



MEMO

Date: November 27, 2018
To: Pastors, Sacrament Preparation Coordinators & Parish Secretaries
From: Huy Nguyen
Subject: **Sacramental Preparation Program UPDATES**

I would like to share with you some of the changes and improvements we have made to the sacramental preparation program based on the inputs that we received. Please review the following updates with your sacramental preparation team:

I. Forms (<http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca>)

- Form A5 will now be called the “Permission Form” (the term “confirmation” was mistaken by some parents to be the “sacrament” itself).
- The Parish’s name and Parent/Guardian’s name have been added to the form.

II. Coordination of visiting Parents/Children

1. To ensure a consistent practice among the parishes, all sacramental coordinators are requested to follow the procedure outlined in the August 2018 memo (<http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca>)
2. The “Home parish” sacramental coordinator **must** obtain permission from the “Alternate parish” coordinator before sending the parents/children to that parish for the missed session.
3. Parents are not to contact the Alternate parish directly.
4. In the event your parish has an unusual high number of parents/children who cannot attend a given session, we request that you consider holding an extra session to accommodate them.
5. Please make sure that parents/children bring the Permission Form and sacramental work books when they attend sessions at the Alternate Parish.
6. Regarding Safe Environment, visiting parents can stay with their children, if necessary, while attending a session at an Alternate parish. This practice would not affect the ratio for supervision even if the visiting parents are not screened.

7. As much as possible, parents should be encouraged to attend sessions at their home parish. Belonging to a community of faith is an essential criteria in faith formation.

III. Retreat

1. In the parish-based sacramental preparation program, the *First Reconciliation Retreat* offers another important occasion for continued learning and community building that reinforces in the children essential concepts and an understanding of the sacrament of Reconciliation in a fun and reflective setting.
2. The primary responsibility to organize and offer the retreat belongs to the parish.
3. There are 2 retreat settings to consider:

Setting 1 - At the Parish:

- a. *Reconciliation – Program Director Manual* offers three parish-based retreat models with detailed step-by-step instructions (pp. 114-130).
- b. If your sacramental team requires further support in planning the retreat, the Diocesan Youth Retreat Team members are available to provide training. Please send your request to Angela Abanto at DYRTcoordinator@calgarydiocese.ca
- c. DYRT's retreat format is downloadable at <http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca>

Setting 2 – At the School:

- a. Calgary Catholic School District and the Diocese have jointly developed the *Grade 2 In-School Reconciliation Retreat* resource.
- b. The in-school retreat model brings the parish and school together in a shared mission to form students who are participating in the parish-based sacramental preparation of Reconciliation, as well as those who are not receiving the sacrament but are learning about it in religion class.
- c. The resource has been made available to all principals and grade 2 teachers in Calgary Catholic School District, and is downloadable at <http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca>
- d. Recognizing that the parish has primary responsibility in preparing children for the sacraments, members of the parish sacramental preparation team are expected to collaborate with the school teachers, and to actively engage in facilitating the retreat.
- e. Parishes that locate in other Catholic school districts are welcomed to consider using this resource in consultation with their respective schools.

IV. [“How to Celebrate Reconciliation”](http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca) (<http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca>)

1. We have developed a “How to Celebrate Reconciliation” card to assist children when they celebrate the sacrament for the first time. It is also intended as an easy-to-use tool that encourages and supports their subsequent celebration of the sacrament.
2. Please plan to introduce this card to the children in your last lesson or during the retreat so they become familiar with its content.
3. The cards will be made available to your parish by mid-December.

V. [Webpage](http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca) (<http://catechetics.calgarydiocese.ca>)

1. We are developing a **“Resource”** section on the Catechetics webpage of best practices, suggestions and procedures specific to the implementation of diocesan sacramental preparation program. We invite your contribution of developed resources (e.g., registration process, scheduling, volunteer recruitment, and so on).

VI. Contact

1. Norline Johnson, Diocesan Catechetics Program Leader, will be the main contact person to provide support for the sacramental preparation program. Please direct all your inquires to Norline at norline.johnson@calgarydiocese.ca or 403-218-5503.

Have a blessed Advent Journey!