



St. Mary of the Visitation Parish

**CELEBRATIONS AND MEETINGS IN PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF
FIRST RECONCILIATION AND HOLY COMMUNION
2019-2020**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This is a precious time in your child's young faith life and we wish you all of God's blessing as you prepare for these sacraments as a family. If you are not already an active member of our parish, this time of Holy Communion will often be a natural "comeback" moment for families, as children have reached the age where they can have a deeper understanding of spiritual things.

As a parish family, we view these parish based activities as **essential opportunities** to support your child in their faith journey, providing not an opportunity for a memory, but to build a lifelong relationship with Christ and His Church.

PARENT INFORMATION MEETING AND REGISTRATION

Wednesday, October 2, 2019 – 7:00 p.m. at St. Mary of the Visitation Church

PREPARATION PROGRAM

While the celebration of Sacraments are a ritual, living them out is about a relationship. An essential aspect of preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and Holy Communion is participation in the Lord's Day celebrations of Mass for it is here that the relationship is nourished. Young people preparing for these Sacraments are encouraged to be a part of Visitation Kids, a program held during the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Mass every Sunday.

PARENT AND CHILD GATHERING

Thursday, February 6, 2020

7:00 p.m. at St. Mary of the Visitation Church

The aim of this meeting is for BOTH parent(s) and children. It will be to inform parents of the immediate preparation being undertaken on behalf of their children for First Reconciliation, and will provide activity stations which both children and parents can participate in. *Sign in will take place at the start of the gathering.*

CELEBRATION OF RECONCILIATION

Parents and children are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on

Saturday, March 7, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Please register on our website and select one celebration no later than Nov. 1, 2019

PARENT AND CHILD GATHERING

Thursday, April 2, 2020

7:00 p.m. at St. Mary of the Visitation Church

The aim of this meeting is for BOTH parent(s) and children. It will be to inform parents of the immediate preparation being undertaken on behalf of their children for First Holy Communion, and will provide activity stations which both children and parents can participate in. *Sign in will take place at the start of the gathering.*

FIRST COMMUNION RETREAT

All students who will be receiving their Holy Communion will gather together for a half day retreat in our Parish Centre on **Saturday, May 2nd from 9:00 a.m. – Noon.**

Parents are not required to remain during the retreat

FIRST COMMUNION PHOTOS

Thursday, May 7, 2020 – Children attending **Our Lady of Fatima School**

Thursday, May 21, 2020 – Children attending **St. Elizabeth School**

Thursday, May 28, 2020 – Children attending **St. Gabriel School**

Individual and Group Photos will be taken by a professional photographer. These will take place at St. Mary's Church in the evening. Individual photos will be in the Parish Centre beginning at 6:30 p.m. and the group photo will take place in the Church at 7:00 p.m.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Children are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of First Holy Communion with their families on the following dates. **Participation in these celebrations is based on successful completion of parish-based preparation activities and not based on school registration.**

Saturday, May 9, 2020 at 5 p.m. – Children attending **Our Lady of Fatima School**

Saturday, May 23, 2020 at 5 p.m. – Children attending **St. Elizabeth School**

Saturday, May 30, 2020 at 5 p.m. – Children attending **St. Gabriel School**

Why does it not all happen at the school? Our Catholic Schools are special places, however, *the Sacraments are about a faith relationship found within the community of the Church, not membership in a school.* At some point in their life, students graduate from their school; they may visit, but their school will not be the place they go back to for sacramental care in a time of joy, for healing in a moment of crisis, or for direction on occasion when they are called to grow and mature in life. A Parish, a faith community, is a place you never graduate from. We want to help you to let your children see – they never graduate from Church, they never graduate from God – but rather they grow here and they become who God wants them to be!

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the parish office at 519-658-4443.