



**PARENT GUIDE**  
**First Reconciliation and**  
**First Communion Preparation**  
**2025-2026**



## **Parent Guide**

### **Welcome to the Sacrament Preparation Process**

Over the course of this year, there are several events planned to help you and your child prepare for the reception of First Reconciliation and First Communion. The purpose of this guide is to equip you to walk with your child through this process. In addition to general information regarding the process, you will also be prepared to talk about the most important parts of the process with your child. As parents, you are the primary catechist, or teacher of the faith, for your child. What we do in preparation at SMOY together will complement, not replace, what you are saying and doing at home.

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### **Weekend Mass**

Saturday  
4:30pm  
Sunday  
8:30am | 11:00am | 5:30pm

### **Daily Mass**

Monday  
6:00pm  
Wednesday – Friday  
8:15am



### **Reconciliation**

Monday  
6:30pm  
Saturday  
3:00 – 4:00pm

## **SMOY Sacrament Preparation Policies**

Students are expected to complete two years of faith formation in preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion. This preparation can take place in a Catholic School or another religious education program.

SMOY School students who are not parishioners at SMOY may complete their preparation with their classmates at SMOY. They should receive the sacrament at their home parish but they may receive the sacraments at SMOY if they provide letters from their home parish indicating their registration, and the pastor's permission for them to receive this Sacrament at SMOY.

Children and parents are expected to attend all of the Parent/Child retreats. Children must attend Jesus Day as well. Those who miss a retreat will be asked to complete an alternate preparation.

Parents are asked to submit a copy of their child's Baptismal Certificate to the parish office at their earliest convenience. Children who were baptized at SMOY do not need to have certificates submitted.

**First Communion  
Parent/Orientation**  
Wednesday, September 3  
6:00 PM  
St. Margaret of York Church

**Parent/Child Advent  
Retreat**  
Wednesday, December 3  
6:00 PM  
St. Margaret of York School  
MPR

**1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation  
Parent/Child Retreat**  
Wednesday, February 25  
6:00 PM  
St. Margaret of York Church

**1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation  
Service**  
Wednesday, March 25  
6:30 PM  
St. Margaret of York Church

**Jesus Day: 1<sup>st</sup>  
Communion Retreat**  
Saturday, April 25  
8:45AM – 11AM  
St. Margaret of York Church

**1<sup>st</sup> Communion  
Pictures**  
Wednesday, April 29  
6:00 PM  
St. Margaret of York Church

**1<sup>st</sup> Communion Masses**  
Saturday, May 2 | 4:30pm  
Sunday, May 3 | 8:30am  
Saturday, May 9 | 4:30pm  
St. Margaret of York Church

## **Orientation**

*What should I do to prepare my child?*

### **Be an example**

- Attend weekly Mass
- Go to Confession monthly

### **Teach the Ten Commandments**

- This creates a basis for a good examination of conscience

### **Do a Daily Examen**

- Look at what went well during the day and what you could have done better
- Share your answers with them —its good for children to see that adults make mistakes too

### **Foster an understanding and love of the Eucharist**

- Go to adoration
- Learn about Eucharistic miracles
- Attend Holy Thursday Mass—where we remember the Last Supper which is when Jesus instituted the Eucharist

### **Build up the Domestic Church**

- Pray together
- Learn—faith formation is a lifelong process!

## **The Ten Commandments**

*The first three help us to show love and respect for God*

1. I am the LORD your God; you shall not have strange gods before me
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain
3. Remember to keep holy the LORD'S day

*The other seven help us to show love and respect for others and ourselves*

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 against your neighbor
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods

## **Advent Retreat**

*What does Christmas have to do with First Communion?*

### **Christmas & the Incarnation**

- The Church calls "Incarnation" the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. *CCC 461*
- At Christmas we celebrate Jesus' Incarnation
- Jesus is fully divine and fully human

### **The Eucharist & the Incarnation**

- The Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul & Divinity of Jesus *CCC 1374*
- The Eucharist is a continuation of the Incarnation
- In the Eucharist we receive the whole Jesus, – fully divine and fully human
- Both are difficult mysteries which we are unable to fully comprehend—we believe by faith

### **Preparing for Christmas, Preparing for First Communion**

- As we prepare our hearts to receive Christ at Christmas during Advent, we prepare our hearts to receive Jesus in the Eucharist



## **First Reconciliation Retreat**

*How do I make a good Confession?*

### **Examination of Conscience**

- Before you go into the confessional, do an examination of conscience so you know what sins you need to confess
- Review mortal vs venial sins

### **Enter the Confessional**

- You may sit behind the screen or face to face
- Make the sign of the cross
- Say "Bless me father for I have sinned. This is my first confession"

### **Confess your sins**

- You must confess all mortal sins. It is recommended to also confess venial sins
- When you are finished let the priest know by saying something such as "for these and all my sins"

### **Receive your penance**

- The priest will give you penance and maybe some advice

### **Say the Act of Contrition**

- It is ok if you do not have this memorized!

### **Absolution**

- The priest prays the prayer of absolution and you make the sign of the cross

### **Do your penance as soon as possible**

## **Ten things you can do to prepare your child for First Reconciliation**

*By Jeanne Hunt*

- Teach your child the difference between a sin, an accident and a mistake.
- Show your child you love them and tell them so.
- Teach your child what is right and what is wrong.
- Practice what you preach: Receive the sacrament with your child.
- Do what you teach or you are teaching something else.
- Develop a family spiritual regime: go to church, be active in the parish, pray together...
- Teach your child the consequences for their actions and establish family boundaries.
- End the night with a prayer and a little look back on the day.
- Start a life-long conversation, heart to heart, with your child with a monthly time out together.
- Pray for your child.

## **Prayer For a Good Confession**

Dear Jesus, help me to make a good Confession. Show me my sins, both the wrong that I did and the good I failed to do. Help me to be sorry for my sins. Help me to try not to sin again. Have mercy on me, O Lord, and forgive me.

Amen

## **Act of Contrition**

Oh 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. Amen.

## **Examination of Conscience**

**When did I choose to do wrong?**

- Did I misbehave during Mass
- Did I ignore what my Mom & Dad told me to do
- Did I ignore what my teachers told me to do
- Have I talked back to my parents, teachers or other adults
- Did I try to avoid doing my chores
- Was I lazy about schoolwork
- Was I mean to anyone
- Have I used bad language
- Did I tell any lies
- Have I played unfair in games
- Did I take anything that didn't belong to me
- Did I get mad and yell or lose my temper
- Did I hit or push anyone

## **Examination of Conscience Continued**

**Did I fail to do good?**

- Have I prayed everyday
- Have I asked Jesus to be with me and help me
- Have I thought of ways to be nice and helped my family
- Have I played nicely and shared with my friends
- Have I followed school rules
- Have I forgiven people
- When someone is being treated unfairly by other kids, do I try to find a way to be fair
- Have I been deceitful by not speaking up to correct something that I knew was wrong
- Do I eat healthy foods for my body

## **Jesus Day**

### *Review & Rehearsal for First Communion*

#### **First Communion Masses**

- Please be sure to sign up for a First Communion Mass time and submit your guest count by **April 6th**.
- Each family will have a pew reserved for them
- Children will sit with their families, but receive Communion before the rest of those gathered for Mass
- Please arrive at least 20 minutes prior to Mass

#### **Dress Code**

- Girls traditionally wear white, but that is not strictly necessary. Outfits should be reverent and respectful
- Veils are optional and should not cover faces
- Gloves can be worn for Mass, but cannot be worn when receiving Communion
- Boys should wear a slacks with a vest at minimum with a suit preferred

## **The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist**

*Excerpt by Fr. Michael Van Sloun*

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a doctrine – an official teaching of the Catholic Church – and a profound mystery. With the words of consecration, the whole of Christ is truly present – Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity – under the appearances of bread and wine.

The doctrine is based upon the words of Jesus Himself when He instituted the Eucharist. Jesus took the bread and said, “This is my body” (Mt 26:26), and He took the cup filled with wine and said, “This is my blood” (Mt 26:28). When Jesus said, “This is my body,” He declared that the bread actually is His Body, and that He is really present.

We accept and believe what Jesus said as a matter of faith. There is no scientific evidence, definite proof or factual explanation. We take Jesus at His word because He is truth (Jn 14:6), He came into the world to testify to the truth (Jn 18:37), and the words that He spoke are spirit and life (Jn 6:63). St. Cyril of Alexandria wrote, “Do not doubt whether this is true, but rather receive the words of the Savior in faith, for since He is truth, He cannot lie.”

## **The Eucharist & Christ's Real Presence**

*By Fr. John A. Hardon, SJ*

The simplest way to express what Christ asks us to believe about the Real Presence is that the Eucharist is really *He*. The Real Presence is the *real Jesus*. We are to believe that the Eucharist began in the womb of the Virgin Mary, that the flesh which the Son of God received from His Mother at the Incarnation is the same flesh into which He changed bread at the Last Supper, that the blood He received from His Mother is the same blood into which He changed wine at the Last Supper. Had she not given Him His flesh and blood there could not be a Eucharist.

We are to believe that the Eucharist is Jesus Christ – simply, without qualification. It is God become man in the fullness of His divine nature, in the fullness of His human nature, in the fullness of His body and soul, in the fullness of everything that makes Jesus Jesus. He is in the Eucharist with His human mind and will united with the Divinity, with His hands and feet, His face and features, with His eyes and lips and ears and nostrils, with His affections and emotions and, with emphasis, with His living, pulsating, physical Sacred Heart. That is what our Catholic Faith demands of us that we believe. If we believe this, we are Catholic. If we do not, we are not, no matter what people may think we are.