



ST. ANDREW PARISH FIRST HOLY COMMUNION INFORMATION PACKET 2021

Please Read Carefully

1. PRACTICES: Monday, May 3

Tuesday Families - 6 - 7 pm in the Church

Wednesday Families - 7 - 8 pm in the Church

2. FIRST COMMUNION MASSES: SATURDAY, MAY 8

Tuesday Families: 10:30 am (in the Church)

Children **MUST** be in their places in the pew **by 10:15 am.**

Wednesday Families: 12:00 pm Noon (in the Church)

Children **MUST** be in their places in the pew **by 11:45 am.**

3. DRESS CODE: "SUNDAY BEST"

Boys - Shirt and tie (any color)
Dress slacks
Jacket is optional
No tennis shoes or sandals

Girls - Dresses of traditional white or (light) color
Veil is optional
Headband, barrettes, flowers are acceptable
Shoes should have a back strap (No tennis shoes)

Girls are not to wear gloves during the Mass. The use of religious articles and accessories should be reserved for private photos after Mass.

4. FAMILY SEATING & 'COMMUNION TRIOS'

First Communion seating and first reception of the Sacrament are done by family. Every family is assigned a pew that is theirs to fill. Twelve people can fit comfortably, although you may want to limit that based on current health concerns. At one end of the pew sits the First Communicant and two adults who make up that family's 'Communion Trio.' When it is time to receive First Holy Communion, the trio gets up and proceeds to the priest so that the two adults get to stand with the child witnessing their first reception before returning to their pew. After every Communion Trio process to the priest, the rest of the congregation will be invited to receive Communion like a normal Mass. More specific information about how this works will be given at Practice.

5. FIRST COMMUNION BANNER & RETREAT

As each family is assigned a pew of their own at the First Communion Mass, we use Banners to indicate which pew is assigned to which family. The banner will hang on the end of your family's pew in church during the celebration. All St. Andrew candidates will create their banner from a pre-purchased kit. Family Faith Formation (F3) candidates will make their banner during their First Communion At-Home Retreat.

While we never want a child to miss the opportunity to experience God's love and learn more about Holy Communion in the fun and excitement of a large group on a retreat day, unfortunately this year it is impossible due to the global coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, we offer an At-Home adaptation of the retreat for you to complete as a family.

We will be providing you a copy of the retreat digitally and on paper the week of Easter at Church Sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 6 & 7 as well as during Drive Up Banner Kit Pick Up times that same week (details will be provided via Flocknote messages).

6. PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Remember, upon returning to one's place after receiving Communion, that prayerfully talking to the Lord, like a *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, is appropriate for everyone. It is important that your child be encouraged to spend time in silent reflection, in thanking Jesus for His gift of Himself, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

7. PHOTOS

Our shepherd, Fr. Eduardo Coll, does not want any photography or recording equipment used before the First Communion Mass begins. Children and their families and friends should be reverent, prayerfully preparing for the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. During the Mass, from your place in the pew, you may use your camera, with no flash. It is at this time you may take photographs.

Also, know that we will have a professional photographer at the Mass who will be taking pictures before and throughout the Mass, the moment of First Holy Communion, and for families after Mass. The pictures of the moment of receiving Communion will be offered to you for free download from the photographer's website. Any other images of the Mass you would like, including family pictures taken by our photographer, will be available for purchase from the photographer's website. Thus, we recommend that you not worry about pictures during Mass but be fully present to the celebration.

After Mass, you may take photos on the first step of the sanctuary. Remember, Christ is present in the tabernacle. Please honor His presence with reverent behavior during your picture taking.

8. AFTER THE FIRST COMMUNION MASSES

- ❖ Saturday's First Communion Mass is a special liturgy, but it is not a Sunday liturgy. On May 9, families should attend Sunday Mass. Children are encouraged to wear their First Holy Communion attire and be recognized when they come to Mass to receive their *second* Holy Communion.
- ❖ F3 Children are expected to complete the year by returning to our final Church Sessions in May (18/19) and June (1/2). We then look forward to seeing them back for ongoing Family Faith Formation (in the Formed Crews) next school year!
- ❖ At the Church Session on May 18 or 19:
 - There will be a "*May Crowning*" of the Blessed Virgin Mary at which those who have just celebrated First Holy Communion will be given a special role. These children are encouraged to wear all, or part, of their First Communion attire.
 - F3 children present in person will receive their First Holy Communion certificate at that Church Session.
 - *We offer a special invitation to all families who have been online to consider coming in person to this May 18 or 19 Church Session so your child can receive their First Holy Communion certificate (and a small gift) along with recognition for this milestone in their spiritual journey.*
 - For online children who cannot join us in person but view the live stream for this session can pick up their First Holy Communion certificates from the Faith Formation Office (Monday to Friday, 10a – 4p or by appointment).