



First Reconciliation

&

First Holy Communion

Family Guide

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### Important Dates to Remember

Date	Time	Location	Purpose
October 23, 2024	6:00 p.m.	Garden Room - Church	Parent’s Meeting
February 22, 2025	10:00 a.m.	St. Agnes Church	First Reconciliation
April 5, 2025	8:30- 11:00 a.m.	Garden Room - Church	First Communion Retreat
May 4, 2025	10:00 a.m.	St. Agnes Church	Sacrament of Holy Communion



## INTRODUCTION

Soon your child will join your family and God's family at the Lord's Table for the first time. Christ gave us a precious gift when He instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Through this gift, He remains with each person in a very intimate way. For this reason, the day of your child's First Communion is an enormously important day in his or her life – and your life as well. Your child's enthusiasm and joy can increase your own, and vice-versa. And that joy can affect the entire parish community.

First Communion is considered one of the holiest and most important occasions in a Catholic's life. It means that that person has received the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is the Body, Body, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Celebrations of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist will be celebrated once a year at St. Agnes Catholic Church.

Sacramental Preparation at St. Agnes consists of expectations for the children as well as their parents. The children's expectations are as follows: Regular attendance in the religious education formations sessions in the school or the Sunday program; attendance at the First Communion Retreat, First Reconciliation, and First Holy Communion. The parent's expectations are as follows: Attendance at three parent's meetings and the First Communion Retreat.

The best preparation parents can give their child is to practice and live the faith. One of the most important ways to do this is regular attendance at Mass. An integral part of our child's faith formation is participation in the Sunday Liturgy. Talk with your child about Mass before you go and at appropriate moments in the actual celebration when you are in church together. Emphasize that the Mass is God's family celebrating a sacred meal. While completing the Sacrament lessons (attending Sunday Religious Education formation sessions or at St. Agnes Catholic School) is important for learning practical knowledge, faith should also be experienced. To be part of the parish family and to worship together each Sunday is to be part of faith in action. Parents, as the first educators in the faith it is expected that you will give your child these experiences so your child will be encouraged to practice and live his/her faith.

## **First Reconciliation and First Eucharist Requirements**

- The child preparing for First Reconciliation and First Holy Eucharist must be registered in the St. Agnes Religious Education Program or St. Agnes Catholic School.
- Regular attendance in faith formation for grades 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Baptismal Certificate (copy) if baptized in a parish other than St. Agnes by **November 1, 2024**
- Normally there are two parent's meetings scheduled for First Communion parents however, due to the pandemic we are in, the information will be shared via email and possibility zoom meetings. Please watch your email for updates.
- We want the children involved in our Religious Education (Sunday) program to have a successful and positive experience to help them benefit the fullest from attending the weekly formation sessions at St. Agnes. All children are required to attend weekly sessions, missing *no more than 3 sessions*. Those who miss more than 3 sessions need to meet with his/her catechist to agree upon make-up work to be done at home.
- Attend and participate in the **First Communion Retreat on April 5, 2025**
- **Weekly Mass Attendance** is expected
- Celebrate **First Reconciliation on February 22, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.**

## **The Mission of St. Agnes Religious Education Program**

The catechetical programs at St. Agnes are dedicated to sharing the Gospel and promoting the Catholic faith through catechesis, evangelization, and Christian witness. The goal of St. Agnes PREP is to help children and youth develop their relationship with Jesus Christ. We strive to help the children and youth understand their faith through catechesis so that they may live it in today's world.

## **The Role of Parents**

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by *creating a home* where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for *education in the virtues*. Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2223).

You as parents are the most meaningful adult Christians’ in the life of your child. You show your love for your child and give witness to your faith when you share your convictions. In particular, your personal responses to God’s love show your child that Reconciliation and Eucharist are part of our daily lives. They are not events that only happen as part of one special celebration day; they are truths that exist at life’s very center.

Not only is the Church emphasizing your role as parents in your child’s religious education but emphasizing the responsibility of our whole parish to help you fulfill your role. To assist you in this responsibility, we will provide you with additional information, guidance, and the confidence you need through our parent’s meeting and liturgical celebrations.

Each family will be provided with the book, *We Learn About Mass* to work on together at home. The book is designed to help you and your child to understand more about the Mass, and how to actively participate in it.

If your son or daughter attends the faith formation session on Sunday mornings the catechist may be *sending home worksheets that are to be completed at home*. Please send the completed worksheets back to following formation session.

## **Parent Parish Covenant Rationale**

The Catholic Church takes most seriously the role parents play in the education and formation of their children in ways of the faith. The Church documents are clear in their stance about the role of parents:

- “[Parents} are the first to pass on the faith to their children and to educate them in it. By word and example they form them.” (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People #11)
- “Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educations.” (Declaration on Christian Education #3)
- “Because they have given life to their children, parents have a most serious obligation and enjoy the right to educate them; therefore Christian parents are especially to care for the Christian education of their children according to the teaching handed on by the Church.” (Canon #226)
- “Parents above others are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian Life by word and example.” (Canon #774.2)
- “You [the parent] are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) [the child to be baptized] in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us.” (The Rite of Baptism)

- Simply put, children first learn the practice of the Catholic faith at home by the example of their parents. At the appropriate time the Church teaches that the parish should assist the parents by providing a more formal catechetical program that helps to educate and form their children in the Catholic Faith.

### **Parent/Child Preparation**

Parents will receive information to assist them with the preparation for their child from the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion leading to a meaningful and joyful celebration of the Sacraments, not only for the first time, but each time thereafter.

Normally there are two parent's meetings scheduled for First Communion parents however, due to the pandemic we are in, the information will be shared via email and possibility zoom meetings. Please watch your email for updates.

### **Liturgical Celebrations & Retreat**

**First Reconciliation** will be celebrated at St. Agnes on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Parents will be able to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on this day as well.

**The First Communion Retreat** will be held on Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 8:30-11:00 a.m. in the Garden Level of the Church. Parents will be asked to assist with the retreat. The children will rotate through three centers: a bread making center, a skit center, and a church tour. **First Communion banners are due on this day.**

**First Holy Communion** will be held on Sunday May 4, 2025, at the 10:00 am Mass. The children's banners will be hung on the pew that is reserved for their family. **Children are asked to meet in the Garden Level of the Church on May 4, 2025, at 7:35 a.m. as they will be lined up to process into Mass.**

### **Religious Education and Mass Participation**

The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice, and for this reason the faithful are obligated to participate in the Mass on Sunday and other Holy Days of Obligation (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2180).

The Church teaches that missing Mass on Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation is a mortal sin. Consequently, our students are taught in the classroom that it is a mortal sin. It is damaging to children when their teachers explain that they are breaking their relationship with God by not attending Mass and then their parents do not regularly bring them to Mass. It confuses them. Moreover, in order for someone to feel a part of the parish community he or she must be regularly attending liturgies with fellow parishioners.

For these reasons, regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation at St. Agnes is a necessary part of our student's religious education. **Parents are asked that they and their children regularly attend Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation.**

### **List of Prayers to Know for First Communion**

The children participating in First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion should have knowledge and understanding of these prayers by First Reconciliation on February 22, 2025:

#### **Act of Contrition**

**Our Father**

**Glory Be**

**Hail Mary**



### **First Reconciliation Day – Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 10:00 am in the church.**

- The dress code is church attire – please, no jeans or sports uniforms. This is a Sacrament and the children should be dressed appropriately.
- We ask that all cell phones be turned off. The church should remain quiet creating an environment for those to pray, reflect, and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Spend some time with your child and talk about what is a “sin” and why we need to confess that sin. In preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation please review the following Examination of Conscience with your child.

## Examination of Conscience

- I. **I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me.**
  - Do I pray every day?
  - Do I worship only God?
  
- II. **You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.**
  - Have I used the words “God” or “Jesus” to someone because I was mad?
  - Have I used bad words?
  
- III. **Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.**
  - Have I missed Mass on Sunday?
  - Do I pay attention during the liturgy?
  - Do I make it hard on others to hear or pay attention?
  - Do I avoid unnecessary work on Sunday?
  - Do I make Sunday a day of prayer and rest?
  
- IV. **Honor your father and your mother.**
  - Do I obey my parents?
  - Have I mistreated them by what I say or what I do?
  - Do I give a good example, especially to younger brothers and sisters?
  - Do I obey others that I should like teachers, law enforcement, elderly people, baby-sitters?
  
- V. **You shall not kill.**
  - Do I say mean things, or make fun of others to hurt their feelings?
  - Do I say mean things about others behind their backs?
  - Do I encourage others to do bad things?
  
- VI. **You shall not commit adultery.**
  - Do I treat my body and other people’s bodies with respect?
  - Do I look at television shows, movies, or pictures that are bad?
  - Do I speak nicely to others?
  
- VII. **You shall not steal.**
  - Have I taken things that were not mine from a store or another person?
  - Have I ruined another person’s property for fun?
  - Do I return things that I borrow? In good condition?



**VIII. You shall not lie.**

- Am I honest in my schoolwork?
- Do I cheat or copy other people's work?
- Do I tell lies to make myself look good?
- Do I tell lies to protect myself from punishment?
- Do I tell lies that make another person look bad or get them in trouble?

**IX. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.**

- Do I get mad when I have to share my friends?
- Are there kids I will not play with or be mean to because they look different?

**X. You shall not covet your neighbor's good.**

- Am I jealous or envious of the things my friends have?
- Am I jealous because my friends can play sports better than I can?
- Am I thankful to God and my parents for what they have given me?
- Do I share the things I have with my family, friends, and poor people?

**Practicing for First Holy Communion**

The first communicants will be practicing for First Communion and can use your help at home. Please have your child practice at home:

- Walking with his/her hands together in prayer
- Walking up to Father with hands together in prayer and bow at the Body of Christ then switch his/her hands to receive Jesus
- Practice taking his/her hand on the bottom (the hand he/she writes with) and use this hand to pick up the Body of Christ and put into his/her mouth
- Pause
- Then put hands back into prayer and walk toward the cup – bow - and receive the Blood of Christ

## First Communion Sunday – May 4, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

- Children are to meet in the Garden Level of the Church at 7:35 a.m. as they will be lined up to process into Mass.
- **No photos** are to be taken during the First Communion Mass
- **What to Wear to First Communion**
  - Boys:
    - Dress shirt with dress pants
    - Optional: tie (most boys wear a tie) and suit
  - Girls:
    - Dress, at least knee length. No spaghetti straps
    - Optional: veil (not covering face) Gloves – must be taken off during the Homily

## Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

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