

A Parent's Guide to Discerning Readiness of their Child Regarding First Holy Communion

Readiness to Begin Preparation for First Holy Communion

- Has the child been baptized Catholic (as corroborated by the parish's baptismal record or by a baptismal certificate from another Catholic parish)?
- Has the child reached the age of reason (about seven years)?
- Is the child interested in receiving Holy Communion?
- Does the child have a sense of belonging to the Catholic community?
- Does the child participate in the Sunday Mass according to his or her ability?
- Does the child pray at home?
- Does the child relate to Jesus as one who loves and cares for him or her?
- Does the child understand that he or she is to care for others?
- Has the child prepared for and had an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance? (The testimony of the parents that the child has participated in the sacrament must suffice, since any other form of proof would compromise the seal of confession.)



From the CDR *Instruction for Sacraments - First Holy Communion, page 13.*

Readiness to Celebrate First Holy Communion

- The child is a baptized Catholic and has reached the age of reason (about seven years), as requested above.
- The celebration of First Holy Communion should follow the celebration of First Penance. However, *preparation* for both sacraments can occur simultaneously.
- Does the child participate in the Sunday Mass according to his or her ability?
- Does the child understand and believe that Christ is present in the Eucharist?
- Does the child realize the difference between the Eucharist and ordinary bread and wine?
- Does the child understand the importance of observing the Eucharistic fast?
- Does the child know how to receive the Eucharist reverently?

From the CDR *Instruction for Sacraments - First Holy Communion, page 18.*