

*St. Isidore's
Sacraments of Reconciliation & Holy Eucharist
Preparation Guide*



"Do This In Remembrance Of Me"
Luke 22:19

Sacrament Preparation Letter	3
Sacrament Preparation Information	4
The Religion Core Curriculum For Years One And Two	4
Sacrament Schedule	5
First Eucharist Retreat	5
Saturday, April 2, 2022 - 9:00 - 12:00 p.m. - School Gym	5
The Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)	5
The Day Of The Sacrament Of Reconciliation	5
The Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist	5
The Day of the Sacrament of Eucharist	5
Dress Code	5
THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION	6
Parents Are The Primary Educators Of Your Children In Matters Of Faith	6
Effects of the Sacrament of Reconciliation	6
Four Elements of the Sacrament of Reconciliation	7
Catechesis For The Reception Of First Penance And Reconciliation	7
The Sacrament Of Reconciliation And Children	7
Scripture References for Sacrament of Penance	8
How Can A Parent Help With The Sacramental Preparation For First Penance And Reconciliation?	8
Parental Involvement	9
Practical Suggestions	9
Preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation	9
An Examination of Conscience for Children...using the Ten Commandments*	11
The Rite Of The Sacrament Of Reconciliation	13
Sacrament of Reconciliation Activity (Print Out)	14
THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY EUCHARIST	15
The Source and Summit of our Catholic Faith	15
About The Eucharist	15
Sacramental Preparation for the Reception of First Eucharist	15
The Communion Fast *	16
Teaching Your Child About The Holy Mass	16
First Holy Communion Do's	17
Practice the faith with your children!	17
FIRST HOLY COMMUNION NOTES	18
Retreat	18
Family-Centered Mass	18
Group Mass	19
Correct Postures	19
Pictures	19
Traditional Catholic Prayers	20

Sacrament Preparation Letter



Dear Parent / Guardian,

Since its earliest days, the Church has recognized parents as the first educators of the faith. It is within the “domestic Church” created by each Christian family that baptized children first learn about God’s love for them. Little by little, they are taught to love God through simple prayer and good deeds. Within the family atmosphere, young consciences are formed and develop as they begin to recognize good and bad choices, and how these choices help or hurt their relationship with God and God’s people.

Your children are now of catechetical age. Their faith formation takes on more formal tones as they have been enrolled in a religious education program in our Parish. Although the practice and living of the Catholic faith is still the primary obligation of the parent, the School and PREP aid our parish families in the religious training of our Parish children. Now the religion lessons of the home are further developed intellectually and intuitively on an age-appropriate level.

This year is a very important time in your child’s faith life as he/she prepares to meet Jesus in a new way in the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. In addition to classroom instruction, a parish sacramental program that includes informational and formational packages has been structured to enhance parental involvement in this sacramental preparation. We urge you to take advantage of these opportunities. Also, take advantage of this special time to tell your child the stories about your own reception of the sacraments and about other personal faith moments. Pray daily at meal times and before bedtime. Talk to him or her about his/her guardian angel or about our Catholic saints. Most importantly, on Sundays, assist with your child at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the central mystery and belief of the Catholic sacramental life.

We hope we have provided some guidance during this time of preparation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Director of Religious Education or your child’s teacher / catechist. St. Isidore’s Parish has a wonderful team of people dedicated to your child’s spiritual development and knowledge of our faith.

Our priest, staff, teachers, catechists, and entire parish family look forward to sharing this special occasion with you and your children.

Jeffrey Daley
Director of Religious Education
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Sacrament Preparation Information

1) Archdiocese of Philadelphia Policy for the reception of sacraments;

- A student must receive two (2) consecutive years of Religious Education to be eligible to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Penance), Holy Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Each parish prepares their own sacrament programs within the guidelines promulgated by the Archdiocesan Office of Catechetical Formation.
- Children are required to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation) in the parish in which their family is registered.

2) St. Isidore Parish Policy for the reception of sacraments:

- Children must be baptized.
- The child's family is registered in St. Isidore Parish.
- Parents must be active participants of the Catholic faith who regularly attend Mass weekly.
- Parents' participation in the preparation process is essential and are expected to assist their children with home assignments throughout the process.
- Children must have regular class attendance, complete all assigned projects, and participate in practice sessions and the First Eucharist retreat.

The Religion Core Curriculum For Years One And Two

The following beliefs of the Catholic faith are taught on a level that is psychologically and educationally appropriate for a primary school aged child. These guidelines have been developed and approved by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in answer to the Church's call to promote the faith through religious education. Please refer to your child's religion textbook for specific information.

Year One

The Trinity- God, the Father and Creator (and how we live in the world);
God, the Son and our Savior of the World, Jesus Christ;
God, the Holy Spirit, who lives in us and gives us grace through
the Sacraments of Initiation

The Church and the Liturgical Seasons

Mary—her feast days and special prayers and devotions

Prayers –Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Doxology (Glory be)

Year Two

Build On Year One's Concepts And Introduces:

The Seven Sacraments (Initiation, Healing, & at the service of communion)

The Mass and its parts

The Mass and the Eucharist—praise, thanks, grace and community

Sacred vestments and vessels used at Mass

Sacramentals of the Church

Act of Contrition

Sacrament Schedule

First Eucharist Retreat

Saturday, April 1, 2023 - 9:00 - 12:00 p.m. - School Gym

The Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)

Thursday Evening, April 20, 2023. 6:30 p.m. - St. Isidore Church

May Procession - Sunday, May 14, 2023 -11:00 a.m. Mass - Children are invited and encouraged to wear their First Communion outfits.

The Day Of The Sacrament Of Reconciliation

- Children are to arrive no later than 6:15 p.m. as the Sacrament of Reconciliation is scheduled for 6:30 p.m.
- Upon arrival please report sign in at the registration table in the Narthex.
- DRESS CODE - All children, parents/guardians, guests are required to dress appropriately in recognition of the sacredness of the sacrament. Please no jeans, sports attire, sneakers, T-shirts, etc.
- SEATING – Families are to proceed to the front of the Church and select a pew on either side of the center aisle.
- Upon completion of the reception of the sacrament, the child will pray their penance in the Chapel and then return to the family's pew. During this time parents should not speak with the child and create a quiet time.

The Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist

(Separate Google Form Link to sign up for your preference)

Option 1 - Saturday, April 29, 2023 - 11:00 a.m. Mass

Option 2 - Sunday, April 30, 2023 - 11:00 a.m. Mass

The Day of the Sacrament of Eucharist

First Communicants are to arrive no later than 10:30 a.m. and proceed directly to the Daily Mass Chapel.

Dress Code

Please be mindful of the sacredness of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist and we are always to be reverent and respectful.

- **GIRLS** – are little innocent children and should be dressed age appropriately. White dress, white veil, white socks/tights, and white shoes are to be worn. The dress should cover the shoulders, no gowns with trains, no backless shoes or heels, which could present a hazard for your child. No pocketbooks are to be brought to church. No gloves or corsages may be worn during Mass.
- **BOYS** – are required to wear a white dress shirt, solid tie, dress shoes, any color suit or sports jacket with dress pants. No sneakers, flip flops, sandals, etc. No boutonniere may be worn.

RECEPTION OF HOLY EUCHARIST - The Communicants will receive their First Eucharist, followed by the congregation is welcome to receive the Holy Eucharist.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION



Parents Are The Primary Educators Of Your Children In Matters Of Faith

“Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.” (Declaration on Christian Education-Vatican II)

“Parents have the right and duty to be intimately involved in preparing their children for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Catechesis aims to help parents grow in understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist and participate in catechizing their children.” (“Sharing the Light of Faith” National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the U.S. 1979)

Because Jesus loves us so much, He calls us back to God's mercy and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He will forgive any sin if we show true repentance. Repentance is a change of heart...a turning away from sin toward God. When repentance comes from our deep love of God, an understanding of our own sinfulness, and the desire to repair our relationships, it is known as perfect repentance, also known as Contrition. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is central to being a member of the Christian community for there can be no love and peace within a community of believers if there is no forgiveness among us.

Effects of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Helps us to live in harmony with others
- Fills us with the love of God
- Enables our willing response to God's actions in our lives
- Restores justice and rectifies the wrong done to others
- Renews our human dignity

Four Elements of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- **Contrition** – the most important act of the penitent (a person who repents of their sins) which is heartfelt sorrow and aversion for the sin committed along with the intention of sinning no more.
- **Confession** – the confessing of sins (telling) comes from the true knowledge of self before God and from contrition for those sins. This includes the inner examination of conscience and of the heart and made in the light of God’s mercy.
- **Penance** – an action of atonement for sins committed by changing one’s life and rectifying any injuries
- **Absolution** – through the sign of absolution by the priest God grants pardon to sinners.

Catechesis For The Reception Of First Penance And Reconciliation

“Catechesis for children must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of individuals. It seeks, first, to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child’s life; second, to help the child to recognize moral good and evil, repent for wrongdoing, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church; third, to encourage the child to see that, in this sacrament, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving; fourth, to encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly.”

National Catechetical Directory, Article #126

The Sacrament Of Reconciliation And Children

Jesus loves children. As a child himself, he was raised by Joseph and Mary in their home in the town of Nazareth. Growing up among relatives, friends and the town folks, Jesus knew of the concerns and problems of children, such as sickness, lack of confidence, being sensitive, mistreated by elders, etc. Within this environment, "He grew, became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him."(Lk2:40)

Jesus also demonstrated his solicitude for children by healing them and raising some who experienced an early death, such as restoring life to Jairus’ daughter and the Widow Nain's son. He freed the daughter of a Greek woman from demon possession and He healed an epileptic boy.

His fundamental concern was always for the spiritual development of children. The greatest gift God the Father can give to anyone, including children, is *faith in his only begotten Son*. Jesus declared that the Father reveals the Son to children more readily than to the learned and clever. Recalling these examples of Jesus’ attention to children sets the proper context for helping children examine their conscience and preparing them for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This sacrament allows Jesus to express his love for today's children. Through it, He continues to influence their lives; he demonstrates his power to heal them: free them from the bondage of sin, and raise them to new life. In turn, this sacrament helps children to come to know and love Jesus. For these reasons, Jesus still exhorts us to... *“Let the children come to me!”*

Scripture References for Sacrament of Penance

(Source is The Catechism of the Catholic Church)

“You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11)

In the Sacrament of Baptism, the gift of new life as a child of God and the promise for eternal life is given. Nevertheless, the magnitude of this sacrament of initiation does not remove the attraction of human nature to sin. The life of a baptized Catholic, therefore, is a continual journey of one’s spirit turning towards God and away from the temptations of this world that rupture our relationship with God and the Church. This is the struggle of conversion to Christ, holiness, and eternal life.

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)

At times, however, the believer fails to follow the Gospel message of Jesus Christ by giving into these temptations. Theologically these actions are called sins. Sins that involve a serious or grave matter and are a total and deliberate turning away from God and rejection of the Church are called mortal sins. Everyday faults that do not remove us from communion with God and the Church are called venial.

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week” Jesus showed himself to the Apostles and “breathed the Holy Spirit on them, and said to them: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ (John 20:19, 22-23)

Only God can forgive sins.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is the Church’s liturgical prayer that reconciles a believer who has sinned with God. In this sacrament, the sinner admits to Christ, in the person of the priest, his/her offense to the Christian life while expressing a sincere contrition and willingness to make satisfaction for this sin. Within the loving and merciful embrace of God’s Holy Spirit, the sinner is pardoned by the priest and returned to a life of grace. Thus, the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation restores the baptismal relationship between Father and child and continues the interior conversion of the believer.*

Mortal sins must be confessed to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance. It is not strictly necessary but is strongly encouraged by the Church to confess venial sins to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance. Regular confession of venial sins helps a believer to form his/her conscience in order to recognize and avoid these temptations while being healed through the saving love of Jesus Christ.

How Can A Parent Help With The Sacramental Preparation For First Penance And Reconciliation?

Repetition is the mother of all learning. This is especially true of a primary school age child when looking forward to a big life event. This notion also carries over to sacramental preparation with young children.

The Church has always maintained that a consistent and loving witness to one’s faith by a parent teaches more than any classroom lesson to a child. Parents, therefore, should be mindful of the child’s prayer life, in particular, worshiping at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and saying daily prayers. In addition, parents should teach the child about the Catholic faith and support your child’s catechist by reviewing all classroom work and assignments at home.

Parental Involvement

1. As parents, be aware that you teach more by what you are and do than what you say.
2. Children learn more through moods, sights, sounds, and activities than by reason and reciting.
3. Develop genuine attitudes of faith and reverence in your child by example. Lead them to the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
4. Provide religious experiences in your home. Short periods of quiet and help to accustom the child to a sense of God's Presence.
5. Pray with the child in a calm, gentle manner to set the mood for silent exchange with God, and in some way the child will think of God.
6. Read short passages from the Bible, e.g. The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, the Last Supper, and The Prodigal Son.

Practical Suggestions

1. Give the child love and security. Develop the child's self image.
2. Give the child guidance and discipline that comes from love.
3. Reflect with your child upon God as a loving parent always loving and forgiving.
4. Acknowledge and discuss with the child times when their actions were a source of joy, pleasure, courage, and comfort.
5. Affirm the goodness of the child. God the child is distinguishing between that which is dangerous, that which is improper, that which is evil and that which is simply annoying to adults.
6. Quietly sit with a child to discuss with him or her the effects that's on the family or class of some irresponsible action of his / hers.
7. Assist the child in adjusting personal needs to the needs of the family or community.
8. Help a child work through a decision by provoking consideration of the feelings of others that will be affected by the decision.
9. Allow the child the opportunity to make mistakes and to be forgiven.
10. Help the child to experience forgiveness by using signs of forgiveness within the family (words, gestures, etc).
11. Express your sorrow for failure to the child and to the family.
12. In keeping with a child's age, give the child responsibilities and allow him / her to experience the consequences of their actions, whether positive or negative.
13. Set an example of how the Christian life is lived.
14. Read stories from the Bible that teach love and forgiveness- Zacchaeus (Luke 19) Prodigal Son (Luke 15), Widow's Mite (MEK 12), Good Shepherd (Luke 15) unjust servant (Matthew 18).

Preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation

There is no need to provide a child with a detailed list of sins, nor for a young child to examine his / her conscience on the basis of every conceivable sin. Similarly, there is no need for a young child to go into great detail about the number of sins. It is difficult for them to scrutinize their past actions and great detail. A more spontaneous expression of the things for which the child is sorry and wants forgiveness is more important in the child's relationship with God and God's people.

To approach the sacrament of penance a child should have an understanding of the following:

1. That sin is a wrongdoing for which he or she is personally responsible.
2. Children believe that they are what they do. Help them to understand that what they do is wrong, who they are is never wrong.
3. That sin hurts others in some way.
4. That God is displeased with sin.
5. That God loves us persistently and constantly despite our sins.
6. That God desires to forgive us for our sins and does so whenever we are sorry.
7. That God's people, too, love and forgive us.
8. That through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we tell God and his people that we are sorry. God and His People express their forgiveness and strengthen their love for us. We praise and thank God for his great merciful love.
9. That we must have a desire to be forgiven of our sins and to please God by our lives.
10. That the child should have an understanding of the Examination of Conscience and Form of the Rite of Confession.

The child must also have a basic understanding of God the Father who is our Creator and Jesus Christ who came to show us how to love. Jesus loved us so much that he died for us and rose from the dead. The Holy Spirit helps us to please our Heavenly Father. We share more fully in God's life and goodness by receiving his special gifts, the Sacraments.

Think about...

Does a child realize when things are right and wrong?

Is the child's attitude toward the sacrament positive? Here parents can help a lot by sharing their positive attitudes (e.g. God is my loving Father. He loves me. He wants to forgive me. God loves us no matter what we do. God always loves the sinner although he hates the sin. When I am sorry I am forgiven and reconciled with my Father.)

A Sacrament is a sign of (external) that Jesus made to touch us with God's love. Sorrow can be expressed without going to the Sacrament and it should be, but the Sacrament is Jesus's concrete way of showing us so we are forgiven. In the Sacrament we receive strength and help to follow Jesus better.

Can the child express his sorrow? Has he done this in the family situation?

Since sacramental preparation asks for the mastery of new concepts and prayers, some additional suggestions for this year follow:

1. Help your child become acquainted with the Rite of Penance by role- playing the Rite of Penance with your child.
2. At bedtime or another convenient time read and discuss the story of the Good Shepherd.
3. Pray the questions of the Examination of Conscience while your child answers privately in his/her heart to God.
4. As a response to this examination, say the Act of Contrition with your child, end with the Prayer of Absolution from the Rite of Penance.
5. Write a "Message of Love" and give to your child either after his/her reception of the sacrament.

Finally, if you sense that your child is not ready for this sacrament please discuss this situation with your child's teacher or catechist.

An Examination of Conscience for Children...using the Ten Commandments*

1. ***"I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me."***

Have I wanted more things (games, toys, iPads, cell phones, etc.) than I needed and do I think they are more important than God?

Have I let my activities such as sports, dancing, choir, martial arts, etc. cause me to miss Holy Mass on the weekend? Do I place participation in activities as more important than God and ignore God and that which I have been taught about Him?

2. ***"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."***

Do I use God's name disrespectfully?

Do I use God's name in anger or say bad words to parents, friends, classmates?

3. ***Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day***

Did I participate at Holy Mass when required to do so on Sundays and holy days of obligation?

4. ***Honor your Father and Mother***

Do I argue with my Mom or Dad when asked to do something? Do I hurt them by calling them names, use foul language, screaming, or being disrespectful? Do I talk back to them or others such as teachers, coaches, adults?

5. ***You shall not kill.***

Have I bullied or made fun of others, calling them names, and harming their reputations?

Do I hold grudges, try to get even with others? Have I been unfair, hurtful towards others, especially those who are different than I am?

6. ***You shall not commit adultery***

Do I show respect for my body? Am I respectful of the body of others? Do I read obscene material, or read or view anything that is not right for my age?

7. ***You shall not steal***

Have I ever taken something that belongs to someone else?

Have I ever cheated on a test or copied someone else's homework?

Do I play fairly in sports and games by following the rules?

8. ***You shall not bear false witness (tell a lie) against your neighbor***

Have I been honest or have I lied to my parents, teachers, friends?

Have I hurt someone by what I have said or done?

9. ***You shall not covet your neighbor's wife***

Have I been jealous of the friends someone else has?

Have I tried to be kind to others?

10. ***You shall not covet your neighbor's goods***

Have I been jealous of the things my friends have?

Have I nagged my parents into buying things because my friends have them?

Have I helped others when they needed help?

* Parents and Guardians are encouraged to lead their child in learning the Ten Commandments and assisting them with preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Rite Of The Sacrament Of Reconciliation

What will happen during the Rite

1. You will enter the confessional or sit face to face with the priest.
2. You will say/ make the Sign of the Cross.

Child: **"In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. "**

"Bless me Father for I have sinned. (This is my first confession) and these are my sins _____."

Say all your sins and how many times you did each, then say,

Child: **"For these and those I cannot now remember, I am truly sorry"**

(When you go to confession anytime after your first time, you say this instead " Bless me Father for I have sinned. My last confession was __ago, and these are my sins.")

3. Listen to Father's advice and pay attention to your penance. Pray the Act of Contrition
4. The Act of Contrition

Child: **O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishments but most of all because they offend you, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen**

5. The priest will raise his right hand over you and say a prayer to absolve you of your sins. You make the Sign of the Cross when Father says,

"And I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. "

Child: **"Amen. "**

Priest: *"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good."*

Child: **"His mercy endures forever."**

Priest: *"The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace"*

Child: **"Thanks be to God"**, Make the Sign of the Cross and leave the confessional or seat if you are face to face.

Proceed to a pew in the Chapel, pray your penance, then proceed back to your family.

Sacrament of Reconciliation Activity (Print Out)

Directions: Cut each line of the prayer and mix. Encourage your child to put them in the correct order like a puzzle. Place them in a baggie so they do not get lost. Repeat often!!!

Act of Contrition

**O my God, I am heartily sorry
for having offended you,
And I detest all my sins
because of your just punishments
But most of all because
they offend you, my God,
Who are all good
and deserving of all my love.
I firmly resolve,
with the help of your grace,
To sin no more and
to avoid the near occasions of sin.
Amen**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY EUCHARIST

The Source and Summit of our Catholic Faith



About The Eucharist

Eucharist is a Greek word meaning *thanksgiving*. Whenever we celebrate the Eucharist we bless God and thank God for creation, for redeeming us, and for making us holy.

The Eucharist is the “source and summit” of the Christian life. The other sacraments and indeed all Church ministries and works of the apostolate are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the Blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself. We recognize that Christ is with us in the Breaking of the Bread; all of us who eat the one broken bread, who is Christ, enter into communion with him and form one body with Him.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1390) gives assurance that Christ is present in a sacramental way under each form – the bread and the wine – and that receiving only the bread (the host) brings all the grace of the Eucharist. At the same time, “the sign of communion is more complete when given under both species, in this way the form of the Eucharistic meal appears more clearly.”

When we pray the Eucharistic Prayer during the Mass, the sacrifice of Christ becomes present to us once more, we then offer this sacrifice of praise to God in thanksgiving as we recall His Holy Sacrifice. The expression "Sacred Mysteries" reminds us that in this celebration the whole of the Church's life of prayer and worship finds its source.

Sacramental Preparation for the Reception of First Eucharist

In their document, *“Sharing the Light of Our Faith”*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops state that a child who has reached the age of reason should be taught and have an understanding on his/her spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and psychological level for the following theological concepts before reception of his/her First Holy Communion:

1. God is a loving and a just God.
2. The Trinity is one God—Father, Son, and Spirit.
3. Jesus is the Son of God who was born and died for our sins.

4. The Holy Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Jesus and is different from ordinary bread.
5. Holy Communion is to be received devoutly* and in the state of grace.
6. Eucharist is the central mystery and heart of our Catholic faith.
7. A Catholic assists at Sunday Mass in order to be nourished by the Bread of Life or Holy Communion.

The Communion Fast *

Regular meals and solid food or liquids may be taken up to one hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water and medicine may be taken at any time; they never break the fast.

These regulations apply at all times, whether Holy Communion is received at Mass in the morning, afternoon, evening or at mid-night. The sick and infirmed, as well as those who care for them, may receive Holy Communion even if they have taken something during the previous hour. Just a reminder: gum and candy are solid foods; so, they may not be eaten within one hour of Mass.

TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT THE HOLY MASS

As a Catholic Christian parent you are **obligated** to attend weekly Mass with your child(ren) and help them to focus on the parts of the Mass and their meaning. The attention span of a child is very short and they will need encouragement from you to concentrate. You can help them to focus at different moments in the Mass such as:

The Gathering Rite – As Mass begins, invite your child to pray for all those they know who are in the church today.

The Penitential Rite – Ask your child to think about someone they may have hurt by word or action and they are now truly sorry for doing so and desire to be forgiven.

The Gloria – Encourage your child to sing/pray with the angels and tell God they are very happy.

Scripture Readings – Help your child to listen attentively to the words from the:

- First Reading from the Old Testament and the Second Reading from the New Testament which tell us about God's love for all people and how each of these Scripture Readings help us to know how God wants us to live.
- The Holy Gospel - the priest or deacon reads to us from one of the Gospels. There are four (4) Gospels one written by St. Matthew; one written by St. Mark; one written by St. Luke; and one written by St. John. The Gospels tell us about the life of Jesus and what he said and what He did to help people. The Gospels teach us to love others the way Jesus loves everyone. We stand to listen to the Gospel because it is the Word of God and we listen to Jesus and do what he wants us to do.

The Creed – When we are saying the Creed together, point out that when we say, I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Spirit, etc. The Creed tells the story of our faith, so we stand together and say it.

General Intercessions – Invite your child to think of someone for whom they wish to pray.

Presentation of the Gifts - Now people bring up the bread and wine that will become the Body and Blood of Jesus. The priest offers bread and wine to God. He asks God to bless the bread and wine. Assist your child in naming the Eucharistic Gifts that are being brought to the celebrant (priest) of the Mass.

Eucharistic Prayer – Invite your child to listen to what the priest is reading and to thank Jesus for giving His life for us.

The Consecration - When the priest says the *words of consecration*, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. We call this food the Eucharist. It is Jesus. At Holy Communion time we will welcome Jesus into our hearts. It is a very special time. It is a miracle!

Receiving Holy Communion – We welcome Jesus into our hearts. He has come to meet us *Now*. We need to have faith and really believe that He is really here--- Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity. Holy Communion is a special time for you to talk to Jesus. We can tell him anything. We can also listen to him speak to us.

Blessing and Dismissal – The priest blesses everyone with the Sign of the Cross at the end of the Mass and we as we bless ourselves (making the Sign of the Cross over yourself). Although the Mass has ended, we do not say goodbye to Jesus. He will remain in our heart even after we leave the church.

Practice the faith with your children!

Weekly Mass attendance is a must! This is not a requirement set forth by our pastor or the staff at St. Isidore's. Attendance at Sunday Mass is a crucial part of the Catholic faith! Pope John Paul II once wrote, "Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area: they are educators because they are parents." At your child's baptism, you accepted the responsibility "to bring your child up in the practice of the faith." While it is our privilege to teach your children, it is your obligation to do so. We can teach them the cognitive aspects, but you need to help them with the spiritual preparation. The best way to prepare your child for First Holy Communion is to attend Mass with your child regularly. Next step: Have your child attend the Children's Liturgy of the Word during weekend Masses. The children love this, and the leaders do a great job with the children. Another idea: ask an usher if your family can take up the Offertory gifts at Mass. A birthday or anniversary is a nice time to establish this tradition.

Try to provide some religious experience in your home.

Religion should not be restricted to Church or St. Isidore's School or PREP. Praying before meals or at bedtime is a good place to start. You can practice formal prayers or perhaps have your child talk to God in their own words. Ask your child for whom he/she wants to pray, then pray with them at their level. This builds your child's relationship with God and strengthens family relationships. The word *eucharist* means "to give thanks." Take time to thank God for all his blessings. Next step: sharing Bible stories. It helps to have a good Children's Bible with pictures! These stories have lessons for people of all ages and can be applied to our everyday lives. Keep in mind - your child will learn Christian attitudes from your values and goals and from your reaction to all that happens daily.

Understand that Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation are the Sacraments of Initiation.

Your child's First Holy Communion should be the beginning of a lifetime of being nourished at the table of the Lord. It is about introducing young people into a life of faith and worship. Keep up the practice of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ after April. The Eucharist will continue to join us more fully with Christ and strengthen us to live as sons and daughters of God. Please remember a child's readiness for this Sacrament is age appropriate. A seven-year-old can only understand and experience the Eucharist as a seven-year-old. It may be difficult for a child to fully understand that the bread and wine have indeed become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. As a child grows in knowledge and faith, understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist will naturally deepen.

Emphasize the Sacrament of the Eucharist as the heart of our Christian faith and life.

While this occasion is a reason for celebration, please remember to emphasize the spiritual importance of this special event. The focus should not be on the party, the dress, the pictures or the gifts. If giving gifts, give your child something to help him/her remember the sacredness of the occasion. St. Isidore Parish will give the children pins to commemorate this special occasion. Bibles, prayer books, crosses, scapulars, rosaries or picture frames will be kept forever as a remembrance!

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION NOTES



Retreat

Our First Holy Communion Retreat for all students will be held on *Saturday, April 1st - 9:00-12:00 in the school gym*. This is a great experience for students and staff! They will be divided into four groups and rotate through "stations". Volunteers are needed for each station and as group leaders.

Family-Centered Mass

A pew will be reserved for your immediate family. When it comes time to receive the Eucharist for the first time, your child will receive instructions before Mass. Only your child will receive the Eucharist at that time. If you wish to receive the Eucharist, please do so with the general congregation. Only children who are selected as gift bearers should participate in the offertory.

Please inform us of any special accommodations that may be needed. (Elderly, wheelchairs etc.)

Group Mass

Pews will be reserved for the children only. The children will sit with their classmates and approach the altar one-by-one after each other. Only children who are selected as gift bearers should participate in the offertory. Please inform us of any special accommodations that may be needed. (Elderly, wheelchairs etc.)

Correct Postures

When your child approaches the priest to receive Communion, he/she should bow as the priest says, "The Body of Christ." After Father says this, the communicant responds, "Amen." When receiving by hand, they are to place one hand over the other, depending on which hand is dominant, then move aside, put the host in their mouth, bless themselves, and continue walking.

Pictures

Any pictures are to be taken from the pew. No one is permitted in the aisles at any time. However, picture-taking should not disrupt your child's encounter with the Living Christ. *Family members must not enter the sanctuary to take pictures.* Flash bulbs and children trying to smile for the cameras will interfere with the sacredness of this occasion. Also, you will receive information from a professional photographer who will be present at both First Holy Communion Masses. This service is optional. Picture time in the main Church before and after Masses will be limited.

Traditional Catholic Prayers

Children are required to memorize these prayers, which will enable them to easily recall them.

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and
of the Son, and of the Holy
Spirit. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (Our Father)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy
kingdom come; thy will be
done on earth as it is in
heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who
trespass against us; and lead
us not into temptation but
deliver us from evil. Amen

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace
the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your
womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners, now and
at the hour of our death. Amen.

PRAYER TO ST. MICHAEL

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle. Be our defense against the
wickedness and snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O
Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust
into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about
the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

The Glory be to the Father

Glory be to the Father, and to
the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now
and ever shall be a world without end. Amen.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator
of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived
by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,
died and was buried; he descended into hell;
On the third day he rose again from the dead
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand
of the Father almighty from there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic church
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body and live everlasting .
Amen

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our
sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor
banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our
sighs, mourning, and weeping in the valley of tears.
Turn then, O most gracious and advocate, thine eyes of
mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us
the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O
loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be
made worthy of the promises of Christ.