

ST. COLUMBA CATHOLIC CHURCH IGLESIA CATÓLICA DE SAN COLUMBA

FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST COMMUNION HANDBOOK

PRIMERA RECONCILIACIÓN Y PRIMERA COMUNIÓN MANUAL

2017-2018 CLASS



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FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

2700 WEST MAIN STREET

DOTHAN, AL 36301

334-792-3065 334-792-2816 (FAX)

RE.STCOLUMBA@GMAIL.COM

Dear Parent:

If you are receiving this letter, your child is eligible for Sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion for the school year 2017-2018. We are excited for you and your child at this time in their life! We are also excited to be a part of the process of assisting you in preparing your child for these very important Sacraments.

As a parent, you are the most important part of your child's faith formation throughout their entire childhood. Our parish is happy to assist you as you help form your child's faith. We ask that we work together in these ways:

- Please take your child to Mass each weekend, whether it is here or another Catholic church out of town. Mass attendance bestows graces and teaches our children about Jesus, community and forgiveness in ways which can't be duplicated elsewhere.
- Please ensure that your child regularly attends faith formation class and please review class material at home. Important concepts are covered at EVERY session and your child will miss material needed for his/her understanding of the sacraments. If for some reason your child cannot regularly attend class, please speak with a member of the Faith Formation team as soon as you are able.
- Please make every effort to attend the parent sessions, meetings and interviews which will be offered this year. These sessions are designed to help you as an adult understand these sacraments more fully, to help you understand your child's faith development, and to help you develop your child's faith life. Your attendance is important as these are not items which can be covered with a note sent home.
- Please pray with your child on a daily basis, helping them to memorize and understand the meaning of the prayers assigned for this year.

Your daily efforts now will help your child have a meaningful prayer life as he/she grows older.

- Lastly, if we can assist you in anyway please don't hesitate to let our Faith Formation Staff know. We can help with Bibles, books, take home material and other resources to assist you at home.

We ask that parents please mark your calendars with all of the dates so that we can avoid schedule conflicts. There is a calendar for your refrigerator in this packet, so please put it in a spot where it can be easily referenced.

Please use our parish website [www.stcolumbacatholic.com] and our youth website [www.stcolumbayouth.com] for information such as online forms, schedules, calendars, prayers, interview questions, and the other items contained in this material.

Should you have any questions regarding the content of this letter or preparing your child for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Blessings in Christ,

Doug Martin
Coordinator of Faith Formation

Melissa Lami
Faith Formation Assistant

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Who may be in preparation class for First Reconciliation/First Communion?

- A child must be at least 7 to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- At St. Columba, we require a child to be in second grade
- The Archdiocese of Mobile requires that a child be in faith formation classes for two years
- The candidate must be baptized
- The candidate's family must be registered as members of St. Columba

What does the Church ask of you?

- Mass attendance each week as a family
- Attend faith formation classes (Ignite) each week with at least 75% attendance
- Memorize and recite at least the Act of Contrition and the Sign of the Cross
- Complete all class assignments

Online Information

Parish website

www.stcolumbacatholic.com/youth

Youth Ministry website

www.stcolumbayouth.com

Handbooks and forms are under the "FORMS" tab

Online Resource

<http://faithfirst.com/RCLsacraments/reconciliation/rc.html>



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*Standard text message rates apply.

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FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST COMMUNION ACTIVITY SCHEDULE 2017-2018

FIRST RECONCILIATION 2017 SCHEDULE

June 2017	Registration Begins		
August 23	Faith Formation Begins	6:00PM – 7:30PM	O'Hara Hall
September 20 & 27	Parent/Pastor Meeting in English	6:15PM – 7:15PM	The Rectory
September 27	Parent/Pastor Meeting in Español	6:00PM – 7:30PM	Downstairs Classroom
October 8	Enrollment Liturgy	10:00AM Mass	The Church
November 16	Parent Session	6:15PM – 7:15PM	O'Hara Hall
December 6 & 13	Parent/Candidate Interviews	5:00-7:00PM	Main Office
January 20	First Reconciliation Service	10:00AM	The Church

FIRST COMMUNION 2018 SCHEDULE

February 28	Parent Session	6:15PM – 7:15PM	O'Hara Hall
March 1	Turn in Banners		
April 19	Parent/Student Interviews	4:00PM – 7:00PM	RE Building
April 27	First Communion Practice	6:00PM – 8:00PM	The Church
April 28	First Communion Pictures	8:30AM – 10:30AM	RE Building
April 28	First Communion	11:00AM Mass	The Church

FAITH FORMATION CLASSES (IGNITE)

Wednesdays – 6:00PM – 7:30PM

August 23	October 11	December 13	February 28
August 30	October 18	January 10	March 7
September 6	October 25	January 17	March 14
September 13	November 8	January 24	March 21
September 20	November 15	January 31	April 11
September 27	November 29	February 7	April 18
October 4	December 6	February 21	April 25

We ask that students attend the Faith Formation classes. Faith Formation classes are considered part of each child's preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion. Besides learning the Faith, these classes are an opportunity to get to know other Catholic kids their age, and because Catholics are such a minority here, it may be one of the best opportunities for your child to make Catholic friends. Our classes also encourage prayer and spirituality on their age level. We want to make learning their faith fun and exciting, as well as, informative.

FIRST EUCHARIST BANNER INSTRUCTIONS

The Eucharist Class Banners have been a tradition here at St. Columba for over twenty years. Every year our families have enjoyed coming together and designing their banners. These banners will be used at our First Eucharist celebration and will be on display in the Education Building for the next year. Last year's class banners will be on display in the Education Building until March. If your family chooses to participate, please turn in the completed banner by March 1, 2018.

1. **Banner measurements should be approximately 1 ½' wide by 3' long.** Banners larger than this will be too heavy to hang in some areas of the church.
2. Use inexpensive materials for your banner such as felt or burlap. Hot glue and fabric paints are very easy to use on these banners. These banners are meant to be an inexpensive, easy and fun family project, not museum works of art!
3. Select a Bible verse and several of the symbols from the book that speak to your child about the Eucharist and its importance in his/her life.
4. Include your child's name on the banner. You may also want to include all family member names, the date of First Eucharist, or current photographs.
5. Attach a wooden dowel (or a stick!) to the top of your banner and tie yarn or ribbon to both ends of the rod so that the banner can be hung.
6. **Banners are due by March 1, 2018.** They will be used during the First Eucharist celebration and will be displayed in the Education Building until March 2017. Any questions, please call the Faith Formation Office at 792-3065.

Helpful Banner Making Websites

<http://www.manylittleblessings.com/how-to-make-first-communion-banner/>

<http://www.manylittleblessings.com/first-communion-banner-examples/>

<http://catholicicing.com/first-communion-craft-make-first/>

<http://www.catholicsupply.com/christmas/FCBANNERKIT.HTML>

How To Make A First Communion Banner

By: Jennifer Maughan

When determining how to make a First Communion banner, keep in mind that a handmade banner will cost less than a professionally printed one. You can also personalize the banner to reflect the experiences of your child specifically.

Design

First, figure out the size of the space where the banner will hang so you know what you're working with. Sketch out the banner design on paper, including color schemes and the position of the lettering. When a good idea is committed to paper, it becomes easy to follow through on it. Play around with contrasting colors and simple appliqué designs. Plan on finalizing the size, shape, color, lettering and any images or embellishments for the banner before you even begin.

Fabric

To make a first communion banner, you'll need a solid piece of material. A good size is about 4 feet long by 2 feet wide, but it can be longer or narrower depending on your needs. Fabric that works well for a banner is light polyester, cotton blend, muslin, calico or even linen. These materials are not heavy and drape nicely when made into a banner. Fabric with a lot of nylon in it doesn't work as well, as it is slippery and hard to work with.

Lettering

Many iron-on lettering kits are available at craft and hobby stores. The easiest method for lettering is to purchase a kit and arrange the letters before ironing them into place. For the sewing hobbyists, letters can also be appliquéd on by cutting a letter from contrasting fabric and stitching it on. Fabric paints are another popular and easy alternative for the non-sewer. Most sayings include the child's name and the date, as well as "God Bless You," "Congratulations," "Happy First Communion" or simply the children's name and date.

Embellishments

As long as the embellishment is not too heavy, almost anything will do. Ribbons, silk flowers, sequins, beading and embroidery are some of the more common things to do to a First Communion banner to tie it into the theme. Applique is another way to add detail to a banner. Choose simple shapes that symbolize the day, such as an angel, chalice, cross or Bible. Flowers, birds and other springtime symbols are also appropriate for a rite of passage.

Putting It Together

Once the design is decided, begin putting the banner elements together. Don't forget to hem the background fabric before adding any lettering or embellishments. Clean edges will make the banner look neat and complete. Iron the banner so that you have a smooth surface and the hems are lying flat. Begin with the lettering, as that is the most important feature. Add the embellishments as desired. You can use thread or fabric glue for most banner projects. How you hang the banner is up to you-choose to make a tab at the top for a long dowel, insert grommets or stitch in tiny loops of thread that can hang on tiny picture nails.

First Communion Photography Package

There is not to be any photographs taken during the First Communion liturgy. This policy covers photographs during all types of services. The only photographs allowed during our First Communion liturgy will be taken by a professional photographer who will photograph each child individually as he or she receives his or her First Communion.

Tina Richards of Tina Richards Photography has agreed to the following picture package at a cost of \$25:

Individual posed photos prior to Mass – one 5X7, two 4x5's and four wallets
Individual photos while receiving communion - one 5X7 and four wallets
Group photo in O'Hara Hall before Mass - one 8X10 composite (individual photo incorporated with group photo)

If you are interested in this package, please fill out the form below and bring it and a check payable to Tina Richards Photography with you April 28th. Pictures will be taken beginning at 8:30AM until 10:00AM. Family photos are offered at an additional price; please ask Ms. Richards when your child has their individual pictures taken on April 28th.

Photographs will be delivered to the Church
You will be contacted to pick them up after they arrive

Yes! We would like the First Communion Photography Package deal!

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Phone _____

Parent's Email _____

(Please make checks payable to Tina Richards Photography)

SUGGESTED DRESS FOR FIRST COMMUNION

Girls: White Dress (veil or flowers in hair is optional)

Boys: White or Dark Trousers, White Shirt (short or long sleeve), White Tie

(Please don't have student hold anything during the liturgy (book, purse, gloves, etc.))

FIRST EUCHARIST GIFTS OR SUPPLIES

If you are looking for First Eucharist supplies or gifts, please check with our gift shop. We stock First Eucharist items in the gift shop and can also order items from a number of different catalogues if we don't have what you want in stock. We can often buy items at a discounted rate. Please come by early – if items must be ordered, sufficient time is needed!

If you do not wish to order from us, there are a number of Catholic websites which carry FHC supplies.



This year, we will continue our First Communion tradition of bringing up baby items for the needy of our community during the preparation of the gifts. In addition to bringing up the bread and wine, our students will also bring up “infant necessities” which they have bought for little ones less fortunate than themselves.

The “Preparation of the Gifts” during the Mass is a time for God’s gifts to us and our gifts to God. However, we really cannot give anything to God himself unless it is by way of giving to God’s people. This is why we began and continue with the tradition of bringing baby items to the altar during our First Communion liturgy.

We would like to have all of our students, if they are able, to bring a gift for a baby. **This gift does not have to be large.** Ideally, it should be something that comes from the student him/herself. Please work with your child towards this gift between now and the First Communion Practice on April 27th. Allow your child to do extra chores to earn the money towards the gift and then go to the store together to purchase the gift.

This year these items will be distributed by our community. At this time, we are in particular need of diapers (especially Newborn and Size 1) and baby wipes. We also could use sleepers, receiving blankets, onesies, bibs, socks and other newborn items.

Please bring your **unwrapped gift** with you when you come to First Communion practice on April 27th. These gifts will be placed in baskets and a number of students will bring them up along with the gifts of bread and wine.

Checklist for Successful Parents

Below is a checklist of some ways you can be a successful Catholic parent. Check all those statements you already do. If some remain unchecked, you may want to consider making them part of your family routine in the future. May God bless you in your sacred vocation of parenting!

1. Attend Mass as a Family each weekend.
2. Discuss the meaning of Scripture readings and/or the homily after Mass with your children.
3. Regularly go to Confession with your family.
4. Discuss the beauty and meaning of the Sacraments with your family.
5. Say morning/evening prayers and/or the Rosary as a family or individually.
6. Read the Scriptures and discuss them.
7. Visit Church or participate in a weekday Mass with your children.
8. Share what your Catholic faith means to you personally with your family.
9. Take an active part in your child's Sacramental preparation and religious instruction.
10. Be careful to provide ongoing formal religious education for your children.
11. Say grace before each meal.
12. Demonstrate the importance of ongoing faith growth and instruction in your own life by actively participating in the Faith Festivals, Holy Hours, Parish Missions, etc.
13. Speak often and lovingly of your faith, especially when you feel particularly close to God.
14. Take an active part in parish life and encourage your children to do the same.
15. Openly share your values and discuss them with your children, listening carefully to their comments.
16. Help them develop moral decision making powers appropriate for their maturity by sharing your insights and guiding them without making all the decisions for them.
17. By word and example, teach your children how to love and value one another, and seek/offer forgiveness.
18. Pray for your family, and ask them to pray for you.

Questions Frequently Asked About St. Columba's First Reconciliation Program

How do I know if my child is ready to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Look for these signs of readiness in your child:

- Your child recognizes the difference between accidental and deliberate wrong.
- Your child understands the need to say "I'm sorry" when he/she hurts another person.
- Your child forgives others when they hurt him or her.

What concepts does a child need to understand to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Look for an understanding of the following concepts:

- Sin is an offense against God, and we need to ask God's forgiveness. God is always willing to forgive those who are truly sorry but asks them to forgive others in turn.
- People need to say "I'm sorry" for what they have done wrong and try to make up with those they have hurt.
- The priest and the church have a special role in bringing us God's forgiveness.

How frequently should my child be participating at Sunday Mass?

In their role as primary educators, parents have the responsibility of celebrating Sunday Mass with their children. A child preparing to celebrate First Reconciliation should attend Mass every Sunday and participate as fully as possible. Attendance at Faith Formation classes are important, but it is most important that your child attend Mass each Sunday.

If the Sacrament of Reconciliation is required only when we commit serious sin and children are not capable of such, why prepare them for this sacrament at all?

Instruction and to what extent children can sin are difficult to determine because of the different rates at which they mature. Most people agree the Sacrament of Reconciliation expresses values we hold as Christians; to be human is to have a choice for good or evil; God's love is everlasting; we are always in the process of growing and in the process, we stumble and need forgiveness. Positive personal experiences of God's love and forgiveness celebrated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a child will be of real value as the child matures into adulthood.

Our children fight often with one another. How do we communicate the concept of reconciliation in this context?

As we grow, it is essential that we define who we are, and see ourselves as individuals. One of the ways this is achieved among children is by “fighting”. Remember your own childhood and how now you are most likely very close to the brother/sister you fought with years ago! When it comes to fighting, parents need a blind eye and a deaf ear, letting children work most of it out on their own, while watching that no serious hurt is inflicted. These times of fighting are also opportunities to teach children about the need to say “I’m sorry”, the need to forgive others and what hurting and being hurt is all about. This is an important part of preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Confession, Penance, Reconciliation -- Why the change in terminology?

A few decades in the past, the sacrament was called “Confession” because “confessing” referred to one of the essential aspects of the sacrament, namely, self-accusation with regard to one’s sins. However, “confession” tends to restrict the fuller understanding of this sacrament, making it seem that acknowledging one’s sins is the major part of the rite. For this reason, the terminology is being changed to better express all aspects of this sacrament.

“Penance” calls attention to the person’s change or conversion from a sinful stance before God and the community to a stance of unity and love, stresses the need for a formal process of forgiveness within the context of community, church and our relationship with God and focuses on acts to bring about reconciliation.

“Reconciliation” also stresses the purpose of the sacrament by calling attention to the ongoing process of conversion from a state of alienation from God and Church to a stance of unity and love. Furthermore, the term reconciliation speaks of the initiative of God “who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:18)

The official ritual is called the Rite of Penance.

How are we to understand and explain grace?

Grace is God’s gift of self. Grace is the very core of our being; to be human is to be open to and in a relationship with God.

Grace is God’s initiative. God invites us to an intimate loving relationship and gives us the power to respond to this invitation.

How do we understand sin?

Sin is best understood in the context of our covenantal relationship with God. God loves unconditionally. We do not have to do anything to earn God's love. And God's love does not impinge on our freedom to accept or reject that offer of love. We are part of a personal relationship with God.

Being in a covenantal relationship requires loyalty, trust, fidelity, a sense of worth and solidarity. Any violation of these requirements weakens our personal relationship with God. That is sin.

In our Catholic tradition, we speak of three kinds of sin: Original, personal or actual, and social.

- **Original sin** is the absence of a special relationship with God, the condition of estrangement or brokenness, the sin of the world. It is the climate of evil that exists in the world. Original sin is greater than the sum of individual acts of sin.
- **Personal sin** is breaking our relationship with God by choosing freely and knowingly to be unloving or selfish. Traditionally, we speak of actual sin as mortal or venial. Venial sin is refusing to grow in God's love and acting inconsistently with our functional commitment to be for life and love. Mortal sin is a conscious decision to act in a way which fashions a life style that turns us away from our loving relationship with God, others and the world. Three conditions are necessary for mortal sin: sufficient reflection, full consent of the will (which implies personal freedom in a decision that changes the direction of one's life) and serious matter.
- **Social sin** describes how our individual choices can allow existing social structures to continue to oppress and exploit God's creation.

Are children taught about mortal and venial sin anymore?

Children in the second grade are taught that sin is freely choosing to do what we know is wrong. Children are taught the conditions necessary for sin. To what extent the child can sin is more difficult to answer because of the different rates at which children mature. Most people agree that the seven to nine year old is not capable of serious sin. The terms of mortal and venial are not taught to children of this age.

What is something I can do to help prepare my child for First Reconciliation?

Here are some ways in which preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation can be reinforced in the home:

- Be particularly conscious of times when family members need to be reconciled with one another. Take time to help your children learn to say "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you" in meaningful ways.

- While at times you might get as angry at an accident or mistake as you do at a genuinely unloving act, it is important for your child's moral growth that you help him or her see the difference. Make clear the cause of your frustration or anger – "I know that it was an accident, but I get really frustrated when you spill milk because you are fooling around at the table" or "I get really angry when you say mean things to your sister – that is an unloving thing to do and we don't allow it in this house. Please speak more respectfully."

Your child's celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be shaped by his or her experience of forgiveness and peace at home and by a growing awareness of the difference between sins and mistakes.

Who is eligible to celebrate First Reconciliation?

A child who has been baptized and has reached the age of reason (normally considered to be seven years of age), and has been properly catechized may celebrate First Reconciliation.

Must a person be baptized to celebrate First Reconciliation?

One must be baptized to celebrate First Reconciliation. Children who have been baptized in another faith and are preparing for reception into the church may celebrate the sacrament of First Reconciliation.

What catechesis is encouraged in the preparation for First Reconciliation?

A family's regular participation in our parish program will help the pastor ascertain whether the child is properly disposed for the celebration of Reconciliation. Because a lot of information is presented at each Wednesday night Faith Formation session, we ask that children attend each session and that parents reinforce the lesson material at home. If a child must miss more than one-fourth of the sessions (more than 6 each year), parents should contact the Faith Formation team to find out how the missed material can be made up. Extenuating circumstances will be handled on an individual basis in consultation with the pastor and Faith Formation team. We ask that for students transferring to St. Columba this year please ask your parish where you attended or Catholic school last year to send attendance records so that we will know where to place each student in the process.

What happens if my child is older than the usual age for First Reconciliation?

It is important that all our children have a basic understanding of God, the Church and sacraments prior to their First Reconciliation. So that our older children are better prepared to celebrate First Reconciliation, the preparation program for older children seeking Reconciliation and Communion will be two years in length. During the first year, the child will participate in their school grade level of the Faith Formation

program. During the second year of preparation they will attend special preparation classes instead of their regular faith formation class.

What is expected of the parents of a child in First Reconciliation?

Parents play a very important role in the formation of their child's faith. As a parent, you are the primary educator of the Faith. We, as the Christian community you are a part of, assist and encourage you in helping form your child's faith. As a way of helping, at least one parent is asked to attend 4 parent sessions that will be led by Fr. Gallagher and our faith formation staff. The dates and times of these sessions are listed on the calendar in this packet.

Who gives permission for the child to celebrate the sacrament if the child is not living with his/her parents?

If the child is living with someone other than the parent or legal guardian, the parent or legal guardian must be asked to grant permission before the child prepares to celebrate First Reconciliation. In the case of joint custody, both parents must be asked to grant permission.

How is the readiness of a child to celebrate First Reconciliation determined?

The parents, with the assistance and advice of the pastor and/or the Coordinator of Faith Formation, should determine if their child is ready. Our interviews with the parents in September will help determine the readiness of the child. If the determination is made that the child is not ready, the celebration of Reconciliation may be delayed to some future time.

FIRST RECONCILIATION VOCABULARY

- Absolution
 - The forgiveness of sin that we receive from God through the Church in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Baptism
 - The sacrament that makes the person a child of God and a member of the Church. It takes away original sin and all personal sin and makes the person a temple of the Holy Spirit.
- Confession
 - Telling our sins to a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. What we confess to the priest is private.
- Confessor
 - A priest who acts as God's minister when he listens to our confession.
- Conscience
 - God's gift which helps us know the difference between right and wrong. It also helps us recognize whether an action we already did was right or wrong.
- Contrition
 - Sorrow for sins and a willingness to do better. Contrition is our first step toward forgiveness. As part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we pray and Act or Prayer of Contrition.
- Conversion
 - A sincere change of mind, will, and heart away from sin and toward God. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament of conversion.
- Examination of Conscience
 - A prayerful way of looking at our lives in light of the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the life of Jesus, and the teachings of the Church. It helps us know whether what we have done is right or wrong.
- Grace
 - A sharing in God's own life. It is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life". (CCC 1996)
- Holy Water
 - Water blessed by the priest for a religious purpose.
- Mortal Sin
 - A serious sin that separates us from God's life.
- Original Sin
 - The name given to the first sin of humans. Because they disobeyed God and turned away from his friendship, original sin is passed to all of us.
- Paschal Candle
 - A candle that is blessed at Easter Vigil and is burned during the Masses of the Easter season. It is also burned at Baptisms and funerals through the year.

- Penance
 - A prayer or good action that we do to show we are sorry for our sins and want to do better. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the priest gives us a penance.
- Penitent
 - The person who confesses his or her sins to the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Precepts of the Church
 - Laws of the Church that help us know what we should do to grow in love of God and neighbor. (The precepts can be found in the Catechism beginning with number 2041.)
- Priest
 - A man who is ordained to serve God and the Church by celebrating the sacraments, preaching, and presiding at Mass. The priest is the confessor, or minister of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The stole is a sign of the priest's obedience to God and of his priestly authority.
- Reconciliation
 - A coming back together.
- Reconciliation Room
 - A room or chapel in which the confessor, or priest, hears the penitent's confession of sins. The room is usually furnished with chairs, a kneeler, a table for the Bible, and a candle. A movable screen can also be used as a divider between the priest and the penitent.
- Sacrament
 - A holy sign that comes from Jesus and gives us grace, a share in God's life.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
 - A sacrament of forgiveness through which the sinner is reconciled with God and the Church.
- Scripture
 - The word of God contained in the Bible. The word *Scripture* means "holy writing." Scripture is used for reflecting on God's love and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Scripture is proclaimed by a lector, or reader, at Mass, at a communal celebration, or in other liturgical celebrations.
- Sin
 - The choice to disobey God. Sin is a deliberate choice, not a mistake or accident. We accept God's loving forgiveness for our sins when we show our sorrow that we are willing to do better.
- Stole
 - A vestment the priest wears around his neck when celebrating the sacraments.
- Trinity
 - The three Persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- Venial Sin
 - A less serious sin that weakens our friendship with God.

Questions Frequently Asked About St. Columba's First Eucharist Program

When is a child ready to make his/her first Holy Communion?

The requirements for the reception of First Holy Communion come to us from Quam Singulari (Pius X) and they are:

- ability to distinguish between ordinary bread and the Eucharist
- knowledge of the mysteries of faith according to his/her age
- ability to express some desire to receive Jesus

What does a child need to know of the mysteries of faith before receiving First Holy Communion?

The following might be considered as some of the essentials:

- the Life of Jesus
- the Mass
- Baptism
- The Last Supper
- presence of Jesus in the Eucharist
- God's forgiving love

Knowledge of the above would be in accord with the child's ability. Students in St. Columba's Faith Formation program are asked to have an understanding of the interview questions given to the parents.

Does my child have to make his/her First Reconciliation before receiving Communion?

"The Sacrament of Reconciliation normally should be celebrated prior to the reception of First Communion" (Sharing the Light of Faith, #126)

In 1910, Pope Pius X issued a decree (Quam Singulari) which stated that children once they had reached the use of reason (about seven years) were not to be denied the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. Pope Pius did this because the prevailing custom of not permitting young people to receive the Eucharist until they were about 15 years old, a custom practiced since the sixteenth century. Since adolescents were capable of committing serious sin, First Eucharist at 15 was usually preceded by a confession of one's sins. When Pius X lowered the age for reception of the Eucharist and Penance, church leaders and catechists continued to follow the established pattern of Eucharist following Penance. It is unlikely that young children are capable of committing serious sin. Only those in the state of mortal sin are obliged to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation. It is the nature of any sacrament that it be received freely.

Why do we receive Communion in the hand?

Reception of Communion in the hand was the way the Early Christians were taught to receive the Eucharist. In the year 387, St. Cyril gave the instruction:

“With your left hand make a throne for the right hand, which will receive the King. Receive the Body of Christ in the hollow of your hand and give the response - Amen.”

In the tenth century certain cultural and theological developments led Catholics to receive on the tongue. In 1977, the bishops of the United States voted to give American Catholics the option to receive the Eucharist on the tongue or return to the Early Church practice of receiving respectfully in the hand.

If Communion is offered under both species, must my child drink from the cup?

There is no “must” obligation to receive both the consecrated bread and the consecrated wine. What liturgists and biblical scholars point out is this: It is Jesus’ intention that we are called to recognize. When he declared that the bread was his body, he spoke as a Jew. To the Jews one’s body was one’s whole self. Thus Jesus stated that the bread he gave to his disciples and to the whole Church was himself. Thus we receive the risen Christ in his entirety when we eat the Eucharistic bread. With regard to the cup, wine which Jesus declared was the blood of the new covenant, the meaning is this: when we receive from the cup we are accepting the cup as Jesus intended - as a sign of the new covenant, the new relationship God has entered into with us, the followers of Jesus (the Church). As a Jew, Jesus conceived blood as the carrier of the life of a person, the living spirit of a person. His blood is his spirit that enlivens the new covenant, a new relationship with God through which the forgiveness of sins is given to all. There is a deep symbolism in the taking of the chalice for it can make us more aware of our commitment to and our relationship with the entire Eucharistic community. To partake of the cup is to personally commit oneself to Jesus in the community for it is the acknowledgment of and a saying “yes” to the community Jesus died for.

How can I explain the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist to my son/daughter?

Young children are very concrete in their understandings. You are present with/to them when you are physically present. We can begin to help children get in touch with the mystery of Jesus’ presence in the Eucharist by talking to them about different ways people are present to/with one another. We can talk about how receiving a card or a gift in the mail, talking to someone on the phone, and thinking about someone can make a person present to us in a very real way. And Jesus said that when we eat this bread and drink from this cup he would be with us.

Why is there so much emphasis on the Mass as a meal?

The Mass is a sacred meal based on what Jesus did when he celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples the night before he died. Because the followers of Jesus connected the Last Supper with the passion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the emphasis of Jesus' sacrifice of his life became part of the ritual meal commemorating these events. For historical reasons, the sacrificial aspect of the meal was stressed and the dimension of the ritual as meal was lost. In the context of the biblical and liturgical advances in understanding the need to restore the aspect of the meal to the celebration of the mass we see this emphasis.

Do we teach children that the Mass is a sacrifice anymore?

Through the Mass the sacrifice of the cross is made present. Eucharist as a symbol of God's care, a meal, a memorial, bread broken and shared, and sacrifice are all presented to the children according to their ability to understand.

Who is eligible to celebrate First Eucharist?

A child who has been baptized, has celebrated First Reconciliation, and has been properly catechized may celebrate First Eucharist.

Must a person be baptized to celebrate First Eucharist?

One must be baptized to celebrate First Eucharist.

What catechesis is encouraged in the preparation for First Eucharist?

A family's regular participation in our parish program will help the pastor ascertain whether the child is properly disposed for the celebration of Communion. Because a lot of information is presented at each Wednesday night Faith Formation session, we ask that children attend each session and that parents reinforce the lesson material at home. If a child must miss more than one-fourth of the sessions (more than 6 each year), parents should contact the Faith Formation team to find out how the missed material can be made up. Extenuating circumstances will be handled on an individual basis in consultation with the pastor and Faith Formation team. We ask that for students transferring to St. Columba this year please ask your parish where you attended or Catholic school last year to send attendance records so that we will know where to place each student in the process.

What happens if my child is older than the usual age for First Eucharist?

It is important that all our children have a basic understanding of God, the Church and sacraments prior to their First Communion. So that our older children are better prepared to celebrate First Communion, the preparation program for older children

seeking Reconciliation and Communion will be two years in length. During the first year, the child will participate in their school grade level of the Faith Formation program. During the second year of preparation they will attend special preparation classes instead of their regular faith formation class.

Who gives permission for the child to celebrate the sacrament if the child is not living with his/her parents?

If the child is living with someone other than the parent or legal guardian, the parent or legal guardian must be asked to grant permission before the child prepares to celebrate First Eucharist. In the case of joint custody, both parents must be asked to grant permission.

How is the readiness of a child to celebrate First Eucharist determined?

The parents should determine if their child is ready, with the assistance and advice of the pastor and/or the Coordinator of Faith Formation. All students must be interviewed by a member of the parish staff in order to help determine readiness. Students will be expected to understand the "Interview Questions" which are distributed to parents in January. Families must work on these interview questions at home. If the determination is made that the child is not ready, the celebration of First Eucharist may be delayed to some future date which is agreeable with the pastor and family.

How frequently should my child be participating at Sunday Mass?

The parents, with the assistance and advice of the pastor and/or the Coordinator of Faith Formation, should determine if their child is ready. Our interviews with the parents in September will help determine the readiness of the child. If the determination is made that the child is not ready, the celebration of Reconciliation may be delayed to some future time.

FIRST EUCHARIST VOCABULARY

- Altar
 - The table of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated at the altar.
- Altar Server
 - A person who helps the priest and deacon at Mass
- Ambo
 - The reading stand from which the Scriptures are proclaimed. It is sometimes called the lectern.
- Assembly
 - The baptized community gathered to celebrate the Eucharist, the sacraments or other liturgy.
- Baptism
 - One of the three Sacraments of Initiation. Baptism gives us new life in God and makes us members of the Church.
- Baptismal Font
 - A bowl-shaped container or pool of water used for Baptism. The word *font* means "fountain."
- Bible
 - God's word written in human words. The Bible is the holy book of the Church
- Blessed Sacrament
 - Another name for the Body and Blood of Jesus
- Blessing
 - An action using words and gestures which asks God to show his kindness to us.
- Body of Christ
 - A name for the Church. It tells us that Christ is the head and the baptized are the members of the body.
- Book of the Gospels
 - A decorated book containing the readings from the four Gospels used during the Liturgy of the Word
- Cantor
 - The leader of song during the Mass and other Church celebrations
- Chalice
 - The special silver or gold cup used at Mass to hold the wine that becomes the Blood of Christ.
- Chrism
 - The oil blessed by the bishop used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders
- Christian
 - The name given to people who are baptized and follow Jesus.

- Church
 - The community of all baptized people who believe in God and follow Jesus
- Ciborium
 - The special silver or gold container used at Mass to hold the smaller consecrated Hosts for communion. A covered ciborium also holds the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.
- Collection
 - The gifts of money collected from members of the assembly and presented during the time of the Preparation of the Altar
- Confirmation
 - One of the three Sacraments of Initiation. It is the sacrament that strengthens the life of God we received at Baptism and seals us with the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Confiteor
 - A pray of sorrow for sin. In it each person tells God and the Church family, "I am sorry." We ask for forgiveness
- Consecration
 - The part of the Eucharistic Prayer when, through the prayers and actions of the priest and the power of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus
- Cruets
 - Small pitchers or containers that hold the water and wine used at Mass
- Deacon
 - A man who is ordained to serve the Church. Deacons may baptize, proclaim the Gospel, preach, assist the priest at Mass, witness marriages, and do works of charity.
- Eucharist
 - One of the three Sacraments of Initiation. It is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Jesus is truly and really present in the Eucharist. The word *Eucharist* means "thanksgiving."
- Grace
 - A sharing in God's own life.
- Holy Communion
 - The Body and Blood of Christ that we receive in the Eucharist
- Holy Trinity
 - The three Persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- Host
 - A round piece of unleavened bread used at Mass. When the host is consecrated at Mass, it becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.
- Incense
 - Oils and spices that are burned in liturgical celebrations to show honor for holy things. It is also used as a sign of our prayers rising to God.

- Lamb of God
 - A title for Jesus that reminds us that he offered his life through suffering and death to take away our sins.
- Lectionary
 - The book of scripture readings used at Mass
- Lector
 - A person who proclaims God's word at Mass or other liturgical celebrations. The word *lector* means "reader."
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - The second main part of the Mass. It is the time when we call on the Holy Spirit and the priest consecrates the bread and wine. We remember and give thanks for all of God's gifts, especially Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection.
- Liturgy of the Word
 - The first main part of the Mass. It is the time when we listen to God's word in the Scriptures.
- Mass
 - Another name for the Eucharist.
- Memorial
 - Another word for remembering. In the Mass, it means to remember and proclaim God's works.
- Mission
 - A job or duty someone is sent to do and takes responsibility for. The Church's mission is to announce the good news of God's kingdom.
- Mystery
 - Something we believe about God and his actions, but we do not understand how it happens.
- Original Sin
 - The first sin committed by the first humans.
- Paschal Candle
 - Another name for the Easter Candle that is lit at the Easter Vigil
- Paten
 - The silver or gold plate or dish used at Mass to hold the large host
- Pentecost
 - The feast that celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and disciples fifty days after Easter. We celebrate this day as the beginning of the Church
- People of God
 - A name for the Church which tells us that we are sent by Christ to preach God's love to all people
- Prayer
 - Talking and listening to God. It is raising our minds and hearts to God.

- Preparation of the Altar and Gifts
 - The part of the Mass when the altar is prepared and members of the assembly bring the bread and wine, which will become the Body and Blood of Jesus, to the priest at the altar
- Priest
 - A man who is ordained to serve God and lead the Church by celebrating the sacraments, preaching and presiding at Mass, and performing other spiritual works.
- Procession
 - A group of people moving forward as part of a celebration
- Sacrament
 - An outward sign that comes from Jesus, which gives us a share in God's life.
- Sacramentary
 - The book containing the Order of the Mass, special celebrations during the year, and various prayers used by the priest at Mass
- Sacraments of Initiation
 - The three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist that together make us full members of the Church. They are signs that we belong to God and to the Catholic Church
- Sanctuary
 - The part of the church where the altar and ambo are located. The word *sanctuary* means "holy place."
- Sign of Peace
 - The sign of peace is an action prayer that we exchange before Communion as a sign to wish God's peace on those who receive it. It shows that we are one in Christ's love.
- Tabernacle
 - The container in which the Blessed Sacrament is kept. It may be located in the sanctuary or a special chapel in the church. A lamp or candle is kept burning near the tabernacle as a sign that Jesus is present. The word *tabernacle* means "meeting place."
- Unity
 - A word that means to be one with others
- Usher
 - A person of hospitality who welcomes members of the assembly to Mass and helps directs processions and collections
- Vestments
 - The special clothing worn by the priest and some others for Mass and other liturgical celebrations

FIRST COMMUNION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(Interviews will be held on April 19th, 2018)

Why do we do these interviews? The purpose of the pastor interviewing the child is to ascertain whether the child understands the basics about the sacrament which they are preparing to receive.

1. How many sacraments have you received in your life so far and which ones are they? (Baptism and Reconciliation)
2. Which sacrament are you getting ready to receive now? (Eucharist)
3. What's another name for this sacrament? (Communion)
4. What happens when the host is consecrated during Mass? (The host becomes Jesus' body)
5. What happens when the wine is consecrated during Mass? (The wine becomes Jesus' blood)
6. Will the consecrated bread still look and taste like bread? (Yes) What is different about the consecrated bread? (It is the Body of Christ)
7. Will the consecrated wine still look and taste like wine? (Yes) What is different about the consecrated wine? (It is the Blood of Christ)
8. When is the only time the bread and wine can be consecrated? (During Mass)
9. Who are the only ones who can consecrate the bread and wine during Mass? (The bishops or priests)
10. Is Jesus really present in the Eucharist? (Yes, we call this the Real Presence)
11. When was the first Mass celebrated? (Last Supper on Holy Thursday)
12. What are the two main parts of the Mass? (the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist)
13. Who was with Jesus at that first Mass? (The apostles) How many? (12)
14. When going to communion, what are the ways you may receive The Body of Christ? (On the tongue or in the hand)
15. Who can distribute communion? (Bishop, Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister)

16. When the Bishop, Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister holds up the host and says, "The Body of Christ" what do you say? (Amen)
17. What does Amen mean? (I believe)
18. When the Bishop, Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Eucharistic Minister offers you the chalice and says, "The Blood of Christ" what do you say? (Amen)
19. Demonstrate how we receive Communion.
20. How many sacraments of initiation are there? (Three)
21. What are the sacraments of initiation? (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)
22. May you receive the Body and Blood of Christ if you are in a state of serious sin? (No)
23. What sacrament do you turn to before going to communion if you are in a state of sin? (Reconciliation)
24. If you go to communion and they run out of the Blood of Christ and you have only received the Body of Christ, do you still receive all of Christ? (Yes)
25. If you only receive a tiny piece of the consecrated host will you still receive Jesus in his completeness? (Yes)
26. If they run out of consecrated bread and you only receive a drop of the consecrated wine, will you still receive Jesus in his completeness? (Yes)
27. If there are leftover consecrated hosts, is Jesus still present or does it change back into ordinary bread? (Jesus is still present – it is still the Body of Christ)
28. If there consecrated wine left over, is Jesus still present or does it change back into ordinary wine? (Jesus is still present – it is still the Blood of Christ)
29. What does the priest do with the leftover consecrated hosts? (Places them in the Tabernacle)
30. What is done with the consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle? (They are used in the next Mass. Ministers to the sick also take it to people in the hospital or to people who are sick at home, as well as to those who are unable to come to Mass because they are very old or cannot walk well)
31. What is done with the consecrated wine that is left over after communion? (The priest or deacon drinks it)

32. How do you know Jesus is present in the Tabernacle? (The sanctuary light is burning)
33. Where is the sanctuary light in St. Columba church? (Behind the ambo)
34. When we come into the Church and see the sanctuary light burning, what is the first thing we do before we go into the pew? (Genuflect)
35. Who are you genuflecting to? (Jesus)
36. Why do you genuflect or bow deeply? (To show respect for Jesus in the Tabernacle)
37. When is the sanctuary light not burning, showing the Tabernacle is empty? (After the mass of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday until the Easter Vigil Mass)
38. Why is the Tabernacle empty from Holy Thursday evening until Holy Saturday evening? (Because this is the time we remember the suffering and death of Jesus)
39. When you come into the Church, why do you dip your finger in the water by the door and make the sign of the cross on yourself? (To remind yourself of your baptism and the promises you made to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit)
40. Is the water at the door of the Church plain water? (No, it has been blessed so we use it in a respectful way)
41. What is another names for the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (The Sacrament of Penance)
42. What is another name that some people have for this sacrament? (Confession)
43. What do you do in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? (Tell your sins to the priest)
44. Can the priest tell anyone what you said? (No)
45. Why can the priest not tell anyone what you said? (Because it is just between you and God)
46. God gave us ten guidelines to tell us if we've done right or wrong. What are those ten guidelines called? (The Ten Commandments)
47. Who did God give these Commandments to so that we would have them? (Moses)

48. Name the Ten Commandments (*Catholic version, not Protestant version – and they do not have to be in these exact words*)

1. I am the Lord, your God. You shall have no other gods besides Me.

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.

4. Honor your father and your mother.

5. You shall not kill.

6. You shall not commit adultery.

7. You shall not steal.

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

49. When we break one of these Commandments, we commit a... (Sin)

50. After you make the sign of the Cross in the Reconciliation Room, what do you say? (Bless me Father for I have sinned, my last confession was...)

51. Then what do you do? (Tell your sins)

52. After the priest gives you a penance, he'll ask you to say a prayer telling God that you are sorry. What is this prayer? (Act of Contrition)

53. Do you go to Mass on Sundays?

Prayers to know by heart:

The Sign of the Cross

The Lord's Prayer

Hail Mary

Morning Offering

Glory Be

Grace Before Meals

Grace After Meals

Act of Contrition

REAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

Today you may hear conversations about belief in the “real presence” of Christ in the Eucharist. The first thing to be said about Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is that it is a mystery that we can never totally understand. That being said, how does the Church describe Christ’s presence in the blessed bread and wine?

Some people will mistakenly talk about the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, because they often use the name Jesus and Christ interchangeably. But a more accurate way to describe the special presence is the “Body of Christ”. It is the Church teaching that the real presence is the presence of the risen Christ, not the physical, historical body of Jesus.

When we talk about the “real presence” of the Christ, we are talking about the presence of glorified Christ who was raised by the Father from the dead. This presence, “body, blood, soul and divinity,” is truly present by the power of the Holy Spirit in the consecrated bread and wine (CCC 1374). Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is the most special presence of Christ that we have. It is personal, it is genuine. This “real presence” remains in the Sacred Host reposed in the tabernacle, where we are invited to visit with the risen Christ alive in the Eucharist.

When Christ invited us to take and eat his body, he was speaking as the Jews of his time would have understood the word “body”. It was more than his physical body. He was inviting us to absorb his body, that is, all of him: his values, his life with people, his care for the marginalized, and his faithfulness to the Father. He wanted us to take in all that he was and be like him, to continue his mission on earth. No one of us can do this individually, but the whole body of Christ, the Church, has set out to be responsible for Christ’s work.

The traditional word used to name the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is “transubstantiation.” St. Thomas Aquinas, a theologian who lived in the 13th century, used the word to describe how the bread and wine still looked like bread and wine and tasted like bread and wine. In other words, the “accidents” did not change, but the substance did (CCC 1376). Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the words and actions of the priest, the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Because we have united ourselves, our lives, with Christ’s sacrifice (CCC 1368) through the bread and wine, our lives are also transformed to better represent and be the body of Christ to the world.

When we speak of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we acknowledge foremost his presence in the bread and wine, but we also recognize how Christ is present in the assembly as it gathers in his name: Christ is present in the Word proclaimed and in the presider who offers all we have and all we are in unity with Christ back to the Father. This teaching is found in Vatican *It’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (n. 7) and in Pope Paul VI’s great encyclical on the Eucharist.

The bishops of the United States remind us that “Jesus Christ gives himself to us in the form that employs the symbolism inherent in eating bread and drinking wine. Furthermore, being present under the appearances of bread and wine, Christ gives himself to us in a form that is appropriate for human eating and drinking. Also, this kind of presence corresponds to the virtue of faith, for the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ cannot be detected or discerned by any way other than faith.” (Taken from “The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., 2001.)

(CCC is an abbreviation for the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.)