

First Reconciliation and First Communion at The Franciscan Church of Saint Bonaventure

An adapted Program for
the Winter and Spring of 2021

Sacramental Preparation During a Pandemic

Baptized Roman Catholic children may begin to prepare to celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Confession) and Eucharist (Communion) once they reach the age of 7.

But, this is a year like no other. We're in a pandemic. While there are ways to prepare the children, the pastoral staff is not able to assign dates to celebrate the Sacraments due to nature of the virus and our concern for safety.

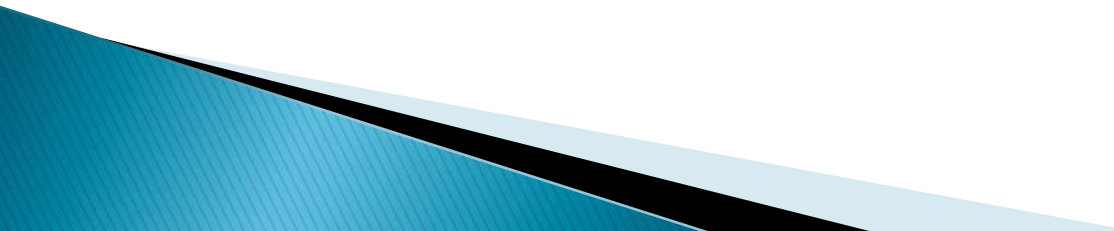
If your child is now 7 years old, you may be asking yourself: "Can my child prepare for these Sacraments this year, even if there is a delay with celebration?"



Once informed, the Choice is Yours

These slides will give you an opportunity to inform yourself about the adapted sacramental preparation program this year at St. Bonaventure Church.

Once you have informed yourself, then you can make a decision that best suits your family's situation and needs at this time.



After reading this information, you may decide:

Yes: You would like to prepare your child now to celebrate First Reconciliation and First Communion at a future date.

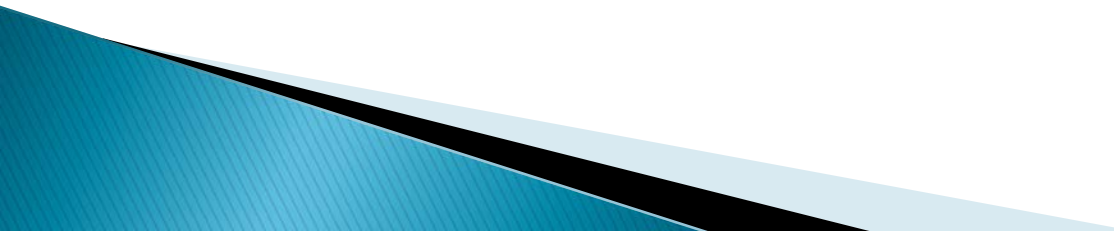
OR

No: You would like to wait until next autumn to prepare your child to celebrate First Reconciliation and First Communion.

Preparation for the Sacraments

At St. Bonaventure Church, we help members of the parish prepare to celebrate the Sacraments, as appropriate.

Children baptised or received into the Roman Catholic Church may be prepared to celebrate Reconciliation (Confession) and Eucharist (First Communion) once they are 7 years old. We coach parents to do this preparation.



But, do I have to?

My child attends Catholic School?

Ongoing religious education offered in Catholic Schools is not the same as preparation for a Sacrament, but it does lay a good foundation toward understanding our faith.

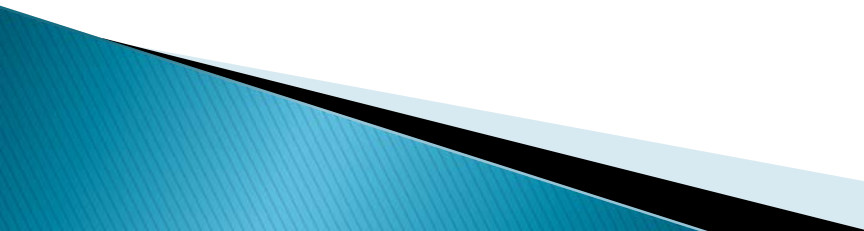
Your example of practicing the faith in the home, participating in Sunday worship, and showing your children how to live a holy life lay not only a good, but an essential foundation of faith.

Preparation for the Sacraments builds on your efforts.



What is Sacramental Preparation?

It is:

- ▶ a specific program through which a person is prepared to celebrate one of the Sacraments;
 - ▶ Normally offered by the parish church to its parishioners (members);
 - ▶ limited in scope and time for each Sacrament (for example, 6 sessions that last 45 minutes to an hour long);
 - ▶ and, with regard to children, involves the parents in the process.
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Where's My Parish?

If you and your child are Roman Catholic

AND

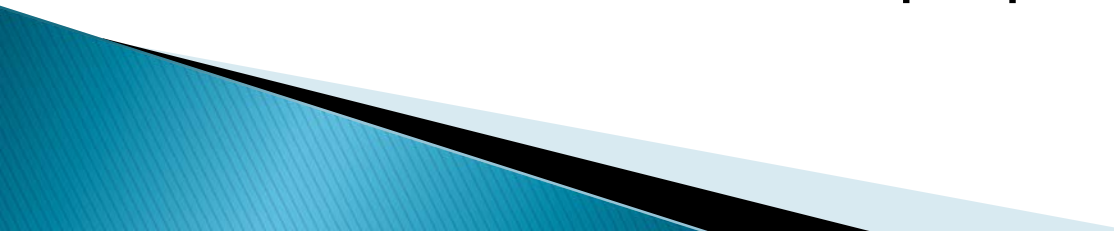
live within the parish boundary of St. Bonaventure
Church,

OR


are registered parishioners at St. Bonaventure
Church (whether you live within or outside of the
parish boundary),

THEN

you are a parishioner of St. Bonaventure Church
and are welcome to register your children for
sacramental preparation here.



St. Bonaventure Church Parish Boundary

- ▶ If you live within the following boundaries, are Roman Catholic, and are not registered at another parish church, then you are automatically a parishioner of St. Bonaventure Parish.
 - ▶ **North:** York Mills Road
 - ▶ **East:** Don River East Branch
 - ▶ **South:** Eglinton Avenue East, Don River West Branch
 - ▶ **West:** Bayview Avenue
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We're not parishioners

If you worship at another church,

OR

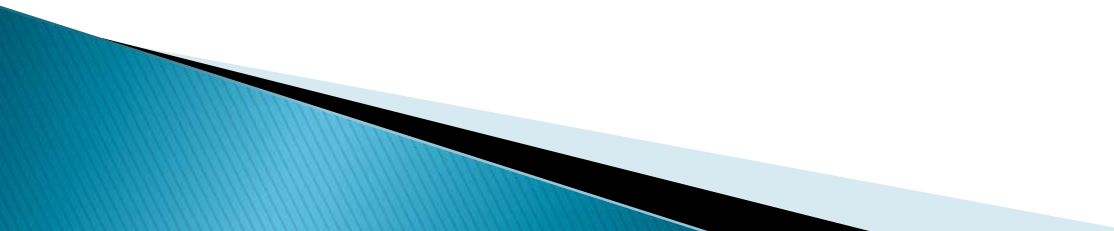
live outside of the St. Bonaventure Parish boundary
and are not formally registered at St. Bonaventure
Church,

then you need to contact your local church
to find out about sacramental preparation.

Click the link to find your parish:

[Archdiocese of Toronto \(archtoronto.org\)](http://archtoronto.org)

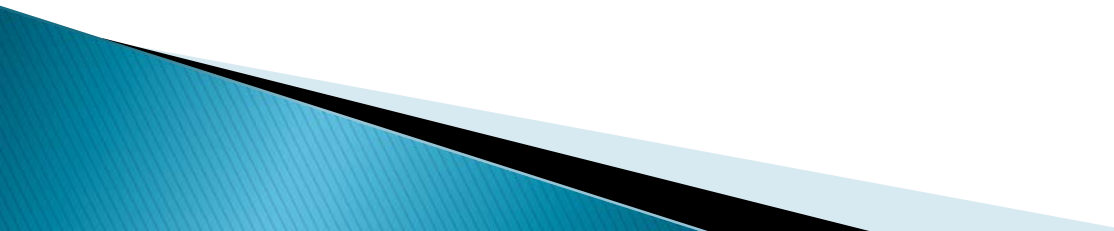
or call 416-934-0606



A Year Like No Other

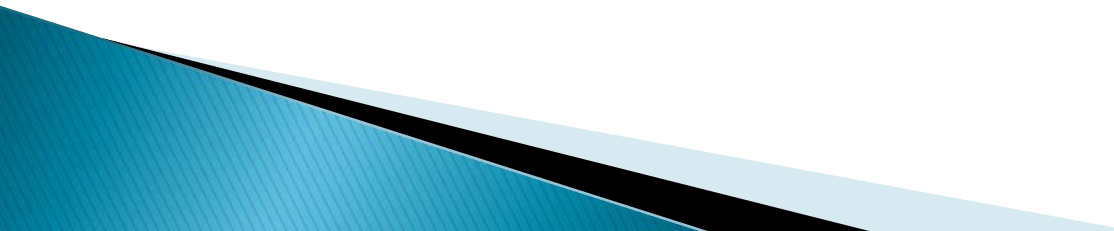
The Pandemic has thrown us a curve ball!

Therefore:

- ▶ we shifted our schedule to ensure that parents and children had time to adjust to the new realities;
 - ▶ we adapted the program for ease of use; and
 - ▶ we follow the public health guidelines to ensure the safety of all involved.
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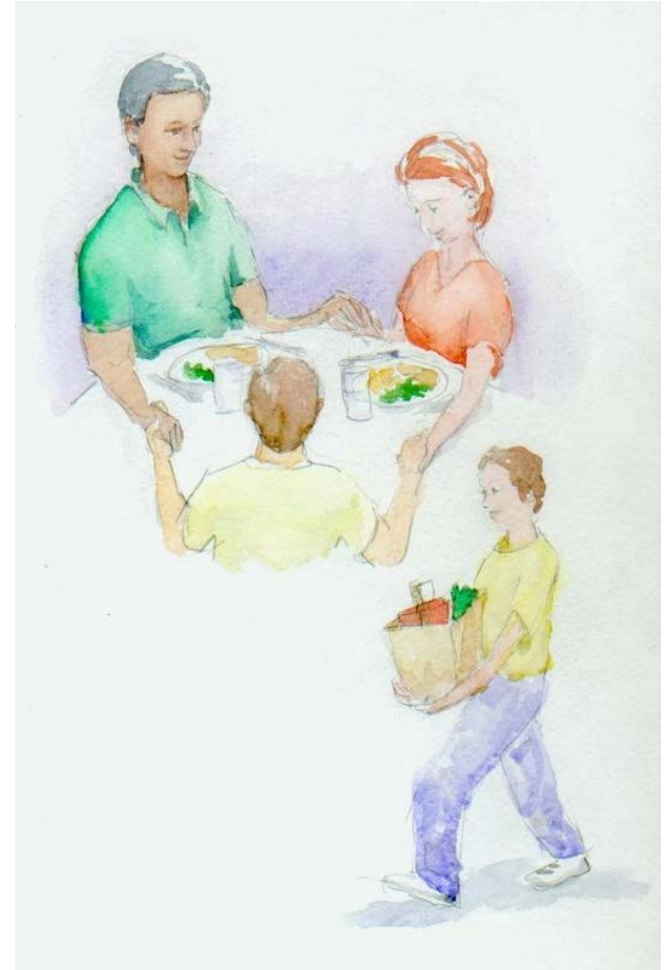
Preparing for First Reconciliation and
First Communion
over the coming months
during a pandemic.

Our adapted program will launch in late
February, starting with preparation for First
Reconciliation and followed by preparation
for First Communion.



Empowering Parents!


- ▶ For the past 5 years, we've used the *Growing Up Catholic* sacramental preparation program in our parish.
- ▶ It has been very well received.
- ▶ The program empowers you to pass on the faith to your child.



Growing Up Catholic...

...respects that you are the most important person to influence your child's growth in faith.

This program empowers you to help your child to:

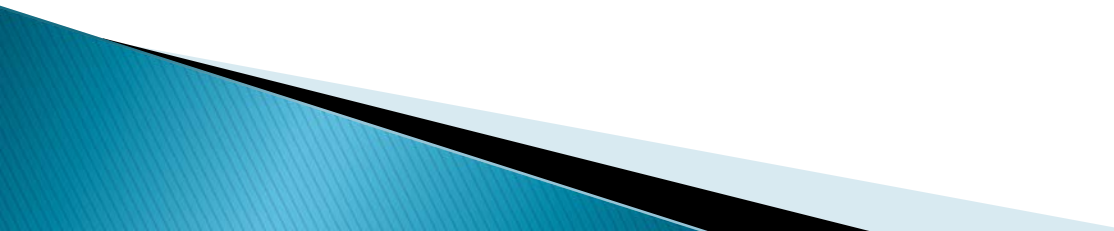
1. discover forgiveness modelled on Jesus's example,
 2. begin to understand how to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation,
 3. respond to Jesus's invitation to participate in his life and in his sacred meal, and
 4. begin to understand the Mass and how to receive Holy Communion.
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Formation for each Sacrament has 6 easy-to-use Sessions

- ▶ 6 sessions are shared between you and your child to prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and 6 sessions are also shared to prepare for the Sacrament of Eucharist (First Communion)
- ▶ One 8-page (on average) handout contains the content for each session, step-by-step, and ready to share.
- ▶ Each page of the handout contains parent coaching tips to help you talk about the contents with your child.




The Sessions

- the *Growing Up Catholic* team has redesigned the program for ease of use during the pandemic;
 - the 6 sessions for Reconciliation and the 6 sessions for Eucharist will be shared completely at home by you with your child; and
 - you will be invited to share 1 session once a week for 6 weeks in preparation for your child's First Reconciliation, take a break for a couple of weeks, and then share 1 session once a week for 6 weeks in preparation for your child's First Communion.
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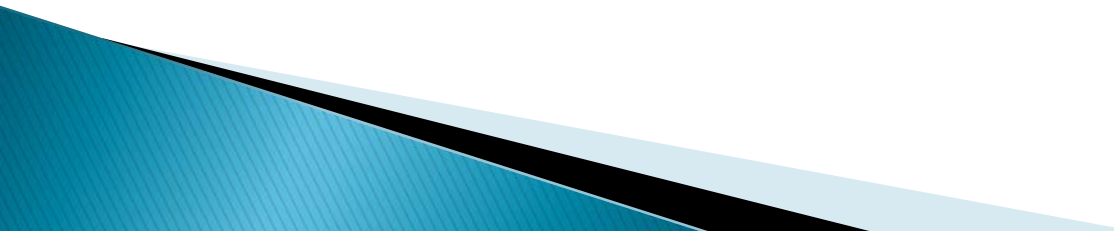
Is your child ready to begin preparation?

This is an important question to ask yourself. Not all children are ready at the same time. Here are good indicators about your child's readiness for sacramental preparation.

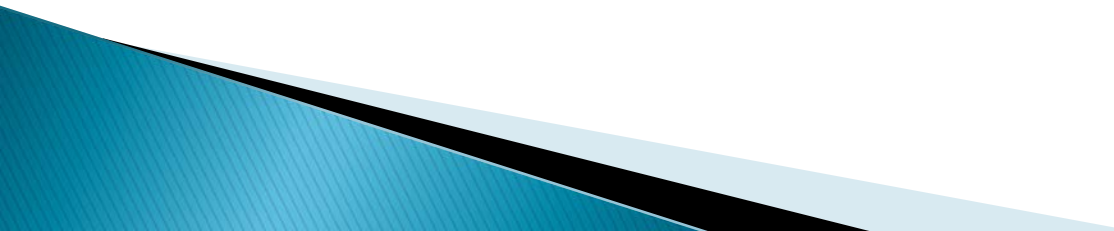
Your child is:

- ▶ beginning to know right from wrong;
 - ▶ beginning to say: "I'm sorry" without being told;
 - ▶ beginning to forgive others;
 - ▶ spontaneously expressing gratitude:
 - ▶ asking questions about Mass; and
 - ▶ asking to receive Holy Communion.
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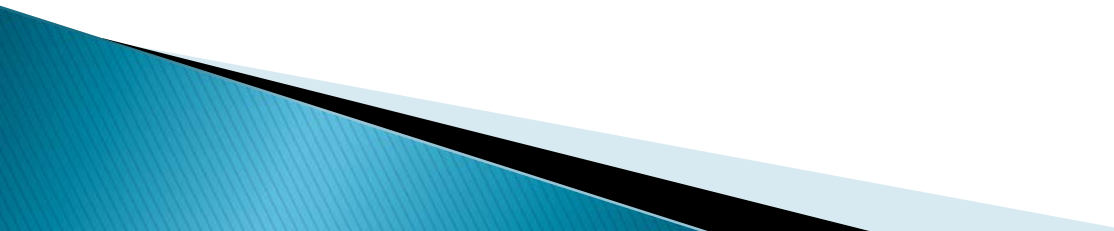
Are you ready to participate at this time?

- ▶ A genuine sign that you are ready is your family's regular participation in Sunday worship, even if virtually or some other way in the home during the pandemic in order to keep the Lord's Day (see the parish website for links to Mass online, Sunday worship with children in the home and children's activities.)
 - ▶ If you haven't been to Mass regularly since your child's Baptism, then we would encourage you to delay beginning sacramental preparation until you can worship on Sundays for at least 6 months, then register the following year.
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Pandemic Considerations


- ▶ Parents are assisting their children at home through online learning. Many parents find this difficult and are not able to add anything more to their schedule.
 - ▶ Some families are less busy because the children's extracurricular activities are on hold. They have more free-time in their schedule and would welcome the addition.
 - ▶ You need to ask yourself whether or not the 12 sessions in total will be doable or too challenging at this time. If you can fit this into your schedule, then please register. If not, then please consider waiting until next year.
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More pandemic considerations...

- ▶ Unlike previous years, we are not able to gather with other families for any of the preparation sessions. Also, helping children to go to Mass as they prepare is excluded while the church is closed, except through online formats.
 - ▶ AND...this is a BIGGIE...
 - ▶ **We do not know when we will be able to actually celebrate the Sacraments with the children.** It may be many months after completing the sessions before we can celebrate the Sacraments with you and your child due to pandemic safety guidelines.
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Please consider the points made in the previous slides.

Each family and child is unique.

- ▶ Some parents will be able to manage easily; some will not.
 - ▶ Some children will be able to retain the content and look forward to even a delayed celebration; some will find it a challenge.
 - ▶ Some families will be ok with sharing faith on their own; some will really miss the group gatherings and interaction.
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You know your child's needs and family situation best.

After careful consideration, if you feel you and your child are ready to begin sacramental preparation now, then please register by completing the registration form no later than Wednesday, February 24, 2021. The registration form may be found on our website:

www.st-bonaventure.ca

If you think it best to wait until the launch of the 2021–22 season, then please let us know by adding your name to the waiting list by clicking here:

waitlist@st-bonaventure.ca

We'll stay in touch with you.



Thank you for taking the time to read the information.

We pray with you and for you as you consider whether or not to begin sacramental preparation with your child at this time.

Whatever you decide, know that God is with you and sustains you with the life-giving Spirit.

Any questions? Please contact Gregory Beath, Lay Pastoral Associate at St. Bonaventure Church by e-mail:

gregb [at] st-bonaventure [dot] ca

