

“Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.” (John 6:35)



First Communion Handbook

2026-2027

Sacramental Preparation for Reconciliation and First Communion

Saint Joseph Parish
Sylvania, Ohio

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We are excited to walk on this faith formation journey with you and your child!

About the Sacrament of Reconciliation (also known as Penance or Confession)

“Penance is an experience of the gift of God's boundless mercy.”

~<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/penance>

“Not only does [the Sacrament of Penance] free us from our sins but it also challenges us to have the same kind of compassion and forgiveness for those who sin against us. We are liberated to be forgivers. We obtain new insight into the words of the Prayer of St. Francis: “It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.”

~from the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*

About the Sacrament of the Eucharist (also known as Holy Communion)

“The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. The term ‘Eucharist’ originates from the Greek word *eucharistia*, meaning thanksgiving.”

“In the celebration of the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the instrumentality of the priest. The whole Christ is truly present -- body, blood, soul, and divinity -- under the appearances of bread and wine, the glorified Christ who rose from the dead. This is what the Church means when she speaks of the “Real Presence” of Christ in the Eucharist.”

~ <https://www.usccb.org/eucharist>

Faith Formation Classes

Children may receive Faith Formation prior to making their sacraments by 1) completing 1st and 2nd grade at Saint Joseph Parish School, or 2) completing 1st and 2nd grade Faith Formation through the Saint Joseph Parish faith formation program or supported homeschooling.

First Communion Kickoff & Parent Catechesis

The First Communion Kickoff parent meeting will be held on Sunday, September 27th from 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M in the elementary school Hoffman Room. If you are unable to attend on this date, a makeup session will be held on Monday, September 28th from 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. This meeting will include detailed discussion of program expectations, parent catechesis on Reconciliation and the Eucharist, and the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Dragon Slayers Retreat

We ask that at least one parent or guardian attend this retreat with their child, as programming is included for both parents and students. This retreat will take place on Sunday, December 6th, from 1:45 P.M. to 4:45 P.M. at Holy Trinity School in Swanton. (Please note there will be no 2nd grade fall Faith Formation class that evening.)

Reconciliation Refresher

The Reconciliation Refresher is open to all First Communicants from the parish school or parish Faith Formation program. This refresher will include prayer and reflection, a chance to explore the confessional, and review how to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation. Attendance at this refresher is encouraged but not required. This will be held in the elementary school Hoffman Room on Wednesday, January 27th at 4:30 P.M.

First Reconciliation Prayer Service

Your child will receive the sacrament of Reconciliation for the very first time at this service! This event will consist of prayer, reflection, and time for individual First Reconciliations. To support their child's sacramental preparation, parents are also encouraged to receive Reconciliation at this service. This will be held in the Church on Tuesday, February 2nd at 6:30 pm.

First Communion Banner Kits will be distributed after the First Reconciliation Prayer Service. These banners will be displayed on the walls of the church during your child's First Communion Mass and can then be taken home as a special keepsake! Please bring your child's finished banner to the First Communion Practice on April 17th (see below) to ensure that the banner is displayed during Mass.

First Communion Practice

This rehearsal will be held on Saturday, April 17th at 9:00 A.M. to ensure the smooth flow of the First Communion Mass liturgy. Kindly arrive in the Narthex fifteen minutes early to check in and turn in your child's completed First Communion banner.

First Communion Mass

To accommodate our large 2nd grade class, First Communion Masses will take place on Saturday, May 1st and Saturday, May 8th, 2027 at 10:00 A.M. If your family has a conflict with either date, please let Janaye know as soon as possible. Families will be assigned to a particular Mass after the First Reconciliation Prayer Service in February. Each family will have one pew reserved for their use during Mass. Feel free to invite family and friends!

First Communion Dress Code

Boys are asked to wear dress pants in dark blue, black, or khaki with a dress shirt and tie (jacket optional) and dress shoes. Girls are asked to wear white dresses of appropriate length and dress shoes. A veil may be worn, but neither gloves nor bouquets are permitted.

Questions?

Contact Janaye Ashman at (419) 885-5791 or email jashman@stjoesylvania.org!



First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Program Dates 2026-2027

First Communion Kickoff & Parent

Catechesis..... Sunday, September 27th, 6:00-7:00 P.M.

First Communion Kickoff & Parent

Catechesis Makeup Session Monday, September 28th, 6:00-7:00 P.M.

Dragon Slayers Retreat Sunday, December 6th, 1:45-4:45 P.M.

Reconciliation Refresher Wednesday, January 27th, 4:30-5:15 P.M.

First Reconciliation Prayer Service &

First Communion Banner Pickup..... Tuesday, February 2nd, 6:30 P.M.

First Communion Practice &

Banner Dropoff..... Saturday, April 17th, 9:00 A.M.

First Holy Communion Mass Saturday, May 1st or May 8th at 10:00 A.M.

