

Self-Guided Parent and Child Preparation Session 1 of 3

Directions: If you and your child missed the first of the three retreats for First Holy Communion preparation, this guide is for you both. If you will be able to make the second session, then you will not yet have the children's material at home. Simply do the other activities here with them and wait until you get the materials to do those assignments.

What is my responsibility as a parent preparing my child for First Holy Communion?

1. To make sure they are over the age of 7 and are baptized in the Catholic faith. If they are not baptized Catholics, please contact the parish priest/pastor as soon as possible to determine the appropriate pathway to the Lord's Table. There is one!
2. To celebrate the Eucharist with them at least weekly. (Precept #1)
3. To make sure they are enrolled and participating in the parish religious education program, the Catholic School or an approved Home Study Program during the year they are preparing for First Penance and First Holy Communion. To assure that they are meeting parish established participation rules for concurrent faith formation. This is what will help meet the requirement of "Sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the Body of Christ with faith and devotion." (Code of Canon Law 913.1)
4. To attend and participate in all of the parish-sponsored preparation sessions for the parents. If that is not possible, to complete the self-guided preparation process.
5. To see that your child attends and participates in all parish-sponsored First Holy Communion events. If that is not possible, to complete the home-based alternate program.
6. To complete the rest of the curriculum materials at home. Preparation is a partnership between the parents and the parish. Completion of both the parish offerings and the home components constitutes sound preparation.
7. To see that your child is ready to receive First Holy Communion. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has provided these signs of readiness. The child:
 - Has prepared for and received the Sacrament of Penance (parental testimony).
 - Participates in the Mass (Not just goes...participates!)
 - Understands and believes that Christ is present in the Eucharist.
 - Realizes the difference between Eucharist and ordinary bread and wine.
 - Understands the importance of observing the Eucharistic fast.
 - Knows how to receive Eucharist reverently.
8. To communicate with the parish if you are experiencing difficulty in meeting these requirement.
9. To pray regularly for and with your child both at home and during the Mass.

Discovering the answers to the questions that formed the basis for Session 1

1. **Why is baptism so important?**
 - a. Watch Fr. Dave Dwyer in this Busted Halo video segment on baptism:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05YB2jdHLsY> (6:28)

- b. Home activities:
 - i. Tell your children the story of their baptism and include why you wanted them baptized. What are your hopes and dreams for their life in Jesus and the Church?
 - ii. Ask your children to interview their godparents about why faith is important and what they want to help them with as they prepare to receive First Communion. Substitute another faithful adult if the child's godparent is not available.
 - iii. Celebrate on the anniversary of their baptism!
2. **Why do you believe in Jesus?**
- a. Watch this music video called "I Believe"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOXHvnSeoAo>
 - b. Spend 15 minutes formulating your response to Why do you believe in Jesus?
 - c. Home Activity
 - i. Complete Lesson 1 in the Pflaum Material "I belong to a community" (if you are missing both catechetical sessions and have picked up the material already)
 - ii. Begin regularly praying the Lord's Prayer with your child
 - iii. Talk with your child about who they understand Jesus is and what they already believe about Him
3. **Why is Sunday important?**
- a. Watch this video clip by Fr. William Nicholas on "Why do Catholic go to Mass on Sunday?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00D5mLSbGCM>
 - b. Home Activities
 - i. Complete Lesson 2 in the Pflaum Material "Our Community Remembers Jesus" concentrating most of your attention on pages 2-3 in this lesson. Do the activities there. Focus on Jesus' love, and the absolute hope and promise that is found because God raised Jesus from the dead. THAT is what is celebrated every Sunday! If you plan to attend the second session, this material will come home after the second session and you can follow this pattern to complete it. Refer to the interim activities handout for more to do while waiting to receive the materials.
 - ii. Plan to attend the services of Holy Week. In 2017 the dates are
 - 1. Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion April 9, 2017
 - 2. Holy Thursday April 13, 2017
 - 3. Good Friday April 14, 2017
 - 4. Holy Saturday/Easter Vigil (the highest holy day of our year) April 15, 2017
 - 5. Easter Sunday April 16, 2017
 - iii. Mark your calendars to celebrate Pentecost on June 4, 2017.
4. **Why do we have to gather to worship? Or Why can't I just worship God in the forest or at the park or at home alone?**
- a. Read the essay entitled "Why do we have to gather to worship? See resource link.

- b. Watch the following video segments
 - i. An overview of the four ways Christ is present in the gathering called Eucharist: Fr. Roc O'Connor and Timothy Johnston, Director of Liturgical Programming at Marquette University https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHm7cOx_PoA (7:09)
 - ii. Bishop Robert Barron on Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist: a look at what is happening during consecration: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJW3LXuHzo> (11:03)
- c. At Home:
 - i. Complete Chapter 3 in the Pflaum First Eucharist Material paying special attention to the story of Jesus feeding the multitudes. If you will attend the next session, then watch these videos together and wait until you have the material to finish it.
 - 1. Short narration of the story with visuals (1:34) for children <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrQsql4TCzs>
 - 2. A look at this story from the perspective of the little boy who gave his food to Jesus and the disciples: animation for children (around 5:00) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ak_zipTFvV/k
 - ii. Do the prayer service with your children found in Chapter 3 "Thanking God for Bread and Wine". This is especially important because it teaches ritual, connects to the Eucharistic prayer and will give your children a sense of how to receive Eucharist. This was partially done by everyone at the first session so try to do it at home if at all possible.
 - iii. Attend Mass and point out the parallel to the prayer service within the Mass.
 - iv. Call your children's attention to how people are processing to receive communion and begin to practice with them the procession. Have them receive a blessing but also pay close attention to how people are receiving communion.
 - v. Ask them what they understand is happening during Mass and what questions they have, or what opinions they have about Mass. Open up the dialogue!

What do I do when we are finished with all of this?

1. Plan to attend the second session on 3/19/17. Contact Michelle Sesny at mstesny@saintbridgetchurch.org if you find you will not make the 3/19/17 gathering. THIS IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT or the alternative preparation process cannot be completed and your child's First Holy Communion will have to wait.
2. Continue to talk about Jesus and the Mass in small spurts.
3. Eat meals together as much as possible as a family.
4. Continue to practice and pray the Lord's Prayer and a Consciousness Examen.
5. Pick up the Parent Pack of handouts from the first session. Contact Julie Koury to make those arrangements. Jkoury@saintbridgetchurch.org

6. Follow any additional instructions you've been given to meet requirements.