PARENT HANDBOOK for the
SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST

St. Joseph Catholic Church Children’s Faith Formation

“To celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation means to be wrapped in a warm embrace.”

Pope Francis

There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious He would have given it to us.

Saint John Vianney
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WHAT IS RECONCILIATION?

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we celebrate God’s forgiveness of our sins. It is the act of making peace. We have a Reconciliation Service to celebrate this peace with others. It is important that we understand that our choices, good or bad, affect others.

The Catholic Church recommends that we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year, preferably during the Lenten or Advent Season. However, more frequent participation is encouraged. Being able to talk to God in a personal, prayerful way is a gift worth encouraging. At each Mass, when we participate in the Penitential Rite, we may confess any minor sins since our last confession and be reconciled with God and others.

CLASS EMPHASIS

In Faith Formation classes, Reconciliation is presented as a Sacrament that emphasizes:

✦ God loves us.
✦ We are an integral part of the Church—God’s family.
✦ By loving God and one another, we are following Jesus.
✦ Mistakes are nothing to be ashamed of; we all make mistakes.
✦ Mistakes and accidents are not sins.
✦ Sins are choices to do the wrong thing; saying no to God.
✦ Jesus is always our friend.
✦ God is a loving father, forgiving our wrong choices.
✦ God is always reaching out to offer us forgiveness and peace.
✦ Worship is a celebration of God’s gift of forgiveness.

Archdiocese of Chicago Policies

306.1.1. Formal instruction for the Sacrament of Penance must be separate and distinct from preparation for the first reception of Eucharist so that the integrity of each sacrament is maintained. (PCPG # 34-B.)

306.2.1. Children shall be offered a genuine opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance before their first reception of the Eucharist. (Canon 914 and PCPG #34-E) To facilitate this, every parish shall have a special celebration of the Sacrament of Penance before the first reception of the Eucharist for those who have been prepared for the two sacraments. (Canon 914 and PCPG #34-A)
Generally, instruction for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered in the fall through Children’s Faith Formation sessions. First Communion preparation follows.

This year the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered on January 24, 2020 at 7:00pm and February 1, 2020 at 12:30pm. Classes are assigned which session they will attend.

What Your Child Should Know

Keeping in mind the developmental differences of every child, your son or daughter should be able (in his or her own words) to describe the meaning of the sacrament and identify it as a special sign of God’s action in our lives. He or she should understand the presence of God’s grace as a special gift of God’s love in our lives. It should be clearly understood by your child that the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation is a sacrament of forgiveness and healing. Your child should be able to describe how he or she feels when his or her parent/guardian offers forgiveness. He or she should be able to describe that Jesus desires to be close to us and live in us. There should be a clear understanding of how we should live because Jesus lives in us.

In addition, your child should be able to do the following:

- Recognize the Ten Commandments in positive language and explain why we have laws.
- Contrast sin from mistakes or accidents, and identify sin as a thing that can hurt our friendship with God.
- Explain how we might listen to God’s voice within to help us grow in love and goodness, and state that God forgives our sins no matter how serious they are if we ask for forgiveness.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS:

1. A copy of your child’s Baptismal certificate or record is needed before your child may receive this Sacrament.

2. Your encouragement and assistance is needed in helping your child understand the terms used in preparing for Reconciliation. A glossary of terms can be found in this handbook on page 10.

3. Your encouragement and assistance is needed in helping your child to learn the Act of Contrition, found on page 9 of this handbook.

4. Practice prayers at home with your children. Prayers they should know include: Our Father, Hail Mary, Doxology (Glory Be).

5. Your encouragement and assistance is needed in helping your child to learn the Ten Commandments, found on page 9 of this handbook.
THE RITE OF RECONCILIATION

- an examination of conscience. We prepare for the Sacrament by praying and thinking about our words and actions.

- confession. We tell about the words and actions for which we are sorry. We talk to the priest as in a normal conversation and listen to any advice he may give.

- penance. The priest tells us something good we can do or prayers we can say to show we are sorry and to make up for our wrong choices.

- an act of contrition. We ask forgiveness for our sins in a special prayer of sorrow to God. A prayer of contrition must include: telling God you are sorry, promising to try not to sin again and to make up for your sins, asking God to forgive you in Jesus’ name.

- absolution. God’s forgiveness (taking away) of our sins. The priest makes the Sign of the Cross as he says, “I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” These words assure us of God’s forgiveness. We are reconciled with God and one another.

- prayer of thanksgiving. We give praise and thanks to God for His love and forgiveness. We bring Jesus’ love to others.

First Reconciliation Service, St. Joseph Catholic Church

- Opening Song
- Greeting and Opening prayer
- Gospel Reading
- Homily
- Act of Contrition (communal)
- Examination of Conscience (independent)
- Reconciliation (independent)
- Penance

Recommendations for Attire:

Our intent is to make the children feel comfortable with the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to concentrate on the making of peace with God.
A casual and comfortable top (not a t-shirt) and slacks or jeans are fine.
THE EUCHARIST

The word Eucharist means, “giving thanks”. We come together at Mass to celebrate, exchange greetings of peace, listen, pray, give thanks, share a meal, remember, and then bring Jesus to others.

For all human beings, a meal fills a variety of needs. Food sustains and nourishes our bodies. Communion and conversation with others revives and nourishes our hearts. It is a way of remembering a person or event. It gives a chance to express our thanks.

At the Eucharist, we remember the great love of God and Jesus’ saving grace; His life, death and resurrection, which brings us new life. The Eucharist is a living sacrifice and the promise of full unity with God. At Mass, we offer God gifts of bread and wine. God returns our gifts of bread and wine as Jesus. The Eucharist is truly a remarkable and special gift from our Lord.

The Catholic Church requires that we receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at least once a year, preferably at the Easter Season. However, more frequent participation is encouraged. Please encourage your child to receive the Holy Eucharist at each Mass they attend after their First Communion. Reaffirm what a special privilege and gift they have been given.

It is a requirement of each family to ensure that children preparing for the Sacrament of the Eucharist are preparing in the best way possible. Therefore, each child is expected to attend Mass regularly in order to gain a fuller understanding of the Eucharistic Rite.

Teachers will sometimes ask the children about the Mass, and need to refer to the signs and symbols of the Mass as well as actions of the priest and the people in order to give good instruction to the children. With good classroom and Mass attendance as well as proper instruction in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, parents will be working toward the fulfillment of their baptismal promise, to be a light and a guide to their children.

Understanding the Mass
The service celebrating the Eucharist consists of four main parts, broken into smaller parts.

1. Introductory Rites

   - Entrance and welcoming song: We show we want to celebrate being together with Jesus and one another.
Greetings and opening prayer: We make the Sign of the Cross. As a sign of our Baptism, we tell the whole world we belong to Jesus’ community of followers.

Penitential rite, “Lord, Have Mercy”: We think about ways we have sinned by hurting others or ourselves. We ask God and those we have hurt to forgive our sins. Then, we are at peace with God and with one another.

Glory to God: We praise and thank God.

2. Liturgy of the Word
We listen to God’s Word and hear how much God loves us and how we are to live as disciples of Jesus

- Old Testament or Acts reading
- Responsorial psalm: We sing God’s praises in response to hearing His Word
- Epistle reading: New Testament letters
- Gospel acclamation: “Alleluia”, a song of praise to God.
- Gospel reading: Jesus’ “Good News” about God’s love for us; what Jesus said and did to show us how much God loves us.
- Homily: Explanation of what God’s Word means for our lives and how we can follow Jesus in the coming week.
- Creed: We state that we believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We renew our beliefs in our church.
- Prayer of the Faithful. We pray for church, Pope, leaders, country, family, parish and all those in need, and whatever is in our hearts.

3. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Preparation and prayer over gifts: The bread and wine are signs of the people, us. The priest praises and thanks God for these gifts and prays that our gifts and sacrifices will be acceptable.
- Eucharistic Prayer: The priest does what Jesus did at the Last Supper.
- Consecration: We still see what looks like bread and wine but through the words of the priest and the power of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine become Jesus, Himself.
- The Great Amen: Prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God through Jesus.
- The Lord’s Prayer (Our Father): A special prayer that Jesus Himself taught us.
- Sign of peace: Our promise to make and keep peace with everyone.
- Lamb of God: A special prayer asking Jesus to have mercy on us and to give us peace.
- Communion. We receive Jesus. The priest says, “The Body of Christ”. We answer, “Amen”;
- The Eucharistic Minister says, “The blood of Christ”. We answer, “Amen”.
- Prayer after Communion: We spend quiet time talking to Jesus.
4. Concluding Rites

- Final blessing: We make the Sign of the Cross; through Baptism, we are members of God’s church.  
- Dismissal: We are sent forth to live the Eucharist we have celebrated by loving and helping everyone.  
- Final procession and song: Upon leaving church, we greet those who celebrated Mass with us. We carry in our hearts the promises we made at Mass to try to live as Jesus’ disciples each day during the coming week. We leave Mass to go forth and live as one of Jesus’ peacemakers at home, at work, at school, in our neighborhood, and in our parish.

FIRST COMMUNION

Children will be receiving their First Communion with their families. They will be seated with their family and follow normal communion procedure. All children will receive both the Body and Blood of Christ at their First Communion. There will be a “practice” during class, using unconsecrated bread and wine to give the children the opportunity to sample the taste of each. (If you have a family history of severe allergy to wheat or alcohol, please contact the Faith Formation office.)

Recommendations for dress

Boys: dress pants and jacket  
white shirt  
tie  
dress shoes

Girls: white dress  
white veil or headpiece (wreath of flowers, bow, etc)  
white shoes

Please remember that these are suggestions only. Emphasis is on receiving Christ, rather than being the best dressed.

PHOTOGRAPHS

A professional photographer will be present during Mass to take a photo of your child as he or she receives the Eucharist. These high quality unobtrusive images are captured from afar without a flash. These photos will be available for purchase immediately after the ceremony. One photo is $15 and 2 copies are $25. PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANY OTHER PERSON DURING MASS IS DISCOURAGED.
How to Receive Jesus in Communion

1. Walk to the Altar with hands joined.

2. Think about Jesus, who you will receive.

3. As your turn comes, bow your head.

4. Then, look up and cup your right hand beneath your left. If you are left-handed, cup your left hand beneath your right.

5. When you hear the words, “The Body of Christ”, answer “Amen.” The priest will put the Host in your hand.

6. Put the Host in your mouth. Chew and swallow the Host. (Please never walk back to your seat without putting the Host in your mouth first.)

7. Move to the minister holding the cup. As your turn comes, bow your head.


9. Receive the cup in your own hands and take a sip.

10. After receiving the Body and Blood, return to your seat, kneel, and say a prayer of thanksgiving.

Communion will be offered under both species [bread and wine]. Friends and family who are not Catholic, younger siblings, or your child at Mass before First Communion, may come up for a blessing during Communion by crossing his/her arms (see below)
RESOURCES

The Ten Commandments

1  Put God first.
2  Don’t make anything in your life more important than God.
3  Use God’s name with respect.
4  Respect your parents.
5  Don’t hurt anyone.
6  Always be faithful to your husband or wife.
7  Don’t take anything that isn’t yours.
8  Always tell the truth.
9  Be thankful for all that you have.
10  Don’t be jealous of what others have.

Act of Contrition

My God,

I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.

Amen.
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABSOLUTION—God’s forgiveness of our sins through the words of the priest

BAPTISM—The Sacrament that makes us a member of the church

BLESSED TRINITY—The name given to three persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit

CHURCH—The family of God

CHRISTIAN—A person who believes in Jesus

COMMANDMENTS—Laws that God gave us to guide us

CONTRITION—Being sorry for doing wrong

EUCARIST—The Sacrament in which we receive Jesus

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE—Looking into our hearts to see how we have loved and failed to love God and others

GOSPEL—The life of Jesus as told in the Bible

HOLY COMMUNION—Jesus Christ under the forms of bread and wine

HOLY SPIRIT—The spirit of Jesus sent by Jesus to teach us and help us to love

HOST—The sacred bread

LAST SUPPER—The last meal Jesus had with his apostles during which he gave himself to us in bread and wine

MASS—The celebration in which Catholic Christians remember and meet Jesus

PENANCE—Prayers or actions that help us make up for our sins and become better persons

PENTECOST—The day the Holy Spirit first came to the disciples

PRAYER—Talking and listening to God

RECONCILIATION—The Sacrament in which Jesus forgives us through the priest

SACRAMENT—A celebration in which we meet Jesus in a special way

SIN—Saying no to God and to his love; choosing to do wrong
BANNER OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

In Baptism, we are clothed with a garment that represents our “putting on Christ” and becoming adopted children of the Father. As Christians, we all share in the ministry of spreading the “Good News” that Jesus came to bring. The garment symbolizes our initiation in this mission.

The making of a banner can be an opportunity for your family to work together in preparation for this special occasion. It can be an opportunity for teaching your child about symbols and their meanings. It provides the opportunity for you to talk with your child about your own faith journey. It is an ideal way for your child to learn about our Catholic faith.

Family participation is needed in making the Banner of Christian Life. Directions and suggestions for making the banner are provided below. The banners will be displayed at the ends of the pews during the First Communion Liturgy.

First Communion Workshop – April 4, 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
Children and parents are invited to bring your kits / supplies to the Koenig Center to assemble your banner together. This special event will also include a look at the sacred vessels used in church and an opportunity to learn more about the sacrament. Kits will be available to purchase or parents can purchase materials on their own.

Bring the banner with you on the day of your child’s First Eucharist celebration. Hang it over the end of the pew.

You may want to begin designing the banner and start working on it now so you are not rushed. Remember to sew a 1” seam at the top of the banner so that the dowel rod can be pushed through.
First Eucharist Banner Directions

Eucharistic Banners will be displayed at the end of each pew for the First Eucharist liturgy! We hope this project encourages your entire family to join in the final preparations of your son or daughter. The instructions are simple, even for first-time banner makers! However, feel free to call with any questions.

- **SIZE OF BANNER**
  15” long by 10” wide

- **MATERIAL TO USE:**
  Burlap, felt, quilted fabric, linen or cotton
  broadcloth or ANY non-stretch material
  Yarn or cording to hang the banner over the end of the pew
  Dowel rod [maximum length 12”] to run through the seam at the top of the banner

- **CHILD’S NAME:**
  Should appear on the face of the banner; family name might also be included.

- **SYMBOLS**
  Use your creativity! However, here are some of the easier symbols to use – chalice, host, candle, water, cross, grapes, wheat, bread, tree of life, silhouette of child’s or Jesus’ face, hands in prayer, etc.

  SYMBOLS can be put on the banner in many different ways:
  1. Embroidery
  2. Iron-on cut-outs
  3. Purchased patches or appliqués, glued* or sewn on
  4. Felt or other material cut-outs, glued* or sewn on
  5. Fabric paint
  6. Fabric markers
  7. Beads or other sew-on items

  *Use glue especially made for fabrics.
**ASSIGNED DATES AND TIMES**

**First Reconciliation Service:** Friday, January 24, 2019 at 7:00pm OR Saturday, February 1, 2020 at 12:30pm  
-Please arrive by 6:50pm on Friday night or 12:20pm on Saturday afternoon to pick-up materials and get settled, the liturgical prayer service will begin on time. *(Church)*  
-Adults and siblings may also receive this healing Sacrament after those receiving First Reconciliation.

**First Eucharist Workshop:** Saturday, April 4, 2020 from 9-11am *(Koenig Center)*  
-get started on your banner and learn about the church and the Mass in a new way

**First Eucharist Dessert Social:** Wednesday, April 15, 2020 (6:30-7:30pm) *(Koenig Center)*  
-Break bread with your child and enjoy a dessert social. **NOTE:** Free babysitting provided for siblings.

**First Communion Practice:** Wednesday, May 6, 2020 from 7-8pm *(Church)*  
**NOTE:** There is one practice for all assigned to the 10am and 2pm Masses - please arrive by 6:50pm

**First Communion Mass:** Saturday, May 9, 2020 - 10AM and 2PM *(Church)*  
-First Communicant must arrive by 9:40am/1:40pm  
-Reserved pew assignments for child and 7-8 adults mailed in March. Non-reserved seating also available.

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Please contact Patty McCarthy (847)362-5797 PMcCarthy@stjoseph-libertyville.org to RSVP, switch dates or times, or ask about serving *(Altar Servers, EOMs, family clergy)*, low-gluten hosts or handicap seating,