

## ***Parents ~ You are #1***

All of the current research supports this fact: you are the number one influence on your child's faith formation, and in practicing the faith! They look to you for guidance and example as they grow to adulthood.

You brought your child to the Catholic Church to receive the Sacrament of Baptism, and "in doing so, you accepted the responsibility of training your child in the practice of the faith." (*Rite of Baptism*)

Your parish helped you and your child prepare for First Penance. Now they are ready to help you prepare your child to receive his or her First Eucharist (or First Communion, as it's commonly called).

What you have done, and will do, to nurture faith at home and in your parish is vitally important. Faithful attendance at Mass every week fosters familiarity with the movements, prayers and gestures of the Mass. Additionally, conversations about Jesus, reading Bible stories, and seeing you reverently receive the Eucharist will help your child prepare to receive First Eucharist.

The awe and reverence your child experiences the first time they receive Jesus in the Eucharist is a treasured gift! Congratulations!

*"Parents are to be carefully instructed on the meaning and theology of the Most Holy Eucharist."* (DOR Policies, 2.2.2)

Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."  
(John 6:51)



## **A Guide for Parents**

First Eucharist  
Preparation in the  
Roman Catholic  
Diocese of  
Rochester, New York



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

## ***What should you say when your child asks, “What is Holy Communion?”***

This is not ordinary food. It begins as wafers of bread and a cup of wine that we offer; through the words of consecration - prayed by a priest - Jesus in turn offers Himself to us!

By the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the power of the Holy Spirit, the priest consecrates our gifts of wheat bread and grape wine and they become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is His greatest gift to us!

The food consumed at home helps your body to grow. Similarly, the spiritual food (Holy Communion) received at the table of the Lord (the altar) helps you to grow in faith and love together with Jesus Christ.

Accepting Jesus’ command to “do this in memory of me”, and going to Mass on Sunday is your way of thanking God for all that He has done, and will continue to do, for you.

Receiving Holy Communion each week helps you to fulfill the two great commandments: to love God and to be loving and kind to everyone you meet.

*“Ordinarily, candidates for First Eucharist have participated in regular religious education or attended Catholic School for first grade before presenting themselves for sacramental preparation.”*

(Diocese of Rochester policies, 2.2.1)

*The celebration of First Penance is to occur before the celebration of First Eucharist.*  
(CIC 914, CCC, 1457)



## ***What are the effects of receiving the Eucharist?***

Receiving Holy Communion strengthens our union with Christ and with the entire Church community.

We receive the strength to live as followers of Jesus and children of God on our journey to eternal life.

*The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.*

(CCC, 1324; LG, 11)

## ***What Does Preparation for the Sacrament Include?***

All children of the parish – those in religious education, Catholic School, or home-school – receive immediate preparation for First Communion together in the parish.

Your child should be given adequate faith formation that helps to develop:

- a familiarity with the entire Mass.
- an understanding of and desire for the Real Presence of Jesus, body, blood, soul and divinity in the Most Holy Eucharist.
- an understanding of the options permitted for the reverent reception of the consecrated host (and precious Blood, if offered).
- a deepening awareness of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- The gift of Jesus in his life, death and resurrection.
- an understanding of the Church’s faith in Christ’s preeminent presence in the Eucharist, relative to His presence in the assembly and in the Word.
- an attitude of thankfulness to God that leads to the regular reception of the Eucharist.

*Do not eat or drink anything but water for one hour before receiving Jesus in Communion.*

(CIC, c. 919)