

# Is My Child Ready for First Communion?

## Questions as You Prepare

The Church asks that the pastor and parents together discern a child's readiness to receive the Sacrament of Eucharist for the first time. Discerning your child's readiness for First Communion takes time, thought and prayer. As your child moves through the immediate preparation for the sacrament, take note of how his or her awareness of the Eucharist grows and changes. Consider not only what your child knows about the Eucharist, but also how he or she *responds* to the Eucharist, feels about it, and relates to Jesus in the Eucharistic liturgy. Here are some questions that might aid you in this discernment.

### **Does your child care about the Mass?**

Is your child on autopilot through the liturgy, or is s/he beginning to take notice of the parts of the Mass?

Does s/he sing the hymns and acclamations?

Does s/he pray with the congregation?

Does s/he listen attentively during the Liturgy of the Word?

Does s/he talk about what he has heard in the readings or homily after Mass?

Does s/he pay close attention to the Eucharistic prayer and the words of Institution (the words reiterating the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper)?

### **Does your child understand the meaning of the Eucharist?**

Does your child love Jesus Christ, and know that Jesus loves her/him?

Is s/he living his faith, trying to live as a disciple of Jesus?

Does s/he understand that at the Last Supper, Jesus gave us a special gift of himself to be with us forever?

Does s/he understand that when we gather for the Eucharist, the gifts of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus?

Does s/he realize that when we receive the consecrated bread and wine, we receive Jesus in our bodies, as food for our hearts and souls?

### **Is your child eager to receive First Communion?**

Does your child feel a longing or a spiritual excitement about receiving First Communion?

Does s/he feel left out not receiving Communion with others in the community?

Does s/he ask questions about how we receive Communion, or why others gathered at Mass do not go forward to receive Communion?

Does s/he talk positively about her/his First Communion?

### ***Your role in this process is crucial. The following are some simple things you can do to lead your child to the Eucharist:***

- Model active participation in the Mass regularly.
- Use your own words to explain what is happening at different parts of the Mass.
- Ask simple questions on the way home from Mass about the Scriptures and the homily: What did you hear today during the readings or homily? What was the message?
- Lead a short prayer for your child during the grace at meals, at bedtime, or even during a quiet moment after you receive Communion.
- Reminisce with your child about your own First Communion, and share what you believe about the Eucharist.
- Highlight not just the "milestone" aspects of the upcoming celebration of First Eucharist, but the spiritual as well.
- Read and discuss the story of the Last Supper (See Matthew 26:26, Luke 22:14, or Mark 14:22) with your child.