

## **POLICY 2.4.1 Catechetical Norms for First Eucharist**

- A child's first sharing fully in the Eucharist is normally to be prepared for and celebrated in grade three, or at about age eight.
- As with all adults in Canada, children are free to receive Communion on the tongue or in the hand. Both of these options are to be freely offered to the child.
- There is no restriction in law that prevents children from receiving Communion under both species. This also is the communicant's option. However, careful preparation will prevent children from making faces or otherwise reacting to what for them may be a strong or bitter taste of the bread and/or wine.
- The reception of First Eucharist normally takes place at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass with the child's family.
- As parents are the primary educators of their child's faith, it is encouraged that the children sit with their families and receive the Eucharist as a family.
- Parents are encouraged to choose attire that the children would normally wear to Sunday Mass.
- According to canon law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the sacrament of Reconciliation is to be received before the child receives the Eucharist for the first time.
- As they are making their proximate preparation for their First Holy Communion, children are to be offered the opportunity for and strongly encouraged to receive again the sacrament of Reconciliation. This contributes to their moral and spiritual readiness to receive the gift of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. However, they should not be "forced" to do so. The celebration of Reconciliation before First Communion need not be the day prior, but every effort should be made to provide Reconciliation within two months of First Communion.
- Families are asked to be prudent and thoughtful in the ways that they mark the celebration of First Holy Communion for their child. Gifts or other ways of marking the event should be consistent with the spiritual nature of this sacrament and its dignified simplicity.
- The program and text for the preparation for this sacrament in the Archdiocese is We Share in the Eucharist, published by Novalis. Additional supplementary resources and support materials are available from the Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis.