

Sacramental Preparation Family Handbook



**St. Leo Catholic Church
Religious Education Program
2016 - 2017**

**Saint Leo the Great Catholic Church
Sacramental Preparation
Parent/Guardian Agreement Form**

I have received and read the Sacramental Preparation Family Handbook for the Saint Leo the Great Sacramental Preparation program for 2016-17. I understand that there are a number of requirements that must be fulfilled before my child can properly receive the sacraments. I agree to work with my child in being responsible for these requirements as described in this handbook.

A question that I have is

Child's Name

Sacrament Being Received

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please return this form as directed.

The Role of Parents

The initiation of children into the Sacramental life of the Church is, for the most part, the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. They are to form and gradually develop a spirit of faith in the children and, with the help of catechetical institutions, prepare them for the fruitful reception of the Sacraments (RC #3).

Parents are encouraged to help their children by:

1. Modeling a positive Catholic lifestyle, continually growing in their relationship with God.
2. Sharing the Catholic faith with their children.
3. Attending Mass regularly as a family.
4. Assisting and encouraging their children in understanding and assimilating material presented during sacramental preparation sessions.
5. Insuring regular attendance at all class sessions and completion of all requirements for reception of the sacraments.
6. Attending parent meetings.

If a child is not sufficiently prepared for the reception of a sacrament, the sacrament should be delayed for that child.

The Sacrament of Baptism for Children between the Ages of Seven and Fourteen

Unbaptized children between the ages of 7 and 14 will be baptized together on **Sunday, November 13, 2016 at 12:45PM**. A single class in preparation for the sacrament will be held on **Sunday, October 23, 2016 from 10:45AM – 12:30PM in the Religious Education Building**, for the child, their parents, and godparents.

An official birth certificate is required for the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Role of Sponsors (Godparents)

Each Baptism candidate should *have "One sponsor, male or female, is sufficient, but there may be two, one of each sex."* (Canon 873)

To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:

1. be appointed by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing this, by the pastor; to be appointed, the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it.
2. be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan Bishop, or unless the pastor considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made.

3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken.
4. not be excommunicated.
5. not be either the father or mother of the person to be baptized.

The Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion

The catechesis for the reception of these two Sacraments requires at least two years of Religious Education prior to Sacramental Preparation. Normally children begin the preparation for these sacraments by enrolling in the First Grade of the Religious Education Program.

A Baptismal certificate is required for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion.

The Sacrament of First Reconciliation

Preparation for the Sacrament of First Reconciliation consists of a five-week program.

In order to receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation, a child must:

1. have reached the age of reason, (age seven) and be able to distinguish right from wrong.
2. have a basic understanding of the concept of sin and the difference between mortal and venial sin.
3. recognize that the Sacrament offers God's forgiveness.

In addition, the child is required to know:

1. the steps of the Rites of Penance and Reconciliation, and the various forms of celebration of the Sacrament.
2. the conditions for approaching the Sacrament worthily (an attitude of sincere contrition, a firm purpose of amendment, and the willingness to do Penance).
3. the requirement to confess serious sin at least once a year (Canon 989).
4. the benefit of confessing venial sin regularly (Canon 988), which helps to form one's conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let oneself be healed by Christ, and progress in the life of the Spirit (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1458).
5. that the frequent reception of the Sacrament continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness and enables the individual to form his or her conscience and grow in grace.

The Sacrament of First Eucharist

Following the preparation for First Reconciliation, the preparation classes for the reception of First Communion last an additional five weeks.

The child preparing for First Communion must have the following:

1. knowledge of the Church's belief about Jesus Christ;
2. knowledge of the difference between Holy Communion (the Real Presence of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine) and ordinary bread and wine;
3. the desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

In order to receive the Sacrament a child must know:

1. the forms of reception of Holy Communion (in the hand, on the tongue, under both species).
2. the conditions for receiving Holy Communion worthily (in the state of grace and at least once a year during the Easter season).
3. the requirements of the Eucharistic fast (no food or drink -- except water or medicine for one hour before receiving Holy Communion).

For the celebration of the Sacrament, dress should be tasteful and in keeping with the dignity of a liturgical event, therefore;

1. For girls: a white dress, shoulders must be covered and the dress must be no shorter than the knee. A veil is optional.
2. For boys: black, blue, grey, or white dress pants with a white shirt and tie. Suit jackets are optional.
3. Appropriate dress shoes should be worn.
4. Objects such as purses, candles, rosaries, bouquets, or gloves should not be carried or worn as they may interfere with the reception of the Eucharist.

Those who receive their First Communion are invited to take part in the ***May Crowning*** which will be performed at the 9:30 Mass on ***Sunday, May 7, 2017***.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

The catechesis for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation consists of two consecutive years of Religious Education or Catholic school attendance. This catechesis normally begins in the 9th grade, with the celebration occurring at the end of 10th grade. Students up to the age of 18 are accepted into the Confirmation preparation program. The date of Confirmation will be determined by the Bishop's Office; a rehearsal will be held the night before.

In order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, a Candidate must be:

1. a baptized Catholic who regularly receives Communion.
2. registered in a parish (both preparation for and celebration of the Sacrament will take place in that parish).
3. be enrolled in a catechetical program at a parish or in religion classes at a diocesan Catholic high school (in addition to the Sacramental Preparation program) which takes place at the parish of registration.

The acceptance for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be based on:

1. a candidate's expressed desire. A candidate must demonstrate a willingness to participate in the Confirmation process, and exhibit a personal commitment to their faith and a desire to be confirmed. This includes regular attendance at and participation in the Sunday Liturgy.
2. the candidate's understanding and appreciation for the Sacraments already celebrated (Baptism, Eucharist, and Reconciliation), as well regular celebration of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
3. the documentation of the candidate's reception of Baptism, First Reconciliation and First Communion.
4. the candidate must have a history of formal and continuous faith formation. A minimum of two full years, usually during 9th and 10th grade, is required in Youth Group/ Religious Education / Catholic School.

Confirmation Candidates must complete the following requirements in the time designated:

1. Submit the Sponsor Commitment Form by **December 4**.
2. Choose the name of a canonized saint of the same gender; research basic biographical details, as well as their namesake's contribution to the Faith; complete a one page essay explaining why that saint was chosen; turn in the essay by **December 4**.
3. Attend the Confirmation Retreat on **February 25**.
4. Write a letter to the Pastor stating whether or not they have decided to be confirmed and submit the letter to him no later than **March 12**.
5. Complete at least twenty hours of community service during the two years of religious education (preferably ten hours per year).
6. Study the Confirmation Study Guide and prepare for a written exam on **February 26**.

For the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation dress should be tasteful and keeping with the dignity of a liturgical event, therefore:

1. For ladies: a dress or professional suit, shoulders must be covered (spaghetti straps and bare shoulders are not allowed unless a shawl or sweater is worn) and the skirt must be no shorter than the knee.
2. For gentlemen: a suit with jacket and tie or bowtie
3. Appropriate dress shoes
4. As the bishop will be anointing the candidate's forehead, it is also helpful that the candidates' hairstyle enable His Excellency to do so.
5. This dress code applies to those being confirmed, as well as to sponsors.

Role of Sponsors

Each candidate is to have ***one male or one female sponsor*** for Confirmation. The preference in Canon law (Canon 874) is that a Baptism godparent be the Confirmation Sponsor to show the bond between the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Parents are not to be considered as sponsors. The sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this Sacrament.

The sponsor must:

1. be sufficiently mature (having attained the sixteenth year) in his/her faith commitment, and should be actively expressing it within the Catholic community (Canon 874).
2. belong to the Catholic Church and be fully initiated, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (Canon 874).
3. be practicing the Catholic faith and in good standing with the Church.
4. act as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfill the obligations connected with this Sacrament.
5. not be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed (Canon 874), need not be of the same gender as the candidate.
6. present a written statement of eligibility from his/her Pastor.
7. know the candidate and be able to help him/her on the spiritual journey, sharing faith and modeling the life of the mature Catholic.
8. encourage the candidate to grow in a faith relationship with Jesus.
9. assist and encourage the candidate with the study and practice of the Catholic faith.
10. accompany the candidate to special liturgies and events in the preparation program.

Classes for Students Attending Catholic Schools

Those students attending Catholic school are required to attend the sacrament preparation classes of the desired sacraments. Catholic school students who have reached the 2nd Grade must enroll in First Reconciliation/First Communion Preparation Classes. Catholic school students in 10th Grade must enroll in Confirmation Preparation Class.

Schedule of Classes

Baptism of children ages 7-17

Meets for a preparation class on Sunday, October 23, for the child, parents, and godparents.

- The Sacrament of Baptism will be administered on Sunday, November 13, 2016.

First Reconciliation and First Communion Preparation Classes

Meet weekly from Jan 22 – April 23, on Sunday mornings from 10:45 – noon.

- The Sacrament of First Reconciliation will be on Tuesday, February 28, 2017.
- The Sacrament of First Communion will be received on Saturday, April 29, 2017.

Confirmation Preparation Classes

Meet weekly from January 22 – March 19 on Sunday evenings 6:00 – 7:00.

- The date of Confirmation will be determined by the Bishop's Office.

Class Fees

Sacramental Preparation:

Baptism	\$ 25
First Reconciliation/First Communion	\$ 35

Grade Nine through Twelve (Includes Confirmation Preparation)

Each student	\$ 50
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No student will be prevented from attending because of a parents' inability to pay. A payment agreement may be drawn up, or if necessary, a parent may submit a "Letter of Hardship" to the DRE explaining why it is impossible to pay for the children's classes.

Fees collected for the Religious Education Program do not cover the cost of educating your child and are therefore considered donations to Saint Leo Parish. As a result, they are not refundable.