



Diocese of Victoria

Our Faith Journey

Preparing Young Children for Celebrating the Sacraments of Initiation



Baptism, Confirmation
and First Holy Communion

or

Confirmation
and First Holy Communion

Our Faith Journey

- Is rooted in the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist
- Builds on the Liturgy of the Word with children
- Follows the Church's liturgical year
- Engages the family, the parish and school
- Provides support and growth for parents
- Meets the program requirements for large and small parishes, providing systematic catechetical and liturgical instruction
- Integrates easily with other parish programs

The Journey

*A journey, unlike a race,
is about the experiences and insights gained
along the way.*

Parents choosing to have their children celebrate Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion or to celebrate Confirmation and First Holy Communion in the Diocese of Victoria join the pastor and parish catechists for a two-year journey of discovery and encounter. It all begins with becoming friends with the Person of Jesus proclaimed and revealed through Sacred Scripture and in the Sunday Eucharist.

YEAR ONE FOCUS

How do we come to know Jesus?

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that, "The Eucharist is 'the source and summit of the Christian life.'" (C.C.C. #1324). After hearing the readings

proclaimed at the Sunday Eucharist, families are guided in recognizing the same presence of Jesus working in their lives as He does in the lives of those they meet in Scripture. Building upon this, families are gradually introduced to the Church's tradition, her teaching and wisdom – learning to recognize and walk with Jesus Christ each day.

Based on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) adapted for children, **Year One** offers an immersion in the Word of God and a marking of the liturgical seasons with ritual experiences. For most, this journey is a continuation of the journey which began at Baptism. For others, it is a beginning – discovering and recognizing the mystery of God's Love, how we encounter that Love, and how to respond to that Love. Preparation for and the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be provided in **Year One**.

YEAR TWO FOCUS

*What does it mean to be a fully initiated
member of the Catholic Church?*

Year Two continues to explore Christian practices through following the ritual rhythm of the liturgical year and reflecting on our relationships with God and the faith community. The child will experience God's Word, deepen his or her prayer life, and celebrate the Sacraments.

Year Two continues the weaving together of the threads of the child's experience and understanding. The child has begun to recognize the warmth of God's embrace and His Love. Now the child will be nurtured in a foundational understanding of Confirmation and Eucharist as the path for exploring the life-long journey with God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A review of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the opportunity to celebrate it will be again provided in *Year Two*.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Who should enrol in the Our Faith Journey program?*

Children who are starting the second year of their parish or school faith formation program (typically grade two) begin sacramental preparation by enrolling in *Our Faith Journey*. The program is appropriate for children up to age 11. Parents of older children should consult with their pastor or parish religious education coordinator for age appropriate sacramental preparation materials.

2. *Why two years?*

Faith, another word for our loving relationship with God and each other, sustains and strengthens us throughout our whole life. It requires a foundation of good spiritual and intellectual formation. This begins, but does not end, at a very young age. None of us can expect to discover the richness of our faith in a few

short weeks, or even a year; it truly is a life-long journey that begins with this initial step.

Supportive feedback from catechists and parents regarding the pilot *Our Faith Journey* material has affirmed the need and the value of allocating two years to prepare families for the foundational Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

3. *When will the new program begin?*

The *Our Faith Journey* program was officially launched in parishes across the Diocese of Victoria in the fall of 2013. Parents should watch their parish bulletin for detailed parish program information and plan to enrol in their parish program in early September. Catholic school teachers will support parish sacramental preparation coordinators in offering the parent/child sessions.

4. *How will I know my child is ready (understands enough) to receive the Sacraments?*

Some indicators of a child's readiness:

- a desire to grow in relationship with God,
- an ability to nurture a personal faith,
- an interest in growing beyond a foundational understanding of the faith, with the guidance of family and community,
- an ability to receive the Eucharist with faith and devotion,
- a desire to regularly attend Sunday Eucharist.

What Parents are saying:

We have enjoyed...

- "...a sense of community developed over the course of the year"
- "...explanations of the Gospel Reading at a child's level"
- "...the purity of the child's prayers"
- "...meeting with the children and parents every week. This was a great idea."

We have found the program...

- "very child-friendly...simple and easy to do: concrete learning."
- "has allowed both my husband and me time to sit with our son and share our faith together."

For more information please contact:

**Diocese of Victoria
Office of Religious Education
4044 Nelthorpe Street
Victoria, B.C., V8X 2A1
Tel.: (250) 479-1331 (Loc. 236)**

E-mail:
Glen Palahicky
gpalahicky@cisdv.bc.ca