

First Eucharist Family Information Booklet



**St. Francis of Assisi
2023-2024**



**St. Francis of Assisi Parish Celebration of First Eucharist
Saturday, May 4, 2024**



9:30AM Mass ~ Who will participate? The Parish School children, and the children attending Family Catechesis, Private School, and Home-Schooled

11:45AM Mass ~ Who will Participate? The Children from the Parish Religious Education Program (Mrs. Marianne Calabrese) (Mrs. Genevieve Starecky) (Mrs. Beth Berman)

Parent and Child Preparation for First Eucharist

First Eucharist Parent Meeting
Thursday, March 14, 2024
7:00PM in Leonard Hall, the Gym

Children's Practices for First Eucharist

Friday, April 26, 2024
9:00-11:00AM (Practice for the 11:45AM Mass)
1:00- 2:30PM (Practice for the 9:30AM Mass)

Thursday, May 2, 2024
9:00 – 10:30 (Practice for 9:30AM Mass)
1:00 – 3:00 PM (Practice for the 11:45AM Mass)

The children who attend the Parish Religious Education Program and Family Catechesis will meet in the gym (Leonard Hall) and will be dismissed from Church.

Parent/Child Practices
Monday, April 29, 2024

6:00 – 6:45PM in Church
Parent/Child Practice for the 9:30AM Mass

6:45- 7:30PM in Church
Parent/Child Practice for the 11:45AM Mass

What is a Sacrament?

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life (grace) is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.”

What is Grace?

All Sacraments give grace. Grace is both God’s life and God’s help. See grace as life in Christ. Thus, receiving grace means growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ and his family, the Church.

The Eucharist

Jesus said: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever;...he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and...abides in me, and I in him.”
CCC #1406

The Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Church’s life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church. **CCC #1407**

By the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body and Blood, with his soul and his divinity. **CCC #1413**

Anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance **CCC #1415**

Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ:

- increases the communicants union with the Lord
- forgives his venial sins
- preserves him from grave sins
- reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ

CCC 1416

Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. “To visit the Blessed Sacrament is ...a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord.” **CCC #1418**



Child's Preparation for First Eucharist at Home

Practical Pointers for Parents

1. Take an active part in preparing your child for First Communion. Ask the children what they are doing in class. Look through your child's text and reinforce at home the lessons taught in school.
2. Provide religious experiences in your home. Introduce or add additional ways and time for family prayer. Make use of the Blessing Cup Book we provide for your family. Your child will receive these on the day an practice.
3. Grow together in appreciation of God's word. Introduce your child to Scripture. During the week, set aside a few moments to read and discuss the readings for the upcoming Sunday.
4. Make Mass a family event. Sit near the front. Talk about the Mass on your way to Church; suggest something for your child to pray about, something to watch or listen for. Talk about the homily on the way home. Offer to take up the gifts at Mass.
5. Take a tour of the Church with your child. Stay awhile after Mass and point out where they were baptized; point out the altar, the tabernacle, etc.
6. Stress with your child that First Communion is a beginning. It is not a culmination. Everything in their preparation should convince your child that First Communion is the beginning of a life-long series of privileged moments with Christ.
7. Avoid over-emphasizing the externals. Shopping for a wardrobe, taking pictures, and celebrating with a party afterwards are certainly all part of First Communion Day. But, do emphasize the spiritual, interior meaning of this day, and stress that the Eucharist will continue to be a source of strength throughout your child's life.
8. Don't discourage chewing the host. The Eucharist is intended to be eaten as Jesus' words say, "Take and eat."
9. Practice at home reverently receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus. The children will have the opportunity to receive under both species, the Precious Body and the Precious Blood. If your child is going to receive the Precious Blood on the day of their First Communion, practice with real wine at home before the day arrives. (This may change due to Pastor'
10. Pray for your child.



Child's Preparation for First Eucharist at Home

The Mass

1. The best preparation for First Eucharist that you can give your child is an understanding of the Mass and **REGULAR ATTENDANCE at MASS**.
2. Talk to your child about the Mass before you attend. Emphasize that the Mass is God's family celebrating *a meal*. Start at the beginning at Mass and explain that as we enter the church, we make the family sign, the *Sign of the Cross*. Remind your child when he/she dips his/her fingers in the holy water font they are recalling their Baptism which made them members of God's family,
3. Talk about the fact that at family meals people talk to one another. Explain that during Mass we have a *family conversation*, too. We talk to God in the:
 - **Opening Greeting**
 - **Penitential Rite**...where we ask for God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of one another, for our sins.
 - **The Gloria** ...where we praise God together
 - **The Liturgy of the Word**...where God speaks to us as the lector proclaims the readings from the Lectionary and the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel from the Book of Gospels.
4. Explain that following the proclamation of the Gospel, the priest or deacon gives an explanation of the Scriptures which is called the *homily*.
5. Explain that following the homily, everyone will say the *Profession of Faith*, which are the main things that we believe as Catholic Christians. The Profession of Faith we usually pray is the Nicene Creed.
6. Prepare your child for the second part of the Mass, *the Liturgy of the Eucharist*. This part of the Mass begins with the *Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts*. The priest prepares the altar and accepts the gifts of bread and wine from the community. Just as at special meals at home you decorate your family table with flowers, candles, a nice tablecloth and dishes, so too does God's family at Mass, this very special meal in which Jesus comes to share all of himself with us.
7. Explain that we pray a very special prayer following the Preparation of the Gifts called the *Eucharistic Prayer*, during which the community sings the *Holy, Holy, Holy*.



8. Make sure your child pays close attention to the next part of the Mass, *the Consecration*. At the Last Supper when Jesus broke the bread and passed it to his friends, he said, “Take this, all of you, and eat it: This is my body, which will be given up for you.” Next he passed the cup of wine around the table for his friends to share. “Take this, all of you, and drink from it, “ He said, “This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.” Then Jesus said, “Do this in memory of me.” Here is the time when you teach your child **THE REAL PRESENCE**. In the Eucharist, Jesus is truly and fully present to us under the appearances of bread and wine. The bread and wine truly become Jesus’ Body and Blood during the Consecration.
9. After the Consecration, we sing or say the *Memorial Acclamation*. Have your child pray it along with you...”Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.” Tell your child this prayer expresses the very heart of our faith: the sacred Mystery that makes it possible for Christ to be with us in the Eucharist.
10. The *Communion Rite* begins with the community saying *the Lord’s Prayer, the Our Father*, followed by *the Sign of Peace*. Prepare your child for the Sign of Peace by pointing out this is a special time when we share greetings with other members of God’s family who have gathered with us to share the Eucharist. Explain that in exchanging a sign of peace, we show Jesus that we want to love one another as He loved his people.
11. Further explain the Mass by sharing with your child that we finish our preparation to receive Jesus in Communion by praying *the Lamb of God* and inviting Jesus to make us holy by saying, “*Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.*” Then we have the privilege of truly receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, Jesus’ Body and Blood.
12. Please teach your child to receive Jesus with *reverence* and to be in a *state of grace* (unconfessed mortal sins).
13. Remind your child to *bow* before receiving Jesus and to say “*Amen,*” which means “*I believe*” while cupping his/her hands (making a throne for Jesus) or by receiving on the tongue.
14. Teach your child to say a Prayer of Thanksgiving as they return to their pew, keeping mindful that Jesus is within them.
15. Explain to your child that Mass ends with the *Concluding Rite* which includes a blessing and then the *Dismissal*. In the Dismissal, the deacon or priest will invite everyone to go in peace.
16. Receiving Christ for the first time should have a lasting effect on the direction of your child’s life, as it should have had on yours. You can help that happen for your child not only by frequently receiving the Eucharist with your child, but also just as importantly, openly expressing your appreciation of this beautiful Gift with your family. Begin with your own heartfelt gratitude for the fact that God loves us enough to be with us always in the Blessed Sacrament that nourishes our spirits and enables us to do Christ’s work.



Child's Preparation for First Eucharist at Home First Communion Banners



- As part of our tradition of celebrating First Communion, we ask that you and your child create a banner that will be displayed at the end of a pew in church. You will be provided with a bag of material and directions. The banner is intended to be a family project that your child is actively involved in and that is meaningful to him/her.
- **Banners are due by Monday, April 29, 2024. Material will be sent home in early April.**

Dress Code

Girls

- White dress (no off-the shoulder)
- Veil optional
- White shoes
- White knee socks, anklets or white stockings
- No gloves or pocketbooks



Boys

- Navy jacket
- White pants
- White tie
- Any color dress shoes



Child's Preparation for First Eucharist at Home

Fasting

- On the day of First Communion, and whenever receiving the Eucharist thereafter, those partaking must, out of respect for the Body and Blood of Christ, fast at least one hour before the reception of the sacrament. No food should be eaten. Taking water and medicine, however, are exceptions.

Home Study ~ Vocabulary

- **Alb** – a loose fitting white garment that looks like a robe
- **Altar**- the table of the Lord
- **Amen** – “Yes, I believe.”
- **Blessed Sacrament** – another name for the Eucharist
- **Chalice** – a consecrated cup which holds the wine
- **Chasuble** – the outer garment worn over the stole
- **Ciborium** – a container which holds the host during communion time
- **Consecration of the Bread and the Wine** – the Holy Spirit, through the actions of the priest, changes bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ
- **Eucharist** – means “to give thanks”/the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus
- **Eucharistic Prayer** – the most important prayer of the Mass
- **Fasting** – the practice of not eating anything for one full hour before we receive Holy Communion
- **Holy Communion**- receiving the Body and Blood of Christ
- **Holy Thursday** – the night on which the Last Supper was held
- **Last Supper** – the meal when Jesus first gave us the Holy Eucharist
- **Liturgy of the Word** – the first main part of the Mass when we listen to God’s word
- **Liturgy of the Eucharist** –the second main part of the Mass in which the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ
- **Mass** – a share in Jesus’ Last Supper/the greatest act of worship given to God/an act of thanks and praise/ a meal/ a sacrifice, an offering of a gift to God
- **Paten** – the name of the flat plate for the host
- **Real Presence** – Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist
- **Stole** – a long narrow piece of cloth which is worn over the alb
- **Tabernacle**- the special place in the church that holds Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament



Mass Responses
LITURGY OF THE WORD

<u>FATHER SAYS</u>	<u>WE RESPOND</u>
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit	Amen
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ	And with your spirit
Have mercy on us , O Lord,	For we have sinned against you
Show us O Lord, your mercy	And grant us your salvation.
May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.	Amen.
The word of the Lord	Thanks be to God.
A reading from the holy gospel according to (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John).	Glory to you O Lord.
The Gospel of the Lord.	Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

<u>FATHER SAYS</u>	<u>WE RESPOND</u>
Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.	Blessed be God forever.

<p>Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.</p> <p>Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.</p> <p>We ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord.</p> <p>The Lord be with you.</p> <p>Lift up your hearts</p> <p>Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.</p> <p>The mystery of faith.</p>	<p>Blessed be God forever.</p> <p>May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.</p> <p>Amen.</p> <p>And with your spirit.</p> <p>We lift them up to the Lord.</p> <p>It is right and just.</p> <p>Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.</p> <p>A-We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until You come again.</p> <p>Or B-When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, O Lord, until you come again.</p> <p>Or C-Save us, Savior of the world, by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.</p>
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<p>Deliver us, Lord, we pray from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.</p>
<p>The peace of the Lord be with you always.</p>	<p>And with your spirit.</p>
<p>Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.</p>	<p>Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.</p>
<p>Go forth the mass is ended.</p>	<p>Thanks be to God.</p>
<p>The Lord be with you.</p>	<p>And with your spirit.</p>



On the Day of



- Please bring your child to the gym, and then proceed to your assigned seat in church.
 - **Arrival time for the 9:30AM Mass is 9:00AM.**
 - **Arrival time for the 11:45AM Mass is 11:15AM.**
 - **For the 9:30 AM Mass, the children will begin to process over to church at 9:15AM.**
 - **For the 11:45AM Mass, the children will begin to process over to church at 11:30AM.**
 - ***In case of rain***, parents and child should come directly to Church and to your assigned pew. In the meantime...place your Blessed Mother statues in your windows and pray for no rain!
 - ***For good weather***, the children will process into church from the gym to the Saxer Avenue entrance of church. They will proceed up the center aisle and into their assigned pews and remain sitting until the Entrance Procession of the Mass.
 - ***If you are a single parent*** and wish another family member to be seated with you and accompany you to the sanctuary when your child receives his/her First Eucharist, please contact Madelyn McBride before First Eucharist Day. Rectory (610-543-0848) OR e-mail stfaprep@gmail.com
 - If you have a relative who is a priest or deacon, and wishes to attend to administer the sacrament to your child, please call/e-mail Madelyn McBride at least one week before First Communion. (610-543-0848) stfaprep@gmail.com
- ***During the reception of your child's First Eucharist***, one pew at a time of child and parents on alternate sides, beginning with the St. Joseph side of the church, will be directed to leave their pew and ***proceed into the sanctuary***. Parents, you will not receive from the priest when your child receives. Parents, who are properly disposed to receive Communion, may receive from the priest, deacon or Eucharistic Minister at Communion stations located by the transepts(far side pews)as they are returning to their pew. ***Inform your child of this so that they will stop with you as you receive and then proceed back to your pews.***

- At the end of the liturgy, *in good weather*, the children will process down the center aisle, down the outside steps of church and will be directed back to the gym. You may pick up your child here and not before. We are doing this to care for the safety of the children. *If it is raining*, parents and children will remain in their pews and may form a line in the center aisle to have family pictures taken in the sanctuary.
- Please be reminded that no picture taking of any kind will be permitted during the liturgy. You may take pictures during the entrance and recessional processions only.

This picture taking time will be limited after the first Mass because we need to prepare for the 11:45AM First Communion Mass!

