

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Sacrament of First Reconciliation preparation program. This First Reconciliation Prep program is the first half of the new combined sacrament prep program as outlined by Bishop William McGrattan.

Gr. 2:

Children in grades 2 now register for a combined First Reconciliation and First Eucharist preparation program. As this is a combined program, if your child has not received First Eucharist they must register for both sacraments.

Gr. 3+:

Children who have received First Eucharist may register for the first half of the program to be instructed and prepared for First Reconciliation.

The purpose of this handout is to provide information about the process used for sacramental preparation. It also details the requirements families need to know.

Parent Information Session: (*Parents only*) The specifics of the program will be presented; books and material will be handed out. Attend according to your child's last name.

Child's Last Name A-L: Monday September 25, 2017 (7pm-9pm)

Child's Last Name M-Z: Thursday September 28, 2017 (7pm-9pm)

This year we are anticipating a large number of registrants, if you must attend an Information Session other than the one you are scheduled for, please contact Karen Woolsey. If you have any questions or concerns as well, please contact Karen at (403)948-5394 ext 6 or stpaulssacraments@shaw.ca

Attendance at the Sessions and the Children's Retreat is expected. Sessions are once per month. If for some reason you are unable to attend a session, please contact Karen Woolsey, there are alternate session dates available at two parishes in Calgary. We at the parish are very willing to assist you so that a session is not missed. You are encouraged, urged and supported to call the parish.

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Each session will run ninety minutes in length. Catechists from the parish community will facilitate the Sacramental Preparation Program with your child, and the parish pastoral team will meet with the parents. The Sacramental Preparation Program is required for your child to understand the significance of the sacraments and to receive these sacraments this year.

All dates are on the Sacrament Session Schedule. Please print the page or copy the dates on to your family calendar. Something new on the schedule you will notice is the Blessing of Children and Families. This a brief ceremony to acknowledge, support and welcome children

who are beginning the preparation for First Reconciliation. It can also serve to remind the parish at large about the ongoing initiation of new members, the responsibility of the entire community to pray for members of the faith community who are preparing for the Sacraments, and the need to continually model Christian love and service.

The Parish Welcome for First Reconciliation takes place after the Homily. Dates and times listed on the schedule.

Celebrating the Sacrament Reconciliation: The Sacrament of First Reconciliation celebration begins with a Liturgy of the Word at 7pm which is then followed by the celebration of the sacrament, “individual confessions”. At this time, the priests will make themselves available throughout the church in designated areas. Once you decide which priest your child will celebrate the sacrament with, you form a line waiting quietly for the priest to become available, your child will then go on his/her own to the priest. It is important that the Catholic parent consider celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation at this time as well to show the child they are not the only one in need of reconciliation, but we are all in need of God’s mercy and forgiveness.

Celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation: Wednesday January 31, 2018 7:00pm

***Tentative additional date: Feb 1, 2018 7:00pm* Dependant on number of children registered in the program, and number of priests available. Final decision to be made in January 2018.**

The Role of Parents

At St. Paul's we use a home study program for First Reconciliation Preparation. This year we continue to do so, but with a new program under the direction of Bishop William McGrattan. Although it is a home-based program, you are not left on your own. We provide a parent information night, four 90-minute sessions for both the parent and child, along with a Children’s retreat run by the Calgary Diocese. Catechists from the parish community will facilitate the Sacramental Preparation Program with your child and the parish pastoral team will meet with the parents. The Sacramental Preparation Program is required for your child to understand the significance of the sacraments and to receive these sacraments this year.

- Parents are crucial people in their child’s life and faith journey. You are now, and have always been, your child’s first and best teacher. It is your example they follow. A few hours of instruction by a volunteer teacher cannot replace the ongoing relationship between parents and children.
- A home study program allows parents to renew and relearn elements of their own faith and strengthen their participation in church life.
- Preparation for the sacraments is a unique opportunity for parents and children to talk about their faith. It provides teachable moments at home and in church when book knowledge can be connected to what children see and live.
- It enriches the whole family. In addition to helping build a bond of faith between parents and the child undertaking the preparation, it provides opportunities for younger children

to be introduced to elements of our faith and for older children to deepen their understanding of the sacraments.

- The workbook exercises and workshops are not optional parts of sacramental preparation. Working at home allows greater flexibility than scheduled class times.

You are best able to judge your child's readiness. As you work through the home study program you need to gauge your child's response. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Work within your child's attention span. Twenty to thirty-minute sessions are usually enough. The workbook is mindful of your child's age and abilities and is arranged appropriately.
- The needs of your child are more important than that of 'the group' or a schedule.

Despite your best efforts, things sometimes happen which limit the preparation time available to families. You may not be able to finish the workbook or attend Mass and the workshops. If for some reason you have to miss a session, please contact Karen Woolsey, there are alternate session dates available at two parishes in Calgary. You are encouraged, urged and supported to call the parish

God bless,
The Sacrament Preparation Team.