

2nd Grade

Parent Handbook:

Preparing Your Child to Receive the
Sacraments of Reconciliation and
Holy Communion



"Let the Children Come to Me."

Immaculate Conception Faith Formation

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Important Dates

First Reconciliation Retreat

Sunday January 28th
11:30am-1:30pm
Basement



First Reconciliation

Saturday, February 3rd @ 10:00am
Church

First Communion Retreat

Sunday March 4th
11:30am-1pm
Basement



First Communion Practice

Saturday, April 21st @ 10:00am
Church

Candlelight Service

Wednesday, April 18th @7pm
Church

First Communion Mass

Sunday, April 22nd @ 1:00pm
Church



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

At Baptism, we become a part of God's family, the Church, and receive sanctifying grace: God's life within us. Through sin, we can lose the life of God within us. In His great love, God gives us the possibility of renewing baptismal graces through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Jesus gave us this sacrament in order that our friendship with Him might be restored. He told His Apostles: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). He entrusted His Apostles – the first bishops – with this great task that is passed down to all priests and bishops through their priestly ordination. When celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest is acting in the person of Jesus Christ. When we receive this sacrament, we encounter the person of Jesus Christ and His infinite mercy. Through the words of absolution pronounced by the priest, we are reconciled to God and to the Church. This sacrament is a gift that helps us grow in holiness.

While absolution is given by God through the priest, there are three requirements that we must carry out in order that we might receive the grace of forgiveness. We must first have contrition: sorrow for our sins and a resolution to not sin again. Secondly, we must confess our sins. Confession to a priest is an essential part of this sacrament. The sacramental seal of confession means that the priest must keep anything said in the confessional private, without exception. Lastly, we must do satisfaction for our sins; we must carry out the penance the priest gives us.

The Holy Eucharist

The Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1324). The life of the Church and all of her members is sustained by the Eucharist. It is truly the heart of the Church.



At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and instructed His Apostles to continue this memorial. He gives us His Body and Blood because He desires to remain with us. In His great love, He wants to be in communion with us. We call this sacrament “Holy Communion” because by it, we are intimately united to Christ. Jesus tells us: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). When we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving a taste of heaven, where we will spend eternity in communion with God.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass makes present the sacrifice which Christ offered to the Father on the cross.

Furthermore, our reception of this sacrament separates us from sin and unites us more closely to the Body of Christ, the Church.

How Can I Prepare My Child?

As parents, you are the primary teachers of your child. At your child's Baptism, you were given this responsibility: “Make it your constant care to bring [your child] up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives him/her is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in his/her heart” (Rite of Baptism n.120).

The most effective way you can prepare your child to receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion is by being a good example for your child. In order for your child to understand more fully the gift he or she receives in these sacraments, he or she must witness your frequent reception of these same sacraments. The most important thing you can do to help your child is to know, love, and receive these sacraments yourself.

Your consistent attention to helping your child review the Faith Formation lessons each week will ensure that he or she grasps the material being covered. Also, your assistance in helping your child memorize his or her prayers is of great importance. Please talk to your child about these sacraments and answer any questions he or she may have. Above all, it is important that your child attends Mass with you each week.

In preparation for First Reconciliation, help your child examine his or her conscience. Since your child was very young, you have helped him or her understand the difference between right and wrong. In preparation for this sacrament, help him or her see more clearly what it means to sin and turn away from God.

Is My Child Ready?

Typically around the age of seven or eight, children reach the “Age of Reason.” At this stage, they begin to develop a deeper understanding of right and wrong and begin to realize their ability to choose between right and wrong. They also begin to ask more questions, wanting to understand why things happen. Younger children may understand that an action is wrong because they have been told so (such as taking a cookie without permission), but they do not understand why the action is wrong. When children are entering the age of reason, they begin to understand why actions are wrong (being disobedient to mom and dad, stealing, etc.).

At this stage, most children have developed the basic mental, emotional, and behavioral moral capacities needed for a meaningful participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation: judging between right and wrong, being sorry, understanding forgiveness, and having the desire to change.

Because children at this stage have these capabilities, it is our responsibility to provide them with opportunities to receive these Sacraments by which they receive the grace to turn from sin and become more closely united with God.

Children at this stage may not have a full understanding of these sacraments, but through the reception of these sacraments their understanding will grow.

Examination of Conscience for Children

- Do I think of God and pray each day?
- Do I go to Mass every Sunday and Holy Day?
- Do I pray, sing, listen and respond at Mass or do I tease and distract others by laughing, talking, playing or ignoring what is said?
- Do I pay attention to my parents, priests and teachers when they talk to me about God?
- Do I obey my parents and teachers quickly and cheerfully or must I be reminded many times?
- Do I tell my parents or those in authority over me that I am sorry and ask them to forgive me when I have not obeyed them?
- Do I obey the rules of my home and school?
- Do I help my brothers, sisters and classmates when they need my help?
- Am I kind to everyone?
- Did I hit, kick or hurt others on purpose in any way?
- Am I willing to play with everyone?
- Did I make fun of or say mean things to anyone?
- Have I used bad language?
- Do I tell the truth?
- Do I say things about other people that are not true or that are not mine to share?
- Did I cheat in class or in a game?
- Did I steal or keep things that are not mine?
- Do I return things that I have borrowed?
- Am I willing to share my things with others?

How to Make a Private Confession

I say: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

I say: “Bless me Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession.”

I say: “These are my sins: I’ve...”

“That is all, Father.”

PRIEST: The priest will talk to me and give me my penance.

I say: My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You, Whom I should love above all things. I have hurt myself and others. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

PRIEST: Prays the *Prayer of Absolution*, absolving me of my sins.

I say: “Thank you Father.”

Prayers to Know

Sign of the Cross

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

Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

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, world without end. Amen.

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You, Whom I should love above all things. I have hurt myself and others. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

Traditions at Immaculate Conception

First Communion Banners

As a part of the preparation for First Communion, we ask each family to make a banner to hang in the church during the First Communion liturgy. These banners are to be a FAMILY project, which helps your child portray their understanding of the Eucharist. These banners can be made of any material and are to be decorated with symbols, pictures or designs that represent your child's understanding of this sacrament. They should be made on the material provided to you and your child's first name should be visible on the banner. You may also want to put the date of first communion (optional). (Resource: www.manylittleblessings.com/categories/first-communion-resources)

First Communion Clothing

It is our tradition at Immaculate Conception that our young girls receiving their First Communion wear white dresses and that our young boys wear dark pants and ties, with white shirts. If this will be a hardship in any way for your family, please let Theresa know as soon as possible.

New Things

At Home Family Formation Activities

Each child will be given an orange book for First Reconciliation and later a green book for First Communion. Attached to each book you will find a listing of dates and chapters to be completed and returned. Please take the 15 minutes per chapter and complete these exercises with your child. Please make this a special time to connect with both God and your child. Make the area special by lighting a candle and starting with prayer. What you put into it, your child will get out of it, the more positive you are the more excited and positive your child will be!

First Communion Prayer Partners

In order to involve the parishioners in this exciting time of preparation and to ensure that many people are praying for our 2nd graders as they prepare to receive First Holy Communion, we have begun a First Communion "Prayer Partner". In the months prior to their First Communion, parishioners will be invited to take an envelope from the Vestibule and pray for the student whose picture and contact information is inside the envelope. If you do not want your child to participate in this "prayer partner" blessing, please let Theresa know.