

Dear Families:

We hope this finds you well and healthy, and managing through the times we are currently living in. We are asking parents to guide their children through the First Communion Preparation program.

The preparation program is in the attached document. It includes videos taken from Blessed: First Communion & Reconciliation, and corresponding crafts and activities. The activities are structured in 3 sessions, but you are free to work with your child at your family's pace. Blessed is a very comprehensive

program, and we had to limit our selection to a small number of videos; you are welcome to view more videos using the links provided, if you wish.

We do ask that leading up to First Reconciliation, you review with your child the 5 steps of Reconciliation, to help your child feel prepared. The Reconciliation prayers were provided at the parent information meeting on March 7, 2022. The prayers are available on the Parish website. A hard copy of the prayers will be provided to your child on the day of First Reconciliation. Similarly, spend time with your child practicing how to receive Holy Communion: hands cupped, consuming the host promptly, and praying after receiving Communion. Bringing your child to Sunday Mass is the best way for your child to visually familiarize themselves with the Communion process.

Journeying with your child towards the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen every family's faith. We are very grateful for your efforts and co-operation in preparing your child for the Sacraments. We are really excited for your children as they journey towards First Communion and Reconciliation, and will keep them in our prayers!

Peace and blessings,

First Communion Preparation Team



FIRST COMMUNION PREPARATION PROGRAM



First Reconciliation

We start by talking about First Reconciliation because your children will receive this sacrament before First Communion. Receiving Reconciliation helps us to prepare to receive the body of Christ with clean hearts and slates. As Father Luigi says, we “receive a shower” to wash away our sins, and to bring us closer to God.

Videos

Episode 2: [Forgiveness](#) [Download](#) [View](#)

God always loves us and is always ready to forgive us, similar to how parents forgive their own children. He asks us to confess our sins, and let him know that we are very sorry. This brings us closer to God, and we receive his grace to help us be the best version of ourselves.

Episode 4: [Temptation, Sin, and Grace](#) [Download](#) [View](#)

We sin when we do something we know is wrong. We stress with our children that we all sin, but we are not bad. God never holds grudges and loves us no matter what.

5 Steps of Reconciliation

5 Steps of Reconciliation:

Step 1: Examination of Conscience--reflecting on the sins we will confess

- Have I been a good friend/brother/sister?
- Do I obey my parents/teacher?
- Have I told any lies?
- Do I cheat when I play?
- Have I taken things that belong to other people?
- Have I done anything that I am guilty about?



Step 2: We Confess Our Sins--we tell our sins to God through a priest, and we say we are sorry.

Step 3: Penance--the priest will ask us to say a prayer or do a kind deed for someone. This helps show God that we are sorry.

Step 4: Act of Contrition--a short prayer we pray promising to try not to sin anymore. (provided in the meeting handout, and will be provided on the evening of the First Reconciliation)

Step 5: Forgiveness--the priest says a special prayer and tells us that our sins are forgiven.



1

First Reconciliation

Craft: Reconciliation Treasure Chest

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church in which the faithful are forgiven from sins. Sacraments are physical ways that we engage with God. They give us a glimpse of the Kingdom of God in a way that we can understand. The purpose of Reconciliation is to reconcile with God, for us to repent our sins, and to receive His forgiveness, thus making us worthy to receive Him in the most Holy First Communion. This activity will help your child recognize the importance of receiving Reconciliation.



Supplies Needed:

- Construction Paper (Brown for the chest, and whatever colour you want for your background) Alternative: brown paper bag!
- Glue Stick
- Foiled Paper (can use aluminum foil, packaging, or just construction paper!)
- Jewels, beads, sequins or stickers
- Black Sharpie Marker
- Glitter Glue (optional)

Instructions:

- First, cut a long rectangle from your brown paper, and fold the top third down to be the lid. Glue onto your background paper like so without gluing the flap down. If you are using a brown paper bag, you can skip this step!
- Next, decorate your treasure chest!
- Cut out gem shapes from construction paper.
- Glue the gems onto the inside of the treasure chest or place inside the paper bag.
- Have your child write down some "gems" of reconciliation on them in sharpie (Examples: takes away my sins, increases my treasures in heaven, helps me say no to sin, makes my soul more beautiful, restores grace to my soul, helps me to be good, reconciles us with Jesus).
- Decorate some more!

2

First Communion



Videos



We move on to talking about First Communion. As Catholics, we believe that we receive the true presence of the body of Christ when we receive communion. Jesus loves us so much that he wants to share himself with us, and he wants us to remember him, especially his sacrifice on the cross. Imagine how much God must love us to sacrifice his beloved son!

Episode 1: [This Is a Special Day](https://www.catholic.com/blessed/first-communication/episode-1-this-is-a-special-day) - <https://www.catholic.com/blessed/first-communication/episode-1-this-is-a-special-day>

There can be nothing more special than Jesus giving himself to your child for the first time.

Episode 5: FROM THE BIBLE: THE LAST SUPPER - [Food for the Soul](https://www.catholic.com/blessed/first-communication/episode-5-from-the-bible-the-last-supper)

Jesus gave the gift of himself to his disciples at the Last Supper, and he continues to give himself to each of us each time we receive Holy Communion. Please read about the Last Supper with your child--Matthew 26:26-30 or Mark 14:22-26. This will help your child understand the origin of Holy Communion.

Talk to your child about how we can gift ourselves to others by doing things out of love for them. Make a list with your child of all the ways. "Today my gift to you is...just because I love you." We can give ourselves when we do something kind for a friend, family member, or anyone in need. During these difficult days, we have great examples of health care providers and volunteers who are treating/helping those infected with the Coronavirus. Many families buy groceries for elderly parents and relatives.

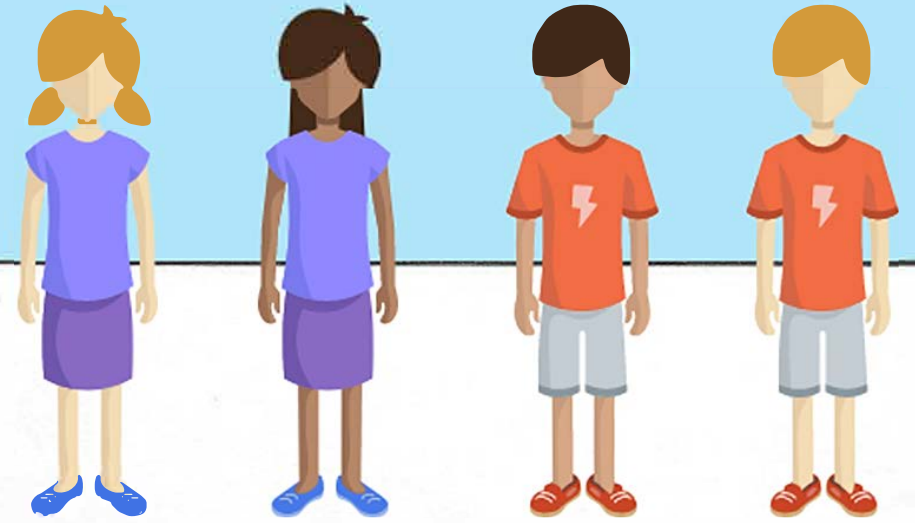
Next, talk with your child about how we can give ourselves to God, and include these on the list. We do this by going to mass, praying to God, and following his commandments (trying to be the best version of ourselves).



2

First Communion

Session 2 Activity: Sharing Yourself



To the Teacher

The gift that Jesus gives in holy Communion is the gift of himself. A parent may give the gift of himself or herself by fixing a special meal for the family, or by helping the children with their homework. A teacher may give the gift of himself or herself by encouraging children to learn. This week, help the children find new ways to give the gift of themselves to others by making personal coupon books explaining their gifts.

The children will need:

- 3" x 5" index cards, at least six per child
- Hole punch
- Markers
- 6" to 8" pieces of yarn

Direct the children in the following steps:

1. On one index card, have each child write: "I give the gift of myself." The children can make this the cover and decorate it with pictures and designs.
2. Punch a small hole at the top, left-hand corner of the cards and tie them together with the yarn, keeping the decorated card on top.
3. Discuss together the many ways that the children can give of themselves. Some ideas are: help Mom with the dishes; make a card for a person who is sick or lonely; share a toy with a friend. Encourage the children to come up with ideas for themselves.
4. On the top of each of the remaining index cards have the children print: "This coupon entitles you to..."
5. Now have the children write a gift of self on each coupon. If they have trouble coming up with enough gifts to fill all their coupons, remind them that some gifts can be given more than once.
6. Be sure the children leave one line at the bottom of their coupon to fill in the name of the person they will give the coupon to — Mom, Dad, Grandma, Susie, Tommy.
7. Tell the children that each time they give a coupon and complete their gift of self, they can write that gift on a leaf and paste it on their Jesus Tree.

THIS COUPON ENTITLES YOU TO...

TO: _____ FROM: _____

*To the Parents

Most children are accustomed to thinking of a gift as something material. Before your child can fully appreciate holy Communion as Jesus' "gift of himself," you need to help him or her understand how a person can be a gift.

The things you do every day, things your child may take for granted, are truly gifts of self. You can identify these gifts by saying, "Today my gift to you is..." and tell your child what you have done "just because I love you."

Other events can also be examined and identified as gifts of self. If a neighbor does something special for you or any member of the family, explain how that neighbor has given a gift of self. Talk about the missionaries whose whole lives are gifts of self to God. Tell your child of Mother Teresa, whose gift of self was given daily to the suffering people of India.

Read John 14:18-21, in which Jesus promises to live on in each of us. Explain that Jesus keeps that promise by giving the gift of himself through holy Communion.

From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- #519-21 on the mysteries of Jesus
- #655 on the significance of Jesus' Resurrection
- #1333-35 on the signs of bread and wine
- #1351 on the collection of gifts



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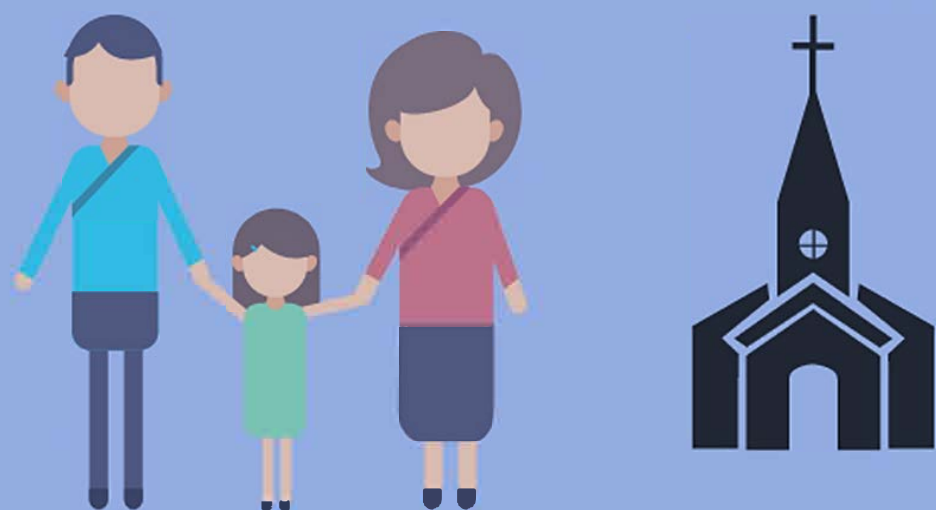
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3 First Communion



We continue talking about First Communion in the last session of the program. This session is dedicated to understanding how we might prepare to receive the Body of Christ, and what to do after we have received our First Communion. The impact that family can have on our faith, especially our Parish family, is emphasized in this session. We encourage you to take a self-guided tour to meet some of the volunteers in our parish as well as Fr. Luigi! We would love to chat with you and your child.

Video

Episode 6: [Jesus Is in You](#) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW330uYUW50](#)

How would you want to act if Jesus came to visit you? What would you want Jesus to catch you doing? These questions are addressed in this video. Talk to your child about their responses to these questions.

When we receive the Eucharist, our souls and being nourished, and we are receiving Jesus. This empowers us to do good deeds, spread the word of the Lord and develop a friendship with Jesus.

Craft: First Communion Plate

Supplies Needed:

- Plate
- Oven
- Sharpie
- Decorations (post-oven)

Instructions:

- Select an old plate to use for the craft and draw a design on the plate. Check out the picture for inspiration! You may want to include the date, the child's name and a message.
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Ensure that the oven is fully preheated, and then put the plate.
- Let the plate "cook" for 30 minutes.
- Turn the oven off after 30 minutes, but let the plate cool in the oven.
- After the plate has cooled, remove from the oven using a hot pad in case they haven't cooled completely.
- Decorate with additional items like sequins, gems, sparkles, etc.
- Display your finished plate!



Don't forget about your First Communion Checklist!



First Communion

PREPARATION

Checklist



01 | KINDNESS

- Compliment a family member
- Play nicely with a family member or pet

02 | PRAYER

- Pray the Our Father
- Say Grace before a meal with your family

03 | FORGIVENESS

- Apologize when you hurt someone
- Forgive someone when they hurt you

04 | THANKFULNESS

- Pick two things you are thankful for
- Share what you are thankful for with others

05 | HUMILITY

- Ask someone what you can do to help them
- Do something kind for someone without being asked

06 | DOING GOOD DEEDS

- Clean up your room without being asked
- Share a toy with a family member

07 | LOVE

- Tell someone you love them
- Show someone how much you love them by doing or making something

08 | RESPECT

- Listen to your parents even when you are upset
- Help with a chore

09 | CARING

- Say a prayer for people suffering with illness
- Call a grandparent or another family member to say hello