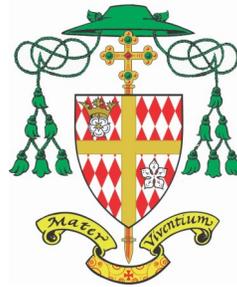




### A Note about Reconciliation

Children preparing for First Eucharist should have the opportunity to celebrate Reconciliation first.

It is permissible for a non-verbal child to confess through an interpreter.  
(Canon 990)



## Called in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist



### What resources do we need?

Beyond learning through books and formal lessons, children can learn a lot from the example of their parents at home and at church.

Parents know their children best. How each child learns and how they can communicate or show their learning will vary.

As every child and every situation is unique, parishes are encouraged to call the Catechesis Office to discuss their specific needs.

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*“Preparation for Sacraments must be appropriate and never onerous to children or families.*”

*May our united efforts help children be welcomed to the Sacraments with the preparation necessary for them to feel the fullness of joy that comes with God’s grace!”*

*Most Reverend Douglas Crosby, OMI*  
*Bishop of Hamilton*

**A Resource for  
Parents, Priests, and Catechists  
Preparing Children with Special Needs**

Catechesis Office  
Diocese of Hamilton

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## Baptism

### What you need to know

**Baptism of children under the age of 7 follows the *Rite of Baptism for Infants***

- The Rite does not ask the child to speak or affirm anything
- Preparation is offered for the parents, so they can better understand the promises they make at the Baptism

### What is essential

- That parents or guardians desire Baptism for their child (Canon 868 §1)
- That there be a realistic hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic religion (Canon 868 §2)

### What the child needs to know

- There is no content that needs to be taught
- An older child with special needs should be aware of what will happen at the Baptism so he or she is prepared that they might be touched for the anointing with oil or the blessing of the mouth and ears and so they are prepared to get wet

## Confirmation

### What you need to know

**Confirmation is normally celebrated in the Diocese of Hamilton in grade 7**

- Confirmation completes the grace received in Baptism and strengthens us to become life-long witnesses to our faith

### What is essential

- That the child has been baptized
- *If a child has the use of reason, he or she must be suitably instructed and prepared to receive this grace from God (Canon 889 §2)*

### What the child needs to know

The *Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation for the Diocese of Hamilton* say:

*“The purpose of the immediate sacramental preparation program is to dispose the candidate to receive the grace of the sacrament and to participate fully in the liturgy of Confirmation. It is not intended to prepare candidates for a test of their religious knowledge.”*

- Helping the child have an understanding of what will happen during the liturgy and why is important for helping him or her enter into the sacrament well prepared

## First Eucharist

### What you need to know

**Reception of First Eucharist in the Diocese of Hamilton normally happens in grade 2**

- Family life, daily prayer, attendance at Mass, instruction through the Catholic School or the Catechetical Correspondence Courses are all ways children are prepared for First Eucharist

### How do you know the child is ready?

The *Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation for the Diocese of Hamilton* say:

*“The decision concerning the individual child’s readiness to receive First Eucharist rests with the child’s parents in consultation with the parish priest. This is particularly the case for parents of children with special needs.”*

### What is essential

- The child is a baptized Catholic or a baptized non-Catholic who makes a profession of faith at the time of first Eucharist (Canon 912)

### What the child needs to know

- Children should be able to recognize that the Eucharist differs from ordinary food  
The way a child will demonstrate this recognition may vary from child to child — reverential silence or gesture may suffice