

## First Holy Communion Checklist for Parents

1. Please take your child to Mass every Sunday. It might be helpful to sit close to the front and share with them the significance of the sacred actions taking place on the altar.
2. Within the next few months, your child will be receiving a copy of the *St. Joseph First Communion Catechism* to further enrich their understanding of the basics. Please be sure to read this with your child.
3. Support your child's efforts to learn and memorize all three verses of their First Holy Communion song "O Jesus, We Adore Thee." Song sheets will be passed out in class.
4. Rehearsal is mandatory and specific to the Mass for which your child is scheduled. Please bring your child to the Church on the day and time assigned to your child. A reminder email will be sent.
5. Class pictures will be taken by Victor O'Neil Studios on the day of First Holy Communion. Please drop off your child, in the care of their teacher, in the cafeteria no later than forty-five minutes prior to their Mass. At this time, you should go directly to the church to your seats. The group picture will be taken promptly at 9:15am for the 10:00am Mass or 1:15pm for the 2:00pm Mass. Children who are scheduled to receive at that Mass must be present in the cafeteria for their class picture. Teachers will then escort them to their classroom. Order forms will be sent home with your child in the next few months. Have your order form completed, making sure to properly mark your child's class code, along with full payment, and give directly to the photographer. A link will be available on our website to purchase portraits electronically should you choose to do so. Pictures will be mailed to your home from the studio.
6. For individual portraits, bring your child from 8:15-9:00 am or 12:15-1:00 pm.
7. Please observe the following guidelines for respecting Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, children making their First Holy Communion, and each other as we pray for and share this beautiful moment with the children.
  - A. While in Church, both before and after Mass, the congregation is asked to observe a respectful silence in the Presence of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.
  - B. Parents and guests are asked to remain seated in their pews during the Mass.
  - C. Please turn off all cell phones and beepers while in the Church.
  - D. No cameras, video equipment or picture-taking are permitted during Mass!
  - E. During the First Holy Communicants' reception of the Sacrament, no one may stand in the aisles.
  - F. After Mass, please report to the classrooms to pick up your child.
  - G. Before leaving, be sure your child has a white envelope that contains their First Holy Communion certificate with their name spelled correctly.
  - H. Families are welcomed to take pictures in Church with the Priests following Mass.
8. Dress Code is as follows:

Girls: White dress, modest and suitable for Mass. White veil (flowers and ribbons are fine, but must have a veil attached). Gloves may be worn, but purses and/or prayer books may not be carried into Mass. **No strapless dresses, low necklines, short hemlines, or bare shoulders (no spaghetti straps), please.** White dress shoes.

Boys: Dark jacket, dress pants (dark or khaki), white shirt, tie (colored or white). White suits are acceptable. Dress shoes.
9. Catholic First Holy Communion merchandise website:  
<https://shop.catholicsupply.com/fc>

Mass Assignments: Due to the large number of students receiving First Communion, it is imperative that you arrange your schedule to work with the day your child has been assigned for their First Communion Mass. This Sacrament is a very important moment in their lives, and needs to take priority over other events.

**Rehearsal Information – EVERY STUDENT MUST ATTEND REHEARSAL!**

There will be only one rehearsal for each of the First Communion Masses.

Rehearsals will start in the church vestibule. Please drop your child off on time on the evening of their Rehearsal. Their teachers and aides will meet them there. The children may be picked up at church at the end of the rehearsal, which will last one hour. If you wish to stay for the rehearsal, you are welcome to do so, but must sit quietly in the back pews of the church.

(NOTE: For Petition Readers and Gift Bearers ONLY - Students selected for these roles will have an extra Practice Session in April, shortly before the date of First Communion. Details will be announced closer to the actual date. If a student is unable to attend the Practice Session, another student will be selected to take their place.)

On the evening of Rehearsal, those students designated as Gift Bearers and Petition Readers will have a final opportunity to practice. If any of these children are late or absent from rehearsal, another child will be selected to take their place.

### First Penance

The children will be going to Confession for the first time the week of February 7-9 during class time; both School and Religious Education. Parents are normally not permitted in the Church during these times, as we have found that it affects the children's comfort level.

If you would prefer to be with your child during First Penance, you may take them to any of the normally scheduled parish Confession times, and then contact the RE Office letting us know that they have received the Sacrament.

**Questions? Please contact the RE Office at 703-729-3714, or at [reoffice@sainttheresaparish.com](mailto:reoffice@sainttheresaparish.com).**