



The Instructions for Sacramental Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion

● YEAR 2 ●

Overview

Celebrating a Sacrament is so much more than a one-day event. It is about being fueled with grace and set ablaze with love for God and our neighbor. As such, it is important that we take seriously the preparation for these sacraments.

Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion is one of the most important moments in the life of a Catholic. This preparation concludes with the celebrating the second of three steps in the spiritual life in becoming a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church – namely, receiving Most Holy Communion, also called the Most Holy Eucharist, for the first time.

Before anyone can receive the Eucharist, he or she must be free from mortal sin (i.e. an action committed knowingly and intentionally against God's commandments). The Church has taught that, in most cases, a child is able to reason between right and wrong by the age of 7. Thus, anyone 7 years old or older can celebrate their First Reconciliation – to cleanse him or her from all sin, but especially from any mortal sins that may have been committed.

Once a person has been reconciled to God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (also known as the Sacrament of Confession or Penance), he or she may then freely celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Because there are many things to consider and discuss, the Archdiocese of New Orleans requires a two-year preparation program.

At St. Luke, the **first year** of preparation covers:

- (1) an overview of both of these sacraments,
- (2) an in-depth teaching on the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and
- (3) an introduction to the practicalities of Confession.

The **second year** of preparation covers:

- (1) the practicalities of Confession,
- (2) an in-depth teaching on the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and
- (3) the practicalities of revering and receiving Holy Communion.

Expectations

As a parish family, we are dedicated to helping parents form their children in the Catholic faith we love so much. Because the parents are the primary educators and formators of their children, our main goal as a parish is to provide you the tools, the resources, the community, the support, and whatever else will help you to succeed in forming your child in the faith.

With that in mind, all participants in their second year of preparation are expected to:

- (1) participate in FIRE nights (see below for more information)
- (2) participate in BLAZE nights (see below for more information)
- (3) participate in STOKE YOUTH (see below for more information)
- (4) participate in First Reconciliation
- (5) participate in the annual retreat
- (6) participate in First Communion
- (7) attend Mass every weekend and holy day of obligation
- (8) pray at home, personally and with their family
- (9) practice virtue and learn good habits from their parents
- (10) go to Confession often, at least once a year (after First Reconciliation)



FIRE NIGHTS

FIRE Nights are the primary focus of our FIRE program, meant to bring together the entire parish family in an ongoing formation process. These nights occur monthly and are approximately 2 hours long. A typical night is structured with three parts:

1. The night begins with a fun **introduction** to the theme or topic of the night.
2. All those present break out into different groups based on age and/or state of life. In each **breakout** group, all are formed regarding the same topic, but at their appropriate age levels.
3. The night concludes with a family **dinner**, in which all present participate in intentional conversations to discuss what they learned in their breakout session.



BLAZE NIGHTS

BLAZED is the general name for all of our sacramental preparation programs. **BLAZE nights** are an additional Sunday each month, where participants receive specific formation regarding the sacrament they are preparing for. These begin with a meal at 5 PM and end at 6:30 PM. All those in their first and second year of preparation for First Reconciliation/Communion are expected to attend.



STOKE YOUTH is part of our FIRE program, which allows teenage Confirmation candidates to act as mentors and prayer partners with those receiving First Reconciliation and First Communion. It does not require more from our First Reconciliation/Communion participants except to keep their mentor in their prayers. Their mentor will help them throughout the year at FIRE nights, BLAZE nights, and retreat.

----- **First Reconciliation** -----

First Reconciliation takes place on a regularly scheduled BLAZE night. Participants are encouraged to attend 4:00 PM Mass. If they attend a different Mass this weekend, participants are expected to arrive at the church by 5:00 PM. The liturgy begins with a prayer service at 5:15 PM. After this prayer service, there will be an opportunity for individual confessions. Once participants have finished their Confession, parents are encouraged to go to Confession as well. Once a participant and his or her family have finished, they are free to leave the church and celebrate with their families or join the rest of the BLAZE participants in the Family Life Center for dinner.

----- **Retreat** -----

The annual retreat takes place on a Saturday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. It is meant to be a prayerful, practical, and fun morning with their peers. Retreats are led by their STOKE YOUTH mentors.

----- **First Communion** -----

In order to celebrate with the whole parish family, First Communion takes place at weekend Masses. Participants and their families are asked to RSVP for a weekend Mass in the first weekend in May: Saturday at 5 PM, or Sunday at 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM, or 4:00 PM. A pew will be reserved for each participant and their family, who are expected to arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass begins.

----- **May Crowning** -----

The weekend following First Communion, all participants are invited to help celebrate our annual May Crowning and Procession. The ladies will be given flower petals to sprinkle as we process. The gentleman will have their names placed in a hat, with one name chosen to crown Mary.

Schedule

2022-2023

FIRE NIGHTS

NO AUGUST
SEPTEMBER 18
NO OCTOBER
NOVEMBER 6
DECEMBER 4
JANUARY 8
FEBRUARY 5
MARCH 5
APRIL 23
MAY 28

BLAZE NIGHTS

AUGUST 28
SEPTEMBER 24
OCTOBER 23
NOVEMBER 13
DECEMBER 11
JANUARY 22
NO FEBRUARY
MARCH 26
APRIL 30
NO MAY

IMPORTANT DATES

FAMILY BASH	OCTOBER 16
RECONCILIATION	MARCH 26
RETREAT	MAY 6
COMMUNION	MAY 7
MAY CROWNING	MAY 14

Contact Information

For more information, please visit our website at saintlukeslidell.org
or contact Mrs. Mandi Troyani via phone at (985) 641-6572
via email at youth@saintlukeslidell.org

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I make sure my child is prepared?

To prepare your child for First Reconciliation, consider some of these tips:

1. Talk about the Sacrament of Reconciliation together
2. Practice how to do an examination of conscience
3. Practice how to go to Confession
4. Practice the Act of Contrition
5. Explain what the Act of Contrition is
6. Take your child with you when you go to Confession
7. Pray together, teaching your child how to pray

To prepare your child for First Communion, consider some of these tips:

1. Talk about the Eucharist together
2. Attend Mass every weekend
3. Explain parts of the Mass to your child

4. Practice receiving the Eucharist
5. Invite your child to join you in the 1-hour fast before receiving the Eucharist
6. Take your child to Eucharistic Adoration
7. Be a model of reverence and focus at Mass
8. Be a model of receiving the Eucharist with reverence
9. Pray together about the great gift of the Eucharist

Who can come to First Reconciliation?

Anyone and everyone can join in celebrating your child's First Reconciliation. It is highly recommended that parents, siblings, grandparents, and Godparents join in the celebration.

Who can come to First Communion?

Anyone and everyone can join in celebrating your child's First Reconciliation. It is highly recommended that parents, siblings, grandparents, and Godparents join in the celebration. Only one pew will be reserved per child, so be sure to arrive early if you need additional seating.

What to wear to First Reconciliation and First Communion?

The dress code for gentleman receiving Holy Communion is:
Dress Pant, Dress Shirt, tie preferred. Handsome smiles.
The dress code for ladies receiving Holy Communion is:
White Dress, veil/flower-crown optional. Pretty smiles.

Parents and attending company should dress appropriately for church. Keep in mind: If wearing a halter or spaghetti strap top, please wear a jacket over it.