

First Communion: Important Parent Information 2021

Finalized Dates/Times:

- Students in Sunday Morning Session and St. Raphael School:
 - Retreat: Saturday, April 17, 10:00 am-12:00 pm
 - Practice: Thursday, April 29, 5:30-6:30 pm
 - First Communion Mass: Saturday, May 1, 10:00 am

- Students in Sunday Evening Session:
 - Retreat: Saturday, April 17, 1 -3 pm
 - Practice: Thursday, April 29, 7:00-8:00 pm
 - First Communion Mass: Saturday, May 1, 1:00 pm

Please note that these days and times have been modified from the November Sacramental Packet

General:

- Timing
 - We expect that the Mass will last approximately 1.5 hours.
- Attire
 - Boys: dark dress pants, white dress shirt, tie, and dress shoes. Coats are optional.
 - Girls: white dress and white shoes. A head covering is optional. If gloves are worn, they must be removed prior to receiving Communion.
 - Per diocesan guidelines, face masks will be mandatory for all First Communicants and guests. For your First Communicant, please choose a solid colored face mask without designs or bright colors. Most girls will wear white to match their dresses.
 - Banners are entirely optional, but your family may choose to create one to display on your pew. Instructions are included in this packet.

If you choose to create a banner, bring it with you to Mass and, as soon as you arrive, hang it at the end of the pew where your family will sit.

- Reconciliation
 - Children must receive their First Reconciliation prior to their First Communion. Confessions are offered regularly and can be made by appointment. See the parish website for details.

- Seating
 - A pew is reserved for each family. Due to diocesan seating restrictions, we will only be able to accommodate four guests along with the First Communicant, for a total of five members of each family. We know this is disappointing news, but we ask for your grace and understanding as we navigate the health and safety restrictions we have received. The Mass will be livestreamed for those who are not able to attend in person.

Practice:

- Pews will be labeled with your family name
- Students will practice processing in and receiving communion.
- Students will practice receiving the Eucharist with an unconsecrated host. They will not practice with the chalice since we are currently unable to offer the precious blood due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Before Mass:

- Remember that there is a one-hour fast (no food, drinks other than water, or gum) prior to receiving Communion.
- Please arrive at least 30 minutes before Mass begins.
- We will begin the rosary 20 minutes prior to Mass.
- The students will gather in the narthex to process in. Parents and other family members should remain in their pew prior to the start of Mass. We will practice this procession during the First Communion Rehearsal, and students will receive cards that help us line them up.

Mass:

- Out of respect and reverence for our Lord, please do not take photos during the Mass.

- Students may process in carrying a baptismal candle or rosary and hand it to their parents once they enter their pew. (Otherwise, students will fold their hands to process in.)
- All First Communicants, with their parents, will receive the Body and Blood of Jesus together.

Reception:

- Due to COVID-19 protocols, we will not be able to host a reception this year. All families are invited to stop in to pick up their First Communion certificate and rosary on their way out of Mass.