

Frequently Asked Questions About First Communion

What does the Church ask of parents in sacramental preparation?

The Church views the role of parents in the religious formation of children as both a privilege and an obligation. When you presented your child to the Church for baptism, you were distinctly reminded that you have the responsibility of "raising them in the practice of the faith" (Rite of Baptism). This obligation and privilege extend to sacramental preparation.

How will I know if my child is ready for Eucharist?

The first question to ask yourself is, "Is my child at Mass regularly?" If your child is at Mass each Sunday and is capable of paying attention to what is going on, that's the first step. The second question to ask is, "Does my child have a sincere desire to share in the Eucharist?" When children attend mass regularly, eventually they want to participate more fully. This is a logical progression that leads the child to ask, "When can I go to communion?" Finally, ask yourself, "Does my child understand that this consecrated bread and wine is truly the body and blood of Jesus?"

Are there prayers my child should learn?

As children come to readiness for first communion, they should be learning the acclamations, responses, and prayers of the Mass. Initially, a child will learn to pray the "Our Father" with the rest of the assembly at Mass. Then gradually, a child should be able to sing or pray the Holy, Holy, Holy, the memorial acclamation, and the great amen, and other brief responses. Children can learn these simply by being at Mass and hearing them every week. Also, you can find them in the back of your child's Eucharist book.

How should my child behave at mass?

As your child now begins to share in the Eucharist, remind him/her that he/she is an important part of the community gathered at Mass. Encourage your child to participate in the music and prayers, rather than bring along a prayer book or other amusement. Remind your child that at Mass we sing, and pray, and we are quiet sometimes. Help your child to receive the Eucharist with reverence. Even the most agreeable and well-behaved children need to be reminded of these things often.

What is the Church's rule about fasting before going to communion?

Church law requires Catholics to fast from food and beverages for one hour before going to communion.