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

AIM

Give the child a simple, orthodox grasp of one God in three divine Persons.

QUICK PREP

Three sticky notes marked FATHER, SON, HOLY SPIRIT.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Make the Sign of the Cross together. Ask: “How many names did we say? How many Gods are there?”

ONE GOD - THREE PERSONS

1. Place the three name cards side by side.
2. Ask the child what Christians believe about each: Is the Father God? Is the Son God? Is the Holy Spirit God?
3. Then ask the crucial question: “Does that mean three gods?” Let the child answer.
4. Bring the three cards together and say: three distinct Persons, one God - not three parts of God and not three gods.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 2. Use the catechism wording rather than trying to invent an analogy for the Trinity.

LESSON 2

The One God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask why the Sign of the Cross is such an important prayer for someone preparing for Baptism.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

How many gods are there? One God.

Who is the Holy Trinity? Father, Son and Holy Spirit: three divine Persons in one God.

Is each Person truly God? Yes - each is wholly and eternally God.

PRAY

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Make the Sign of the Cross slowly once each day, naming each divine Person deliberately.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Avoid water/ice/steam, shamrock and similar analogies. They often teach something the Church does not mean. The catechism's concise language is safer and clearer.

LESSON 3

Creation, Sin and the Promise of Salvation

AIM

Connect the goodness of creation with the reality of sin and God's promise to save.

QUICK PREP

Two cards: GOOD and BROKEN. Optional: a beautiful natural object or photograph.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask the child to name something in the world they think is genuinely good or beautiful. Then ask: "If God made the world good, why is everything not perfect?"

GOOD - BROKEN - PROMISED

1. Put the GOOD card down. Name several good things God created.
2. Put down BROKEN. Ask for examples of things that go wrong because of human sin: lies, cruelty, selfishness, violence.
3. Clarify that creation is good, but humanity is fallen and needs salvation.
4. Add a third handwritten card: PROMISE. Ask: "Did God walk away from us?" Lead into the promise of a Saviour.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 3. Keep original sin and personal sin distinct.

LESSON 3

Creation, Sin and the Promise of Salvation

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Use one concrete example to distinguish an accident from a freely chosen wrong action.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

Who created the world? God created it from nothing and made it good.

What is original sin? The fallen condition in which we are born without original holiness and justice.

Did God abandon humanity? No. He promised a Saviour.

PRAY

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

THIS WEEK

Notice one beautiful thing in creation and thank God for it; make one deliberate good choice.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Keep the lesson hopeful. Sin explains why we need Christ; it is not the final word. The movement is always creation -> fall -> promise -> salvation.

LESSON 4

Jesus Christ Our Saviour

AIM

Help the child answer “Who is Jesus?” with more than “a good man” or “a teacher.”

QUICK PREP

A crucifix and a Bible.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Show the crucifix. Ask: “If a friend asked who this is, what would you say?” Do not correct the first answer immediately.

WHO IS JESUS?

1. Write four headings: TEACHER, HEALER, SAVIOUR, SON OF GOD.
2. Ask the child for a Gospel story that fits any heading. Supply one if needed.
3. Open a Gospel and read a short passage where Jesus acts with authority or mercy.
4. Ask: “Which heading is the most important if we want to say who Jesus really is?” Bring the answer to true God and true man, our Saviour.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 4 and use its exact teaching on Jesus being one divine Person with a true divine and true human nature.

LESSON 4

Jesus Christ Our Saviour

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask what difference it makes that Jesus is not merely a wise teacher but the Son of God made man.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

Who is Jesus Christ? The eternal Son of God made man.

Is Jesus truly God and truly human? Yes.

Why did he become man? To save us from sin and bring us to the Father.

PRAY

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

THIS WEEK

Choose one Gospel story about Jesus and tell another person what it reveals about him.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Let the Gospel do some of the teaching. The aim is encounter as well as information: the child is preparing to belong to Christ.

LESSON 5

The Paschal Mystery

AIM

Show that the Cross and Resurrection belong together: sacrifice and victory.

QUICK PREP

A crucifix. Two cards: CROSS and EMPTY TOMB.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “If our story about Jesus ended on Good Friday, what would be missing?”

FROM CROSS TO GLORY

1. Place CROSS on the left and EMPTY TOMB on the right.
2. Ask the child to tell the story from the Last Supper to Easter morning in a few steps.
3. For each step ask: “What does this show about Jesus?”
4. Finish by placing the crucifix between the cards and saying: the same Jesus who truly died truly rose.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 5. Emphasise that the Resurrection is a real event, not just a way of saying the disciples felt hopeful.

LESSON 5

The Paschal Mystery

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask why Christians can face suffering and death with hope.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

How did Jesus redeem us? By his suffering, death and Resurrection.

Did Jesus truly rise? Yes, bodily, on the third day.

Will Jesus come again? Yes, in glory to judge the living and the dead.

PRAY

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Keep a crucifix where you pray and thank Jesus for his sacrifice and Resurrection.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Do not rush past either side: children need the reality of the Cross and the joy of the Resurrection. Christian hope is not pretending suffering is unreal.

LESSON 6

The Holy Spirit and the Catholic Church

AIM

Help the child see the Church as Christ's living people, animated by the Holy Spirit, not merely a building.

QUICK PREP

A simple sketch of a church building and several blank stick-figure circles/cards.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: "If this church building disappeared tomorrow, would the Catholic Church disappear?"

BUILDING OR BODY?

1. Place or draw the church building.
2. Add cards for Pope, bishop, priest, family, saints, parishioners and the child.
3. Ask which of these are part of the Church and what unites them.
4. Add a small flame or write HOLY SPIRIT in the centre: the Spirit gives life, sanctifies and unites the Church.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 6, especially the four marks of the Church and Baptism as sacramental entry into her life.

LESSON 6

The Holy Spirit and the Catholic Church

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask how joining the Church through Baptism will change where the child belongs on Sundays and in ordinary life.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

Who founded the Catholic Church? Jesus Christ.

What are her four marks? One, holy, catholic and apostolic.

How do we become members of Christ and his Church? Through Baptism.

PRAY

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

THIS WEEK

Learn the names of the Pope, the Bishop of Nottingham and your parish priest.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Avoid reducing “Church” to clergy. The child should see a visible, sacramental people with real shepherds, but also a Body into which they themselves are being received.

LESSON 7

Faith, the Creed and Sacred Tradition

AIM

Show that Catholic faith is received from God through Scripture and Tradition rather than invented individually.

QUICK PREP

Bible, Apostles' Creed, two cards marked SCRIPTURE and TRADITION.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: "If everyone invented Christianity for themselves, how would we know what Jesus actually taught?"

RECEIVED, NOT INVENTED

1. Place the Bible and the SCRIPTURE card on one side and TRADITION on the other.
2. Ask the child to name something Catholics know from Scripture and something Catholics do because the faith has been handed on in the Church.
3. Read a line of the Apostles' Creed. Ask: "Did we invent this today?"
4. Explain that the Creed sums up the faith the Church has received and professes.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 7. Keep Scripture and Sacred Tradition together as one deposit of faith entrusted to the Church.

LESSON 7

Faith, the Creed and Sacred Tradition

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask whether faith means never asking questions. Draw out that faith seeks understanding.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What is faith? The gift by which we believe God and all he has revealed.

Where is revelation handed on? In Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.

What is the Creed? A summary and profession of Catholic faith.

PRAY

Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. Keep me faithful to all that you have revealed through your Church. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Learn one new line of the Apostles' Creed and ask about any word you do not understand.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Welcome genuine questions. "Received faith" does not mean switching off the mind; it means asking questions inside a relationship of trust with God and the Church.

LESSON 8

Prayer and the Christian Life

AIM

Make prayer practical and help the child see how Catholic life becomes visible through habits.

QUICK PREP

Five small cards: ADORE, THANK, SORRY, ASK, LISTEN.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “If you could speak to God for one minute right now, what would you say?”

FIVE WAYS TO PRAY

1. Lay out the five prayer cards.
2. Ask the child to give one example sentence for each kind of prayer.
3. Choose one and pray it aloud together.
4. Then make a tiny weekly plan: Sunday Mass plus one short daily prayer the child can realistically keep.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 8, including the distinction between worshipping God and honouring the saints.

LESSON 8

Prayer and the Christian Life

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask what someone would notice in a home where Catholic faith really mattered.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What is prayer? Raising the mind and heart to God.

What is the perfect prayer? The Our Father taught by Jesus.

Do Catholics worship the saints? No. We worship God alone and ask the saints to pray for us.

PRAY

Our Father, who art in heaven... Amen.

THIS WEEK

Pray the Our Father daily and attend Sunday Mass with the family.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Choose habits that can survive a busy week. One faithful practice is better than an ambitious plan that disappears after three days.

LESSON 9

The Commandments, Sin and Conversion

AIM

Form conscience without confusing accident, temptation and deliberate sin, while preparing the child for repentance before Baptism.

QUICK PREP

A plastic cup or harmless object. Three cards: ACCIDENT, TEMPTATION, CHOICE.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Hold up the cup. Ask: “Are these three the same: I drop it by accident; I feel like throwing it but do not; I throw it on purpose because I am angry?”

ACCIDENT - TEMPTATION - CHOICE

1. Place the three cards in front of the child.
2. Give several simple scenarios and ask where each belongs.
3. For deliberate wrong choices, ask: “What would conversion look like now?” - sorrow, apology, repair, asking God for mercy.
4. Remind the child: before Baptism, they bring sin to God in repentance; Baptism will wash all previous sin away.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 9 and the catechism’s necessary note that an unbaptised child does not receive sacramental Confession before Baptism.

LESSON 9

The Commandments, Sin and Conversion

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask why God's commandments are a way of love rather than a collection of traps.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What do the commandments teach? How to love God and neighbour.

Is temptation itself a sin? No.

How are sins committed before Baptism forgiven? Every previous sin is forgiven in Baptism.

PRAY

O my God, because you are so good, 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

Make one act of repair for a real wrong choice, if appropriate.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Never ask the child to disclose private sins to you. This is formation of conscience, not rehearsal of Confession. Safeguarding disclosures are handled through normal parish procedures.

LESSON 10

The Journey of a Catechumen

AIM

Help the child understand that the journey has stages because the Church is accompanying a real conversion, not running a course.

QUICK PREP

Seven cards: ENQUIRY, ACCEPTANCE, CATECHUMENATE, DISCERNMENT, PURIFICATION, INITIATION, MYSTAGOGY.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “Why do you think the Church does not simply baptise someone five minutes after they first ask?”

BUILD THE JOURNEY

1. Mix the seven cards and ask the child to put them in a sensible order.
2. Use Appendix A of the catechism to correct and explain the order.
3. For each stage ask: “What is growing here - knowledge, prayer, conversion, belonging, readiness?”
4. Put a small marker on the stage the child is currently living.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 10 and Appendix A. Emphasise “apprenticeship in Christian life.”

LESSON 10

The Journey of a Catechumen

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask what has already changed since the child began this journey and what still needs to grow.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What is a catechumen? An unbaptised person formally accepted for preparation for Baptism.

Is the catechumenate only a course? No. It is an apprenticeship in Christian life.

What determines readiness? Faith, conversion, sufficient understanding and a developing Christian life.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, guide me on the road to Baptism. Let your Cross mark my mind, my words and my whole life. Amen.

THIS WEEK

At Sunday Mass, pray for everyone preparing for Baptism and notice one way the parish supports them.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Do not make the child anxious about “passing stages.” The stages exist to serve grace and readiness, not to create hurdles.

LESSON 11

Holy Baptism

AIM

Make clear what God truly gives in Baptism and distinguish sacramental reality from outward appearance.

QUICK PREP

Bowl or cup of clean water; white card marked BEFORE and blue card marked AFTER.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “If someone looks exactly the same five minutes after Baptism, has anything really changed?”

VISIBLE WATER - INVISIBLE GRACE

1. Place the water between BEFORE and AFTER.
2. Ask what water normally does: washes, refreshes, gives life.
3. Now ask what only God can do in Baptism: forgive sin, give sanctifying grace, make us adopted children, join us to Christ and the Church, give an indelible character.
4. Say clearly: the water is a real sacramental sign through which Christ acts; it is not magic and not merely a symbol.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 11. Do not rehearse Baptism by pouring water over the child while saying the sacramental formula.

LESSON 11

Holy Baptism

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask which effect of Baptism seems most important to the child and why.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What is Baptism? The sacrament of rebirth by water and the Holy Spirit.

What sins does it forgive? Original sin and every personal sin committed before it.

Can Baptism be repeated? No. It gives an indelible character.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, prepare me for the saving waters of Baptism and make me a faithful child of your Church. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Visit the baptismal font and thank God for the grace he will give there.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Keep the activity sacramentally reverent. Ordinary water may illustrate the sign, but only the Church's real celebration is Baptism.

LESSON 12

The Signs and Celebration of Baptism

AIM

Help the child read the signs of the rite: Cross, water, anointing, white garment and light.

QUICK PREP

A cross, bowl of water, small amount of ordinary oil/cream, white cloth, candle or battery candle.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Place the objects on a table. Ask: “Without saying anything, what do you think each object is trying to tell us?”

READ THE SIGNS

1. Let the child choose one object at a time and say what it might mean.
2. Use the catechism to refine the meanings: Cross - belonging to Christ; water - cleansing/new birth; anointing - consecration; white garment - putting on Christ; candle - Christ’s light and living faith.
3. Ask which sign speaks most strongly to the child.
4. Practise only the spoken responses and promises - never a simulated Baptism.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 12 and Appendix B. Note that the child personally rejects sin and professes the Catholic faith.

LESSON 12

The Signs and Celebration of Baptism

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask what “keeping the flame of faith alive” might look like six months after Baptism.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What must the child reject? Sin, Satan and all that leads away from God.

What faith is professed? The Catholic faith in Father, Son, Holy Spirit and the Church.

What does the candle mean? Christ’s light and the duty to keep faith alive.

PRAY

Jesus, Light of the world, keep the flame of faith alive in me and make my life shine with good works. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Read the baptismal promises and practise answering them freely and clearly.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

The child should know what they are saying yes and no to. Avoid drilling responses without meaning.

LESSON 13

The Holy Eucharist and the Real Presence

AIM

Help the child distinguish what the senses perceive from what Christ gives in the Eucharist.

QUICK PREP

An ordinary cracker or piece of bread in its packet; a Bible. Do not place ordinary food where it could be mistaken for the Blessed Sacrament.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “Can our eyes tell us everything that is true?” Let the child give examples where we rely on trustworthy testimony.

WHAT THE EYES SEE - WHAT CHRIST SAYS

1. Look at ordinary bread and list what the senses can tell: shape, smell, taste, texture.
2. Put it away. Open the Bible or catechism to Jesus’ words at the Last Supper.
3. Ask: “After consecration the Host still looks like bread. Why do Catholics believe Jesus is truly present?”
4. Use the catechism language: the whole substance changes; the appearances remain; Jesus is truly, really and substantially present.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 13. Use the catechism rather than inventing analogies for transubstantiation.

LESSON 13

The Holy Eucharist and the Real Presence

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask what “Amen” to the Body of Christ will mean when the child receives First Holy Communion.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

Who is present in the Eucharist? Jesus Christ, truly, really and substantially.

What is transubstantiation? The change of the whole substance of bread and wine into Christ’s Body and Blood.

Is the Eucharist merely a symbol? No.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Increase my faith and love. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Make a short visit to the tabernacle and say quietly, “My Lord and my God.”

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

This is one of the key readiness points. Do not settle for “special bread.” The child should distinguish the consecrated Eucharist from ordinary food according to their capacity.

LESSON 14

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

AIM

Connect Calvary and the Mass without suggesting that Jesus dies again.

QUICK PREP

Crucifix; two cards: CALVARY and MASS.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Place the crucifix by CALVARY. Ask: “How many times did Jesus die?” Then place MASS beside it.

ONE SACRIFICE MADE PRESENT

1. Ask the child to tell what happened on Calvary.
2. Ask what happens at Mass. Listen for “Jesus dies again” and gently correct if needed.
3. Place the crucifix between the two cards and say: one sacrifice, once for all; at Mass that one sacrifice is made sacramentally present.
4. Name the two principal parts of Mass and ask what the child does in each.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 14 and Appendix C.

LESSON 14

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask what the child could spiritually offer with Jesus at the next Mass: a joy, worry, person, sacrifice or act of love.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What is the Mass? Christ makes present and offers sacramentally his one Sacrifice of the Cross.

Does Jesus die again? No.

What are the two principal parts? Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist.

PRAY

Eternal Father, I offer myself with Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Accept my whole life through him. Amen.

THIS WEEK

At Sunday Mass, notice one moment in the Liturgy of the Word and one in the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Keep the language simple but accurate: “made present” is better than saying the Mass merely “reminds us” of Calvary.

LESSON 15

Receiving First Holy Communion

AIM

Prepare the child practically and spiritually to receive, especially the meaning of “Amen.”

QUICK PREP

Two chairs for a simple procession; an unconsecrated practice host only if parish practice permits.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “When the minister says ‘The Body of Christ’ and you say ‘Amen’, what are you saying yes to?”

PRACTISE THE MEANING, NOT JUST THE MOVEMENTS

1. Walk through the Communion procession calmly.
2. Practise the exchange: “The Body of Christ.” - “Amen.” Ask the child to explain Amen in their own words.
3. Rehearse the approved manner of receiving and immediate consumption, according to parish practice.
4. Review the one-hour fast and what to do if unsure about receiving.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 15 and Appendix C. Note carefully: an unbaptised child does not make Confession before Baptism; Baptism forgives every previous sin.

LESSON 15

Receiving First Holy Communion

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask how the child can prepare their heart as well as their body for Communion.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

Whom do you receive? Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Does an unbaptised child confess before Baptism? No. Baptism forgives every previous sin.

What does "Amen" mean here? I believe.

PRAY

Come, Lord Jesus. Make my heart ready to receive you with faith, reverence and love. Amen.

THIS WEEK

With an adult, work out the Eucharistic fast and practise a short thanksgiving prayer.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

If Baptism and First Communion are celebrated together, the child comes from Baptism free from every sin. Do not accidentally import the First Confession pathway into this one.

LESSON 16

Living as a New Catholic

AIM

Make clear that Baptism and First Communion begin a life of discipleship; they are not a graduation.

QUICK PREP

A weekly calendar or blank piece of paper. Four cards: MASS, PRAYER, MERCY, SERVICE.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “Imagine it is six months after your Baptism. What would show that being Catholic has become part of your life?”

BUILD A SIMPLE RULE OF LIFE

1. Put MASS, PRAYER, MERCY and SERVICE on the table.
2. For each, choose one realistic habit: Sunday Mass; short daily prayer; learning to use Confession after Baptism; one act of charity or parish service.
3. Write the habits onto a weekly or monthly calendar.
4. Add one future step: continuing formation and preparation for Confirmation according to the parish pathway.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 16 and the final readiness material.

LESSON 16

Living as a New Catholic

Conversation, prayer and a simple next step

TALK TOGETHER

- Ask which habit will be easiest, which will be hardest, and who will help the child keep going.

CHECK THE MAIN POINT

What duties follow Baptism? Faithfulness to Christ, Sunday Mass, prayer, obedience to God and love of neighbour.

What sacrament forgives serious sins after Baptism? Penance and Reconciliation.

Is formation finished after First Holy Communion? No. Catholic growth continues throughout life.

PRAY

Lord Jesus, remain with me by your grace. Keep me faithful to your Church and help me grow in holiness. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Begin the simple rule of life now rather than waiting until after Baptism.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

The child needs a real community around them. A rule of life is only useful if family, godparent, mentor and parish help make it possible.

THE JOURNEY AT A GLANCE

Use this as a pastoral overview, not as a timetable.

Stage	What is happening
Enquiry	Questions, welcome and Sunday Mass.
Acceptance	The Church welcomes the child among the catechumens.
Catechumenate	Faith, prayer, conversion, worship and belonging deepen.
Discernment	Child, family, mentor and priest consider readiness.
Purification	Prayer, repentance, Creed and Our Father.
Initiation	Baptism and First Holy Communion according to the authorised arrangement.
Mystagogy	Life from the sacraments; continuing formation towards Confirmation.

IMPORTANT ABOUT CONFIRMATION

The source catechism notes that Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist ordinarily belong together for an unbaptised child who has reached the age of reason, while this parish pathway prepares for Confirmation later. That arrangement must follow the directions of the parish priest and any competent diocesan permission or policy.

READINESS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Readiness is not perfect memory or finishing sixteen meetings. Look for a growing Christian life.

FREE DESIRE

The child personally wants Baptism and can say simply why.

FAITH IN CHRIST

The child knows the central Gospel and trusts Jesus as Saviour.

CATHOLIC FAITH

The child can receive the Trinity, Church, Creed, prayer and moral life according to capacity.

CONVERSION

The child can recognise deliberate wrongdoing, repent and make amends.

BAPTISM

The child knows Baptism truly forgives sin, gives grace and joins us to Christ and the Church.

READINESS: LIFE AND PRACTICAL PREPARATION

EUCHARIST

The child distinguishes the Body of Christ from ordinary food and believes the Real Presence.

SUNDAY LIFE

The child and family are developing a stable pattern of Sunday Mass and parish belonging.

PRACTICAL READINESS

The child can participate in the promises and receive Communion reverently with needed adaptations.

CONTINUING FORMATION

The family understands that mystagogy, future Confession and continuing preparation remain part of the journey.

FOR THE PRIEST

Final sacramental and canonical discernment belongs to the priest, following the approved rites, current Church law and diocesan direction.

FINAL WORD FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

The best meetings will not all look the same.

Sometimes the child will want to talk. Sometimes the object or activity will unlock the teaching. Sometimes one sentence from the catechism will be enough. Sometimes a question will need to be carried to the next meeting.

KEEP THE ORDER SIMPLE

Person first. Activity second. Catechism for the teaching. Conversation. Prayer. One next step.

DO NOT RUSH

A child who has reached the age of reason is making a real catechumenal journey. Understanding, conversion, Sunday worship, desire and belonging matter more than completing pages quickly.

KEEP CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

The goal is not that the child can pass a Catholic quiz. The goal is that the child comes to know Jesus Christ, freely asks for Baptism, receives the sacraments with faith and begins to live as a Catholic disciple.

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