

Answering a Common Question: Why Sacramental Preparation?

Why Parent Participation and Why Not Just in Class?

Parents are the first educators in their child's character and faith and their attitude and lifestyle influences children's faith more than any other human factor.

For this reason, parents play an active role in the retreats, gatherings, and home assignments, providing explanations and personal life stories to illustrate God's Presence in our lives. It is a time of grace for both the children and the parents to journey together toward a better relationship with Jesus.

Through experiences, the gatherings connect knowledge learned in catechesis (religion lessons) with a way of living and thinking, not just "knowing." Sharing these experiences with their parents helps children apply a Catholic perspective and worldview to what they learn about and do in all other areas of school and life.

Why Retreats?

Retreats are invitations to set aside worldly life for a time encounter Jesus. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has directed that all sacramental preparation should include a retreat experience. Children need this opportunity to focus on a friend they don't physically see but who is always there for them. They need guided opportunities to consider Jesus active and real Presence and Love so that their hearts begin to long for Him in the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Goals of a Retreat:

1. To withdraw from daily activities and spend time with Jesus, considering how He is with us every day.
2. To receive insights about God's love for us, how He is involved in our lives, and how knowing this affects the way we live our lives, in thought, word, and action.

A Retreat Should:

1. Help prepare parents and children to receive God's life in the sacraments by strengthening the desire to be with Him, know Him, and want to follow Him.
2. Provide a valuable length of time (3-5 hours) to deepen the understanding of how God's love is reflected in the sacraments as He pours forth His grace in greater abundance through the physical and spiritual actions of the sacraments.
3. Review the key elements of what is happening in each of the sacraments, at an age-appropriate level. We should understand our involvement in the sacraments as more than an empty ritual.

Two Requests of Parents

1. While both parents and children will see friends, it is **essential** that both parents and their child(ren) focus with only each other on what is occurring at stations. Please refrain from conversations with others during the presentations and activities. You can converse with friends before the gathering begins, at a snack/meal break, and after the gatherings.
2. It is essential that your child know that you are here completely for him or her. Please turn off your phone until after the gathering.