

First Holy Communion

Guide for Parents

Primary Duty of the Parent

“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.”

“Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children.”

“Through the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2223, 2224, and 2225)

The celebration of the Mass is the center of the whole Christian life. All other liturgical rites and all the works of the Christian life are linked to, flow from, and have as their end the Eucharistic celebration.

Parents have a right and duty to be intimately involved in preparing their children for First Holy Communion. Catechesis aims to help parents grow in their understanding, love, and appreciation of the Eucharist and to participate readily in catechizing their children. You are encouraged to read the four Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, as well as, **John Chapter 6:49-56 and 6:66-71** with your child. Parents have an awesome and serious duty and obligation to care for the minds, bodies, and souls of their children. As a parent, you have the *primary role* in the sacramental process for your child. You will help your child grow in faith as you prepare him or her for the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. *Your attendance at required events and Sunday Mass is vital!* Even more importantly, your interest, example, witness, and prayers make a difference in your child’s decision to receive the Sacrament and the Faith with an open heart as he or she continues to grow in the Faith.

With this in mind, we remind you that the role of a Religious Education program can only be secondary to you, the parent. We encourage you to do all you can, and we promise to do the best we can to aid and guide the sacramental preparation for your child.

Tips for Talking to Your Child about the Holy Eucharist

- ✠ Be sure to talk sincerely to your child about your experience of Jesus. It is essential that the child understands the importance of having a real relationship with Jesus. If you do not speak to your child about your love of the Eucharist, even your best example may appear to them to be empty formalism.
- ✠ You are a model for your child. Remember that the reverence with which you accept Jesus in the Eucharist will be the example that will be followed by your child. No matter how much your child’s catechist stresses “how to receive reverently”, if this is not being done by his/her family, the lessons will be quickly forgotten.
- ✠ When you attend Mass EACH Sunday and Holy Day, help your child to fully participate in the Mass. Remember, if you do not sing or recite the responses, neither will your children.
- ✠ Take your child to Church to visit Jesus in the most Blessed Sacrament. Explain how Jesus is waiting in the Tabernacle for us to come to Him, how He loves us to come and just be with Him. Let the children know that we can tell Jesus everything: our joys, our pains, even ask for help in our studies. This also would be a good chance to practice appropriate Church behavior with your child while showing him/her your own love of the Lord. Practice the Sign of the Cross, prayers, genuflecting, etc.

What your child should know for First Holy Communion

What must one do to receive Holy Communion Worthily? Memory Device - BBF

- Be in the state of Grace
- Believe the Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus
- Fast for 1 hour before receiving Holy Communion

What does “Be in the state of grace” mean?

- You have no unrepentant and unconfessed mortal sin on your soul

How do you know if a sin is mortal?

KFCS – Kentucky Fried Chicken can kill you, like, mortal sin kills the life of grace in your soul

K – Know it is a mortal sin

F – Freely

C – Choose

S – Serious Matter (Use the 10 Commandments as a guide)

*One may not receive Holy Communion if in a state of mortal sin. First, the person must make a good confession with a firm purpose of amendment.

What does “Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity” mean?

This means that after the consecration (when the bells ring during Mass), only the appearances of bread and wine remain. The consecrated Host continues to look like bread, taste and feel like bread; but it is not bread. The entire substance of bread is changed into the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ.

It looks like bread and tastes like bread but we know that the host is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus because Jesus told us so. This is a mystery of our Faith. A mystery is something we cannot see but we believe because Jesus told us it is true.

What is the Eucharistic Fast?

One must not eat or drink at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water may be taken, or medicine.

Parents should support these truths by the following:

- Following the Precepts of the Church and hopefully more!
- Frequenting the Sacrament of Penance so that the soul can be pure reception of Holy Communion.
- Dressing up for Mass
- Helping to prepare your child for First Penance and First Holy Communion.
- Praying daily and familiarity with the main events of Jesus’ life (The Rosary can help here).

Benedict XVI's Explanation of Prayer for Children

"The Day of My First Holy Communion Was One of the Most Beautiful Days of My Life"

COTONOU, Benin, NOV. 20, 2011 (Zenit.org).- Here is a Vatican translation of the address Benedict XVI delivered Saturday evening in Benin when he visited St. Rita's Parish, and spoke to the children there.

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Dear Young Friends,

I thank Bishop René-Marie Ehuzu of Port Novo, Director of Social Ministry of the Benin Bishops' Conference, for his words of welcome. I also thank the parish priest and Aïcha for their words offered on behalf of all of you. After this beautiful moment of Eucharistic adoration, it is with much joy that I greet you. Thank you for coming out in such great numbers!

God our Father has gathered us around his Son and our brother, Jesus Christ, who is present in the host consecrated during the Mass. This is a great mystery before which we worship and we believe. Jesus, who loves us very much, is truly present in the tabernacles of all the churches around the world, in the tabernacles of the churches in your neighborhoods and in your parishes. I ask you to visit him often to tell him of your love for him.

Some of you have already made your First Holy Communion, and others are preparing for it. The day of my First Holy Communion was one of the most beautiful days of my life. It is the same for you, isn't it? And why is that? It's not only because of our nice clothes or the gifts we receive, nor even because of the parties! It is above all because, that day, we receive Jesus Christ for the first time! When I receive Communion, Jesus comes to live in me. I should welcome him with love and listen closely to him. In the depths of my heart, I can tell him, for example: "Jesus, I know that you love me. Give me your love so that I can love you in return and love others with your love. I give you all my joys, my troubles and my future." Do not hesitate, dear children, to speak of Jesus to others. He is a treasure whom you should share generously. Throughout the history of the Church, the love of Jesus has filled countless Christians, and even young people like yourselves, with courage and strength. In this way, Saint Kizito, a Ugandan boy, was put to death because he wanted to live according to the baptism which he had just received. Kizito prayed. He realized that God is not only important, but that he is everything.

What, then, is prayer? It is a cry of love directed to God our Father, with the will to imitate Jesus our brother. Jesus often went off by himself to pray. Like Jesus, I too can find a calm place to pray where I can quietly stand before a Cross or a holy picture in order to speak to Jesus and to listen to him. I can also use the Gospels. That way, I keep within my heart a passage which has touched me and which will guide me throughout the day. To stay with Jesus like this for a little while lets him fill me with his love, light and life! This love, which I receive in prayer, calls me in turn to give it to my parents, to my friends, to everyone with whom I live, even with those who do not like me, and those whom I do not appreciate enough. Dear young people, Jesus loves you. Ask your parents to pray with you! Sometimes you may even have to push them a little. But do not hesitate to do so. God is that important!

May the Virgin Mary, his Mother, teach you to love more and more through prayer, forgiveness and charity. I entrust you to her, together with your families and teachers. Look! I have this rosary in my pocket. The rosary is like a tool that we can use to pray. It is easy to pray the rosary. Maybe you know how already; if not, ask your parents to help you to learn how. At the end of this meeting, each one of you will receive a rosary. When you hold it in your hand, I would ask you to pray for the Pope, for the Church and for every important intention. And now, before I bless you all with great affection, let us pray together a *Hail Mary* for children throughout the world, especially for those who are sick, who are hungry and in places of war. Let us pray together: *Hail Mary*,...