

Sacramental Preparation



**First
Reconciliation
And
First Eucharist**

**Nativity of Our Lord
Religious Education Program
2025-2026**

A handbook for parents assisting their child in
the preparation for the Sacraments of
Reconciliation and First Eucharist

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INTRODUCTION

Reconciliation and First Eucharist are exciting and beautiful events. The excitement and newness can fade quickly unless every encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist is made special. Our program endeavors to teach our children that Reconciliation is a call to strengthen our friendship with people and with God. We stress that the basic belief that is God is all loving and all forgiving. Through parental example of forgiveness in daily situations at home, children will learn of God's never-ending forgiveness and regularly use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a means for inward peace.

Your own attitude toward the Eucharist is very important to your child's view. Each of you is a saint in the making. A close relationship with Jesus is important to your spiritual progress as well as your child's. The Eucharist is a mystery of God's love, a mystery which unites us to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In the Eucharist we are called to imitate Jesus in His giving which "was an unconditional giving of self to and for others." By attending Mass each Sunday and receiving Communion, you continually renew your relationship with Jesus. Young children learn by the example of their parents. Rejoice with your child and family on this blessed occasion.

YOUR ROLE AS PARENTS

Parents have a responsibility to create a Christian environment in the home. You should:

- Set a good example and encourage your child to live a life of active Christian service.
- Serve your family out of love.
- Build an atmosphere of trust and understanding.
- Worship together at Sunday Mass and Holy Days.
- Participate in Parish programs.
- Be sure that your child is formed in the fundamentals of the Faith.
- Always tell your child you love them.

WHAT IS RECONCILIATION

"Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 20:22-23).

During our journey toward the kingdom of God, at times we turn away from our lifetime goal to do God's will. Often, we fail in loving God and our neighbors, and we sin. The church responds to the situation of personal sin with a sign of Christ's forgiveness and healing, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Through our celebration of the sacrament, our loving relationship with Christ and the Church is restored. People who acknowledge their sinfulness, who express sorrow in their own hearts, and who seek to change and make a "fresh start" have already begun the process of sacramental forgiveness.

WHAT IS HOLY EUCHARIST

"Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:58).

When Jesus gathered with His disciples to celebrate the Jewish Passover, they shared their last supper together and their first experience of the Eucharist.

In this meal they remembered the covenant love through which they were related to God, and they began a new ritual that marked a new covenant, one in which Jesus Himself was the Father's love.

Of all the sacraments, the Eucharist is the one that is celebrated most often. We will be nourished at the Table of the Lord by the Body and Blood of Christ many times throughout our lives. Our sharing in the Eucharist completes our process of incorporation into the Church and brings about a closer union with Christ and with all the members of the believing community.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life. Through the expression of its faith in the Eucharist, the Church deepens that faith. In the Eucharist Jesus is truly present as the saving events of the Paschal Mystery are recalled and celebrated. He is truly present as well under the appearances of bread and wine that the people share in Holy Communion. Thus, the Eucharist is at once a sacrifice, a sacrament, and a sacred meal.

The Eucharist is a sacrifice because it memorializes the offering of a victim by a priest to God. Jesus is both the victim and the priest in the sacrifice of the Eucharist. He is the one offering the sacrifice in the person of the priest and the offering itself. He offered himself freely, suffering death on the cross for us. In the Eucharist the worshiping community enters into the sacrifice of Jesus, and the members pledge to incorporate themselves more fully into His mission.

The Eucharist is a sacrament because it is a sign of God's nourishing love, a symbol of unity, and a bond of charity. Even as the Eucharist reveals God's love, it causes God's love to be experienced and shared within the worshiping community. The Sacrament of the Eucharist, Holy Communion, is a sacred coming together, an intimate solidarity with God and one's brothers and sisters, a blessed sharing in God's gift of Himself to all.

The Eucharist is a sacred meal because it brings about the nourishing effect it symbolizes. It is spiritual food. It is the "bread of life" and the "cup of salvation". The worshiping community shares the banquet of Jesus' love when they eat at the Table of the Lord. Just as ordinary food is converted in physical energy, the Eucharist nourishes the continual journey of the believer toward oneness with God.

II PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE: All children receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist are required to attend all gatherings, retreats, and events that are pertinent to the reception of these Sacraments. Absences will result in a deferral of the reception of the Sacraments.

REQUIRED DOCTRINE: Children will study from the Dynamic Catholic Program "Blessed" for First Reconciliation/First Eucharist. They will learn the information contained in these books along with videos that explain the sacrament on their level. The goal of this program is to focus on God, Father and Creator of the world; Jesus Son of God who is our friend and the Holy Spirit, Giver of strength and joy. They will learn about the Mass, the Church Community, and the Sacraments they are preparing to receive.

Besides the book/video information, children are required to learn:

- The Sign of the Cross
- The Lord's Prayer
- The Hail Mary
- The Glory Be
- Act of Contrition (use version in this booklet)
- The Sacraments
- The 10 Commandments
- The steps in preparation for Reconciliation

Please review these weekly with your child/children.

III PREPARATION FOR RECONCILIATION

CEREMONY:

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is being held on the evening of **Monday, January 26, 2026 at 6:00PM**. Children need to arrive at Church by 5:45PM and come dressed appropriately as they would to attend Mass.

PRACTICE:

There will be **ONLY ONE** rehearsal for Reconciliation on **Sunday, January 25, 2026 from 6:00 – 7:00 PM in the Church**. All who are receiving this Sacrament **MUST ATTEND**. Parents need to return by 6:45pm for a brief meeting.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

We need to think about the actions of our lives which cause us to turn away from God's love and the love of our brothers and sisters.

PROCEDURES

Preparation for Confession: (Individual Penance for children). Family members may receive individual Penance after the children.

Penitent: "Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my first confession..."

Priest: Invites penitent to confess his or her sins.

Penitent Answers:

Priest: May give a short reflection.

Penitent: Recites the Act of Contrition

Priest: Gives absolution, which ends "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Penitent answers: "Amen"

Priest: "Go in Peace"

Penitent: "Thanks be to God"

ACT OF CONTRITION: Oh my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishment, but most of all because they offend thee, my God, who are all good, and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more, and to avoid the near occasions of sin.

Amen

IV
PREPARATION FOR FIRST EUCHARIST

Please observe the following guidelines for respecting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, children making their First Holy Communion, and each other as we pray for and share this beautiful moment with the children.

While in Church, both before and after Mass, the congregation is asked to observe a respectful silence in the Presence of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament. All parents and guests should dress "church appropriate" in terms of neckline, length of dress etc. Parents and guests are also asked to remain seated in their pews during the Mass. All cell phones must be silenced to preserve the sanctity of the Mass.

- A. First Eucharist: Saturday, May 2, 2026 at 10:00am. Children are to report downstairs in the hall dressed. Time TBD.
- B. Practice: There will be TWO rehearsals. Bot practices will be held on Wednesday, April 29th & Thursday, April 30th from 6:00 – 7:30pm in the Church. Children must attend both. Parents may stay for each practice or drop their child off. If you stay, I ask that you sit at the back of the church. If you decide to leave, please return by 7:15pm for a brief meeting.
- C. Dress code: Children are required to dress appropriately for First Eucharist. Please have them use the bathroom before coming to church.
- Girls: white dresses suitable for Mass. No strapless dresses, low necklines, short hemlines, or spaghetti straps. Stockings/tights, headpieces and veils are optional. Gloves, jewelry, rosary beads, purses and /or prayer books **may not** be carried into Mass. White dress shoes are required. No sneakers.
- Boys: a suit or sports jacket and slacks with a dress shirt and tie are to be worn. White suits are acceptable. Prayer books and/or rosary beads **may not** be carried into Mass. Dress shoes are required. No sneakers.
- D. Flowers: Boutonnieres and bouquets may be given to the children **after** Mass.
- E. Pictures/Videos: **No pictures or videos are to be taken during the Mass.** This is a sacred liturgy and there will be NO distractions. Pictures and private photographers are permitted AFTER the Mass.
- F. After the Mass, all children will head back to the hall for dismissal. Please come meet your child and pick up their white bag and First Holy Communion certificate.