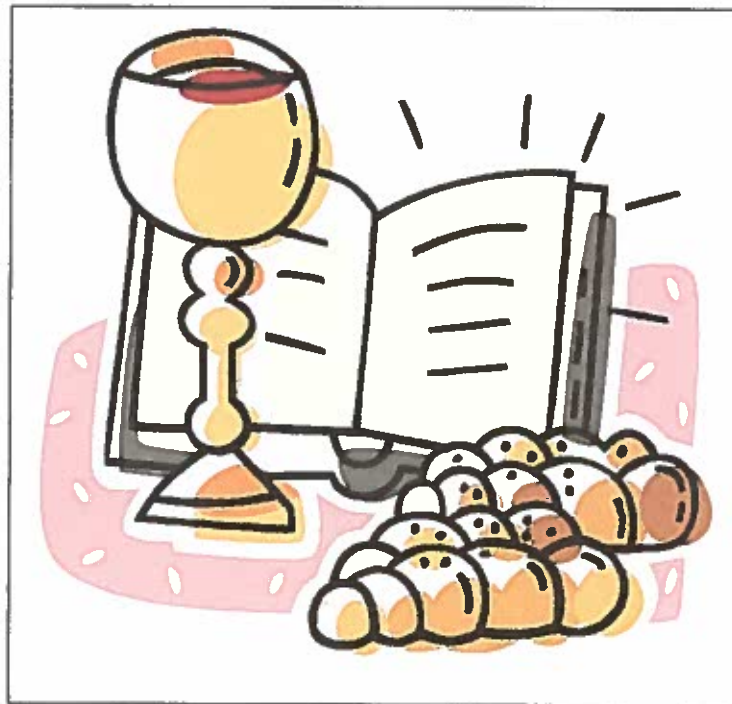


The Church of St. Catharine
2017-2018
First Penance &
First Holy Communion
Information Booklet for Parents



*First Penance & First Holy Communion
Information Booklet for Parents
2017-2018*

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September, 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This is a very special year for you and your child, and we hope to make it a memorable one for all of you. There are a number of details and activities involved with the reception of First Penance and First Holy Communion, and so this booklet has been prepared to facilitate some of the paper work and the questions that parents ask regarding the sacraments.

I ask that you look through this booklet and keep it handy during the next few months, as the information presented here will answer many questions.

The First Holy Communion Information Sheet and Parent Timeline have already been sent to you. **All Baptismal Certificates and forms need to be sent to the Religious Education Office no later than September 11 and 13.** It is not possible for a child to receive the Sacrament of First Penance or First Holy Communion without a Baptismal Certificate.

Thank you very much for all of your support and cooperation.

Blessings and Peace,

Dominica Vullo

Dominica Vullo
Coordinator of Religious Education

Prayer for Parents

Heavenly Father, make me a better parent.

*Teach me to understand my children,
To listen patiently to what they have to say,
and to answer all their questions kindly.*

Keep me from interrupting or contradicting them.

Make me as courteous to them as I would have them be to me.

*May I never laugh at their mistakes, or resort to ridicule when
they displease me.*

*Bless me with the confidence to grant them all their reasonable
requests and the courage to deny them privileges I know
will do them harm.*

*May I not rob them of the opportunity to think, to choose, and
to make decisions for themselves.*

Make me fair and just and kind.

*And fit me, O Lord, to be loved and respected and imitated by
my children.*

Amen.

Cary C. Meyers

**MY LOVE FOR
YOU WILL
NEVER END**



What is the Meaning of Holy Communion?

When we hear that someone is going to make First Communion, our reaction may be, "How Nice! The children look so innocent with their white dresses and blue suits. I hope their parents are having a party."

But truthfully, First Communion, or any Communion for that matter, is more than "nice"; it is extraordinary!

During the day before He died, Christ told His apostles to go see the owner of the house where they were having their Passover meal. Jesus knew that He was going to leave them and He wanted this last meal with His apostles to be something special. Jesus knew He was going to suffer and die. He also knew that He would no longer be with the apostles, as their teacher and leader here on earth.

After everyone had finished eating, Jesus took some ordinary bread and table wine and blessed them. He told the apostles to eat and drink this bread and wine, because they were now His body and blood. He told them that whoever eats and drinks His body and blood will have everlasting life. Then, because He knew He would be leaving the apostles, Jesus told them that whenever they do this miracle of changing ordinary bread and wine into His body and blood, they should remember how He did it the first time.

During the Last Supper with His apostles, Jesus gave us the sacrament of Holy Communion. This outward sign, given to us by Christ to give us grace, is His way of allowing those who followed after the apostles to have a chance to share in Christ physically. This sacrament is truly a miracle.

As the children receive First Communion, they are receiving the second of the three sacraments of initiation. The first was Baptism that they probably received as infants. The third is Confirmation that they will receive when they are in the eighth grade.

The earliest Christians who were converted by the apostles were the adults of their time. These new converts received all three of these sacraments at one time, when they were initiated into the Faith. Even today, adult converts to Catholicism, who have not already been baptized or confirmed, receive these three sacraments for the first time at the Easter Vigil service on Holy Saturday night.

So, to the parents of the First Communicants, this is a memorable day, a good day to celebrate and have a party. But remember what you are really celebrating. Your son or daughter is receiving for the first time, the actual physical body and blood of Our Savior in the special way of Holy Communion.



Outline of the First Communion Program

This year is a very important year in your child's spiritual life. The reception of First Communion will be the first major event in their lives regarding the Church that they will remember into adulthood. All of us, who are involved in St. Catharine's Religious Education Program, are fully committed to its success. If you have any questions about any of the material or activities regarding the First Communion Program, please feel free to speak with your child's Teacher or contact us at the parish office at (732) 758-8568 or religious_ed@stcatharine.net.

The following material is provided to help you understand some of the basic events that are related to the program this year.

Attendance:

A great deal of important material will be covered this year in the preparation for the reception of First Communion. It is very important that the students attend as many of the classes as possible, so that they can learn the material and come to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the marvelous gift of the Sacraments they are receiving. If your child is absent, please contact the teacher to find out which lesson was missed and review the missed lesson at home with your child.

Parent's Meeting:

There will be a parent's meeting on **Thursday, October 26 @ 7:00 p.m.** Important information will be discussed at this meeting regarding both the Sacrament of Penance and Communion. All parents are asked to attend.

First Penance:

Before the children receive First Communion, they will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance. During the first part of the year the children will learn about good and bad choices and how God is a forgiving and loving Father who is always there for them. This sets the basis for the reception of the sacrament in December. This year the children will receive the sacrament of First Penance on:

Thursday, December 7 @7:00 p.m.

We ask that the parents review the formula for going to confession and see to it that your child receives the sacrament of Penance one more time before First Communion.

Retreat:

There will be a First Communion Retreat for all 2nd graders on **March 4.**

Parents and children are asked to attend the 12:30 p.m. Mass and the children and one parent come to the classrooms to begin the retreat at 1:25 p.m. The day usually ends around 4:30 p.m.



Practices:

It is important that all children and at least one parent be present at their assigned practice so they are prepared for First Communion.

Practice is from 4:30-5:45 p.m.

- April 30 (For the 9:00 a.m. Communion Mass),
- May 2 (For the 11:30 a.m. Communion Mass).

Ceremony:

First Holy Communion will be held on Saturday, May 5. Parents and first communicants will be processing into the Church together and will sit in a designated pew. The parents will come up to receive with their child at Communion time. (All parents are asked to come up at Communion time, and any parent who cannot receive Communion will receive a Blessing from Monsignor.)

The Mass usually lasts about an hour and we ask that no more than 10 guests attend.

Times and classes will be as follows:

- 9:00 a.m. Monday classes
- 11:30 a.m. Wednesday classes

Individual Communion:

We also offer each family the opportunity for a family communion should your child need to receive First Communion if a different date is needed. The family chooses a Sunday, and the child will receive First Communion at that Mass. If you need to participate in an individual Communion, please call the Religious Education Office.

Pictures:

No one is allowed to leave his/her seat during the ceremony to take pictures. For this reason, a digital video will be sent to each family as a remembrance of this memorable occasion.

A photographer will be available before First Communion and after the ceremony for individual and family pictures.

Dress Code:

Boys: are required to wear a blue or white suit. White dress shirt, white tie and white or black dress shoes **(No sneakers or deck shoes.)**

Boys are permitted to wear a boutonniere.

Girls: are required to wear a white dress with white shoes. **(No strapless or off the shoulder dresses, high heels or make-up are permitted.)** All girls are requested to wear either a veil or a wreath (No hats). The wreath may be made of silk or fresh flowers. Gloves, flowers, purses, etc are not permitted during Mass. Please hold onto all belongings until after First Communion.

Summary of Important Dates

Parent's Meeting for First Penance & First Holy Communion:

October 26 (Thursday)

7:00 p.m.

First Penance:

Thursday: December 7 @ 7:00 p.m.

First Holy Communion Retreat:

March 4 (Sunday)

12:30 Mass (attend together as a family)

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. (students & one parent)

Practice Dates for First Holy Communion:

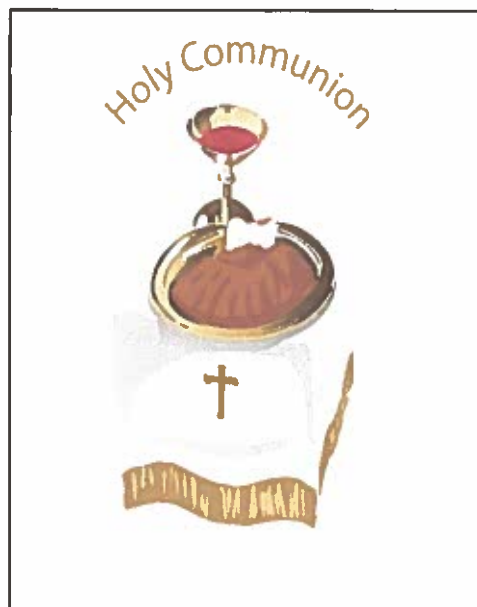
April 30 9:00 Mass 4:30 - 5:45 p.m.

May 2 11:30 Mass 4:30 - 5:45 p.m.

First Holy Communion: May 5 (Saturday)

9:00 Mass Monday classes

11:30 Mass Wednesday classes



Prayers



*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, 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 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.

*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,
world without end. Amen.

*Grace Before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts which we are about to receive
from your goodness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Sorrow/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 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.

*Note: All prayers with * were memorized in the first grade.

Formula for First Penance



"Bless me Father for I have sinned.
This is my first confession.
These are my sins."

(Tell your sins to the priest.)

When you are finished, let the priest know by saying,
"That's all Father."

The priest will then speak to you and give absolution. When he gives you absolution, make the sign of the cross.

When you are finished, don't forget to say, "Thank you, Father."

Prayer of Sorrow/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 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.