Coming into the Catholic Church

Activity & Conversation Companion

For validly baptised children of catechetical age

THIS IS NOT ANOTHER CATECHISM

Use with Coming into the Catholic Church A Preparation Catechism for Baptised Children. The catechism gives the teaching; this guide helps a parent, mentor or priest make it personal and memorable.

THE METHOD

Start with the child

Do something concrete

Open the catechism

Talk honestly

Check the central truth

Pray and act

THE SACRAMENTAL PATHWAY

First Confession before Reception. Profession of Faith and Reception, then Confirmation and First Holy Communion ordinarily within the same Mass.

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

Parent • Mentor • Priest edition

cathparishmje.co.uk

How to use this guide

THE PRINCIPLE

The child is already Christian through Baptism. Honour what God has given and accompany a free, sincere desire for full Catholic communion.

For each lesson

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and ask the opening question. Listen before explaining.

2. Try the activity. All cards can be handwritten; drawing and speaking are equally welcome.

3. Open the matching catechism lesson. Read the indicated teaching slowly and pause for questions.

4. Talk together. Use the short answers to clarify what needs to be understood.

5. Pray the printed prayer and choose one action for the week.

6. Repeat or adapt as needed. Sixteen lessons do not require sixteen meetings or a fixed timetable.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The priest must establish valid Baptism and the correct pathway. A Catholic Baptism, doubtful Baptism, Eastern Christian background or previous Confirmation needs his particular guidance.

The adult alongside

You need no prepared talk. The activity opens the conversation; the catechism supplies the teaching. Take difficult questions to the priest. Adjust to the child’s age, language and capacity.

A small activity kit

Keep it simple. Use ordinary items already at home or in church. No craft kit or separate workbook is needed.

Paper and a pen

Names, cards, choices, gifts of the Holy Spirit and a simple calendar.

A crucifix or cross

Jesus our Saviour, the Cross and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The preparation catechism

All sixteen lessons, the Creed, prayers and the practical sacramental guides.

An optional Bible

A familiar Gospel story. The activities can use the catechism alone.

A cup of water

A visual reminder of Baptism already received. No water is poured over anyone.

A church visit

The font, altar, ambo, tabernacle and place of Confession, when access is arranged.

A chair or clear floor space

A calm walk through movements and spoken responses.

REHEARSE RESPONSES AND MOVEMENTS

Do not act out sacramental absolution, anoint with chrism or imitate a consecration. Any ordinary bread remains ordinary food. The real celebration uses the approved rite.

God Calls Me to Follow Jesus

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Help the child speak about becoming Catholic as their own response to Jesus.

QUICK PREP

Paper and a pen, or simply a conversation.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “Who has helped you know Jesus? What makes you want to become Catholic?”

DO SOMETHING

My name and my response

1. Write the child’s name. Around it, add people who have helped them learn about God.

2. Ask the child to name something they already love about Jesus and something they want to understand.

3. Write “Jesus calls me” beneath the name. Ask: “How could you answer him at home, at school and in church?”

4. Finish with the child’s own question or hope. Leave room for an answer that is still growing.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 1, especially grace, discipleship and the freedom of the child’s response.

God Calls Me to Follow Jesus

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

- "What is the difference between following Jesus and only knowing facts about him?"
- "What would help you follow him more closely?"

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

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

Does God force faith? No. His grace helps us answer freely.

Why do you want to become Catholic? Let the child give a sincere answer in their own words.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

Each morning say: "Jesus, guide me today." Choose one action that answers this prayer.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Listen for personal desire rather than a rehearsed answer. Hesitation can be discussed gently; never pressure the child into saying what adults want.

The One God Father Son and Holy Spirit

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Give a clear understanding of one God in three divine Persons.

QUICK PREP

Three handwritten cards: FATHER, SON, HOLY SPIRIT.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Make the Sign of the Cross. Ask: “Whom did we name? How many Gods are there?”

DO SOMETHING

One God and three Persons

1. Lay out the three cards. Ask whether the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each truly God.

2. Ask: “Does this mean three gods?” Read the catechism’s answer before going further.

3. Write ONE GOD above the cards. Explain: each Person is wholly God; the Persons are distinct, not three parts of God.

4. Ask how the Sign of the Cross recalls the child’s Baptism. Make it again slowly.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 2. Use its wording about the one divine nature and Baptism in the name of the Trinity.

The One God Father Son and Holy Spirit

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “Why do we begin prayer in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?”

• “What does it mean that you already belong to Christ through Baptism?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

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 truly and wholly God.

PRAY TOGETHER

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 carefully each day, naming the three divine Persons.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

The cards name the Persons; they do not explain God’s nature. Avoid analogies that suggest three gods, three parts or one Person wearing different disguises.

Creation Sin and the Promise of Salvation

AIM

Connect God’s good creation, the reality of sin and his promise of a Saviour.

QUICK PREP

Three cards: GOOD, SIN, SAVIOUR.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “What is something beautiful God made? Why do we also see things going wrong?”

DO SOMETHING

Goodness sin and mercy

1. Under GOOD, name people and created things for which the child is grateful.

2. Under SIN, use invented examples of lying, cruelty and selfishness. Explain that human wrongdoing does not make God’s creation evil.

3. Place SAVIOUR beside them. Say: God did not abandon us; he promised and sent Jesus.

4. Ask: “If I have chosen something wrong, what does turning back to God look like?” Name sorrow, asking forgiveness and making amends.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 3. Distinguish original sin from a personal wrong choice. Baptism has already forgiven the child’s original sin.

Creation Sin and the Promise of Salvation

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

- "Why does God tell us the truth about sin?"
- "Why does his mercy give us hope to begin again?"

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

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

What is personal sin? A deliberate thought, word, deed or omission against God's law.

Did God abandon us? No. He sent Jesus Christ our Saviour.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

Thank God for one good thing each day and choose one act of kindness.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Do not present original sin as something the child personally chose. Baptism forgives original sin, while weakness and temptation remain. Keep truth and mercy together.

Jesus Christ Our Saviour

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Help the child know Jesus as the divine Son made man who saves us by his Cross and Resurrection.

QUICK PREP

A crucifix and two cards: CROSS, RESURRECTION.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Show the crucifix. Ask: “If someone asked who this is, what would you tell them?”

DO SOMETHING

Who Jesus is and what he gives

1. Let the child name a story they know about Jesus. If needed, remind them that he taught, healed and forgave sins.

2. Read the opening of Lesson 4: the eternal Son took a true human nature from Mary. Jesus is true God and true man.

3. Place CROSS beside the crucifix. Ask why Jesus freely gave his life for us.

4. Add RESURRECTION. Ask what happened on the third day and why Christians have hope.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 4. Keep Jesus’ identity, his saving sacrifice and his real bodily Resurrection together.

Jesus Christ Our Saviour

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “Why is Jesus more than a good teacher?”

• “What difference does his Resurrection make to how we face death?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

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

Is Jesus truly God and truly human? Yes.

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

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

Thank Jesus before a crucifix and tell someone why Christians celebrate Easter.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Let the child speak simply, but keep the teaching precise: Jesus is one divine Person with divine and human natures. His Resurrection was real, not merely a feeling of hope.

My Christian Baptism

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Honour the Baptism already received and explain why it is never repeated.

QUICK PREP

A cup of water. Optional: a baptismal photograph or details already known.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “What do you know about your Baptism? What did God give you then?”

DO SOMETHING

A gift already received

1. Place the cup of water on the table. Ask what ordinary water does: cleans, refreshes and supports life.

2. Read the effects of Baptism in Lesson 5: forgiveness, new life, adoption as God’s child and union with Christ.

3. Write “Baptism already received” on a card. Add “Valid Baptism is never repeated”.

4. Beside it write “Full communion”. Ask what the child is now preparing to receive and profess in the Catholic Church.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 5 and the note in Appendix A distinguishing a baptised candidate from a catechumen.

My Christian Baptism

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

- "Why do we thank God for your Baptism?"
- "If you are already Christian, what does full Catholic communion add to your life?"

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

What did Baptism give you? Forgiveness of sin and new life in Christ.

Can valid Baptism be repeated? No. It gives a permanent spiritual character.

Are you baptised again at Reception? No.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

With an adult, find out one detail of your Baptism and thank God for it.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

The priest establishes validity; the child is not asked to judge it. Be respectful towards the family and Christian community through whom this gift was received. Do not simulate Baptism.

Sacred Scripture Tradition and the Creed

AIM

Show that Catholic faith receives the revelation God entrusted to his Church.

QUICK PREP

The catechism and three cards: SCRIPTURE, TRADITION, CREED.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “How can we know what Jesus taught when we were not there to hear him?”

DO SOMETHING

Receiving the faith

1. Lay out SCRIPTURE. Explain that the Bible is God’s written word, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2. Lay out TRADITION. Explain that the Apostles’ teaching is handed on in the Church’s life and teaching, not just in writing.

3. Place CREED below both. Read its opening from Appendix F and ask whom it tells us to believe in.

4. Ask: “Who helps the Church faithfully explain this received faith?” Introduce the Pope and bishops’ teaching office.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 6. Scripture and Sacred Tradition belong together in one deposit of faith.

Sacred Scripture Tradition and the Creed

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “What is different about receiving God’s truth and inventing our own beliefs?”

• “Which word in the Creed would you like explained?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

What is Sacred Scripture? God’s word written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

What is Sacred Tradition? The living transmission of God’s word from the Apostles.

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

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

Read one line of the Creed in Appendix F. Ask about any word you do not understand.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Welcome questions. Sacred Tradition is not simply every Catholic custom. The Magisterium serves God’s word; it does not invent a different revelation.

The Catholic Church and Full Communion

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Make full communion concrete while recognising the real Christian bond of Baptism.

QUICK PREP

Three cards: FAITH, SACRAMENTS, PASTORS.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “Is the Church just this building? What brings Catholics together wherever they live?”

DO SOMETHING

Three bonds of communion

1. Draw a church building, then add people: families, priests, bishops and the Pope. Explain that Jesus founded a living, visible Church.

2. Place FAITH beside it: we profess the Catholic faith together.

3. Add SACRAMENTS: we share the sacramental life Christ gives his Church. Add PASTORS: we live in communion with the Pope and bishops.

4. Ask where Baptism already belongs in this picture and what the child is seeking through Reception.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 7, especially the four marks of the Church and the three bonds of full communion.

The Catholic Church and Full Communion

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

- "What gifts of Christian faith have you already received?"
- "What will living in full communion mean for you?"

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

Who founded the Church? Jesus Christ.

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

What does full communion include? Catholic faith, sacramental life and communion with the Pope and bishops.

PRAY TOGETHER

Lord Jesus, you prayed that your disciples might be one. Lead us into unity in truth, charity and full communion. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Ask an adult for the names of the Pope and our bishop. Pray for them and your parish priest.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Speak clearly about Catholic fullness without insulting other Christians. Baptism already creates a real bond with Christ. Listen for the child's understanding of faith, Sacraments and pastoral communion.

Prayer Sunday Mass and Christian Life

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Help the child build a practical pattern of prayer, Sunday worship and charity.

QUICK PREP

Paper divided into MORNING, SUNDAY, HOME AND SCHOOL.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “If faith matters to someone, what might we notice in an ordinary week?”

DO SOMETHING

A week with God

1. Under MORNING, choose a short daily prayer, beginning with the Sign of the Cross.

2. Under SUNDAY, write the family’s plan for Mass. Ask what helps the child listen and pray there.

3. Under HOME AND SCHOOL, name a real opportunity for honesty, forgiveness or service.

4. Read the Our Father in Appendix F slowly. Choose one phrase and ask what it means.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 8. Explain that Sunday celebrates the Resurrection and Mass is central to Catholic life.

Prayer Sunday Mass and Christian Life

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “What can you say to God when you feel grateful, worried or sorry?”

• “Who can help you keep these habits?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

What is prayer? Lifting our minds and hearts to God.

Why is Sunday holy? It is the Lord’s Day, celebrating Jesus’ Resurrection.

How does faith become visible? Through worship and a life of love, truth and service.

PRAY TOGETHER

Father, teach me to pray as your child. Help me love Sunday Mass and put my faith into practice. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Use the prayer and Mass plan you made. Choose one act of kindness at home or school.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Support the family with a workable plan. Children depend on adults for transport and routines; do not blame a child for circumstances they cannot control. During preparation, attend Mass without receiving Communion until the priest directs otherwise.

The Commandments Sin and Conversion

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Form conscience by distinguishing accident, temptation and a freely chosen wrong.

QUICK PREP

Three cards: ACCIDENT, TEMPTATION, SIN.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “Are dropping a cup by accident, wanting to throw it, and throwing it deliberately all the same?”

DO SOMETHING

What did the person choose

1. Lay out the cards. Read three invented examples: a knocked-over cup; feeling like telling a lie but choosing truth; deliberately taking someone’s property.

2. Let the child place each example. Ask what the person knew and chose.

3. Read the three conditions for mortal sin in Lesson 9. All three must be present together.

4. Ask what conversion would mean after a wrong choice: sorrow, turning to God, making amends and learning to choose well.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 9. God’s commandments teach love; temptation is not itself sin.

The Commandments Sin and Conversion

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “Why do we need both an honest conscience and trust in God’s mercy?”

• “How can a person repair harm without pretending the wrong never happened?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

Is temptation itself a sin? No.

What is needed for mortal sin? Grave matter, full knowledge and deliberate consent.

What is conversion? Turning away from sin and back to God.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

Each evening, thank God, think quietly about your choices, ask forgiveness and choose one way to do better.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Use invented examples, never a public account of the child’s sins. Something done to a child without their free choice is not their sin. Follow parish safeguarding procedures if a concern is disclosed.

Jesus Forgives Me in Confession

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Prepare calmly for a real, private First Confession before Reception.

QUICK PREP

Six cards: PREPARE, BEGIN, CONFESS, LISTEN, ABSOLUTION, THANKSGIVING.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “When someone has done wrong, what helps them begin again?”

DO SOMETHING

Walk through the steps

1. Use Appendix B to arrange the cards. Explain sorrow for sin and the intention to turn away from it.

2. Practise the opening: “Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. This is my first Confession.” Add that the child is preparing for Reception.

3. Use an invented example only, such as a fictional child deliberately lying. Practise speaking simply, listening and praying the Act of Contrition.

4. Explain absolution and penance without acting as the confessor. The real sacrament is celebrated privately with the priest.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 10 and Appendix B. Because the child is already baptised, First Confession comes before Reception.

Jesus Forgives Me in Confession

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “Who forgives sins through the priest?”

• “What could you do if you forget the words or feel nervous?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

Who forgives in Confession? Jesus Christ through the priest.

What is contrition? Sorrow for sin with the intention to turn away from it.

What is absolution? The sacramental forgiveness Christ gives through the priest.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

Practise the opening and Act of Contrition. Examine your conscience privately using Appendix B.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Never ask for real sins during practice or afterwards. Explain that the priest will help. Make arrangements with him for First Confession before Reception; keep practical support separate from the child’s private confession.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Connect the Mass with Christ's one Sacrifice of Calvary.

QUICK PREP

A crucifix and cards: CALVARY, MASS, WORD, EUCHARIST.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: "How many times did Jesus die? What does the Church celebrate at Mass?"

DO SOMETHING

One sacrifice made present

1. Place CALVARY beside the crucifix. Explain that Jesus offered himself once for all.

2. Place MASS on the other side. Say: at Mass, that same sacrifice is made sacramentally present; Jesus does not suffer and die again.

3. Lay out WORD and EUCHARIST. Name what we hear and do in each principal part of Mass.

4. Ask the child to choose a person, a worry or an act of love to offer with Jesus at the next Mass.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 11 and Appendix E. Keep the sacrificial and Eucharistic meaning together.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• "Why is Mass more than listening to a talk?"

• "How can you join Jesus' offering even before your First Holy Communion?"

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

What is made present at Mass? Christ's one Sacrifice of Calvary.

Does Jesus die again? No.

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

PRAY TOGETHER

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 Sunday Mass, listen to the Gospel and offer yourself with Jesus during the Eucharistic Prayer.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Use "made sacramentally present". Do not describe Mass as merely remembering Calvary or as another death of Jesus. The child can participate through listening, prayer and offering before receiving Communion.

The Holy Eucharist and the Real Presence

AIM

Help the child distinguish the Eucharist from ordinary food and believe Christ's word.

QUICK PREP

An ordinary piece of bread in its packet, optional; the catechism.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: "Can our eyes tell us everything that is true? When do we trust someone's word?"

DO SOMETHING

What we see and what Christ gives

1. If using bread, name what the senses perceive: shape, colour, smell and taste. Keep it clearly ordinary food.

2. Put the bread away. Read Lesson 12 about Christ's words at the Last Supper and the consecration.

3. Write "Appearances remain" and "Jesus truly present". Explain that the whole substance changes into Christ's Body and Blood.

4. Ask why Catholics adore the Blessed Sacrament and approach Communion reverently.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 12. Use its explanation of transubstantiation rather than inventing a comparison for the change.

The Holy Eucharist and the Real Presence

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• "Why is a consecrated Host different from ordinary bread?"

• "What would show that we believe Jesus is present in the tabernacle?"

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

Who is present in the Eucharist? Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

What remains after consecration? The appearances of bread and wine.

Is the Eucharist merely a symbol? No. Jesus is truly, really and substantially present.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

Make a short visit to the tabernacle with an adult and say: "My Lord and my God."

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

This is a central readiness point. Listen for belief in Jesus' real presence, beyond "special bread". Ordinary food must never be presented as the Blessed Sacrament or used to imitate a consecration.

The Profession of Faith and Reception

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Help the child understand and freely make the Catholic Profession of Faith.

QUICK PREP

Appendix C and three cards: PROFESSION, RECEPTION, FULL COMMUNION.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “What is the difference between reading words aloud and meaning what you say?”

DO SOMETHING

Words I can sincerely mean

1. Read the Profession of Faith from Appendix C slowly. Ask which words need explaining.

2. Explain “believe and profess”: I accept this faith and say so openly. “Revealed by God” means the truth God has made known.

3. Place the cards in order. Explain that after the profession the priest receives the child into full communion. No Baptism is repeated.

4. Let the child explain the profession in their own words, then practise saying it calmly and freely.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 13 and Appendix C. The approved rite supplies the actual words and actions of the celebration.

The Profession of Faith and Reception

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “Can you accept the Catholic faith while still having questions?”

• “What are you saying yes to when you make this profession?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

Are you baptised again? No.

What do you profess? All that the Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God.

Must you understand every mystery perfectly? No. You must sincerely accept the faith and keep learning.

PRAY TOGETHER

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 with an adult and bring any remaining question to the priest.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Check meaning before memorisation. Do not turn the profession into a performance. If the child cannot freely and sincerely accept it, continue conversation and seek the priest’s guidance.

Confirmation and the Gift of the Holy Spirit

AIM

Connect Confirmation with baptismal grace, the Holy Spirit's gifts and Christian witness.

QUICK PREP

Seven handwritten gift cards using the names below. No oil is needed.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: "When is it hard to do what is right? What help do we need from God?"

DO SOMETHING

Gifts for following Christ

1. Read the gifts in Appendix D: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

2. Choose two everyday situations: resisting unkindness and deciding whether to tell the truth. Ask which gifts could help.

3. Read how hands are laid and the forehead is anointed with sacred chrism. These signs belong to the real sacrament.

4. Practise "Amen" as a response to receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Ask how the child can bear witness to Jesus.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 14 and Appendix D. Confirmation strengthens baptismal grace and gives a permanent seal.

Confirmation and the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “Why is Confirmation a gift for living faithfully, rather than a reward for finishing lessons?”

• “Where could you ask for fortitude this week?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

What does Confirmation do? Strengthens baptismal grace through a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Can it be repeated? No. It gives a permanent spiritual seal.

Why are we strengthened? To live and bear witness to Christ.

PRAY TOGETHER

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 and ask the Holy Spirit to help you use it in a real situation.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Confirmation ordinarily follows Reception when not already validly received. Do not postpone it simply to follow an annual group timetable. The priest resolves previous Confirmation or Eastern chrismation and directs the correct celebration.

Receiving First Holy Communion

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Prepare both the child's faith and the practical manner of receiving reverently.

QUICK PREP

Space for a short procession and Appendix E. No food or practice host is necessary.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: "When you hear 'The Body of Christ' and answer 'Amen', what do you believe?"

DO SOMETHING

Reverence and thanksgiving

1. Practise walking calmly, approaching reverently and answering "Amen". Follow the approved parish manner of receiving.

2. Explain that the Sacred Host is consumed immediately. Rehearse the movement without pretending ordinary food is the Eucharist.

3. Use a clock to work out one hour before the expected time of Communion, rather than before Mass begins. Water and medicine do not break the fast.

4. Practise returning quietly to pray: thank Jesus, offer yourself to him and pray for another person.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 15 and Appendix E. Review the state of grace, the fast, immediate consumption and thanksgiving.

Receiving First Holy Communion

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

• “How can you prepare your heart as well as your movements?”

• “What should you do if you are unsure whether to receive?”

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

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

What does Amen mean here? I believe that this is the Body of Christ.

How long is the fast? One hour before Communion, except water and medicine.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

THIS WEEK

With an adult, plan the fast and use this thanksgiving: “Thank you, Jesus. Help me love you and live faithfully.”

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Anyone conscious of mortal sin should seek sacramental absolution before Communion. Refer concerns about illness, swallowing, gluten or other adaptations to the priest. The ordinary celebration places Reception and Confirmation before Communion.

Living in Full Communion

Page 1 • Opening & activity

AIM

Make Reception the beginning of a continuing Catholic life.

QUICK PREP

A weekly calendar or paper and cards: MASS, PRAYER, CONFESSION, CHARITY, LEARNING.

BEGIN WITH THE CHILD

Ask: “Six months after Reception, what would show that being Catholic is part of your life?”

DO SOMETHING

A simple rule of life

1. Lay out the five cards. Ask what each could mean in an ordinary week or month.

2. Choose manageable habits: Sunday Mass, daily prayer, regular Confession, one act of charity and continued learning.

3. Write who will help with each habit. Include the family, sponsor, mentor and parish where appropriate.

4. Arrange a later conversation about the sacraments received and the child’s questions. Explain that this continuing reflection is called mystagogy.

NOW OPEN THE CATECHISM

Read Lesson 16 and Appendix H. Formation and accompaniment continue after the celebration.

Living in Full Communion

Page 2 • Conversation, prayer & action

TALK TOGETHER

- "Which habit will be easiest? Which will need help?"
- "How could you share your faith kindly at home or school?"

CHECK THE CENTRAL TRUTH

Is Reception the end of formation? No. Catholic life and learning continue.

What stays at the centre? Sunday Mass and worthy Holy Communion.

How do we bear witness? By truth, holiness, charity, service and sharing the faith.

PRAY TOGETHER

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

Begin the simple rule of life now. Ask an adult to help you keep it after Reception.

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Make continuing support concrete. Confirmation has strengthened the child for mission; it is not a future course to be added to this ordinary pathway. Keep space for questions, repentance and fresh beginnings.

The journey at a glance

Use this as an overview, not a timetable. Preparation recognises Christian life already begun in Baptism.

Enquiry and Baptism established

Meet the priest. Confirm valid Baptism, sacramental history and the correct pathway.

Formation and parish belonging

Grow in Catholic faith, prayer, conversion and participation at Sunday Mass.

Discernment of readiness

Child, family, sponsor, mentor and priest consider free desire and understanding according to capacity.

First Confession

The already baptised child receives the Sacrament of Penance before Reception, as arranged with the priest.

Profession of Faith and Reception

The child freely professes the Catholic faith and is received into full communion.

Confirmation and Holy Communion

Confirmation, if not already validly received, and First Holy Communion ordinarily follow within the same Mass.

Mystagogy and continuing life

Reflect on the sacraments received and continue Mass, prayer, Confession, charity and formation.

A BAPTISED CANDIDATE

This child is not a catechumen. Do not add the rites proper to the unbaptised or repeat valid Baptism. The priest directs any particular circumstances.

Readiness in faith and freedom

Readiness is more than finishing pages. Use these prompts for a calm conversation, with understanding adapted to the child's capacity.

FREE DESIRE

The child personally wishes to become Catholic and can speak simply about why, without pressure.

FAITH IN CHRIST

The child knows Jesus as true God, true man and Saviour, who died and rose again.

CATHOLIC FAITH

The child accepts the Trinity, Scripture and Tradition, the Creed, the Church and the moral life according to capacity.

BAPTISM AND FULL COMMUNION

The child knows Baptism is already received and understands that Reception brings full communion in Catholic faith, Sacraments and pastoral life.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The child understands what is being professed and can make the profession freely and sincerely.

If something needs more time

Return to the relevant lesson, welcome the child's question and discuss it with the priest. Do not turn these points into marks, a public test or a demand for perfect memory.

Readiness in sacramental life

CONFESSION

The child understands sin, contrition, private confession and absolution, and can approach the priest with suitable support.

CONFIRMATION

The child understands that the Holy Spirit strengthens baptismal grace for Christian witness and knows the meaning of chrism and the seal.

THE EUCHARIST

The child distinguishes the Body of Christ from ordinary food and believes Jesus is truly present.

SUNDAY LIFE

The child and family are developing regular Sunday Mass, prayer and parish belonging.

PRACTICAL PARTICIPATION

The child can profess faith and receive reverently, with any necessary language, medical or accessibility adaptations.

CONTINUING SUPPORT

The family and sponsor will help with Mass, prayer, Confession, charity and learning after Reception.

Final sacramental and canonical discernment belongs to the priest. Use Appendix H of the catechism for the parish working checklist.

Final word for the adult alongside

The best conversations will not all look the same. Sometimes an activity will help; sometimes one clear sentence and an honest question will be enough. Give the child time to speak and time to grow.

KEEP THE ORDER SIMPLE

Begin with the person. Use the activity to open the conversation. Read the catechism for the teaching. Talk, pray and choose one next step.

DO NOT RUSH

Free desire, faith, understanding, conversion, Sunday worship and belonging matter more than reaching a date. Preparation can be repeated or adapted.

KEEP CHRIST AT THE CENTRE

Help the child grow in friendship with Jesus, receive the Catholic faith freely and live from his Sacraments. Family, sponsor, mentor and parish continue to accompany them.

Keep the two pathways clear

An unbaptised child prepares for Baptism. This child has already received valid Baptism and prepares for First Confession, Reception, Confirmation and Holy Communion. Honour the grace already given.

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References for the priest and mentor

The lesson order and doctrinal teaching follow Coming into the Catholic Church A Preparation Catechism for Baptised Children. Use its appendices alongside the activities.

Appendix A

The journey and the distinction between candidates and catechumens.

Appendix B

First Confession, examination of conscience and privacy.

Appendices C and D

Profession of Faith, Reception and Confirmation.

Appendices E and F

Mass, Holy Communion, the Creed and prayers.

Appendices G and H

Summary catechism, readiness and parish arrangements.

Church sources

Catechism of the Catholic Church, especially 811–870, 1213–1284, 1285–1321, 1322–1419 and 1422–1498.

Code of Canon Law, canons 883–885 on Confirmation; 916 and 919 on preparation for Holy Communion.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Reception of Baptised Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, especially introductory paragraphs 391, 394 and 395 in the England and Wales edition.

The approved liturgical books, current diocesan direction and the parish priest govern the actual celebration. This activity guide supplies conversation and practical preparation; it does not supply a substitute rite.

Primary texts: vatican.va and liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Rites/RCIA.pdf