

# LITURGICAL LIVING

Series 34: April 14-21

Our AFC is celebrating our First Communion Mass on Sunday the 21st. I wanted to dedicate this installment of Liturgical Living to talking about First Communion and the Blessed Sacrament. **So What's the Deal with First Communion?**

The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith: it is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Pope Francis has called it the "Sacrament of Love":

"The Eucharist is at the heart of 'Christian initiation', together with Baptism and Confirmation, and it constitutes the source of the Church's life itself. From this Sacrament of love, in fact, flows every authentic journey of faith, of communion, and of witness."



First Communion is the second sacrament of initiation in the Catholic Church. It takes place after the sacrament of Baptism, usually around the age of seven or eight, or during first or second grade. If you convert to Catholicism in adulthood, your First Communion will take place at the same time as your Baptism and Confirmation in the Catholic Church, most often during the Easter Vigil Mass.



For children who are preparing to receive their **First Holy Communion**, this is a big deal. And for all of us, no matter how many times we have received Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, **it should always be a big deal.**

What makes it so special the first time is the same thing that makes it special every time!

Jesus comes to us in a unique way in the Eucharist. When He comes, we receive Him into our body and our soul. We are transformed into a little Christ. This is very beautiful, personal, and intimate. And it's something that unites us all as Catholics - we take on

the one blood of Jesus Christ. A family more closely connected than blood relatives. We should not take it for granted!

This is why the first time a family member makes their Holy Communion, it is an exciting event for the whole family. The person preparing for this sacrament is going to be profoundly united with Jesus and His Church in a way that they never have before!

It is such a holy, joyful occasion. Our souls become the bride of Christ. That is why girls wear white dresses and boys wear suits. Relatives are invited. Parents take pictures. We celebrate. **And the very act of celebrating reveals our belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.**

First Holy Communion is, without question, a time of great joy. The saints in heaven, who are delighted to intercede for us, are celebrating along with your family.

St. Mother Teresa said, "Jesus has made Himself the Bread of Life to give us life. Night and day, He is there. If you really want to grow in love, come back to the Eucharist..."

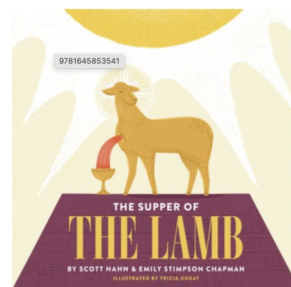
## How to prepare your child (and really yourself for Holy Communion)

**1. FIND THOSE MINI-CATECHESIS MOMENTS.** When you begin your fast before receiving Communion, announce to your child what you are doing and invite them to fast with you. Explain to them that you are preparing yourself spiritually and physically to receive Jesus into your body.

- Draw your child more deeply into Eucharistic reverence by praying with them before and after you receive Holy Communion. The [Anima Christi](#) is a beautiful Eucharistic prayer that you can memorize together. Pray together before Mass— it is in the Church Missal!
- As you leave the pews when Mass ends, instead of genuflecting in the aisle and walking out, walk with your child up to the Tabernacle and genuflect with them there instead, or kneel with them for a few moments at the foot of the altar in quiet prayer. This will teach your child that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist, and the tabernacle is His resting place until the next Mass.



*Soul of Christ, sanctify me;  
Body of Christ, save me;  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me;  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me;  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me;  
O good Jesus, hear me;  
within Your wounds, hide me;  
separated from You let me never be;  
from the evil one, protect me;  
at the hour of my death, call me;  
and close to You bid me;  
that with Your saints, I may be  
praising You forever and ever. Amen.*



- Activities/Crafts. I especially think the true presence craft is cool! <https://www.catholicicing.com/first-communion-resources-for-kids/>

**2. GET TO EUCHARISTIC ADORATION.** Our recent Popes have recommended [children's Eucharistic adoration](#) as a great way to prepare your children spiritually for their First Communion. Don't be concerned that your child won't understand what Eucharistic Adoration is or that they won't be able to sit quietly. Just tell your child that you are going to spend a few minutes sitting and talking with Jesus, and invite them to talk to Jesus too.

The advice I received that was helpful for me with three boys under the age of three is to start with one minute per each year of age. Literally spending three minutes in adoration with my son to start. And build from there as they learn. You'd be surprised how much they take it in!

**3. REINFORCE WITH LITERATURE.** There are so many beautiful children's books about Mass, the Saints and Catechesis. Add some to your book collection and go to them often. We got the Supper of the Lamb book by Scott Hann and Emily Stimpson Chapman for Easter and I found myself learning about the truths of Mass. Getting our children to Mass weekly and teaching about what is happening at Mass also allows them to participate in their way and at their level. Let Mass be a holy hour for your child, just as it is for you!

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