


Office for the Bishop

November 19, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pastors and Parish Catechetical Staff

FROM: Bishop Robert McElroy 

RE: Policy on Length of Parish Sacramental Preparation Formation

The catechetical formation of children and youth is a vital element in the life and evangelizing mission of our Church. The faith journey through formal catechesis provides an opportunity for encounter with the Person of Jesus. This process is not one to be rushed nor is this one more task to be marked off as complete. A vital part of my ministry is to work to ensure that our parish and school catechetical preparation programs provide a systematic catechesis that ensures proper and effective faith and sacramental formation at every grade level.

The question pertaining to sufficient length for parish sacramental preparation programs is of particular importance. It is imperative that there be consistent length of sacramental formation programs throughout the parishes and schools of the Diocese of San Diego.

The Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are usually celebrated in second grade and the minimum required age for celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation is the age of fifteen (15). Except for the case of unbaptized children of catechetical age (catechumens) who should receive Confirmation when they are baptized and the case of baptized Christian children of catechetical age but not Catholic (candidates) who should receive Confirmation when they are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

To provide uniformity and consistency in the duration of all parish and school sacramental preparation programs in the Diocese of San Diego, these shall be two years in length. The revised versions of the applicable policies are now posted on the diocesan website.

- **EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY 2** – Catechetics (section 210)
Preparation programs for the reception of the sacraments of First Penance and First Eucharist shall be two years in length.
- **EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY 3** – Youth and Young Adults (section 310)
To provide uniformity and consistency in the duration of all parish and school sacramental preparation programs (for Confirmation) in the Diocese of San Diego, these shall be two years in length.

Children and youth who have previously participated in a catechetical program at another parish, will need to provide a letter to this effect from their former Pastor/Director for Catechetical Ministry before they are enrolled into the sacramental preparation program at the new parish. Any sacramental preparation that is not provided or approved by a parish catechetical program should not be recognized.