

# A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AS THEY PREPARE THEIR CHILDREN FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

EUCCHARIST  
THE SOURCE AND SUMMIT

## *A Wonderful Time of Life*

That beautiful child that you brought into the world, named and carried to the Church for baptism, is now ready to make another step in his or her sacramental life. They have reached the time to begin the immediate preparation for their First Holy Communion.

## *What is our Tradition?*

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers. . . Day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts.”*

(Acts 2: 42, 46)

*From its earliest days the community of the Church gathered around the Eucharistic table. It was there that Jesus was present in their midst.*

*The Eucharist is of such importance in our lives as faithful people that the Second Vatican Council stated that the Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”*

(Lumen Gentium, 11)

## *The Importance of Parents*

Parents are the primary educators of their children in all things. This is especially true in matters of faith. In celebrating the Rite of Baptism of Infants, you publicly committed yourselves to form your children in the life of faith.

At that time, the priest or deacon said this to you: “Parents, you have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God’s commandments as Christ

taught us, by loving God and neighbor.” (RB, 39)

As parents you have the right and duty to be intimately involved in the preparation of your child for First Holy Communion. Parish or school programs of faith formation assist parents in this most important responsibility but can never take over the necessary role of parents.



## *Advance Preparation*

Preparation for any of the sacraments is a journey of faith. One that you as parents share with your children by teaching them to pray, e.g., before eating a meal, before going to bed, when getting up in the morning. When they are old enough, taking them to Sunday Mass where they can meet and experience the larger faith community of which they are a part. As parents show their love and care for their children, they teach about the love and care that God has for us also.

In these ways from the time they are infants we are preparing our children for participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

When the children begin school, it is appropriate for them to begin a time of formal faith formation which will help them to understand the faith even more deeply.

## *Immediate Preparation*

Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Eucharist is usually short and focuses on catechesis for the celebration of the sacrament. This is not an educational process or a time to “catch up” on catechetical material. Rather it involves reflection, prayer, faith sharing and ritual celebration with parents and other candidates.

The goal of this catechesis is to help children participate in the Mass in a meaningful, reverent manner. It has at its core the format and structure of the Mass and speaks of themes such as sharing, listening, eating, giving thanks and celebrating.

## *Some Questions to Ask*

As you engage in the preparation process for the Sacrament of the Eucharist, here are some questions you might want to consider

- Does your family pray together at home?
- Does your family participate in the life of the parish by coming to Sunday Mass, going to faith formation classes, and volunteering in some area of service?
- Does your child participate in Sunday Mass and does he/she express a desire to receive Holy Communion?
- Do you have the intention to commit yourselves to helping your child prepare for this sacrament?
- Does your parish provide you with the necessary support and tools to fulfill your obligation?

## *Some Additional Concerns*


In order to clearly understand the connection between Baptism and Eucharist, it is most appropriate to celebrate First Holy Communion during the Easter season, coming as a family to one of the regularly scheduled Sunday

Masses. Elaborate clothing is not necessary, but wearing the color white is certainly associated with the white garment of baptism and could be worn in some fashion by both boys and girls

This is the first day in a lifetime of coming to the table of the Lord to be nourished by his Body and Blood.

Let it be a holy and joyous celebration for the whole Christian community!



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