

Advisory for Youth Receiving the Sacraments of Initiation

For Baptized Youth

Note: The age of reason indicated in Canon law is seven years of age.¹

1. Youth who are baptized Catholic and uncatechized, between the age of reason and eighth grade, and lack Confirmation and Eucharist, will attend age-appropriate formation for two school years or until they are ready, and receive the Sacrament of Penance and First Eucharist. When these youth are in the eighth grade, they will be eligible to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, according to diocesan policy.
2. Youth who are baptized in a non-Catholic Christian denomination whose parents wish for them to become Roman Catholic, between the age of reason and twelfth grade, are to be received into full communion of the Catholic Church with their parent(s). They are welcomed into the Catholic community at the Rite of Reception upon their profession of faith and confirmation.² Confirmation and Eucharist take place within the Reception into full communion therefore, the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation with candidates for reception into full communion is to be carried out at a time prior to and distinct from the celebration of the Rite of Reception.³

For Unbaptized Youth

Youth who are unbaptized and uncatechized and who have reached the age of reason, for the purposes of Christian Initiation, are considered to be adults by the Church.⁴ Therefore, they rightfully belong in the Rite of Christian Initiation process (RCIA) adapted for children. These youth will attend an age-appropriate formation process until it has been discerned that they are ready to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil. Presumably, the preparation process should include catechesis and preparation to receive the Sacrament of Penance, post-Baptism.

*Pastoral Note: Occasionally, a parish may experience overwhelmingly large numbers of uncatechized youth who have been baptized Catholics. Parish facilities may be inadequate for appropriate catechesis and formation, and a sufficient number of volunteer catechists may be lacking. If this situation exists, parish catechetical leaders should consult with the Department of Catechetical Services along with the Office of Worship for assistance in finding a solution. Every effort should be made to consider the process the **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)** adapted for children, as the model for all formation.*

¹ This is clearly stated in Canon 97 §2, and cf. discussion at Canon 11.

² Appendix III National Statutes for the Catechumenate #32, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

³ Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, #482.

⁴ Canon 852 §1, and Appendix III National Statutes for the Catechumenate #18, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.