

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. **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, bare backs, 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.
3. Catholic First Holy Communion merchandise website - <https://shop.catholicsupply.com/fc>
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. **Arrival on the day of First Communion** – Please arrive no later than 9:00 am for the 10:00am Mass or 1:00pm for the 2:00pm Mass. Students must report to their designated prep rooms in the Elementary wing of the school by these times. Once you drop your child off at their room, please head directly to the Church to find your seats.

8. **Photos**

Individual portraits – These will be available from 7:30am-9:00am or 11:30am-1:00pm, in the Zelli Martin Conference Room in the Admin Building.

Candid shots – These photos of the students at the moment they receive their First Communion will be taken by Victor O'Neil Studios once again, and will be made available to parents as a gift from the parish.

Class photos - Individual teachers may request that their students arrive earlier in order to coordinate a class photo prior to the Mass, or they may arrange to do so following the Mass. Please check with your child's teacher for details.

Large group photo (New for this year) - A large group photo of all students receiving First Communion will take place at the end of each Mass. After the final hymn, students will be lined up in front of the altar for this photo. Once the photo is taken, students will be escorted back to their prep rooms where they will receive their First Communion Certificates, and then be picked up by their parents.

9. 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, please 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 electronic devices 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 and the final Large group photo, 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.

Mass Assignments: Due to the number of students receiving First Communion, and the reduced number of Masses, it is imperative that you arrange your schedule to work with the time 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 about 60-75 minutes. 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.

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 March 10-12 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.