

# St. Vincent de Paul Church

1502 E. Wallen Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825



## First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Handbook 2020-2021



SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL  
CATHOLIC PARISH

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Dear Parents:

Can you remember when you received the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time? What about your First Communion? Celebrating a sacrament is an important step in the life of your child as a Catholic. Most of us have clear memories of celebrating these sacraments tucked away somewhere; you may even have your dress or Mass booklet in a special place. St. Vincent de Paul Family Faith Formation Department is very excited and honored to help in the preparation of your child for both of these sacraments.

This parent handbook will provide valuable information to assist you in preparing your child for the sacraments. Please take the time to read through the entire handbook; as this will be the main form of communication. Parent participation and support is crucial in the spiritual development of each child. As a family, attendance at weekly mass is the best form of support and education you can provide your child. It will bring the classroom teachings alive as your child can experience all that is being taught.

While the liturgies for each sacrament will be similar to those of the years past, please be sure to read the handbook to see the specific changes from past years. We are making every effort to create a welcoming and family centered liturgy for your child at each sacrament. If you have questions throughout the year, please feel free to contact me at any time. I will gladly discuss the program with you.

God Bless,

Debbie Blackburn

Director of Family Faith Formation

## **What is Reconciliation?**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the most unique and beautiful aspects of Catholicism. Jesus Christ, in His abundant love and mercy, established the Sacrament of Confession, so that we as sinners can obtain forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God and the Church. The sacrament “washes us clean,” and renews us in Christ.

## **What is Holy Communion?**

First Holy Communion is one of the most important events in early life for a Catholic, along with Baptism, Reconciliation and Confirmation. The First Holy Communion is a sign of Christian unity and a symbol of a Catholic’s faith and devotion. First Holy Communion is typically celebrated when a child is about seven years old.



## **Sacrament Dates**

### **First Reconciliation:**

Saturday, February 6 & 20 at 11:00AM  
St. Vincent de Paul Church

### **First Holy Communion**

**April 25 and May 2 at the 1:00 PM Mass**

Two 1:00 PM liturgies have been set aside as the principal ones for First Holy Communion. Please choose the Mass that is most suitable for your family.

We realize that for some families, there is a particular spiritual attachment to another Mass time, or the practical necessity of another Mass time (flight schedules of visiting relatives). Therefore, there is also the possibility of your child receiving First Holy Communion at the following liturgies:

### **Alternate Mass Times**

**Saturday, May 1 - 5:00 PM**

**Sunday, May 2 - 7:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM or 5:00 PM**

Mass time selection will be done through SignUpGenius for which a link will be provided by email. There will be room for approximately 50 families at the 1:00 PM liturgies which will allow for approximately eight guests per family. Please know that additional spots may be available once the sign-up is complete and we are aware of total numbers. Space will be limited at the alternate Mass times, so we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

# Sacrament of Reconciliation



## Bless Me Father For I Have Sinned

**The Reconciliation Service will take place on Saturday, February 6, 2021 at 11:00 AM and Saturday, February 20, 2021 at 11:00AM at St. Vincent de Paul Church.**

Please attend on the ONE day that best fits your family's schedule. No sign-up is needed. ***If your child was not baptized at St. Vincent's, and does not attend St. Vincent School, you must submit a copy of your child's baptismal certificate to the Family Faith Formation Office prior to First Reconciliation.*** The Sacrament of Reconciliation cannot be conferred without proof of Baptism.

The children and their parents will meet in the Church on the chosen date. A sign-in sheet will be available in the Gathering Space. The Reconciliation Service will include a welcoming and a reading from scripture, an Examination of Conscience and reciting of the Act of Contrition as a group. The children will then go to the priest for individual confession of their sins and receive absolution. After all the children have received their First Reconciliation, each family member is encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be an example of faith for their child. After you and your child have completed your penance, you may leave. There will be no formal dismissal or final song.

## Practice the Sacrament of Reconciliation with Your Child

1. Explain to your child that Reconciliation is a Sacrament of healing in which our sins are forgiven and in which we are reconciled with God and the Church.
2. Teach your child that God is a loving merciful Father who is waiting for us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
3. Explain that Jesus granted the apostles and their successors (priests) the authority to forgive sins.
4. Teach your child how to make an examination of conscience and have them make it at the end of the day as part of their night prayers.
5. Make sure your child learns and memorizes the **Act of Contrition** and he/she understands Reconciliation as a way of preparing his/her soul to receive Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.
6. Emphasize that the priest will never tell anyone their sins.



### 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.

## **Procedure for Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation**

1. Priests will be available to hear confessions in the stained glass window alcoves along the back of the church.
2. After the communal celebration, ushers will direct children to the alcoves where the priests will be stationed.
3. When each child approaches the priest, they begin with the Sign of the Cross and say, "Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my First Reconciliation."
4. They will tell their sins to the priest. (Review the Ten Commandments and use the examination of conscience included in this packet).
5. When done confessing the child will say, "For these and those sins I may have forgotten, I am sorry."
6. The child will be given a simple penance for his/her sins.
7. Typically the priest will ask that the Act of Contrition be recited at this time. Since the Act of Contrition will be said as a group, the child will not need to recite it again after confessing.
8. The priest will raise his hand over the child and recite the prayer of forgiveness (Absolution) and will say, "Go in Peace".
9. The child will say, "Thank you Father," and then go back to his/her seat to say penance.
10. As a model of faith to your child, parents are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation after all children have confessed. If there is a priest with a much shorter line, parents can line up for confession with that priest before all children have confessed.





## **The Ten Commandments**

(Students in second grade are not required to recite the Ten Commandments, however for their confession to be valid, students must be very familiar with the Ten Commandments in order to examine their conscience.)

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep Holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your Father and your Mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.



## **Examination of Conscience for Children**

1. When I make choices, do I sometimes forget about what God wants me to do?
2. Do I pray every day?
3. Do I attend Mass every Sunday?
4. Do I try to see God in others?
5. Do I listen to my parents and teachers or do I ignore them?
6. Have I made fun of my brothers and sister or my classmates?
7. Am I selfish at school or do I share what I have with others?
8. When I am angry, do I say or do things to hurt whoever has hurt me?
9. Do I say, "I'm sorry" to the person I have hurt and "I forgive you" to the person who has hurt me?
10. Do I play fair or do I ever cheat at school or games?

## **First Holy Communion Retreat**

Depending on the circumstances, we will hold either a virtual First Holy Communion Retreat, or if possible a modified in-person retreat. If we are able to do an in-person version of the retreat it will be held on:

**Saturday, March 27, 2021 from 7:45 AM to noon  
in the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Grade School.**

If we are able to hold the retreat in-person, registration information will be sent at the beginning of March when we are more aware of the restrictions in place at that time. Many parent volunteers will be needed to make this day meaningful for your child, so please consider in advance whether you will be able to help if needed. Opportunities to volunteer will be listed on the registration form if an in-person retreat is held.

## **First Holy Communion Masses**

**Saturday, April 25 & Sunday, May 2 at the 1:00 PM Masses**

The 1:00 PM liturgies have been set aside as the principal ones for First Holy Communion. Families will check in with teachers and catechists in the Gathering Space before entering the Church. Specifics regarding the seating and format will be communicated closer to the date of First Holy Communion and will be dependent upon restrictions in place at that time.

## **Alternate Mass Selection**

**Saturday, May 1 – 5:00 PM**

**Sunday, May 2 – 7:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM or 5:00 PM**

First Communion Mass selection will be done by SignUpGenius through a link that will be sent by email. There will be room for 50 families at each 1:00 PM liturgy which will allow eight total attendees per family including first communicant. Additional spots for each 1:00 PM liturgy may become available once the sign-up is complete. Please know that space at the alternate Mass times is limited, but we will do our best to accommodate your family's needs. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Debbie Blackburn at [debbieblackburn@saintv.org](mailto:debbieblackburn@saintv.org) or 260-489-3537 ext. 204.

## **Requirements for First Eucharist**

- Parents are required to read all information in the First Communion Handbook and complete and turn in all required forms by the due date indicated.
- If your child was not baptized at St. Vincent's, and does not attend St. Vincent School, a copy of the baptism certificate must be turned in to the Family Faith Formation Office prior to January 27<sup>th</sup>. No sacraments can be conferred without it.
- Candidates are to attend Mass regularly.
- Candidates are to know their prayers, sacrament definitions, and the proper procedures for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

**Please make sure your child knows how to genuflect.**

- Genuflection is an act of reverence or respect. One should genuflect when walking in front of the Tabernacle or when entering a church pew if the Blessed Sacrament is present.
- To genuflect, one must kneel with the right knee all the way to the floor. While kneeling, one should make the Sign of the Cross with the right hand.

## **First Holy Communion Preparation**

It is important that students know the following information prior to First Holy Communion. Please work with your child at home to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom.

### **The Sign of the Cross**

### **Our Father**

### **Hail Mary**

### **Glory Be**

### **Act of Contrition**



### **Name and definition of the Sacrament of Baptism**

### **Name and definition of the Sacrament of Penance**

### **Name and definition of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist**

## Recommended Dress Code for First Holy Communion

### Girls

Modest white dresses

- Sleeveless is acceptable
- No spaghetti straps

White veils (optional)

White shoes

White or natural colored stockings or socks.

**NO GLOVES**

### Boys

White dress shirts

Dark slacks (no jeans)

Dark shoes (no tennis shoes)

Dress ties (any color or pattern)

**No jackets** at the 1:00 PM liturgies

Children should **not** bring prayer books, rosaries, or other religious articles to the liturgy that day.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Typically, Varsity Photo takes group and individual pictures at the May Crowning Ceremonies for St. Vincent School students and students in the Family Faith Formation program. We will provide information regarding photographs when the dates for First Communion draw closer. Pictures will be dependent upon restrictions in place at that time.

If you wish to come to the church to take First Communion pictures prior to your child's First Communion day, please feel free to do so, however we ask that you contact the church office before coming to insure church availability.

## MAY CROWNING CEREMONY DATES

- **ST. VINCENT'S SCHOOL:** May Crowning Ceremony will be held on Wednesday, May 12 at the 8:15 AM Mass.
- **WEDNESDAY FAMILY FAITH FORMATION MAY CROWNING CEREMONY:** May 12, at 6:00 PM in the church. Second grade students arrive at church with their parents by 5:30 PM dressed in their First Communion attire. This is the last class for the catechetical year.
- **SUNDAY FAMILY FAITH FORMATION MAY CROWNING CEREMONY:** May 16, at 3:00 PM in the church. Second grade students arrive at church with their parents by 2:30 PM dressed in their First Communion attire. This is the last class for the catechetical year.