

First Eucharist Rehearsal Notes 2026

Prior to Mass:

The students meet in the gathering space to prepare for group and individual photos. The April 11, 4:00 p.m. Mass children must arrive by 3:00 p.m. The April 12, 10:30 a.m. Mass children must arrive by 9:30 a.m.

One pew will be reserved for each child/family. In the pew will be placed the child's First Eucharist certificate, his/her Mass book, which is a gift from the parish, and a program for the Mass. Parents should take these items home after the Mass.

After pictures, the children go to the St. Gianna room (at the end of the dining room behind the double wooden doors) where they will prepare to line up for the procession.

We will line up for the procession in the room, then go up the back stairs to the church entrance. The banner and flowers that will be carried will be in the church entrance. All other children will walk in with their hands folded (with fingers pointed toward heaven). Procession order is:

- Banner
- Flowers
- First Communicants (two by two)
- Altar servers
- Deacon
- Priest

During Mass:

Those processing with the banner walk forward to the banner stand, put it on the stand with a catechist's help, then stay near the banner until it is time to genuflect at the same time as Fr. Maus genuflects. Those carrying the flowers put them in place by the tabernacle, with the help of a catechist, then move over near the banner until it is time to genuflect with Fr. Maus. As the rest of the First Communicants come forward, they stop at the pew marked with their name, genuflect, and enter the pew right away. When Fr. Maus genuflects in front of the altar, the banner carriers and flower carriers genuflect at the same time as Fr. Maus and then go down the center aisle to their pews, so they are seated at the center aisle. The catechist should help the banner and flowers children watch for the proper time to genuflect and then direct them to go to their pews.

The Mass continues as usual.

After the Creed, Fr. Maus will invite the children who will read to come forward for the Prayers of the Faithful. The catechist comes, too, and has the Prayers of the Faithful in a folder. The catechist makes

sure the microphone is on and positioned correctly for the child, that the stool is ready for the child to stand on, and stands by the child as he/she reads in case help is needed. The catechist may adjust the microphone and feel free to put a hand on the student's back to draw him/her closer to the microphone as needed.

When the Offertory song is announced and the ushers bring up the baskets to the front pews for the Offertory collection, the Gift Bearer students go to the back of the church to get ready to bring up the gifts. (*Parents must remind their children, because in a past Mass the children forgot to go back for the gifts.*) A catechist will be in the back to help them, and ushers will help them know what to do. The Gift Bearers may walk at a normal pace as they bring up the gifts; they do not have to walk too slowly. (Three children will carry the gifts; the rest will walk behind two by two with hands folded, pointed toward heaven).

At Communion time, the First Communicants receive communion first while their parents and the others in their pew wait until all First Communicants have received. Both priests will be distributing Communion to the children, so the First Communicants come out of their pews and go forward to the priest who is on their aisle's side. They will receive the Body of Christ first from the priest. Then they will turn toward the side where their pew is and receive the Blood of Christ. (See instructions for receiving at the end of this description.)

The children should go back to the outside of their pew while their family members who remained in the pew should move toward the center aisle so the family members will be ready for Communion.

As the children are individually receiving their First Communion, a Deacon(s) goes to the short side pews, giving Communion to the handicapped and all others in the side pews (so they will not have to walk through the pews that hold the First Communion families.) In addition, other Ministers of the Holy Eucharist will distribute communion to those seated in the upper pews behind the altar, with the choir being first.

After all of the First Communicants have individually received communion, then we begin with the first pew again, allowing the parents and the rest of the family to receive. (If a parent or family member is not Catholic or is not in a state of grace to receive communion, he/she should cross their arms in front of them indicating that they want a blessing rather than communion.) The Deacon(s) will likely be done with the two sides by then and will join the priests in giving the Body of Christ to the people coming up the center aisle.

When the First Communicants return to their pews, they will move toward the center aisle end of the pew as family members leave it (not before), so the child is once again at the end of the pew by the center aisle. Communion continues as usual for the remainder of the people in the church.

Remember, after returning to the pew, all people, including the First Communicants, should kneel to say a prayer of Thanksgiving for being able to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Remain kneeling until all in the church have received Communion and you see the consecrated hosts (which are Jesus) are returned to the tabernacle and Fr. Maus sits down. You may then sit down. (Some people choose to remain kneeling until all the items used during consecration are purified and returned to the credence table on the side of the altar. That is proper, as well, if you prefer to do that.)

After communion is finished, Fr. Maus will ask the congregation to be seated for the announcements. The two children who are reading announcements should then come forward and stand near the catechist who is helping them. The two children who will make the announcements go forward to the ambo. The catechist again makes sure the microphone is on and positioned, the stool is in place, and stands by the child in case help is needed. The first child who reads goes behind the other once finished. After the second child finishes reading, they both go down the center aisle to their pews. (The adult commentator, if there is one, will have read his/her announcements at the beginning of Mass.)

As soon as the final song of the Mass begins, the First Communicants should step out of their pews and stand in the center aisle by their pews. (Fr. Maus may need to announce this, since some children forgot to do this in a previous year. Parents, please remind them.) The children will wait for Fr. Maus and the altar servers to come down in front of the altar, and the First Communicants will all genuflect when Fr. Maus genuflects. Then, the First Communicants turn toward the back and process out of the church, with the First Communicants who are in the farthest back pews being the leaders. (Parents, please watch and tell them when to begin processing out.) They will go to the back of the church, down the side steps to the dining room, and line up against the wall in the dining room until their parents can come to find them. They may then have cake! (On Sunday, it will be a full breakfast and cake!)

Instructions for receiving:

The Body of Christ – Bow when you get near the priest (or as the person in front of you is receiving). **If receiving in your hand:** Put your strong hand (right hand if you're right handed) under your other hand and make a cradle in your palm for Jesus. The priest will say "The Body of Christ". You answer "Amen". Once the priest places the consecrated host (which is Jesus) into your hand, take your bottom hand and use your fingers to pick up the host and put it in your mouth. Then move to the side, make the Sign of the Cross as you are walking, and walk toward the person who is distributing the Precious Blood. **(If you wish to receive the consecrated host in your mouth,** raise your face toward the priest and hold your tongue out so he may place the host on your tongue. The rest is the same.)

The Blood of Christ – Again, bow when you get near the deacon or Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist who is distributing the Blood of Christ. The minister will say “The Blood of Christ”. You answer “Amen”. Take the chalice with both hands – one hand under the bottom of the chalice and one hand around the chalice. Carefully lift the chalice until a tiny taste of the consecrated wine (which is Jesus) passes your lips. Carefully hand the chalice back to the minister, who will wipe the edge and turn the chalice before giving the Blood of Christ to the next person in line. Make the Sign of the Cross as you go back to your pew. Remember to kneel and say prayers of thanksgiving once you have returned to your pew and to remain kneeling until Fr. Maus sits down.

After Mass:

Please join us for the Reception in the Dining Room afterwards. All family and guests are invited. There will be cake and beverages on Saturday. On Sunday, there will be cake along with a free-will offering Knights of Columbus breakfast. You may stay for the full breakfast or just the cake, whatever works best for you.

Questions?

If you have any questions, feel free to text my cell phone – 701-219-3194 – at any time. If your child becomes ill the day of the Mass and cannot attend, please tell me early enough, if possible, so I can adjust the reserved seating. Thank you and may God bless you!

Tanya Watterud, Faith Formation Coordinator