

THE GRACES RECEIVED THROUGH FIRST SACRAMENTS

In order to participate in the Sacraments of First Reconciliation/Confession and First Holy Communion, the Church requires that your child be a Baptized Catholic with one year of prior faith formation in either a formal parish religious education program, a Catholic school, or an approved homeschool religious education program. The learning and experience which a child receives from the Sacrament of Baptism and faith formation is an invaluable gift towards their life long spiritual health. Children learn the importance of discipline and commitment through consistent attendance (at least 70% rate), as well as joyful attendance at Mass and regular practice of grace filled prayers.

The healing and grace received from the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Confession is invaluable for our growth as a Christian community. We must learn to have mercy as God has Mercy and to forgive as we have been forgiven. St. Francis of Assisi teaches children the power of forgiveness to lead a whole, complete life of love in Christ.

For your child to receive First Reconciliation/Confession and First Holy Communion, it is important for your child to be able to say the following prayers: the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be by the end of first grade. To help them understand the importance of penance and their responsibility as active members of the Church they should memorize the Act of Contrition and know how to use the Ten Commandments as an examination of conscience prior to receiving First Reconciliation/Confession. They should also understand what it means to sin and how it separates us from God's Love as well as how it offends Him.

For your child to receive First Holy Communion, they should have a deep understanding of the Eucharist in addition to the prayers above. The Last Supper, what Jesus said at the Last Supper, how the bread and wine are changed into His Precious Body and Precious Blood, what happened on Good Friday, are all important elements of their faith journey and should be explored and incorporated into the child's faith. They should also understand who the priest is in relation to Jesus and what the Mass is in relation to the Last Supper. They should also be practicing how to receive Holy Communion and what to do after receiving.