Saint Thomas More Catholic Primary School

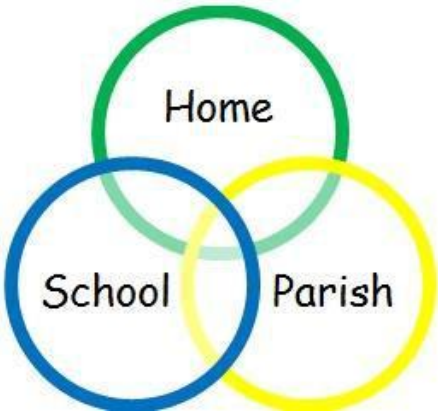
First Communion Preparation: A Guide for Parents

Welcome to this important time in your family's life with Jesus Christ and His Church. This preparation time for First Communion marks a new chapter in your family's faith life as Catholics. Your child will be able to participate fully in the worship life of your parish by receiving Jesus in the Eucharist each week. So, this preparation is not just for his/her "first" Communion; it is preparation for a lifetime that only begins with First Communion. Your parish is your partner in this preparation, and is committed to supporting you in your responsibility as Christian parents. May God bless you on this faith journey!

Parents – You Are #1

Parents, you are the #1 influence on your child's faith, and what you do to nurture faith at home and in your parish are vitally important. The Second Vatican Council noted the importance of the home in nurturing faith in its reference to the family as **"the domestic church"** or the **"Church of the Home"**. In essence, the family is the most basic foundation of Church.

During this time of preparation for First Communion, you will be provided with many opportunities to grow in your own faith and to nurture faith at home – prayers and practices, family activities for the home, print and web resources, and opportunities to serve others. We urge you to take advantage of as many of these opportunities as you are able.



Sunday Eucharist is the centerpiece of life as a Catholic. Please make every effort to develop a practice of coming to Mass with your children each week, both now and after they receive their first Communion. Just as we provide our children daily with food at our table, we cannot fail to provide them weekly with food that will sustain them for life – the presence of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament.

What Does First Communion Preparation Look Like?

A child who was baptised Catholic and is at least seven years of age is eligible to receive First Communion after sufficient preparation. Prior to the preparation for First Communion, a baptised child must receive preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) and have the opportunity to receive it. You will be fully involved during this special time.

"Parents, you have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in practice of the faith…" (Rite of Baptism)

Your child will follow a programme in school that will support them, alongside your support, in their preparation.

The goal of the First Holy Communion preparation period is to:

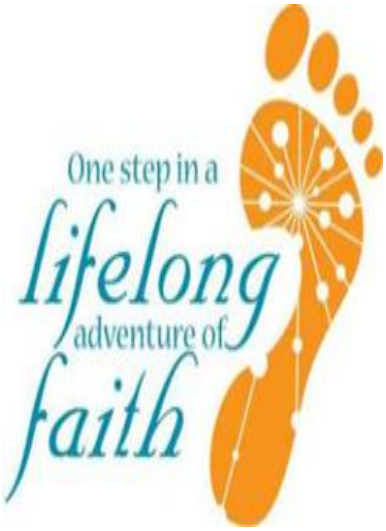
- nurture a child's/family's understanding of God's love for them and their response of thanksgiving
- nurture a child's/family's relationship to Jesus Christ in prayer and worship,
- enhance a child's/family's appreciation and active participation in the Mass
- develop a child's/family's sense of belonging to a community of disciples who love as Jesus loves

How will I know if my child is ready to receive First Communion?

These are the signs that indicate a child is ready to receive First Communion:

- A desire to receive the Eucharist
- A developing relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church
- A familiarity with the movements, prayers, gestures of the Mass and their connection to life
- A sense of "real presence" – that the bread of Eucharist is not ordinary bread, but Jesus coming to us in a special way

Parents have an important role in helping children become “ready”:



- If they see you regularly receive the Eucharist with reverence, and see that it is an important part of your life, they will also desire Eucharist, and know this is Jesus coming to us in a special, tangible way.
- If you have conversations about God, encourage the family to pray, worship and also meet Jesus through life with others in the parish, they will naturally grow in relationship to Jesus Christ and the Church
- If you take the time to help them participate in Mass – to give thanks and praise, to learn the words, gestures, to sing and pray, they will be as comfortable at the Eucharistic meal as they are at their family’s table.
- If you “practice what you pray” by living the gospel mandate to “love one another”, they will see that the Eucharist nourishes your life every day of the week.

We look forward to taking this special journey with you and your child.