

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion



Parent Information

January 22, 2018



First Reconciliation Information:

1. First Reconciliation Service will take place during Lent, Fr. Manuel will let me know as we get closer to that date at Immaculate Conception Church.
2. The children should be dressed in their Dress Uniform (*Mass Uniform*) clothes.
3. Please practice with your child the procedure for going to Confession. This procedure is listed on the handouts that have been given to you at the parent meeting.
4. You are welcomed to be present in the church when your child goes in for their First Reconciliation, but your child will only be in the confessional with the Priest.
5. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Lydia Mendoza or Mr. Trujillo, and/or myself.

*Always remember that **You** are your child's primary teacher. Children who are 7 and 8 years old imitate the actions, attitudes and values of their parents. The faith of your child relies on the stories, rules, and values of the family and community to which they belong. They attach great importance to knowing and conforming to these values.*

1. The Value of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for Children

The children have learned how Christ brought the Father's love into our world. They have heard how they can live in Christ's love, but they are aware that they sometimes fail to love God and others. They have some understanding of right and wrong, but need help in distinguishing between deliberate misbehavior and accidents that have unpleasant results. Children want help in order to grow more like Christ. They desire to be forgiven for the wrongs they do occasionally and need to be encouraged when they make the right choices.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation helps young children develop attitudes that promote peace and welcome forgiveness. This Sacrament gives the children the opportunity to become more aware of God's love for them and what it means to forgive and to be forgiven. Because children usually have sensitive hearts, they are particularly ready to respond to Christ's call for reconciliation. The Church encourages confessions of devotion, and young children can grow spiritually by drawing from the wellsprings of grace that the Sacrament of Reconciliation offers them.

To receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, all a child needs is some awareness of his or her need to be forgiven as well as a desire for Christ's forgiveness. The Church simply assumes that children who have reached the age of reason are able to receive the Sacrament of Penance. Of course, they need to learn about the significance of the Sacrament and about how they should receive it.

2. The Meaning of Reconciliation and Its Importance in Our Everyday Lives

St. John reminds us that "God is love and anyone who love lives in God, and God lives in him" (1 John 4:16). That is what reconciliation effects in us: living in God and letting God live in us. It brings us peace, peace with ourselves, with others and with God.

Our familiar, everyday expressions show how that we often feel uncomfortable about ourselves and others. As we confront the tensions we feel within ourselves, as we face the conflicts that threaten our peace of heart, we recognize our need for reconciliation, our need for healing.

As children grow, they become more independent in their actions and decisions. This growth will include making mistakes, but these mistakes create opportunities for learning within the family. Your response to your children's behavior at these times will shape to the great extent their idea of forgiveness. Words such as "I'm sorry" or "That's OK, I understand" help children realize that you love them even when they make a mistake or use poor judgment. When children

see that their parents are forgiving toward each other and toward them, they come to view forgiveness and reconciliation as a natural part of everyday life. Children gradually realize that selfish choices somehow separate them from those they love. They learn that to ask and grant forgiveness brings people back together. Jesus has chosen to act today through His Church. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the ministry of the priest brings the sign of God's forgiveness and the help we need in order to be more faithful in our response to His love. God's merciful kindness always offers forgiveness when we express sorrow for having offended His love.

3. How Parents Can Promote Reconciliation in the Home

The following questions will help you think and plan ways you can make reconciliation within your family a natural expression of your love for each other and for God.

- How do you express forgiveness toward your child?
- What do you feel is the most effective way a parent can show a child that he or she is forgiven?
- How can you help your child show forgiveness to someone who has injured or hurt him or her?
- How do you make the words "I'm sorry" part of your family life?
- How can parents help a child feel and express sorrow out of love and concern and not merely out of fear of punishment or fear of being caught?
- What are ways you can help your children learn from their mistakes?
- How do you use prayer as a means of encouraging reconciliation in your home?
- What is an effective approach to prayer in your family? To reading Scripture? To reading simple stories of everyday life to your child? To talking to your child about God and His love and concern for us? To showing your child how to pray?
- How do you get your child to talk about a story, a TV program or a real-life experience involving moral decisions? Does your child respond to discussion?
- What are some ways you can help your child evaluate misbehavior?
- How do you help your child become more responsible for his or her actions?

4. Ways Parents Can Help Your Child Prepare for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

- a. Plan with your child how you as a family will celebrate this first meeting with Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- b. Tell your child how wonderful it is that God loves us even when we fail to love, and about how He is always ready to forgive us. Share your own desire to express sorrow for your sins and take your child with you when you go to confession.
- c. Guide your child in a short examination of conscience before he or she goes to bed at night and pray together an Act of Contrition.
- d. Before your child receives the Sacrament of Reconciliation, encourage him or her to ask your forgiveness and the forgiveness of brothers, sisters and friends.

*** AS PART OF OUR RELIGION SERIES, WE WILL BE REVIEWING WHAT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE AND WHAT THEY MEAN IN STUDENT TERMS. STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO KNOW THE 10 COMMANDMENTS BY THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018. THEY WILL BE ASKED WHAT THEY ARE. HERE IS A LIST OF THEM:**

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord God in vain
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day
4. Honor your father and your mother
5. You shall not kill
6. You shall not commit adultery
7. You shall not steal
8. You shall not bear false witness
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods

They are found in Exodus 20 : 2-17

First Communion Information:

1. First Holy Communion Mass is on Saturday, April 14, 2018 at 10 am in Immaculate Conception Church.
2. All Students are to come fully dressed to the Mass and to have eaten breakfast before hand also.
3. All Students are to meet Miss Zacher in the Foyer (back) of the church at 9:45 am.

Ways to help your child Prepare for First Holy Communion:

1. Take your child to Mass every weekend. It is the primary way you teach your child that this sacrament is meaningful and important. Show your faith by example, *don't be a hypocrite, believe me it's amazing what they share in class and think at times.* They are much more observant than we are aware of.
*** There are 168 hours in a week, all the Lord asks for is 1 hour of it for Mass. That leaves you with 167 hours to do what you want to do with your time.**
2. Pray with your child every night to help him/her prepare his/her heart for receiving Jesus. Practice the necessary prayers – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Nicene Creed, Apostle's Creed, Act of Contrition.
3. Encourage your child to prepare his/her GIFT for Jesus – an act of kindness, and act of obedience, and act of love at home and school.
4. Fast as a family one hour before receiving the Body of Christ. This gives and awareness of WHO we are to receive.
5. Model reverence for the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. Every time is just as important as the first celebration. Arrive to church before Mass starts (*before the priest walks down the aisle*) and don't walk out of Mass until it is over (*when the priest walks down the aisle out of the church*).

MASS – Mass begins promptly at 10 am on Saturday, April 14, 2018. Children need to be at the front church entrance at 9:45 am.

SEATING – The children will lead the procession at the beginning of the Mass, then sit together as a group in the front pews. Godparents do **not** walk with the children when they make their First Communion. Parents and Godparents are to be seated behind the children.

CONFESSION – Please make your own arrangements to take your child to Confession before the First Holy Communion Mass. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at Immaculate Conception Church on Saturdays from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm. If you wish to go elsewhere, please check times for this sacrament at other parishes.

REVERENCE – Please keep an attitude of reverence during Mass. Unnecessary talking or playing on the phone during Mass is very disrespectful and distracting. Those planning to receive communion must not eat or drink anything except water or required medication one hour before Mass, unless there are some extenuating medical circumstance's that exist. Chewing gum is considered food.

GIRLS' ATTIRE – Girls wear a white dress with an appropriate length (knee length or longer). **NO** strapless or low cut on the top of the dresses are allowed, remember these are 7 and 8 year old little girls in Our Lords house receiving him for the first time. If the dress has spaghetti straps, a white jacket or sweater must be worn. A veil, hat, or flowers in the hair are optional, but should be securely fastened and cannot be removed during Mass. Gloves and purses are very distracting and take away from focusing on the Mass, therefore, they are **not** allowed at their First Communion Mass. Accessories may be used during pictures after the Mass.

BOYS' ATTIRE – Boys should wear dress pants, a white dress shirt that tucks in, and a tie. A jacket or vest is optional, but if your child wears them for First Communion they must keep them on during the entire Mass.

GIFTS – Parents/Godparents are to hold any gifts for children during Mass. The children may carry a communion candle or rosary during the entrance procession into the church. If you want the items blessed, the priest will do it at the end of Mass. **** Please let your guest know that **NO** Balloons are to be brought into the church. They are very distracting and can block the view of other people at the mass. Thank you ****

PICTURES – Pictures and videos are to be taken from the back of the church.

DO NOT come up the middle aisle, side aisle, or in front of the pews to take pictures during communion or any other part of the Mass. Tablets and cell phones should **not** be held up to record the mass in the pews it is very distracting, inconsiderate, and rude to those there; you will need to go to the back of the church to record. This is a prayerful time so that all present may receive the fullness of Jesus in the Eucharist. A professional group and individual pictures will be taken of all the children making First Communion.

Prayers to Practice at home with your child:

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.

Also called The Lord's Prayer, since Jesus taught it to his disciples (see Matthew 6:9-13).

The Our Father is the foundation of Christian prayer (Catechism, 2759)

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.

The Hail Mary is well-loved and beautiful basic Catholic prayer. It combines two lines from Scripture (Lk 1:28 and Lk 1:42) with a humble request for Mary to pray for us.

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.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 the life everlasting.

Amen.

This creed is considered to be a faithful summary of the Apostles' teaching. It is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church at Rome. (See Catechism, 194.)

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, 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 confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

Penitential Act

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
(*And, striking their breast, they say:*)
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Reference to this is found in the Catholic Catechism of the Catholic Church CCC: 980, 1422, 1440, 1448.

It is also found in the bible in: James 5:16; Rom. 12:16; James 3:6; James 4:17; 1 Thess. 5:25

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

*The Gloria
is found in
the bible in:*

*Lk. 2:14;
Rev. 19:6;
Rev. 22:9;
Eph. 5:20;
Rev. 7:12;
Jn. 1:29;
Rom. 8:34;
Lk. 4:34;
Rev. 15:4;
Lk. 1:32;
Jn. 14:26.*

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

"Our profession of faith begins with God, for God is the First and the Last, the beginning and the end of everything. The Credo begins with God the Father, for the Father is the first divine person of the Most Holy Trinity; our Creed begins with the creation of heaven and earth, for creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God's works."

--the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 198

Catholic belief is succinctly expressed in the profession of faith or credo called the Nicene Creed.

Here are a few good sites to find more information on what was presented to you tonight, and to help grow your own knowledge in the Roman Catholic Church. Once the children have made their First Holy Communion, and they are growing in their faith of Our Lord, this is when those tough questions start being asked of the parents and teachers of what/why the Catholic Church believes/does what they do. Also, these are good resources to help start conversations with your children on Church Teachings.

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/>

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass>

<http://catholicbible101.com/scriptureinthemass.htm>

<http://www.catholic.org/bible/>

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Eucharist/mass-history.htm>

* You can also Google search the following and have images to help guide you in conversations with your child(s):

Parts of the Roman Catholic Mass in the Bible

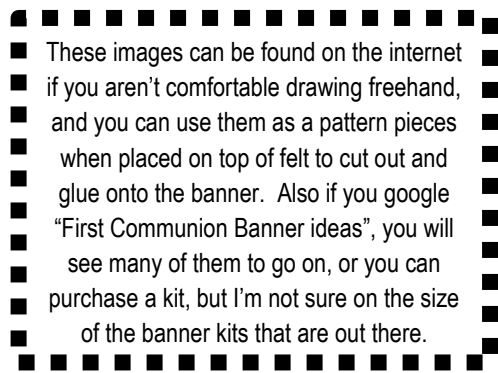
First Holy Communion Banner Information

- Miss Zacher needs to see it by **Wednesday, March 28th**. You can bring it in for me to see or take a picture of it and show it to me on your cell phone / tablet. You can Google “First Communion Banners” to get ideas.

- Each child is to create a personalized First Holy Communion Banner for them to remember this very special day in their life. The banner is to have the following on it:
 - The child’s full baptismal name
 - The date of: April 14, 2018
 - For it to be at least the size of 12” by 15” and **no larger** than a 15” by 18”.
 - They are to be made in a vertical layout.
 - They are to have a small wooden dowel attached to it about the size of a pencil and have a cord attached to it that can hang 3-5 inches up when put on a hook where the banner will be at.

- Images that would be appropriate on a First Holy Communion Banner are:

Grapes, wheat, chalice
 Crosses
 Lamb
 Church
 Stained glass window
 Hearts
 Hosts
 Dove
 Monstrance
 Rosary


 These images can be found on the internet if you aren't comfortable drawing freehand, and you can use them as a pattern pieces when placed on top of felt to cut out and glue onto the banner. Also if you google “First Communion Banner ideas”, you will see many of them to go on, or you can purchase a kit, but I’m not sure on the size of the banner kits that are out there.

* The banners will be hung in the church along the walls on the “Command Hooks”, so please keep the weight of the banner on the lighter side.