

# Order of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for Children

## A Family Handbook – 2011-2012

St. Stephen Catholic Church Religious Education Office  
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Welcome! By enrolling your child in this program you have chosen to make this a special time for your family. As we begin this journey of faith with your family, please be aware that parents teach more by what they are and do, than by what they say. Your children will learn Christian attitudes from your values and goals. It is important to provide religious experiences in your home because children learn about the Catholic faith by living the faith. You need to be a strong role model for your children. By your example, you pass on the traditions of our faith. Discuss the importance of this year of preparation with your child. The Religious Education Staff is excited to be your partner this year. Feel free to call us if you have any questions.

Q: What is Order of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for Children (OCIC)?

A: Children are invited to experience God through Jesus within the Christian tradition and the church community. Knowing Jesus, they will fall in love with him and begin a process that will continue throughout their lives. OCIC is conversion. For children, this means making values and images of the Christian community their own.

Q: Why is the program called Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for Children? Will the children learn the same information as adults?

A: Children will celebrate the same adapted adult Rites, as landmarks in their faith journey. The process reaches a peak when they receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil along side the adults. The information presented is completely at the child's developmental level.

Q: Why are children of different grades taught together in this program?

A: Despite different ages and maturity levels, the children will absorb values, traditions, and customs from their teacher and each other. We may divide a large group into elementary, Middle, and High School groups. Young adults (and sometimes High School youth) prepare with the Adults.

Q: Isn't my child too young to receive Confirmation?

A: This program calls for a return to a much earlier practice that was common in the Roman church until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. What we know now as separate sacraments were once one: a single, unified rite of initiation, signifying full entrance into the Christian community. This program mandates that non-baptized children receive all three sacraments of initiation at one time: Baptism – Confirmation – Eucharist.

Q: Why do parents have to be involved in this program?

A: The success of the initiation process is directly related to the involvement and support of the parents or guardians. Parents are a child's primary religious educators, helping children experience the good news of God's love through laughter, spending time together, praying as a family, embracing, and more.

Q: How is the church community involved?

A: The faithful community models an authentic Christian lifestyle. They create a saving network bound by shared stories, symbols and celebrations to which the child wants to return. We all need each other's support to live a faith that is countercultural.

Q: How will my child develop a relationship with Jesus through this program?

A: Children learn through their senses. The combination of liturgy (celebration), catechesis (class), and community service can bring about conversion.

Q: What part does prayer play in this program?

A: Since conversion is the primary purpose of children's initiation, this program tries to facilitate the child's personal relationship with God. A key component is communication. We call it prayer. We encourage the attitude of turning internally to God.

Q: How are the lessons presented?

A: Christian initiation follows the liturgical year (Advent through Ordinary Time) rather than the calendar year or school year. The program is divided into four periods. Rites mark the bridges between these periods. The sacraments of initiation are celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

- Period 1: Inquiry. The child feels called away from sin and drawn to the mystery of God's love. Children are introduced to various forms of prayer. This leads to the Rite of Acceptance.
- Period 2: Catechumenate. The goal of this period is to deepen faith through readings, prayer, service, celebrating rites, loving others.
- Period 3: Purification and Enlightenment. This usually coincides with Lent and the spiritual preparations for Easter. Traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are emphasized, as well as the Gospels.
- Period 4: Mystagogy. The newly baptized continue to meet. During this time they break open the word and explore the meaning of the sacraments they have received. They continue with prayer, service, and joyous community celebrations.

## The Rites of Christian Initiation for Children

**Rite of Acceptance** – The children move forward from initial inquiry to active involvement in preparation for the sacraments. Parents/Guardians present the child to the church community. This signals the parents' acceptance of the responsibility to be actively involved in their child's religious formation. This Rite is celebrated with the adults also preparing for initiation. Children are dismissed from Mass, before the Offertory.

- Catechumens gather in the lobby of the church. As they enter they are asked, "What is your name and what would your wish be?" The response is: State name and "I wish to be a friend of Jesus."
- The sign of the cross traced on the forehead of the children by the celebrant and parents or sponsors marks them as Christians and reminds them of Christ's love (also sign all the senses by tracing a cross).
- Each catechumen is presented with a Bible. The reason for this is that the gospel is the heart of the learning for the catechumenate, the next period the children will enter. Parents and sponsors are encouraged to write a personal message to the child in the front of the Bible.

### Questions to discuss after the Rite:

- How did you feel about the Rite?
- What did you think when you were standing before the community?
- How did you feel about being marked by the cross?
- What do you gain by believing in Jesus?

**Rite of Sending** – The church community acknowledges the children's readiness to receive the sacraments of initiation, and recognize the progress they have made in their spiritual formation. The children receive the assurance and prayers as they go forth to the Rite of Election celebrated by the Bishop. Lunch will be served when they are dismissed from the Mass, before going to the cathedral.

- One by one the children are called forward by name. Accompanied by their godparents, they stand in front of the priest.
- The children sign the Book of the Elect and return to their seats. The Book of the Elect represents the parish record of those who have responded to Jesus' call. Children see their name here and know they belong.
- Children kneel and godparents place right hand on their right shoulder during the intercessions.

**Rite of Election** – This Rite is celebrated with the adults at the Cathedral in St. Petersburg, and marks the start of the final preparations for the sacraments of initiation. The importance of this Rite is the declaration that God's choice of these children is eternal. When all the people preparing for initiation gather together, it gives them a sense they are a part of a larger and more universal church.

**Scrutiny** – This is done separate from the adults preparing for initiation. Children return to their classroom afterwards, & are dismissed at the usual time.

- The children, with their sponsors, come forward and stand before the priest. They bow their heads and pray for some time in silence.
- They kneel during the intercessions, with sponsor standing behind them with right hand on shoulder.
- The children stand and face the assembly while the priest prays over them, then lays hands on each one.

## **Easter Vigil**

All of Lent is the spiritual preparation for the Easter Vigil. Children become familiar with key symbols through readings, discussion and activities. Sponsors and parents will do a walk through at the rehearsal that morning. Photographs of the children to be initiated will be posted on the wall in the back of the church, and the church community is asked to pray for them.

NOTE TO PARENTS OF YOUNGER CHILDREN: an afternoon nap is essential. Often the Vigil goes late at night.

As you teach your child to pray, you yourself will deepen your prayer; as you teach your child to appreciate the Mass, your own faith will be enriched. The sacraments of initiation that your child will receive at the Easter Vigil – Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist – is only the beginning of a new life in which you grow closer to one another in the family, and closer to God.

## Prayers to Know

### *SIGN OF THE CROSS*

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

### *GLORY BE*

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit.  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

### **HAIL MARY**

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your  
womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners, now,  
and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

### **ACT OF CONTRITION**

My God, I am sorry for my  
sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above  
all things. I firmly intend  
with your help, to do  
penance, to sin no more,  
and to avoid whatever  
leads me to sin. Amen.

# Baptism

Baptism is a birth into the Christian community. It's an event that needs to be prepared for. A parent's most important preparation is to look at their own faith life. The very fact that you have asked to have your child baptized shows that you recognize the importance of God in your life. The Church welcomes your child into its midst with love and prayers for the future peace and happiness of your family in the years ahead.



The signs and symbols of Baptism:

- Sign of the Cross – The sign of the cross is the mark of Christians because Jesus died on the cross. Godparents trace it on the child's forehead to show that their child belongs to Christ, who now offers his help and grace to face and overcome the sufferings of life.
- Water – This is a sign that our sins are washed away. Baptism cleanses us of original sin with which we are all born and, in the baptism of adults, of every sin committed prior to baptism. Water is also necessary for life and so is a sign, to, that the life of the risen Christ is ours.
- Oils – Oil of baptism is olive oil. Oil of chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balsam. It is a sign of sealing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- White garment – This garment is a relic of the new clothes worn by Christians after baptism in the first centuries. It is a sign of innocence and the new life of resurrection.
- Candles – These symbolize Christ – the Light of the World. The baptismal candle is lit from the paschal candle, a sign of the risen Christ. The baptismal candle reminds us that the light of Christ has entered the child's life; its flame symbolizes the flame of faith which will burn through the life of your child.
- Baptismal Register – Your child's baptism will be recorded in the parish baptismal Register. Certificates of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist will be mailed to your home the week after the Easter Vigil.

If your child is not baptized when entering the program, please complete the baptism registration form attached and attached with registration before first class.

## Important Things to Know to Receive Communion



### **Knowing the Life of Jesus**

- Jesus is the Son of God. Mary is Jesus' mother
- Jesus taught people how to follow God's rules of love.
- Jesus gave us the Eucharist at his Last Supper with his friends.
- He died on the cross out of love for us.
- He rose from the dead.
- Jesus is with God' his Father. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to always help God's family.

### **Knowing the difference between Communion and ordinary bread and wine**

- When Mass begins, the bread and wine are not Jesus.
- At Mass, the bread and wine become Jesus at the consecration when the priest says the words of Jesus: "This is my Body", and "This is my Blood."
- The bread and wine do not seem different in any way after they become Jesus. They still seem to be bread and wine – they look and taste and feel the same, but they are really Jesus.
- When you receive just the Host in Communion, you are really receiving Jesus. Jesus is fully present in the Host. Jesus is also fully present when you receive Communion from the cup.

### **Showing a desire to receive Communion**

- Jesus gave us the Eucharist because he loves us.
- People want to receive Jesus. They love Jesus. They want Jesus to help them show love. They want to share in the Meal of God's family.

### **What Am I Feeding My Child?**

(excerpt from "A Reflection for Parents of Children Preparing for First Holy Communion" by Jeanne Brett)

Our concern is for our children's health, their strength, their ability to grow, to play, to dance, to run, to feel good, to stave off illness, and to develop good eating habits. Jesus instructs us also to feed our children's spirit from our knowledge of him and our belief in his sustenance. If we are more concerned with increasing material gain, and weak in spiritual gain, our children will be weak too. If we seek personal comfort more than Christ's comfort, if we're busier with this life and find no time for Jesus, so will our children. Plan your child's spiritual meal at Mass once a week. Partake with them of the feast Christ has prepared for us through his Church – the meal that began at the Last Supper and continues to be set out daily in memory of him.

Follow Jesus' recipe for spiritual strength by listening to his Word, praying, and by eating at his table each week. Our concern should be for the health of our children's soul as well as their body. Feed them Christ's love so that they will have strength to live in this world according to the Commandments; so they will have strong values and be able to stand up and walk away from those who are wrong. Children don't know what they need to build strong bones and healthy bodies. We have to teach them about the importance of the four basic food groups and daily exercise. So too, they don't know what will help them develop a strong moral character.

It's up to you, the parents, the people Jesus put in charge of this precious gift, your son or daughter. This year your children have prepared for two sacraments: Reconciliation and Eucharist. Encourage them to continue receiving these gifts from God. Be the role model they need. Celebrate and live our faith!

## THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION BACKGROUND



Traditionally the Sacrament of Confirmation has been associated with the sending of the Holy Spirit. The effect of the sacrament was and is an enriching of the individual through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The recipient then applies those gifts in service to the community.

Early in the Church's history, the Apostles welcomed new Christians into the community with the celebration of the three sacraments: baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. These were all administered at the same time. The importance of the sacrament of Confirmation was noted in the fact that the Apostles themselves would lay their hands upon the newly baptized Christians in a symbolic gesture indicating the sending of the Holy Spirit.

As the history of the Church unfolded, the three sacraments separated from one another. Thus we have the tradition today of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation at different times in a person's spiritual progress. Confirmation is usually administered by the bishop, highlighting the special significance of this sacrament. During the ceremony the bishop lays his hands upon the person in the same manner that the Apostles did and calls upon the Holy Spirit to strengthen that person.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is now seen as an important dimension of the initiation of the individual into the community. As one grows physically, intellectually, and emotionally, one also grows in faith. The sacrament offers concrete instruction and the visible support of the community through the Bishop and the parish. As the newly confirmed (confirmandi) grows in faith, the sacramental experience becomes more real. As parents, we should be aware that our faith can always grow and that one cannot expect adult faith from an adolescent.

### PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created; and You will renew the face of the earth. O God, who did teach the hearts of your faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same spirit to be truly wise, and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen. (Traditional Prayer to the Holy Spirit)

## CHOOSING A CONFIRMATION SAINT'S NAME

### Web sites

- [www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints)
- [Catholic-forum.cin.saubts/ce001006.htm](http://Catholic-forum.cin.saubts/ce001006.htm)
- [Catholic.org/saints/](http://Catholic.org/saints/)
- [Catholic-pages.com/dir/saints.asp](http://Catholic-pages.com/dir/saints.asp) (this gives list of books on saints)

### Popular Saints

Juan Diego	James the Great	Victoria
Christopher	Leo the Great	Lucy
Mary Magdalene	Dominic	Pual
Anthony of Padua	Elizabeth Ann Seton	Clare
Valentine	Padre Pio	Peter
Monica	Rose of Lima	Hillary
Bernadette	Francis of Assisi	Rita
Thomas Moore	Martin de Porres	Luke
Augustine	Vincent de Paul	Jude

Please complete the Saint Name Research Form and  
Saint Name Information Form by December, 2011

## CHOOSING A SPONSOR OR GODPARENT

Who can be a Sponsor or Godparent?

- Confirmed Catholic who is living their own Confirmation commitment – a person of faith who tries to live a Catholic life; a role model
- Mature person who is at least 16 years of age
- Someone who prays and celebrates Mass and the sacraments regularly

**PLEASE NOTE :** Parents are not allowed to be sponsors for their own children. They already have a significant role as parents.

What can a Candidate expect from their sponsor or godparent?

- A sponsor is someone you know, trust and respect
- A sponsor will take an interest in the process and will be ready to take part in the special liturgies and help you complete your requirements
- A sponsor is someone you will be able to talk to, and feel free to ask questions concerning your faith and the Sacrament of Confirmation

### REQUIREMENT

As soon as you decide on a sponsor/godparents and they agree to take on this awesome responsibility, you should provide your sponsor with the **Sponsor Verification Form** (WHITE FORM). It will be your sponsor's responsibility to submit it to his/her home parish for verification, and then **mails or faxes it to St. Stephen Religious Education Office by December, 2011.**

This form is part of your requirements for the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation, so please be sure your sponsor complies with this requirement.

MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:  
St. Stephen Religious Education Office  
10428 Saint Stephen Circle  
Riverview, FL 33569

FAX FORM TO:  
(813) 671-2994

# St. Stephen Catholic Church

5049 Bell Shoals Road • Valrico, Florida 33594 • Telephone (813) 689-4900

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## Godparent / Sponsor Certificate

Dear Brother or Sister in Christ,

We are delighted that you have been asked to be a godparent or sponsor for the Sacrament of Baptism or Confirmation. What an honor! You have been chosen because of the way you live and share your Catholic faith. It will be your role to help the newly baptized or confirmed to lead a life in harmony with the Gospel. One of the most effective ways to share one's faith is through example.

Therefore, to be eligible to serve as a godparent or sponsor, you must be an active Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. In addition, you must be at least 16 years old and live your life in harmony with the faith. For this reason, Catholics who are living with someone outside marriage, have married outside the Catholic Church, regularly miss Sunday Mass, or fail to live their lives in accord with the teachings of the Church, cannot serve as godparent or sponsor.

St. Stephen Parish Family

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I testify that I am an active Catholic of at least 16 years of age. I have been confirmed, regularly receive the Most Holy Eucharist, and live my life according to the teachings of the Church. Furthermore, I am registered parishioner of \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Parish, contribute to the support of my parish according to my means, and fulfill the requirements listed above. I consider myself suitable to the role of godparent or sponsor and intend to fulfill it and live a life of faith befitting this role.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

For the Baptism / Confirmation of \_\_\_\_\_

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To whom it may concern:

We are pleased to be able to issue this testimonial letter. The individual whose name is signed above is a practicing Catholic who is a registered member of this parish. To the best of our knowledge, this person is qualified to be a sponsor for anyone receiving the Sacrament of Baptism or Confirmation.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name and Title \_\_\_\_\_

(Seal)

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Experience the Roots of Our Catholic Mass  
**Seder Meal ~ Passover Supper**

Thursday, April \_\_\_\_, 2012

at St. Stephen Church multipurpose room

The Seder is a joyous, ecumenical parish gathering, and it's the ideal lead-in to our Holy Week celebrations. It will also be a prayerful and profoundly spiritual event. All ages are welcome!



In Judaism, Passover is the time for giving gifts; it is also time for fun, fellowship, for music and dancing. In our parish Seder, we'll capture that spirit. While remaining as true as possible to the Jewish traditions of the Passover Meal, we'll explore the meaning it has for us Christians.

Our Parish Seder Meal will bring to life many of the Psalms that we use regularly in Mass. It will especially give us a deeper understanding of the Catholic Mass: the use of bread and wine, the blessings, the thanksgiving prayers, and more.

The Seder uses several symbolic foods in rituals that teach the story of the first Passover: **KARPAS** (green vegetable for the goodness of God)

**MATZOS** (unleavened bread)      **LAMB BONE** (Paschal Sacrifice)

**MAROR** (bitter herbs of slavery)    **EGG** (new life)    **WINE** (four fold promise)

**HAROSET** (chopped nuts, apples, raisins symbolizing mortar)

**\$10.00 per person**

Return the bottom portion with payment to  
the Religious Education or Church Office

Includes a catered chicken dinner  
wine (or juice), coffee & dessert

**Seating is limited – buy your tickets by \_\_\_\_\_**



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**RETURN THIS FORM WITH PAYMENT BY March \_\_\_\_ TO THE R.E. OR CHURCH OFFICE**