

# St. Mark's Church First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion

## Handbook 2025-2026



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# Introduction

This is a very exciting year for you and your child! Celebrating a sacrament for the first time is an important step in the life of your child as a Catholic. Your child will receive two wonderful Sacraments this year: Reconciliation and Holy Communion. Since you, as parents, are called to be the primary religious educators of your child, this program is designed to assist you within instilling the values and the meaning of Holy Communion and Reconciliation. Our Religious Education Program is excited and honored to help in the preparation of your child for both of these sacraments.

This Parent Handbook will provide you the information about the catechesis your child will be receiving, how you can help your child at home, and give the details about the upcoming liturgies to celebrate each sacrament. ***Please take the time to read through the entire handbook, as this will be the main form of communication.***

## The Role of the Parents

You, as parents, are the most influential adults of catechesis for your child. As parents you have the right and duty to be intimately involved in the preparation of your child for First Holy Communion. You catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives by the love of the faith. “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.” “Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2223 and 2224)

## General Information for Parents

Your child’s second grade year is an opportunity for parents to reaffirm their commitment to the Catholic faith and to become refreshed and renewed in their faith life. This renewed commitment involves developing a genuine desire to participate in the Eucharist and the sacramental life of the Church as well as a commitment to uphold the Precepts of the Church:

- Attend Mass weekly.
- Share your gifts of time, talent, and treasure.
- Keep connected as a church community.
- Make prayer and our faith an important part of your daily life.

# Attending Mass as a Family

It is the parents' right and responsibility to transmit their faith on to their children. A serious commitment to faith formation is expected from all parents and children. Therefore, it is expected that all children enrolled in our CCD program and their families attend Mass every week. It is nearly impossible to expect a Religious Education Program to succeed if the central act of worship is ignored.

**Attendance at class and Mass is very important.  
Religion Education Classes are NOT a substitute for Mass.**

## Sunday Mass Attendance Log

Students are required to provide proof of attending Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Proof of attending Mass on Sunday is to keep a "Sunday Mass Attendance Log" by asking the celebrant priest to give you a sticker or stamp at the end of Mass. Alternative to the log is to bring to class a church bulletin signed by the celebrant from another Church.

Each Mass sticker/stamp/bulletin equals one point, students in the 2nd grade class need **20 Mass** points in order to be eligible to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation & First Communion. Director/Catechists will check Mass points weekly, make sure your child brings his/her attendance log to class.

Students who fail to provide proof of Sunday Mass attendance will receive zero points and no other alternative assignment will make up this requirement.

Sunday Mass attendance log will be distributed on our Parent meeting on November 16

**Mass attendance log due in class: April 19, 20, 21**

## Mass Times and Confessions

**Saturday** at: 4:30 PM

Sacrament of Reconciliation at 3:30 PM to 4:15 PM

**Sunday** at:

8:00 AM

10:00 AM

12:00 Noon

Spanish Mass at 5:00 PM

Sacrament of Reconciliation at 4:00 PM to 4:45 PM

Check bulletin for Mass times for holy days of obligation.

# Eligibility

To be eligible to enter preparation to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion at St. Mark's Church, your child must meet the following qualifications:

- The child must be baptized
- The child must be well-prepared
- The child must want to receive the Sacraments Preparations.

## **First Reconciliation Preparation for Parents & Child**

**Wednesday, February 4 from 6:00-7:30 PM**

*What Does the Sacrament of Penance Have to do With My Friendship With Christ?*

The purpose of this lesson is to look at what the sacrament of penance has to do with our friendship with Christ. Its purpose is to heal and reconcile our relationship with our truest, most faithful friend. Let us look at the sacrament with fresh eyes and an ever-increasing awareness of God's desire to blanket us with mercy.

### Home Activities

- Look for and encourage opportunities to use the phrases, "I love you," "I am sorry," and "I forgive you" with each other.
- Make a habit of making peace with each other before going to bed.
- Attend a parish reconciliation service as a family, especially during Advent or Lent.
- Use opportunities that are part of everyday family life to talk with young children about the difference between mistakes and sin.

## **First Communion Preparation for Parents & Child**

**Wednesday, April 15 from 6:00-7:30 PM**

*What Does the Eucharist Have to do With My Friendship With Christ?*

The purpose of this lesson is to look at what the sacrament of the Eucharist has to do with our friendship with Christ. Its purpose is to enter into a close relationship with the Son of God. When we receive the Eucharist, we unite ourselves with Christ's sacrifice and become part of the mystical body of Christ, the people of God. In eating the consecrated bread, our remembrance is a participation in the fullness of Christian life: in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord, a deep and intimate relationship with God.

### Home Activities

- Nurture your child's understanding of God's love for them and their response of thanksgiving.
- Nurture your child's relationship to Jesus Christ in prayer and worship.
- Enhance your child's appreciation and active participation in the Mass
- Develop your child's/family's sense of belonging to a community of disciples who love as Jesus loves

## Important Dates

### **Family Mass and Meeting for Parents & Child**

Sunday, October 19 at 10:00 a.m.

### **First Reconciliation Preparation for Parents & Child**

Wednesday, February 4 from 6:00-7:30 PM (Church basement)

### **Reconciliation Practice for all 2nd grade for children only**

Tuesday, February 24 at 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. (Church)

### **First Reconciliation Mass & Confessions**

Sunday, March 1st at 12:00 p.m. (Church)

Child, Family & Friends. Please arrive by 11:30 a.m.

### **First Communion Retreat for Parents & Child**

Sunday, March 8 @ 10:00 -12:00 p.m. (Church basement)

Light breakfast will be served at 9:30 a.m.

### **First Communion Preparation for Parents & Child**

Wednesday, April 15 from 6:00-7:30 PM (Church basement)

### **Banners & Application Due: April 19, 20, 21**

Mass attendance log

Completed Banners

Application

Baptismal Certificate (if not previously submitted)

### **First Communion Practice**

Wednesday, April 29 at 4:00-5:15 p.m. (Church)

\*This practice is for Parents & Child.

Both parents must be present.

Please come on time and plan to stay until 5:30 p.m.

### **First Holy Communion**

Saturday May 2, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Please arrive by 8:30 a.m. (Church basement)

# Sacramental Guidelines

## Attendance:

Attendance is taken each time we meet, parents may be contacted if a child misses two consecutive classes. If your child must be absent, please contact your child's catechist. Be sure your child arrives on time and strive for monthly attendance. If your child is absent from class, the lesson must be completed at home the following week. A parent will be provided with a calendar with dates and lesson plans, also a parent must sign the child's book, indicating that he/she supervised the lesson.

**Please don't register your children for classes, if you have other obligations including sports or other activities. Our sessions will be an hour long. We take attendance quarterly, and after more than 3 unexcused absences during the school year, the student will need to attend a make-up session that week or the following for the absence. A make-up session reservation is required in order to attend, please contact me for more information. Excessive absences may result in repeating a grade. This is extremely important during sacramental preparation. Thank you for your cooperation.**

## Dismissal Procedures:

**Drop off:** Parents may accompany their children to each session for grades 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>. Older grades may walk in by themselves. Only use side doors (crescent parkways side) to enter the building.

**Dismissal:** For the safety of our children, we have these Dismissal Procedures in place:

**Sunday Morning:** Please come down to the classroom to pick up your child. There is too much traffic and confusion at this time to allow any other dismissal procedure.

**Monday & Tuesday:** Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5: A parent or another designated adult or sibling must come to the classroom to pick up the children and walk out with them.

**Early Dismissal from Class:** If your child needs to leave early, a parent must see the coordinator first for pick up. If another adult is picking your child up, they must have a written note from parent or must send an email prior pick up.

**No student will be allowed to leave class early, unless a parent is present or has written note/email.**

## Sacramental Preparation Fee:

The sacramental fee for First Holy Communion is \$50. Fee must be paid at the time of registration.

## Practices:

A practice will take place on a weekday prior to your child's First Holy Communion. We will practice lining up, coming forward to receive Communion, practicing songs, etc.

## First Holy Communion Mass: Saturday May 2, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Please arrive at Fr. Child's Hall with your child 30 minutes prior to Mass. After finding your pew, please bring your child to the basement to line up. Seating: Each child and their family will have a pew reserved for them. Family members who do not fit in that pew can sit in any unmarked pew.

## Photography/Videography:

Our photographer for this year is Stephanie Wolf, she will be offering prints and digital prints. Prints will be available 2-3 weeks after Communion (parents must come to the office to collect them) If you are requesting prints, you must return the forms before Communion Day. Place the form in a sealed envelope with the child's name and full payment: cash or check.

Digital copies will be available 1-2 weeks on their website. I will send you a private link for purchase to your email. [www.swolfphotography.com](http://www.swolfphotography.com)

Before the Mass the children will assemble in front of the church for a group photo, and photo of the child receiving communion, among other pictures during Mass. You may photograph or video the children procession in and out Mass. At the end of Mass you may also take individual photos of your child. Msgr. Flynn will be available for photos with your child at this time.

## Photographs during Mass:

We ask that the Sacraments be respected at all times including when your child receives Jesus. Pictures should be taken when the children process into the Church and after the Mass. Please refrain from flash photography during the Mass. Let your family and friends know they should not leave their seats, they may not move around during the liturgy or block the aisles, nor may they approach the altar area to take pictures of the children receiving the Holy Communion. Please help the candidates and the rest of the parish make this a special and joyful event. After Mass you may take individual photos of your child at the altar or outside of the church. Also, Msgr. Flynn will be available for photos with your child at this time.

## **May Crowning:**

The First Communion class will honor the Blessed Virgin Mary by placing a crown of flowers upon her head. May Crowning will take place immediately after Mass. All the children and their families will be participating.

## **Fasting:**

We fast from food and drink (except water) for one hour before we receive the Eucharist. We do this as a reminder that we are hungry for Jesus. Since your children will be arriving 30 minutes early for their First Holy Communion, they will already be in observance of the fast. However, this should be a regular practice in every Catholic home.

## **Dress Code:**

### **GIRLS**

White dress, below the knees

White veil and /or headpiece (optional)

Dress shoes with socks or stockings

NO gloves, purses or corsages

### **BOYS**

White, black or navy, recommended or blazers and dress pants

White dress shirts, ties or bow ties are encouraged.

Dress shoes with socks

# PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

## PRAYERS TO BE MEMORIZED

### **Sign of the Cross**

In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **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.

### **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

### **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.

### **Act of Contrition**

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.

# Communion Banner Instructions

Due: April 19, 20, 21

(May bring it earlier when finished)

SAMPLE



## Supplies Needed

- A picture of your child (school photo or snapshot), scissors, glue
  - Cut out letters of child's name or use 2' inch pre-cut letters of any color. These can be found at a Amazon or a craft store; (Michaels or AC Moore)
  - Additional decorations: scrapbook religious decorations, paper cut-outs in color, tiny light-weight flowers or wheat and grape symbols, etc.
  - St. Mark's will provide the following: white poster, gold chalice and host.
1. Place gold chalice and host; already cut out of contact paper. Peel off backing and adhering it to the center of the banner; a little at a time. (see examples above).
  2. Adhere letters of the child's name. You may include your child's full name or first name only. Please remember the banner should be decorated long-edge. (see examples above).
  3. **Glue picture of child to the center of gold chalice. Do not place picture anywhere else!**
  4. Decorate your banner: Add any other symbols you choose to complete your banner, or leave it simple.

If you need additional instructions, please see me before or after class. I will be happy to help!

# First Reconciliation & Holy Communion Songs:

## JESUS LOVES ME

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgghCEtITFo>

Jesus loves me! This I know,  
For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong;  
They are weak, but He is strong.

### **Chorus:**

Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He will stay  
Close beside me all the way,  
He's prepared a home for me,  
And some day His face I'll see.

### **Chorus:**

Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
Yes, Jesus loves me!  
The Bible tells me so.

## WE COME TO YOU, LORD JESUS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwBbSsRH6gc>

We come to you Lord Jesus,  
to say our thanks to you,  
and in our mass we bring ourselves  
and every thing we do.

### **Chorus:**

We love you Lord Jesus, stay with us we pray.  
Help us to be more like you each day.

We bring the bread, we bring the wine,  
we bring them now to you,  
we bring our work, we bring our play,  
and everything we do.

### **Chorus:**

We love you Lord Jesus, stay with us we pray.  
Help us to be more like you each day.

Your love for us, our love for you.  
We celebrate today. O fill our hearts  
with peace and joy. Be with us Lord we pray

We love you Lord Jesus, stay with us we pray.  
Help us to be more like you each day.

# APPLICATION FOR THE RECEPTION OF FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST

*Please type or print clearly the information below*

Full name of child receiving First Communion:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

## RECORD OF BAPTISM

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Church of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Maiden Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Godparents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Masses: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach the following:

**Copy of the Baptismal Certificate; if not previously submitted**

Return it to the Religious Education Office by April 19, 20, 21