

At the Parish

There is no better preparation for the Sacraments than ongoing participation in them. There is no better way to be prepared to participate fully in the Eucharist than to go to Mass.

When you are at Mass as a family, you may want to take time to emphasize some of the key moments.

Take time as you dip your fingers into the holy water at the door of the church and make the sign of the cross.

Remind your child that we do this to remember our Baptism, when we were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Take time as you genuflect at your pew.

Remind your child that we bow down before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle. Jesus is really present in the Eucharist and Jesus is God!

Take time to point to the words in the hymnal or Mass booklet that you may have in the pew.

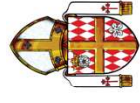
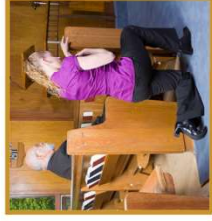
Remind your child that we are all called to participate by singing, praying, and listening together.

Take time to say hello to your parish priest and fellow parishioners before and after Mass.

Remind your child that our parish is an important community to which we belong.

Take time to check out the bulletin together.

Remind your child that lots goes on in and through the work of the Church. They may not know about all the groups or all the activities that happen in the parish. This can help them to be excited about their own growing participation in this community.



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON



PREPARING FOR FIRST COMMUNION *(First Eucharist)*

Simple Suggestions for Parents and Caregivers

At Home + At School + At the Parish

The goal of all sacramental preparation is to help the person be open to the grace of Almighty God gifted to them through the Sacrament.

Children become more open to God's grace in the following ways:

- + By experiencing God's love through the love of our family and friends
- + By being thankful for our blessings
- + By sharing with others
- + By learning about God through lessons and the sharing of Bible stories
- + By praying on their own and with others
- + By participating in the Mass, especially with their family

At Home



Any time you welcome or gather

You teach about the need to be welcoming, to be in community, to come together as a family, or a team, or any group who loves one another and works together.



Any time you listen to one another's stories

You teach about the need to be respectful when others are speaking. You prepare your child to listen attentively at Mass, especially during the homily.



Any time you share a Bible story

You teach about the need to know the stories of our faith. You prepare your child to look forward to the stories they already know and encourage them to be excited to learn new stories.



Any time you give thanks for a meal

You teach your child about gratitude which is the main attitude we are called to in the Mass.



Any time you do a good work to help others

You teach your child about the importance of living our faith. This will help them understand the dismissal at Mass "Go and glorify the Lord by your life."

At School

In our Catholic schools, children are learning from a program called *Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ*. It is a beautiful Canadian program approved by our bishops.

Find out more about your child's Religion Program at school.

What stories are they reading?

What songs are they learning?

Find out how the family can participate in the learning.

Are there handouts, books, or online activities for the family to try at home?



Or through the Catechetical Correspondence Courses

If your child is not in Catholic school, you may be using the Catechetical Correspondence Courses. These are home study programs that encourage parents to read and talk about lessons together with their children.

Children with Special Needs

If your child has special learning needs, and you are concerned about their participation in the Sacraments, be sure to reach out to both the school and your parish for assistance. We are here to help!

Further resources for parents of children with special needs are available on our website:

www.hamiltondiocese.com/offices/catechesis/sacraments/parents