



## CLOYNE DIOCESAN CENTRE

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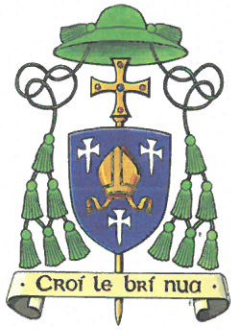
Dear Rev Fr., Principal, Class Teacher and Families,

I write to you at the outset of the new school term, praying that many blessings await you in the year ahead. I am reissuing the document *Principles and Guidelines for Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time*. I ask that it be factored into your preparations for first sacramental preparation and celebration, and that it be considered the norm for the diocese of Cloyne.

Sacramental preparation is intrinsic to the Catholic identity of our schools and our schools have prepared our children well. They built on the foundation of children's faith experience in the home and the parish. Over time, and as our society has evolved, that foundation can no longer be presumed, and schools now find themselves in a role far beyond what was previously expected. Today, our culture is experiencing a growing indifference to things of spiritual value. This affects Christian family life and the practice of our faith. The over-emphasis on the "day" of first sacramental celebration itself comes at a cost to families that is unjustifiable spiritually, morally and financially. In this situation, the pastoral practices which accompanied sacramental preparation in the past are no longer sufficient. Ignoring this situation would be a disservice to children, their families, their teachers, and to parish communities. Therefore, the relationship between catholic homes, parishes and schools is called to meet new and varied challenges which mark the lives of people striving to be faithful to the person and teaching of Jesus Christ, not least in the area of sacramental preparation and celebration. In terms of the liturgical celebration itself, I ask you to follow the format and advice given in our *Liturgy Preparation Sheets*. These will help foster the dignity of the celebrations and protect families and schools from some of the excess pressures which have become a feature of these celebrations. They are available for download at [www.cloynediocese.ie](http://www.cloynediocese.ie) under *Education --- Primary Education --- Teacher Resources*.

I am conscious that this document brings change but I am evermore convinced that the connection between the faith community and the family is one that requires our fullest attention. It is no longer reasonable to assume that preparing young children for sacraments without the inclusion of their family meets the needs of a vastly changed and changing social and cultural landscape. As a diocese, we are called to engage with the whole family so that the homes of our parishes become schools of prayer and places of learning in the Catholic faith. For the sacramental life to be fruitful in the lived experience of a young person, the family home must be infused with daily prayer, and formed in such a way that the family can strive joyfully towards maintaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Everything in the document is designed to achieve this objective and to orientate us as a faith community towards that end.

Finally, a word on the sacrament of Confirmation is important as the *Grow in Love* programme enters 6<sup>th</sup> class this year. The programme invites parents, guardians, schools and parishes to work closely together to ensure the integrity of the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation, and to ensure that the celebration of the sacraments are events in the life of the wider



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Christian community, not just in the life of the school. I therefore ask that the *Principles and Guidelines* document should also be taken into consideration in the preparation and celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation at parish level. Notwithstanding the fact that we rightly await the publication of *Grow in Love* 6<sup>th</sup> Class (in September 2019), we can begin this work now, with a view to consolidating it in the years ahead. I will again write to parishes regarding the Confirmation liturgy for 2020 in due course. However, a draft section on Confirmation has been included in the *Principles and Guidelines*. The aim is to produce a more substantial overall document in the longer term. Submissions would be appreciated and can be forwarded to Fr Seán Corkery at [cloynenewevangelisation@gmail.com](mailto:cloynenewevangelisation@gmail.com)

Our shared desire is to prepare our children to celebrate these important sacramental moments in their faith journey as fully and as reverently as possible. I hope and trust that this letter accelerates a necessary conversation at parish level as a matter of urgency which will bear fruit in the time ahead.

With every good wish.

Yours sincerely,

*+ Wm. Crean*

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Most Rev. William Crean, D.D.,  
Bishop of Cloyne.



## **Principles and Guidelines for Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time**

### **PRINCIPLES**

1. Parents and guardians are the first teachers in the ways of faith.
2. Baptised children are members of the Church of Christ and each parish has a responsibility to witness to them and to help them grow in faith.
3. The Catholic School supports parents in providing a Catholic identity, a faith community and a catechetical formation.
4. Through the sacraments of initiation, we are incorporated into the Body of Christ and the life of the parish.
5. An important aspect of preparation for the reception of the sacraments is that the child has an adequate understanding of the sacrament in question, and knowledge of the prayers, responses and hymns associated with it.
6. Inappropriate adaptations or practices that are contrary to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Rite of Penance* are to be absolutely avoided. The liturgy is itself full of ritual meaning and should be given its full expression. Nothing should distract from that.
7. On the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time, the child should be *ministered to* and not have to perform other functions which detract from the essential character of the sacrament being received.
8. Representatives of the home, school and parish who have helped to prepare the children throughout the year are to be encouraged to fulfil the liturgical roles required on the day such as ministry of the word, prayer of the faithful, procession of bread and wine at the preparation of the gifts and extraordinary ministry of holy communion (if required).
9. Mindful of the fact that the days of first sacramental celebrations are special, they should not be disconnected from general parish celebrations. The simplicity and beauty of the liturgical life of the parish must be reflected in the celebration of sacraments for the first time so that unrealistic expectations are not created in first sacramental celebrations.

## GUIDELINES

### 1. Parish – Home

- i. There is already much work underway regarding parish-led preparation programmes. **The primary diocesan programme for parish-led preparation which compliments the work of our Catholic Schools is *Grow in Love of the Lord*. It is designed to support parents and guardians in their role as the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith.** The diocese does not discourage programmes such as *Do this in memory of me* and *The Bridge* at parish level as a means of outreach to families.
- ii. **Ways of promoting family ministry and regular practice of the faith by families are important at parish level.** These could include a children's liturgy for young children on Sundays, children's adoration<sup>1</sup>, Christian film and social media initiatives, occasional scripture and faith formation initiatives which bring families together on both a social and catechetical level on Sunday - the Lord's Day. The rhythm of the feasts and seasons of the liturgical year provide a sound basis on which to proceed.
- iii. Given the current climate regarding the practice rate at parish level, **it is prudent for the parish to insist upon an Enrolment ceremony as early as possible for persons who petition the parish to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time.**
- iv. The diocesan *Family Prayer* Book can be gifted to families. Other catechetical, biblical and prayer resources can be sourced at local level by parishes to support and nurture the life of faith in the Catholic households of the faith community.

**Note:** The diocese currently has 11 trainee catechists who will conclude their formation in Summer 2019. Once commissioned, the trained catechists will give a minimum of four years voluntary service (renewable) to the parish that sponsored their training. It is hoped that more parishes will discern suitable candidates for the role of parish catechist and avail of the training at the next available opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.childrenoftheeucharist.ie](http://www.childrenoftheeucharist.ie) The diocese supports this programme which is already underway at parish level.

## 2. School – Home

- i. The *Grow in Love* Primary School Religious Education Programme affirms parents and guardians as the first and best of teachers, and the family as the first school of faith. The weekly “At Home” page in the *Grow in Love* Children’s Book provides concrete activities for Parents and Guardians to engage with the child’s faith formation journey. **The “At Home” activity should be a weekly feature of the child’s faith journey during the school year.**
- ii. The primary focus of the *Grow in Love* programme is on catechesis for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion as opposed to focusing on the day of receiving the sacraments for the first time. This permits the school to become the main resource assisting families of the children in their care. It is particularly noteworthy that *Grow in Love* does not contain templates for the celebration of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time. This is deliberate. *Grow in Love* envisages a more incremental approach to learning about God’s forgiveness and about the Blessed Eucharist over the course of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. It is hoped this will offer children the space and time to understand what happens in the Confessional and at Holy Mass, rather than learning about it in the context of the immediate and practical preparation for liturgical celebrations. Sacramental preparation is intrinsic to the Catholic identity of our schools. As such, **the primary concern for the school is to ensure the child has an adequate understanding of the sacrament in question, and knowledge of the prayers, responses and hymns associated with it.** This liberates the school from being solely responsible for the logistics of the liturgies themselves that take place during the year. The diocese of Cloyne endorses the *Grow in Love* vision here:

. . . the Catholic School contributes an *indispensable* amount of commitment, expertise and resources to sacramental preparation and celebration. It has been, and will remain, a vital partner in this area, as well as in the religious education of children in a more general sense. However, the role of school and its teachers must be to support families and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way around.

- iii. **The school may cooperate with the parish and the home in the preparation of the liturgies associated with preparing and celebrating the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time.** There should be no more than one to three school-led rehearsals in the Church prior to first sacramental celebrations. The parish should support the school and its teachers in these rehearsals by the presence and assistance of the school chaplain, members of the Parish Pastoral Council, parish catechists (as they become the norm in parishes) and/or other relevant parish personnel. Multiple rehearsals for these liturgical celebrations should not impinge upon core curriculum time during the school day as this is unreasonable to the teacher and his or her professional requirement for classroom contact time. If necessary, the parish may need to take an active role in supporting the school and home by organising an afternoon, evening or weekend rehearsal in the days prior to these liturgical celebrations.
- iv. **Many schools have a tradition of regularly participating in the morning parish celebrations of the Eucharist throughout the school year.** This is a highly desirable practice for a Catholic school when practicable for school authorities.

### 3. Home – School – Parish

- i. **The parish supports and promotes the Catholic ethos in the Catholic schools of the parish on many levels.** Frequent visits to the school by the school chaplain provide a welcome support to teachers and gives the children an experience of dialogue with their local priest which they may not otherwise have. *Grow in Love: A Guide for Priests and Parish Workers when Visiting Classrooms: Junior Infants-Second Class* (Veritas, 2016) provides starting points for discussion during such visits and gives an insight into the language of faith that the children are familiar with. The children should know that the visits are by someone with a role in the local Church who wants to share the responsibility of handing on the Catholic faith that comes to us from the Apostles.
- ii. **Persons who petition a parish to receive the sacraments from non-catholic schools should undertake a period of catechetical instruction and faith formation.** This would be facilitated by the parish. The programme of catechetical instruction to be followed requires the approval of the local bishop. Bishop Crean already approves the use of the following programmes:
  - *Grow in Love* First Class and Second Class (Veritas, 2016)
  - *YOUCAT for Kids* (Catholic Truth Society, 2018)
  - *Jesus our Life: Faith and Life Series 2* (Ignatius Press, 2016 [3<sup>rd</sup> Edition])
  - *My First Holy Communion* (Clonmacnois Press, 2010)
- iii. Sacramental celebrations belong to and in the parish faith community. Liturgical actions are not private but, by their very nature, call for a community celebration for which the parish priest has a responsibility to direct in his own parish. He is to strive to ensure that Christ's faithful are nourished by the devout celebration of the sacraments, and in particular that they frequently approach the sacraments of the Most Holy Eucharist and Penance (cf. Can 528 §2; Can 837§1-2). In this regard, **the diocese endorses the vision contained in *Grow in Love* which is to root our celebrations in the liturgical life of the parish.** With regards to celebrating the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time, the following points should be noted:
  - a) The local parish in collaboration with the school remains best placed with the expertise and experience to take the lead role in preparing the liturgical celebrations of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time. It is hoped that some competent members of the wider parish community and representatives of the families can be invited to assist in this work.
  - b) Liturgical planning should observe the principles outlined by the Bishop in this document. Given the importance of family ministry and the regular practice of the faith by families, the liturgical rites of first sacramental celebrations should not be disconnected from general parish celebrations so that it creates unrealistic expectations in the minds of an eight-year old and his or her family (cf. Principle # 9).
  - c) To assist in implementing this vision, ***Liturgy Preparation Sheets*** have been prepared for the following liturgies:
    - The Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the First Time
    - The Celebration of Holy Communion for the First-Time *within* Sunday Mass
    - The Celebration of Holy Communion for the First-Time *outside* Sunday Mass
    - Suggested Readings for Holy Communion for the First-Time outside Sunday Mass

These will help foster the dignity of the celebrations and protect families and schools from some of the excess pressures which have become a feature of these celebrations. They are available for download at [www.cloynediocese.ie](http://www.cloynediocese.ie) under *Primary Education --- Resources and Downloads*.

The *Liturgy Preparation Sheets* operate from the principle that Reconciliation and Holy Communion are more than one-off events. The proposed liturgies are devised around the prayers and songs of the *Grow in Love* programme and Bernard Sexton's, *Mass of Renewal*, which is widely used in this Diocese. The *Liturgy Preparation Sheets* also provide guidance on preparing the Church building for the celebration. The resources emphasize parish and parental involvement in leading the prayers, so there will be far less demands on the children to rehearse their part.

The following songs from *Grow in Love* can occasionally be incorporated into the repertoire of parish choirs during the liturgical year. It makes sense for children to hear them at general parish celebrations as they will be familiar with them. It will encourage the children to have greater participation in general parish liturgy:

a) **The Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

**Opening Hymn:**

- "Lay Your Hands" (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 89)

**Concluding Hymn:**

- Gifts from God (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 88)
- Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks (1<sup>st</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 207)
- "This is the Day" (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 212)

b) **Celebration of Holy Mass**

**Entrance Hymn:**

- Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks (1<sup>st</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 207)
- Christ Be Beside Me (1<sup>st</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 309)
- "Gathering Song" (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Teacher Manual p. 88)

**Offertory Hymn**

- We Come to You, Lord Jesus (1st Class Teacher Manual, p. 186)

**Communion Hymn**

- "The Last Supper" (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 190)
- "Eat this Bread" (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 191)

**Concluding Hymn**

- Gifts from God (2<sup>nd</sup> Class Teacher Manual, p. 88)

**What Next?**

1. **Reflect on how best to prepare and celebrate for sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time at parish level. It makes sense for representatives of the home, school and parish communities to cooperate on this.**
2. **The diocese proposes that, as soon as possible in the academic year, the presider for these celebrations convene the meeting suggested in the *Liturgy Preparation Sheets*, and organise this year's celebrations in accordance with their guidance.**
3. **It is hoped the contents of this document, *Principles and Guidelines on Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time*, will foster cooperation between the home, school and parish so that the responsibility for preparation is equally shared by all.**

## 4. The Sacrament of Confirmation

At present, young people typically seek the Sacrament of Confirmation in 5<sup>th</sup> and/or 6<sup>th</sup> Class (Curriculum Level 4). The *Grow in Love* programme approaches the sacraments of initiation in the same manner here as it did on previous occasions. The primary focus is on catechesis in receiving the fullness of the gift of the Holy Spirit and on the living out of that gift in the life of the person as opposed to focusing solely on the day of receiving the sacrament itself. This permits the school to become the main resource assisting families of the children in their care. Therefore, *Grow in Love* envisages a more incremental approach to learning about the Third Person of the Holy Trinity over the course of several years in the child's formation in faith.

*Grow in Love* states that “[i]t is important that all the work on the Sacrament of Confirmation is not left until the year in which the children are preparing for the sacrament.”<sup>2</sup> The first time the child is introduced to the story of Pentecost and a Prayer to the Holy Spirit is in *Grow in Love First Class* (Theme 8 Lesson 2). Every year thereafter this foundation is consolidated and developed. Therefore, by the time the child reaches 5<sup>th</sup> Class, they already have a sound awareness of the person of the Holy Spirit:

They have learned that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, that Jesus promised that he would ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to his followers to help them live as he had asked them to when he was no longer with them, that the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles at Pentecost, and that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism.<sup>3</sup>

This approach offers children the space and time to understand what it is to have a relationship with God the Holy Spirit, rather than learning about it in the context of the immediate and practical preparation for liturgical celebrations. Sacramental preparation is intrinsic to the Catholic identity of our schools. As such, **the primary concern for the school is to ensure the child has an adequate understanding of the sacrament in question, and knowledge of the prayers, responses and hymns associated with it.** This liberates the school from being solely responsible for the logistics of the liturgies themselves that take place during the year. The diocese of Cloyne endorses the *Grow in Love* vision here:

. . . the Catholic School contributes an *indispensable* amount of commitment, expertise and resources to sacramental preparation and celebration. In has been, and will remain, a vital partner in this area, as well as in the religious education of children in a more general sense. However, the role of school and its teachers must be to support families and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way around.

In terms of the immediate catechetical preparations for the Sacrament of Confirmation in 5<sup>th</sup> Class, the child will have three *or four*<sup>4</sup> lessons on the theme of the Holy Spirit which build on what they already know and live:

In the context of their preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, we teach the children that in Confirmation they will receive the fullness of the gift of the Holy Spirit. We teach them about the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit and how they can recognise these gifts and fruits in action in their own and other people's lives.<sup>5</sup>

In the 5<sup>th</sup> Class programme, faith formation is centred around lessons on

1. The Holy Spirit in symbol and sacred Scripture
2. The Holy Spirit in Gift
3. The Holy Spirit in Sacrament
4. The Holy Spirit in its fruits and mission

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<sup>2</sup> *Grow in Love Fifth Class*, Teacher Manual, 306.

<sup>3</sup> *Grow in Love Fifth Class*, Teacher Manual, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Lesson 4 is only suited to those who have already celebrated Confirmation and it will be included in a slightly different format in the Sixth Class programme (*Grow in Love Fifth Class*, Teacher Manual, 22).

<sup>5</sup> *Grow in Love Fifth Class*, Teacher Manual, 9.



## Considerations:

### 1. Parish Based Preparation

The “*You Shall be my Witnesses*,” programme is being run in several parishes in the diocese with varying degrees of success in terms of personnel recruitment and participation rates. It is a resource designed to encourage active partnership between those involved in parish leadership, parents and members of the wider parish community as they help children to prepare for the sacrament. As the diocese of Cloyne moves to a stage where parish catechists become more the norm, parish preparation will continue to carry significant challenges but this is not reason enough to limit or disregard the need for parish involvement in sacramental preparation.

A long-standing pastoral practice has been for Confirmation candidates to participate in a retreat experience during the course of their preparations. A possible parish-based preparation programme would be to create an expanded retreat experience facilitated by the parish which combines pilgrimage and faith-formation in a concrete manner over a series of days for Confirmation Candidates and their families – e.g. Five First Saturdays:

<b>CLOYNE DIOCESAN PILGRIM PATHWAY</b>			
	<b>Pilgrimage to . . .</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Prayer Intention</b>
<b>Month 1</b>	<i>Local Area Site</i>	My Parish – My Community – My Place – My Faith	To hear God’s call in my life
<b>Month 2</b>	<i>St Gobnait’s Well, Ballyyourney</i>	The Communion of Saints – My Confirmation Name and Role Model	To be inspired by the communion of saints
<b>Month 3</b>	<i>Corrin Hill and Cross</i>	The Cross: Undefeated weapon of Christ – Divine Sacrifice made present in the Mass	To understand the Mass better and to grow in devotion to it
<b>Month 4</b>	<i>St Colman’s Cathedral, Cobh</i>	My Diocese – one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church	To strengthen my bond with the Church, and to bear witness to Christ by my words and deeds
<b>Month 5</b>	<i>Nano Nagle Birthplace, Ballygriffin</i>	The Lady with the Lantern – Being Salt of the Earth and Light of the World – A city set on a hill cannot be hidden (Mt 5:14)	To go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in fruitful witness to Christ
<p><b>Suggested Pilgrimage Itinerary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Families gather in the parish and depart for Pilgrimage Site with the <i>Prayer to the Holy Spirit</i></li> <li>▪ Recitation of the Rosary and meditation on the <i>Prayer Intention</i></li> <li>▪ Tour of Pilgrimage Site and talk focused on <i>Theme</i> by a local person or by the School Chaplain</li> <li>▪ Food and Recreation (possible Packed Lunch or stop-off somewhere)</li> <li>▪ Return to Parish and <i>Prayer of Thanksgiving</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Due regard is to be given to planning for transport needs and safeguarding requirements. The opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and for Holy Mass may be factored into this Pilgrim Pathway as appropriate</i></p>			

## 2. Ceremony of Light

*The Ceremony of Light* is a pre-Confirmation ceremony, which has been added to the Confirmation preparation process in recent years. A key part of the service is when parents and guardians hand the lighted Baptism candle to their child as an acknowledgement that the child is now being made ready to be a responsible Christian.

At their child's baptism, parents and godparents light the baptismal candle from the paschal candle. This is a sign that they are willing to hand on their faith to their child. In the same way, at the service of light, parents and guardians once again light their child's baptismal candle from the paschal candle and hand the lighted candle to their children; in doing so, parents promise to help and support their child live out the call of the Sacrament of Confirmation. They are agreeing, together with their child, to keep the light of faith burning brightly in the world in which they live.

Now more than ever children heading into adolescence need the help and the support of their parents and guardians. They need their parents to be the 'light' of Christ in their lives and to be able to rely on them in times of crisis.

## 3. The Sponsor

### a) Role

- Encourages the growth of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the person confirmed
- Shows an interest in and supports the developing faith of the young person
- Takes an interest in the young person's religious education
- Gives concrete witness to the faith and models sound Christian values
- Strives to be a good listener and to ask the questions that encourage the young person to mature into adulthood

### b) Requirements

The Church requires that a sponsor meet certain requirements in order to serve as the sponsor of a candidate for Confirmation. Essentially whoever is chosen as a sponsor needs to be concretely practicing and engaging with their faith:

- Must be over 16 unless, for a just reason, an exception can be made by the parish priest or by the minister of the sacrament
- Must be a catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken
- It is desirable that the sponsor be one of the candidate's baptismal godparents because Confirmation continues and deepens the grace of Baptism

## 4. Choosing a Confirmation Name

- Each child is to choose a Christian saint's name
- It is important that they know how that saint answered God's call and was a sign of hope to others. This saint becomes a role model for life
- From this, children can then reflect on the ways they themselves will respond to God's call and be signs of hope.

## Appendix

### Source Documents & Provenience of Diocese of Cloyne *Principles and Guidelines for Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time*

1. *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2010), 131-148.

Cf. *Chapter 5 Sharing our Faith with the Young*. This chapter is important and relevant to contextualise the pastoral and theological situation and to set out the background context to par. # 97 & 102 which outline the vision of home, school, parish cooperation in first sacramental celebrations.

**Two Key phrases:**

"It should be considered the norm, then, that children are initiated into the sacraments within with faith community and in their own parish, or local church. For First Communion, this should, by preference, take place at the Sunday liturgy. Where there are a large number of children, a strategy should be arranged with parents/guardians whereby First Communion could take place at any one of a number of Masses, over a particular weekend or over a number of Sundays, during the month of May. . . . Whatever local customs apply both Confirmation and First Communion should be reclaimed as parish events, whereby the child completes initiation into his or her faith community" (par. 97)<sup>6</sup>

As well as contributing to the religious education of children, the Catholic primary school, as an outreach of the local Catholic parish, plays a very significant role in the Christian initiation of Catholic children as they grow into fuller participation in their local Christian community. The Catholic School, in conjunction with its parish, and other local parishes, helps prepare its Catholic pupils for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. This takes place at the behest of the parents/guardians, with their cooperation and in partnership with their parish community.

In general teachers in the Catholic primary-school sector participate willingly and generously in the faith formation of Catholic pupils. Complaints arise from time to time that primary teachers experience themselves as isolated in the sacramental preparation of children, being left to cater for this alone, without the input of parents/guardians, and sometimes with the minimum of interest from the parish too. Such misconstructions, or even abandoning, of roles should not be allowed to develop. Where it is observed, it should be corrected. The school and its teachers support parents/guardians and their parish in the Christian initiation of children, not the other way round" (par. 102).

2. *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland; Curaclam don Oideachas Reiligiúnach do Réamhscóileanna agus do Bhunscoileanna Caitliceacha in Éirinn* (Dublin: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2015).  
*Two copies of this document were presented to every school in the diocese of Cloyne in 2015/16 during Grow in Love In-service for Junior and Senior Infants/Naíonáin Shóisearacha agus Naíonáin Shinsearacha.*  
See <http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/media/wysiwyg/9781847306241.pdf>;  
<http://www.veritasbooksonline.com/religious-education/curaclam-don-oideachas-reiligiunach-eirinn-1.html>

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<sup>6</sup> In some parts of the country the move is already underway to make a so-called "Communion season" a reality – that the school and parish cooperate with the family in preparing the child for the sacraments during 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class. The *Rite of Penance* may be a parish celebration to which these families attend; and the families can then take their children to any of the designated Sunday Masses of their choosing during the month of May to receive Holy Communion for the first time. It is important to say that a "communion season" is not envisaged in Bishop Crean's directive, but the pastoral practice of receiving Holy Communion within a Sunday Mass does exist in some parishes of the diocese and remains, in a sense, the ideal.

3. ***Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time: Guidelines and Discussion Document for Home, Parish Communities and Schools*** (Dublin: Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2016)  
*This document was presented at Grow in Love In-services in September 2016 for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Class and at the Cloyne Priests Conference in Killarney in November 2016.*
4. ***Grow in Love Teacher's Manual 1<sup>st</sup> Class; Grow in Love Teacher's Manual 2<sup>nd</sup> Class*** (Dublin: Veritas, 2016), 12-13.  
Writing Team: Elaine Mahon and Dr Cora O Farrell.
  - **Elaine Mahon** is a primary school teacher who holds a Masters in Religious Education. She has worked as a Diocesan Advisor for Primary Religious Education in the Dublin Archdiocese and as a lecturer in Religious Education at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.
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5. Bishop Crean requested the *Diocesan Education Commission* to make proposals following a discussion of the matter at the Council of Priests in 2016/17.
6. **Bishop William Crean, *Principles and Guidelines for Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time*** (Diocese of Cloyne, 2017). See <http://cloynediocese.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Education-Letter-and-guidelines.pdf>
7. In September 2018 & 2019, Bishop William Crean reissues ***Principles and Guidelines for Preparing and Celebrating the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the First Time***, asking parishes to commence incorporating them into the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**Please Note:** In September 2020, when the diocese as a whole will have had sufficient time to study *Grow in Love 6<sup>th</sup> Class*, it is hoped to issue a document which will include a best practice approach to the Sacrament of Confirmation. This work has already commenced but it will be helpful to wait and comprehensively study how the *Grow in Love* Programme envisages it.

Note: Two common threads unite the documents in this Appendix. Firstly ***the need to balance the home, school parish matrix correctly and to correct any imbalances which emerge therein***. Secondly, ***the liturgy belongs to no one individual group or person, save in the parish community where it is celebrated***. Yes, it is essential at times for the bishop to exercise his role in upholding the integrity of liturgical celebrations in his diocese, but the liturgy itself is the work of worship which is the right and responsibility of the entire parish community joined together as God's holy people. The source and summit of life in Christ is the celebration of Holy Mass where the whole community joins in this work of worship.