

Embracing Christ and His Parish

A living Catholic Parish plays an important role at the major life events of its parishioners. The birth of a child is certainly such an event as is their continued growing participation in the community life. It is the responsibility of the community to assure that those being initiated into the faith will be raised in the faith, and encouraged to live an active Christian, Catholic lifestyle.

Our parish seeks to deepen the integrity and meaning of Baptism and First Communion by calling on parents to attend the appropriate ***Embracing Christ and His Parish*** session(s) for Baptism or Eucharist before *each* child's reception of Baptism and First Communion. These sessions will provide a theological and spiritual reference to offer parents the chance to reflect on the grace of God working in their family life at this point in time. It will present them opportunities to foster community with others who are at the same place in the road, and allow for the sharing of ideas which will challenge parents to identify fruitful practices that will lead their child into the practices of the Catholic Church in a purposeful way.

This is why we have renamed what had come to be known as Sacramental Preparation, to ***Embracing Christ and His Parish: Baptism***, or ***Embracing Christ and His Parish: Eucharist***. This title better recognizes the effort to ready ourselves for the new stage of life that each Sacrament celebrates. These mile markers in our life can take us into deeper relationship with "Christ" and "His Parish" if we just embrace the opportunity by pausing from our daily lives to become intentional in our Catholic walk. So beginning January 1st, 2011 the policy for the reception of Baptism and First Eucharist, preceded by Reconciliation, at St. Jude is outlined below (changes underlined).

Baptism of Children

Parents wishing to have their child baptized must be a registered member of the parish and participate in *Embracing Christ and His Parish: Baptism* with the pastor before a date for baptism will be scheduled for each child or family of children being baptized at the same time. This class will clarify the roles of parents, godparents, and the various symbols that are used within the Baptismal ceremony.

If parents from another parish wish to have their young child baptized here they must meet the requirements of their parish for baptism and submit a letter of permission from their parish to St. Jude's Director of Religious Education before the date of baptism.

Preparing Children of Catechetical Age for Initiation into the Church

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Children, RCIC, is a process of conversion for children of catechetical age (3rd grade) whose parents wish them to be initiated into the Catholic Church. This process involves regular meetings lead by a designated catechist and usually with other children to learn about the teachings of the Church. These sessions are designed and scheduled based on the needs of families each year and usually culminate with entry into the Church at the Easter Vigil service. Parents must be registered members of the parish or participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Parents must also participate in *Embracing Christ and His Parish: Baptism* with the pastor before the date for baptism for each child or family of children being baptized at the same time.

RCIC is also appropriate for older children who were baptized as infants, but who have not continued in their formation and made reconciliation or first communion.

Second Grade Sacramental Preparation Policies

Preparation for First Communion preceded by Reconciliation begins in September of the second grade year for baptized children registered in our parish. Regular attendance in a formal religious education program such as the Sunday Morning Religious Education Classes, St. Jude School or verified homeschooling program is required for children who wish to participate in *Embracing Christ and His Parish: Eucharist*. This means that if you have a child wishing to prepare for Reconciliation and First Communion in second grade, they must be participating in some formal program for both their first and second grade years.