

# **St. Mary On The Hill Catholic Church**

## **First Reconciliation and First Eucharist Program**

**2022 - 2023**

St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church  
1420 Monte Sano Ave  
Augusta, GA 30904

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## St. Mary on the Hill Parish Policy on Preparation for Sacramental Reception

Before a child receives any sacrament, he/she must be prepared through regular attendance in a religious education program. Parents are actively involved in the preparation process. Religious studies in preparation for reception of the sacraments may be completed either through the St. Mary on the Hill School religion program or through the St. Mary on the Hill parish CCD program which includes a homeschooling option.

Parents are the primary religious educators of their children. “The impact of parents is primary among the human factors which influence this [catechetical] process.” (National Catechetical Directory #25)

Commitment of parents to support the child is an integral part of the child’s faith formation. This necessitates the Christian nurture of the family in praying together, celebrating together, creating a spiritual environment in the home, and reconciliation within the family. (The Christian Family in the Modern World)

Catechesis is about conversion and formation. In the words of Vatican II’s Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (#14) the purpose of catechesis is to make a person’s faith “become living, conscious, and active.”

Religious education is the responsibility of the religious community as well as the parents. St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church provides a structured approach to the faith formation of youth in grades kindergarten –through eighth. It is based upon the premise that parents are the primary educators of their children and that the parish community is a vital aspect of faith development.

Parent and child attendance at weekly Sunday Mass is an automatic pre-requisite for the child's reception of the sacraments.

### Qualifications for Reception of the Sacraments

#### First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

The child must be baptized, be in at least the second grade, and have completed first grade religious studies (or received special permission from the Parish staff to receive the Sacrament). A six-to-eight week instructional period is required to prepare the child to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents, teacher, and pastor decide when the child is ready to receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation. Celebration of First Reconciliation is usually in January. After First Reconciliation, a ten-to-twelve week instructional period is required to prepare the child to receive First Eucharist. Celebration of First Eucharist is usually held in May.

## **Sacramental Preparation Schedule**

November 20, 2022  
Sunday

Baptismal certificates due

January 25, 2023  
Wednesday  
7:00 PM

Sacrament of First Reconciliation (bring baptismal candle if available) in the Church

May 11, 2023  
Thursday  
7:00 PM

Practice for First Eucharist in the Church  
Parent Meeting in the Parish Hall

May 13, 2023  
Saturday  
10:00 AM

Sacrament of First Eucharist in the Church (Pictures at 9:00 am)

AS PARENTS OR GUARDIANS OF \_\_\_\_\_

WHO IS PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST. I/WE UNDERSTAND THAT MY/OUR PARTICIPATION IN HIS/HER RELIGIOUS TRAINING IS EXPECTED AND NEEDED. AS A FAITHFUL CATHOLIC AND A RESPONSIBLE PARENT/GUARDIAN...

I WILL ATTEND MASS EACH WEEKEND WITH MY CHILD.

I WILL, BY MY OWN EXAMPLE, ENCOURAGE MY CHILD TO PRAY AND TO CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENTS REGULARLY, ESPECIALLY THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION.

I WILL SEE TO IT THAT THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION, A BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE, IS OBTAINED AND TURNED IN WHEN DUE.

I UNDERSTAND THAT ONE PREVIOUS YEAR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS REQUIRED FOR MY CHILD BEFORE HE/SHE CAN RECEIVE THESE SACRAMENTS.

I WILL ENCOURAGE ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DAILY/WEEKLY CLASSES AND DISCUSS WITH MY CHILD WHAT HE/SHE HAS LEARNED FROM THOSE CLASSES.

I WILL PARTICIPATE IN ADORATION WITH MY CHILD.

I WILL SEE TO IT THAT MY CHILD IS PRESENT FOR SCHEDULED PRACTICES.

I WILL COMMIT MYSELF TO THE PREPARATION SCHEDULE

I WILL ENCOURAGE AND PRAY FOR MY CHILD AS HE/SHE PREPARES FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF EUCHARIST AND RECONCILIATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

SCHOOL OR CCD

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class

## **SIGNS OF READINESS**

The child

- a. Is able to recognize the difference between actions done "accidentally" or "on purpose."
- b. Should know the three elements of sin:
  - 1. Doing something wrong - mild/grave matter.
  - 2. Knowing it is wrong - sufficient reflection.
  - 3. Doing it on purpose - full consent of the will.
- c. Has begun to say "I'm sorry" without prompting by others.
- d. Is willing - at least sometimes - to make up with someone who has hurt him/her.
- e. Is interested in receiving God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

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## **GUIDELINES FOR THIS SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAM**

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- 1. Give the child love and security.
- 2. Give the child guidance and discipline that comes from love.
- 3. Help the child to experience forgiveness by using signs of forgiveness within the family.
- 4. Affirm the goodness of the child.
- 5. Guide the child in distinguishing between that which is dangerous, that which is improper, that which is evil, and that which is simply annoying to adults.
- 6. Reflect with your child upon God as a loving father.
- 7. Set an example of how Christian life is lived.
- 8. Assist the child in adjusting personal needs to the needs of the family or community.
- 9. Express your sorrow for failure to the child and to the family.
- 10. Give the child responsibility in keeping with the child's age.
- 11. Invite the child to make free choices.
- 12. Allow the child the opportunity to make mistakes and to be forgiven.
- 13. Make an effort to help your child better understand **why** he/she fails when failure does occur.
- 14. Pray with you child, reflect on Bible stories together, and get to know your child better through honest and open sharing.

## **MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNG CHILD**

May 19, 1977 - The Vatican Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship issued a letter stating it is fitting and indeed necessary that children participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving their First Eucharist.

- - The pastoral question is not whether or not a child at this age can commit mortal sin, but rather the moral and pastoral assumption that children this age are "de facto" in need of healing and reconciliation.
- - The entire pastoral tone and teaching is one that emphasizes that we have a responsibility to teach children how to discover God's **grace** in their own hearts and how to recognize evil and sinful trends which may now touch their lives and which later may bring them profound harm.
- - Therefore, we should lead children to thank God for the gift of grace that they have received and help them to be more aware of their need to be healed, to forgive, and to be forgiven. We want to lead the child to "the greatest purity" and this purity is fostered in the frequent use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- - We need to keep before our minds and the minds of the children why we are here on this earth - - **TO LOVE GOD AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS GOD LOVES US.** So, when we offend God and when we offend one another, we need to say "I'm sorry." Therefore, Christ has given us the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order for us to forgive and be forgiven, and thereby receive God's gift of grace.
- - Grace is God's life within us. Graces are the continuous ways in which God's presence prompts us to do good or avoid evil.
- - Remind the child that the Law of Love is to be obeyed always - not just for one day, or in one place, or with one person. It is not just for when we are young, but for our whole life.
- - You should help your child develop his/her ability to accept **responsibility** for his/her actions. This is helping him/her form a proper conscience which is very elementary at this stage of development.
- - Your second grader's conscience is probably at a very elementary stage of development. Fear of punishment may often be a strong factor in determining his/her actions: thus, learning to say "I did it" could be a step forward in his/her conscience formation.

There are some very basic ideas that can be readily understood by the younger child;

1. People need to say "I'm sorry" for what they have done wrong, and make up with those they have hurt.
2. God is always willing to forgive those who are truly sorry, but asks them to forgive others in turn.
3. The priest and the Church have a special role in bringing us God's forgiveness.

It is important that the child understand the difference between doing **wrong on purpose** and **doing something wrong by mistake**.

Children need to know that when we sin, we turn away from God's family.

A sin is something we do on purpose, knowing it is wrong and wanting to do it. Sin is not forgetting, or making a mistake, or doing something by accident. **SIN IS FAILING TO LOVE AND DISOBEYING GOD ON PURPOSE.**

- - Stress the three elements of sin;  
DOING SOMETHING WRONG  
KNOWING IT IS WRONG  
DOING IT ON PURPOSE
- - To help a child develop gradually and normally through different stages of moral awareness is one of the most delicate tasks of a Christian parent. It is a task not achieved in one or two years, but as long as the growing child remains within the sphere of parental guidance.

Example is the most effective way of influencing others - especially young children. Attitudes are caught - not taught.

It is of little avail to tell children, "Don't shout!" if adults yell at each other around the house.

What good will it do to say, "Don't lie" if the children see their parents deceiving others?

Children are taught in religion class about the value of daily prayer. But, if at home, neither father nor mother, brother or sister, bother to pray, there is very little hope that prayer will become a habit.

In guiding a child's moral growth, it is important to maintain discipline. But parents and teachers should do more than correct or punish a child's misbehavior. When the child disrupts the family or classroom harmony by a selfish act - we should help him/her understand how that action has affected the rest of the family. Such guidance is an invaluable aid to a child's moral growth.

I hope preparing your child to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation will help him/her grow in awareness of the need to make peace with others. I hope that you, the parents, will also encourage your child to be more aware of this need.

Reconciliation is more than confession, making a clean breast of faults. It is renewing, restoring a relationship. When we sin, we break our relationship in a number of ways: with God, with neighbor, with nature and with self.

We use the Sacrament of Reconciliation for atonement to be "at one" in our relationships again.

## **YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE**

Jesus teaches us, "Love the Lord your God." It is His first great commandment. Check the ways in which you show love for God.

1. Do I pray every day?
2. Do I use God's name with respect?
3. Do I pray with others?
4. Do I join them at Mass?
5. Do I listen to God's word?
6. Do I study my religion well?
7. Do I try to understand what God asks of me?

Jesus teaches us, "Love others as yourself." This is His second great commandment. Check the ways in which you show love for others.

1. Do I try to make my parents happy?
2. Do I obey them right away?
3. Do I help at home?
4. Am I friendly?
5. Do I behave in class?
6. Do I tell the truth?
7. Do I share with others?
8. Do I take care of my health?
9. Do I do my best at school, at play?

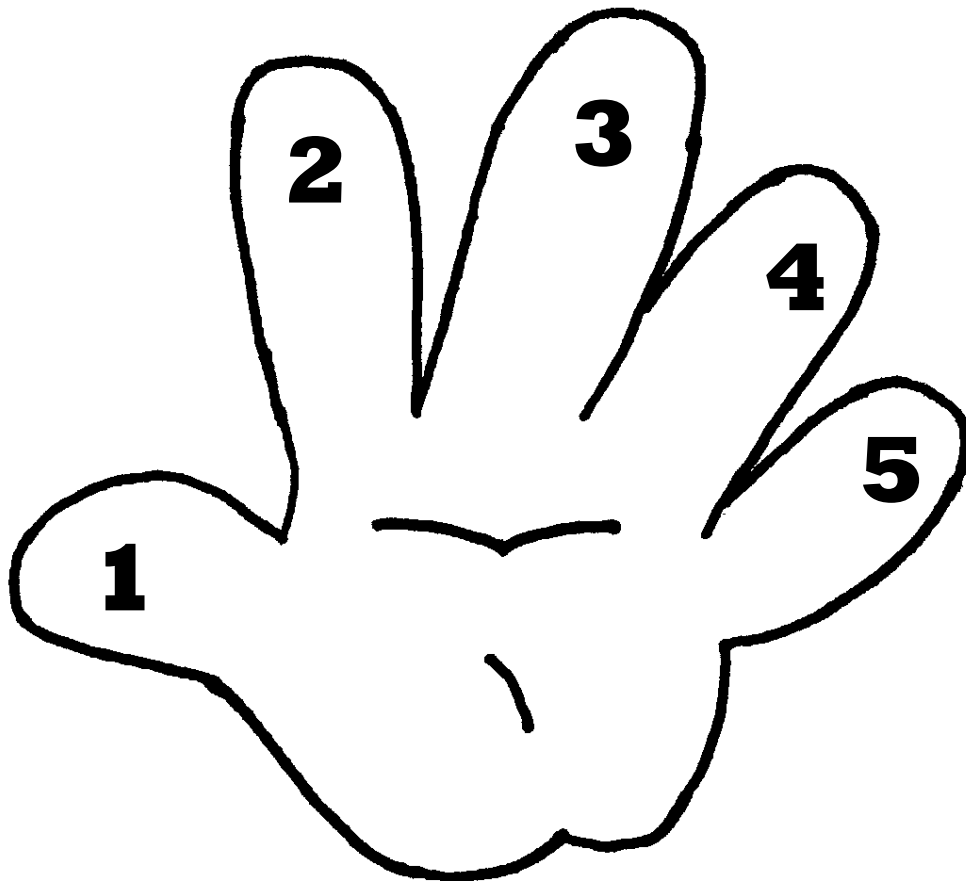
### **Act of Contrition**

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, because You are so good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin."



Five (5) easy steps to examining my conscience and preparing for the Sacrament of Penance, the Rite of Reconciliation.



1. Think of my sins.
2. Be sorry for my sins.
3. Tell my sins to the priest.
4. Make up my mind not to sin again.
5. Do the penance the priest gives me.

## Thoughts on Eucharist

1. INVITATION - A special meal with Jesus  
Goal  
To help your child:
  - (1) feel special, invited and welcomed to Communion by you and others who are important to him or her;
  - (2) learn that Communion is a meal with Jesus;
  - (3) that the very first Communion ever, was at the Last Supper.
2. PRESENCE - At Communion Jesus is with us  
Goal  
To help your child:
  - (1) have a good time with you, enjoying your presence;
  - (2) believe that Jesus is really present with us at Communion;
  - (3) believe that Jesus is really present with us always.
3. UNITY - At Communion we are united with Jesus and His friends  
Goal  
To help your child:
  - (1) experience a sense of belonging and unity within the family;
  - (2) learn that Communion is about unity - at the Eucharist and in daily life.
4. FOOD - At Communion Jesus is the Bread of Life for us  
Goal  
To help your child:
  - (1) appreciate the gift of food and its importance for life;
  - (2) believe that the food received in Communion is more than ordinary food;
  - (3) believe that the bread and wine of Communion are identified with Jesus himself, the Bread of Life;
  - (4) believe that those who eat the Bread of Life are united with Jesus now and will live forever with Him.
5. GIFT - At Communion Jesus gives us Himself  
Goal  
To help your child:
  - (1) experience the family's love through their "gifts of self;"
  - (2) believe Jesus loves us so much that He gives us Himself in Communion.
6. SERVICE - At Communion Jesus calls us to help others  
Goal  
To help your child:
  - (1) share in a project to help someone, and to talk about helping others;
  - (2) realize that receiving Communion involves a call to help others.

# **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

## **THINGS TO DO AT HOME**

### **"Belonging to a Family"**

Look through the family picture album or old pictures.  
Talk about family experiences.

### **"Belonging to God's Family"**

Talk about why you named your child as you did; talk about your child's patron saint; look at baptismal pictures; talk about child's godparents, why they were chosen.  
Make an invitation for godparents to come to First Communion Celebration.

### **"Community"**

Talk about community helpers; say a prayer of thanks for the mail carriers, police, fire fighters, sanitation department, plumbers, dentists, doctors, nurses, public officials, etc.  
Install in your child respect for the property and rights of others.

### **"Celebration"**

Make an ordinary family meal extraordinary with the "good dishes," candles and centerpiece made by your child, perhaps.  
Let your child begin helping to plan the celebration of First Communion - make invitations and allow the child to be host or hostess. Remember much joy is in anticipation.

### **"Worship"**

Visit the Church at a time when you and your child can look around and talk about the altar and the vessels used at Mass.

### **"Prayer"**

Try a spontaneous prayer at meals - encourage each member of the family to ask God's blessing on someone or something or to thank Him for something special during the day.

### **"Forgiveness"**

Help your child make an examination of conscience each night before he/she goes to bed:  
What have I done to share love with others?  
How could I have been more loving?  
Do I need to say I'm sorry for anything?

### **"Caring"**

Try sharing time, prayer, clothes, toys, money, etc. with some needy organization or person.

### **"Sharing"**

Read about the Last Supper in the Gospels; prepare a special meal for Holy Thursday or join in the Parish Seder Meal.

### **"Living the Christian Love"**

Help your child realize that receiving communion is the beginning of a relationship that must grow. We are challenged to love and serve the Lord every day of our lives.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

SCHOOL OR CCD

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class