

Diocesan Guidelines
for the Preparation and the Celebration of the *Quince Años*
Diocese of Dodge City

Introduction

*“You are the temple of the living God, just as God has said,
‘I will dwell with them and walk among them.
I will be their God and they shall be my people.’”
(2 Corinthians 6:12)*

Celebrating the *quince años* is an ancient tradition rooted in the indigenous rites of passage of the Hispanic people. It provides a great opportunity to evangelize and catechize the entire family and all participants of the celebration. While there are many forms to celebrate it, the purpose remains the same; it is an act of thanksgiving to God for the gift of life. The young people and all the participants are called to strengthen their relationship with God and with one another as Church, the Body of Christ.

“Desiring to be the light of the world and salt of the earth, many Hispanic young people dedicate their energies and talents to the mission of the Church. Their values are deeply Christian. Whatever their circumstances, they feel themselves members of a spiritual family led by their Mother Mary. This is evident in their art, poetry, and other forms of expression. Yet pressures on Hispanic youth to adapt and live by self-seeking values have led many away from the Church” (*La Presencia Hispana: Esperanza y Compromiso*, Section i).

“The Church sees in young people an enormous force for renewal, a symbol of the Church itself. This it does, not for tactical reasons but by virtue of its own vocation. For it is ‘called to constant self-renovation, that is to say, to repeated rejuvenation.’ Service to young people, carried out with humility, should effect a change in any inconsistency or mistrust within the Church vis-à-vis young people” (*Puebla*, 1178).

Preparation

The young people and their parents are required to attend the preparation which consists of three aspects ~ the cultural; the physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual; and the religious. The required time for the preparation is 6 – 8 hours in order to cover all three aspects of this tradition. It is required that each parish has a parish team to prepare young people for their *quince años*. The pastor is responsible to make sure that the preparation is available.

The team approach is very important. This brings collaboration and support for each other in Christ; helps spread the workload; allows for continuity when one member is ill or moves; spreads the joy around! The pastor may or may not be a “member” of the team. Of course, the pastor makes the final decisions. We do not want the team to think that it makes the final decisions about a pastoral matter. Collaboration, cooperation, communication, and obedience in the Lord!

The *cultural aspect* includes:

- Culture: external and internal and four ways to transmit culture
- Family structure: traditional and today
- Sacred ways of our ancestors
- *Acompañamiento* of parents
- World of our youth today
- Hopes and dreams of our youth
- Gifts and talents of our youth

The *physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual aspects* include:

- *Theology of the Body*
- Sexuality
- Our Body ~ Temple of the Holy Spirit
- Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation
- Self-knowledge
- Vocation and Mission
- Models of Chastity ~ Jesus and Mary
- Dangers of the internet, drugs, pornography, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Quote from Mother Teresa and Prayer of Blessed John Paul II

The *religious aspect* includes:

- Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist
- Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Celebration of the Eucharist
- Act of Consecration to Mary

Guidelines

1. The family and the *quinceañera* are required to be registered members of the parish.
2. The family and the *quinceañera* are required to attend Sunday Mass regularly.
3. The family is required to make an appointment with a parish contact person, no more than 6 months, before the preparation and reserves the date for the *quince años* celebration by filling out a request form. If the family wishes to celebrate at another parish, a letter is required from the pastor giving his permission to do so. The family informs the contact person of any changes regarding the date for the celebration and/or the telephone number.
4. The *quinceañera* and the family are required to attend the preparation which consists of charlas, *encuentro*, and/or *retiro*.
5. Young persons celebrating their *quince años* are required to have celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism. If they have not celebrated the Sacraments of Confirmation, Penance / Reconciliation, and the Eucharist, they are required to be in preparation for these sacraments according to their grade. The pastor in consultation with the parish team will make a pastoral decision on a particular situation regarding this matter of sacramental preparation.
6. The *quince años* celebration may be celebrated at a regularly scheduled community Mass. Or it may be celebrated outside of Mass with a Liturgy of the Word without Communion at a time determined by the pastor in consultation with the parish team or a blessing may be given within the Sunday Mass.
7. If a priest or deacon is a member of the family and is not of this diocese, he will be permitted to preside at a *quince años* celebration provided that he follows the diocesan and parish guidelines. This means that he would need permission from the diocese. This will apply, as well, to any visiting priests and deacons of another diocese.
8. The blessing of the young person celebrating *quince años* and the act of consecration to Mary may take place after Communion as designated by the *Order for the Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday* (USCCB, 2008).

When a fifteen-year old is celebrating within the Saturday or Sunday Mass, the Profession of Faith will be used. The Renewal of the Baptismal Promises may be used at a Liturgy of the Word without Communion.
9. The *quince años* celebration will not be celebrated during Lent.
10. The faith companions will have a place in the assembly. The number of faith companions is optional and is to be determined by the pastor in consultation with the parish team. All faith companions, Catholic and non-Catholic, are to be instructed to show the utmost respect and reverence for the Celebration of the Eucharist. Non-Catholic faith companions are to be instructed that they are not to receive Holy Communion.

11. The dress or attire is to be simple and modest in order to show respect and reverence for the celebration of the Eucharist and the Eucharistic assembly. The parish team has a right to approve the proper attire of the 15 year-olds and their faith companions.
12. The practice for the *quince años* celebration will be determined by the parish team.
13. The decorations, floral arrangements, videos, and photography are determined by the parish team.
14. The pastor, with consultation of the parish council, may require a donation to the parish for the celebration to cover the expenses. This amount must be submitted to the parish office, at least, 1 month in advance of the celebration. If a deacon celebrates, he should receive just compensation.

Assistance to Parishes

Please contact Sister Angela Erevia, MCDP, director of Hispanic Ministry, if you need assistance in preparing a parish team to do the preparation for the celebration of the *quince años*.

Resources

Order for the Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, (USCCB), 2008. Washington, DC.

Mis Quince Años, 2003, published by the Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saints Pauls Avenue, Boston, MA 02130-3491.

Quince Años: Celebrando una Tradición • Celebrating a Tradition, by Sister Angela Erevia, MCDP, 1985, published by the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence, 2318 Castroville Road, San Antonio, TX 78237. Telephone: 877-814-9392..

Quince Años: Celebrando la Vida • Celebrating Life, by Sister Angela Erevia, MCDP, 2000, published by the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence, 2318 Castroville Road, San Antonio, TX 78237. Telephone: 877-814-9392.

Quince Años: The Gift of Life, la Familia de Dios, la Fiesta, a 12-minutes DVD with a study guide for small group discussion, 1996, published by the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence. Telephone: 877-814-9392.

Un Recuerdo de Mis Quince Años: Mass (bilingual) by Sister Angela Erevia, MCDP, 1988, published by the Missionary Catechists of Divine Providence. Telephone: 877-814-9392.

With permission of Catholic Answers, Inc., 2020 Gillespie Way, El Cajon, CA 92020, parts were translated to Spanish by Norma Alvarez, DRE of Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Dodge City, Kansas.

PowerPoint Presentations of the 3 Aspects of the *Quince Años* Preparation are available on the diocesan website under Hispanic Ministry Office.

Parishes having preparation and celebration of the *quince años*:

1. Dodge City: Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe
2. Garden City: St. Mary
3. Great Bend: Prince of Peace
4. Liberal: St. Anthony of Padua
5. Kinsley: St. Nicholas

Parishes not having the infrastructure for the preparation and celebration of the *quince años*:

1. Elkhart
2. Hugoton
3. Lakin
4. Meade
5. Ness City
6. Plains
7. Satanta
8. Scott City

Guidelines approved by


Bishop of the Diocese of Dodge City

May 9, 2012