

Timeline and checklist for preparing your child for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

At the Church of the Risen Christ, the preparation for the celebration of first Reconciliation and first Eucharist is done by the parents in the home. This is separate from our weekly religious education program. We believe faith is first and foremost shared by families in their everyday activities of loving, sharing and forgiving. We also believe that parents are the primary religious educators of their children and have the privilege of passing on their faith to their child. Here are some things to remember about the process.

6-9 months prior to the date you would like your child to celebrate First Communion:

___ Pray about the readiness of your child and your family to prepare for and celebrate these sacraments. Remember you are preparing your child for two sacraments. The church requires that children must be at least 7 years old but many children are not ready until 8 or 9 years old or even older. Regular Mass attendance and parents participation in the sacraments and the life of the community of Church of the Risen Christ is expected of those preparing their children. If you are not registered in the parish you must do so before beginning the preparation. It is **required** that the child be enrolled in our weekly Religious Education program (unless they are attending Catholic school) which reinforces all the concepts presented in their sacrament preparation and gives the child a sense of community with other children his/her age. Registration for our weekly religious education program occurs each August.

___ Attend either one of the Sunday preparation sessions (offered in October and January) or the evening preparation sessions (offered in May). These sessions are **required**. The sessions will provide the materials and information you need to prepare your child. For the Sunday Sessions, parents and child attend the entire time. We begin with the 11:00 Mass then move to the parish center for the preparation. For the evening session in May parents only attend the first evening of the session. Children attend with parents for the second evening and the Sunday Mass. This information is given to all parents of second through fifth graders at religious education registration and distributed to students at the first religious education class of the year.

2-3 months prior to the date you would like your child to celebrate First Communion

___ After completing both the Reconciliation and the Communion book with your child, call the parish office to schedule their first Reconciliation. First Reconciliation is always done one-on-one with one of our parish priests. Hopefully your child is familiar with them from attending Mass and other functions at church. Because of their busy schedules, please allow plenty of time for our priests to arrange a date and time to meet with your family for first Reconciliation. After Reconciliation has been celebrated you are free to schedule your child's first Communion at any of our regularly scheduled week-end Masses (except on holidays). Most of our families plan the celebration around

another family event (perhaps a wedding or summer family gathering), a visit from relatives or at a time of year that is most convenient for them. First Communion does not *have* to happen in May or June!

PLEASE NOTE:

**First Communion celebrations will NOT be scheduled until
First Reconciliation has been celebrated.**

___ The priest will give you a form to complete at the conclusion of first Reconciliation. At that time you can request the date and Mass time you would like for the celebration of first Communion. You will also be asked how many seats you would like us to reserve for your family and friends. We do not schedule more than 2 first Communions and/or a Baptism at any one Mass. Please come prepared with a few different dates or times in mind in case your first choice is not available. (Many people choose the 4:00 or 5:30 Mass on Saturday evening and plan a dinner afterward, or the 11:00 on Sunday with a lunch to follow.)

**Remember to bring a copy of your child's baptism certificate to your first reconciliation appointment.*

Three weeks before the First Communion celebration:

___ Call the parish office to confirm the date and Mass time. We cannot guarantee which priest will be presiding at Mass at the time that you have chosen to celebrate first Communion. Due to their busy schedules and commitments outside the parish, as well as emergency situations that arise, the priest Mass schedule can vary.

___ Children usually wear comfortable but “dressy” clothes. This is a very special occasion but they do not need to be in a formal dress or suit/tuxedo, unless that is what your family decides. (If your son hates to wear a tie, please don't feel he *has* to for this occasion. We want him to remember the special event and how wonderful it is to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament rather than how uncomfortable he was in a tie!)

___ Visit our Book Nook! The store has lovely First Communion gifts for children.

On the day of First Communion:

___ Please arrive at the church 20 minutes before Mass begins and check in with the priest in the sacristy. Often family members of the first Communicant are asked to bring up the gifts (hosts and wine) at the Offertory. Front pews will be reserved for your family/friends

___ Pictures may be taken but please do so from the pew and do not interrupt the prayerfulness and beauty of the Mass.

If you have any questions, please call Debi Jamison at the parish office at 303-758-8826 or e-mail her at Jamison@risenchristchurch.org.