

A Guide for Parents First Communion Preparation

The Importance of Parents

Parents are the primary educators of their child/children. In celebrating the Rite of Baptism of Infants, parents publicly commit to forming their children in the life of the Catholic faith. Parents are specifically addressed at Infant Baptism: "Parents you have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her 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, by loving God and neighbor."

Parents have a right and a duty to be intimately involved in preparing their children for First Communion. Catechesis aims to help parents grow in their understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist and participate readily in the catechizing of their children. Parish or school programs of religious formation assist parents in this most important responsibility but never usurp the rightful role of parents.

What is readiness?

When speaking of the readiness of a child to celebrate a Sacrament, there are three areas to address: the family, the individual, and the parish community.

Family: primary place of a child's formation

- • Does your family participate in the life of the community in the areas of worship, formation (education) and service?
- • Has your child received appropriate formation for his/her age?
- • Does your family pray together at home?
- • As parents are you willing to commit to the continuing education of your child in worship,

formation and service? Individual:

- • Is the child baptized and does he/she have the use of reason (about the age of seven (7)/
- • Does the child express a desire to celebrate Eucharist?
- • Does the child participate in the liturgy on a regular basis at the parish?

- Has the child been formed in faith in an age appropriate manner including basic knowledge of who Jesus is and what he has done?

- Can the child distinguish Eucharist from ordinary bread? Parish Community:

- Because Sacraments are community celebrations, the parish also has a responsibility in Sacramental preparation.

- Does your parish provide you (the parents) with the necessary support and information to enable you to fulfill your role as the primary educator of your child?
- Does your parish provide opportunities for lifelong formation?
- Does the community welcome children into its life?

Basic Themes to be taught prior to First Holy Communion:

- Eucharist as the Presence of Jesus
- Eucharist as Symbol of God's Care
- Eucharist as Meal
- Eucharist as Sacrifice
- Eucharist as a Memorial
- Eucharist as Bread Broken and Shared
- Eucharist as Celebration
- Eucharist as Belonging