

## Saint Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church

# PREPARING FOR FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST

PARENT RESOURCE GUIDE

2025

## WELCOME

Everything that we know about God, all the Scriptures, all the Tradition, all the prayers, all the liturgies - EVERYTHING - is a preparation, a foreshadowing, A REMINDER of why the Eucharist is, as the Catechism teaches us, "the Source and Summit of our Catholic Faith." Why? Because of the promise God made in the book of Isaiah all those many hundreds of years before Jesus was born: *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel,*" and again in the Gospel of Matthew, *"She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."* All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: *"Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"* which means "God is with us."

This, my dear Parish Family, **IS** the Lord with us: **The Holy Eucharist!** I welcome you and your family into the greatest and most beautiful mystery: Jesus, the Lord, who loves us, remains with us, and makes us holy: He alone is the very LOVE for which we all yearn!

With great joy, *Father Jared*

## MY COMMUNION PRAYER

Dear God,

I know that You give me many gifts.

The gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ in Holy Communion is the greatest of all.

How can I ever thank You enough for this special gift?

At Mass we are called to be like Jesus, by loving and serving one another in the world.

As I become more like Him, please continue to help me. Show me the places and ways that I can bring Your love, kindness, and peace to others in my family, in my neighborhood, in my community, and with my friends.

I ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

*\*Prayer taken from Our Sunday Visitor*



**I AM THE  
BREAD OF LIFE**

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## THE EUCHARIST: WHAT WE BELIEVE

One of the three sacraments of Initiation, “**the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life**” (CCC1324). This is why as Catholics, one of the most important things we do is come together to celebrate Mass. Every Mass is a memorial of the sacrifice Jesus offered God the Father at the Last Supper. During that meal, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and told his followers, “Do this in memory of Me.” Mass is the heart and soul of our worship of God. It is the celebration that gives us the strength we need to live a Christian life. Because of its importance, the Church places a serious obligation on all its members to take part in the Mass each Sunday and on holy days.

Eucharist is Jesus’ true presence here on earth. Although a mystery, we as Catholics **accept on faith the fact that bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus because Jesus told us this is so.** “The whole Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine. ; it is Jesus himself.” (CCC 1374)

**For a more in-depth exploration: The Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist: Basic Questions and Answers, USCCB**

DO THIS IN  
MEMORY OF ME.

JOHN 6:35

## UNDERSTANDING THE EUCHARIST ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Check out the resources on Formed which can be accessed through this link: FORMED.org**

- You’ll need to set up a free account: [www.saintlukeslidell.org/getformed](http://www.saintlukeslidell.org/getformed).
- Kids, check out the Brother Francis videos on Formed.org including *The Mass: A Life Giving Prayer and Bread of Life: Celebrating the Eucharist*

**Additional Resources to help explain the Eucharist to your child:**

Busted Halo—Holy Eucharist

**Additional Resources for a Parent’s refresher on the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist:**

Bishop Barron on the Sacrament of the Eucharist as Real Presence

Busted Halo: Advanced 201 Eucharist What We Believe

## THE MASS: IN THE LITURGICAL YEAR

Like the natural seasons, the Church has seasons too. They are called liturgical seasons. One of the clearest signs of these seasons is the changing liturgical colors. With each change of seasons, the Church changes the color of vestments (clothing worn by the priest, or celebrant, and cloths adorning the altar).

*The following colors are used:*

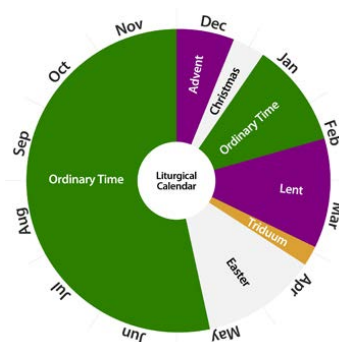
**Green** is a symbol of hope and life. This is the color worn during ordinary time.

**White** is a sign of joy and celebration. This is the color worn during the seasons of Christmas and Easter, and for some designated Holy Days. This is also the color worn for sacramental celebrations, such as baptism, First Eucharist, holy orders and marriage. It is also worn for funerals, in honor, memorial and celebration of a person's life in Christ.

**Violet (Purple)** represents penance and reflection. This color is used during the seasons of Lent and Advent. It is also seen during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Rose** is the color of joy and the promise of light. We see this color only two times during the year, on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday).

**Red** symbolizes the blood of Christ and martyrs of the Church, it also represents the Holy Spirit. The priest will wear red on Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Pentecost. It is also worn for the feast days of martyrs, and for the Sacrament of Confirmation.



For additional information:

[2025 Liturgical Calendar](#), USCCB

## THE MASS: IN THE CHURCH BUILDING



The Catholic Church is the gift that Jesus Himself has given to the world. Like a great ship that carries God's people through the world, the Church is not just a single building or many - it's also the people who gather together to worship the Lord, receive Him and love Him, and through Him, love others, and the world He gave us. It's where we learn to be His FAMILY. When you enter Saint Luke, always take a look around. Jesus is everywhere! In the good people who worship with you, in the priest and in the deacon, in the Holy Scripture, and most of all, in the Blessed Eucharist - the greatest Sacrament! You are being invited to receive Jesus: but not just once, ALWAYS. As you get ready for your First Communion, it's okay to be excited! Your whole parish family is looking forward to joining us in the Holy Eucharist!



**The Nave** is the main space within the church where the congregation sits. The other rooms in the church are the **Community Room**, or the "lobby" area; the **Vesting Room** where the vestments (clothing worn by the priests, deacons, or altar servers) are hung. This is within the **Sacristy** where the items used for Communion and the celebration of the Mass are kept.



**The Sanctuary** is the elevated space within the church where the **Main Altar** resides. The Altar is the large, high table where the Eucharist is celebrated. It is "dressed" with a white **Altar Cloth**, and may be adorned with the colors of the Liturgical season. Behind the Altar is the **Tabernacle**, the beautiful golden box where the Blessed Sacrament is kept. We know that the Blessed Eucharist is in the Tabernacle when the red candle near it is aglow. Above the Altar is the **Crucifix** which reminds us what Jesus did lovingly for us in order to make our salvation possible. When you receive the Eucharist never forget that the same Lord who made the whole world, who died on the Cross, and rose again is the same Lord in the Eucharist you are receiving. He is JESUS with US! And He loves you so much that He wanted to give you the Eucharist in order to be close to you forever.



The **Ambo** is the place where Sacred Scripture is proclaimed, especially the Holy Gospel, and where the priest gives the **Homily**. It is located to the left of the Altar. The **Paschal Candle** is the large white, decorated candle by the Baptismal Font. It is set ablaze at Easter vigil, carried inside our church by the deacon, and it lights our own candles as a reminder that Jesus wants us to be His light of love to the world. It is kept glowing bright at the Holy Mass, at Baptisms, Marriages, and at Funerals to give us encouragement and hope.



**The Cantor** is the person who leads us in singing to the Lord at the Holy Mass. He or she is often surrounded by musicians and a choir made up of people in our parish family just like you

## PREPARING FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE MASS

Just as you would prepare to host guests at a celebration with a meal in your home, preparations are made before each celebration of the Mass.

**The Deacon or Sacristan** prepares the items needed for the celebration of the Mass. This includes:

- Lighting the **altar candles**;
- Preparing the table which holds the gifts (**ciborium with unconsecrated hosts and a cruet of wine**) to be brought forward;
- Preparing the **Credence Table** to the side of the altar which holds **ciborium with unconsecrated hosts and wine** which will be brought to the altar for consecration at Communion time.
- Setting out the vessels that the priest uses for the Eucharist:
  - The **Chalice** to hold the wine that will become the Precious Blood,
  - The **Paten** which holds the bread that will become the Body of Christ,
  - A **Corporal** to collect any crumbs or spills, and
  - A **Purificator**, a linen cloth which is used to wipe clean the Chalice and the Paten



I WILL BE  
WITH YOU  
ALWAYS."

MATTHEW  
28:20

**The Priest** prepares by wearing special **vestments**. The wearing of vestments arose at the same time the celebration of the Mass was moved into church buildings as a way for people to tell who the various ministers were. The vestments we see the most are:

- An **Alb** is the first garment placed on by the priest, and is long and white. This is also what is seen being worn by **Altar Servers**.
- The **Cinture** is the cord tied around the waist of an alb.
- The **Stole** is a narrow cloth, similar to a scarf, draped around the neck of the priest. It symbolizes the authority given by the church and sacredness of his role.
- The **Chasuble** is the outer garment, similar to a poncho, and will match the color of the liturgical seasons.







## PREPARING FOR MASS: THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist. We are encouraged to receive Communion frequently and devoutly. In order to be properly prepared to receive, one should not be conscious of a grave sin, and should have fasted for one hour prior. The best practice is to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation with enough frequency to have a clear heart and conscious when coming to receive our Lord in the Eucharist.

## PREPARING FOR MASS: ENTERING THE CHURCH

Each person coming to Mass should prepare and respect the holy place they are entering. Here are some ways you and your child can prepare:



- When first entering the **Church**, stop and dip the fingers of your right hand in the **Holy Water Font** placed by each of the entrances, and then make the **Sign of the Cross**.
- As you choose a place sit during Mass, be aware of your child's perspective. The more they can see, the more engaged they will be.
- Before entering your **pew**, turn towards the **Tabernacle** and **genuflect**. This is a sign of reverence towards Christ, and is done by kneeling on one knee and making the Sign of the Cross.
- Once in your pew, take a moment to kneel and talk quietly with God. This also gives your mind and body a moment to transition from the noise of the world to the peace of the Mass.



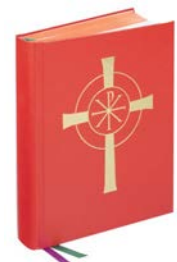
## THE ORDER OF MASS: INTRODUCTORY RITES

- **Procession.** We stand as the presiding priest and other ministers enter the assembly. We sing a gathering song. The priest kisses the altar. He then goes to the chair where he presides over the celebration.
- **Greeting.** The priest leads us in praying the Sign of the Cross together. The priest greets us and we say, **“And with your spirit.”**
- **Penitential Rite.** *“I confess to Almighty God...”* We admit our wrongdoings. We thank God for his mercy and ask for prayers.
- **Gloria.** *“Glory to God in the Highest”* We praise God for all the good he has done for us (this is omitted during Advent and Lent).
- **Opening Prayer.** The priest leads us in praying the Opening Prayer. We respond, **“Amen.”**

IN THE NAME  
OF THE FATHER,  
AND OF THE  
SON AND OF  
THE HOLY SPIR-  
IT.  
AMEN

## THE ORDER OF MASS: LITURGY OF THE WORD

- **First Reading.** Proclaimed by a lector usually from the Old Testament or from the Acts of the Apostles. God invites us into a prayerful conversation.
- **Responsorial Psalm.** The cantor leads us in singing a psalm. This helps us think about what we heard in the first reading, and respond to the Lord.
- **Second Reading.** A lector then proclaims the New Testament reading. This tells us about how Jesus fulfills the life God is calling us to live, so that we can imitate Him. Daily Mass usually omits this reading.
- **Gospel Acclamation.** This is the *“Alleluia!”* The cantor sings it first and the congregation repeats. We stand to honor Jesus present with us in the Gospel that the Deacon or the Priest will proclaim. (During Lent the word *alleluia* is omitted).
- **Gospel.** The Gospel includes the words and actions of Jesus. It is read by a Priest or Deacon, never by a layperson.
- **Homily.** Then the Priest or Deacon explains the Scriptures we heard, and how we should practice what Jesus teaches us. Sometimes, he will also use this moment to tell us an important lesson or service that we should do.
- **Profession of Faith.** *“I believe in one God...”* All join in this declaration of what we believe. We pray the Nicene Creed which states the Truth about God and the Church.
- **Prayer of the Faithful.** *“Lord, hear our prayer.”* Also known as General Intercessions or the Universal Prayer. We are lead in praying for those in need and for ourselves.



THE WORD  
OF THE LORD.  
  
THANKS BE TO  
GOD.



“TAKE AND EAT  
FOR THIS IS MY  
BODY.

THEN HE TOOK  
THE CUP AND  
SAID, “DRINK IT  
ALL OF YOU,  
THIS IS MY  
BLOOD, WHICH  
SEALS GOD’S  
COVENANT.”

MATTHEW 26:  
26-28

## ORDER OF MASS: LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- **Preparation of the Altar Gifts.** This is also called the **Offertory**. We sit as the Altar is prepared, the collection is taken up, and the gifts of bread & wine are brought forward by members of our parish family.
- **Eucharistic Prayer.** The priest invites us to join in praying the Church’s great prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father. We stand, then kneel for this prayer. During this prayer the ordinary bread and ordinary wine, become the extraordinary body and blood of our Lord.
- **Communion Rite.** This part begins with the *Our Father*, followed by the Sign of Peace. After praying the Lamb of God, we receive the sacred body of Christ in the consecrated host.

## ORDER OF MASS: CONCLUDING RITE

- **Greeting and Blessing.** “*In the name of the Father...*”
- **Dismissal.** “*Thanks be to God!*” We are sent forth to do good works, praising and blessing the Lord.
- **Recessional.** We stand as the altar servers, Deacon, and the Priest leave the altar. Out of respect, we do not leave our pews until the Priest has fully exited the Church.

## ORDER OF MASS: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Order of the Mass, USCCB](#)

[Parts of the Mass, USCCB](#)

[That Catholic Show: 001: Sit, Stand and Kneel](#)

[The How-To Book of the Mass, by Mike Dubruiel](#)

[What’s Happening in Mass?, Busted Halo](#)





## RECEIVING COMMUNION

### THIS IS HOW WE ARE TO RECEIVE THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST:

- Prepare your heart to welcome Jesus with folded hands.
- When you come up to receive the Eucharist, *bow in reverence to our Lord who is in the Eucharist.*
- You can choose to **receive the Lord on your tongue or reverently in your clean hands.**
  - ◊ **If you receive the Eucharist on the tongue,** please make sure to open your mouth wide, with your head tilted back.
  - ◊ **If you receive the Eucharist in the hand,** extend your hands with palms facing up, with your dominant hand under your other hand like a little throne. Make sure to allow the Eucharist to arrive in your hands before taking the Eucharist. After the Lord is placed in your cupped hand reverently pick up the Host with the hand on the bottom (dominant hand) and place it in your mouth.
  - ◊ When you hear the words, “*The Body of Christ,*” **please answer, “Amen.”**
  - ◊ When you come the Blood of Christ, bow in reverence to our Lord.
  - ◊ Wait until the Chalice is offered to you, and then hold it well with both hands, being careful to not let any of the Precious Blood drop or spill.
  - ◊ When you hear the words, “The Blood of Christ,” please answer, “**Amen.**”
  - ◊ Consume the Eucharist, prepare to receive the Blood of Christ, or return to your seat quietly with your hands folded in prayer.

*“LORD I AM  
NOT WORTHY  
THAT YOU  
SHOULD ENTER  
UNDER MY  
ROOF,  
BUT ONLY SAY  
THE WORD  
AND MY SOUL  
SHALL BE  
HEALED.”*

### COMMUNION PRAYER

MY JESUS, I  
BELIEVE THAT  
YOU ARE TRULY  
PRESENT IN THE  
BLESSED  
SACRAMENT. I  
LOVE YOU  
ABOVE ALL  
THINGS, AND I  
LONG FOR YOU  
IN MY SOUL.  
  
AMEN

### Busted Halo—Holy Eucharist: How to Receive

## AFTER RECEIVING COMMUNION

Jesus is within you now. Kneel and quietly share whatever is on your heart with Him in prayer. Give thanks, ask for help, or just quietly rejoice in His presence within you. This is a special time for you with Jesus. Let His Love fill you with peace.

Remain kneeling, and sing the Communion song with your parish family. Watch as the Altar table is cleaned. When the **Priest or Deacon** takes the Body of Christ back to the **Tabernacle, and everyone at the Altar bows.** Once this has occurred, you may be seated until the final blessing. Some people choose to continue to kneel until the clergy at the Altar all sit. That's fine, too.

## RECEPTION OF COMMUNION BY FELLOW CHRISTIANS AND NON-CHRISTIANS

As Catholics, we welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist, and pray that our common Baptism and the Holy Spirit will draw us closer and dispel the divisions which separate us. Because we believe that Christ is fully present in the Eucharist, reception of this sacrament is discouraged among those who do not share in our faith in Jesus Christ, or those whom are members of churches not fully united in the Christian, catholic faith. We do ask, during this time of the Mass, that they offer their own prayers for peace and the unity of the human family. (Code of Canon Law, canon 916 & 844)

## FIRST EUCHARIST PREPARATION

### **Preparing for First Eucharist BLAZE + OCIC**

Make sure to follow the directions given to you through your Formator and BLAZE + OCIC Coordinators. You want to make sure to plan for the following dates:

### **For BLAZE FIRST COMMUNION + OCIC**

+ *First Communion Retreat*: April 18, 2025

+ *FOR OCIC First Communion*:

You'll receive your Sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass on April 4, 2025, at 8pm

+ *FOR FIRE First Communion*: You will receive your First Holy Communion on May 3, 2025, at the 11 am Mass. This will be followed by the May Crowning.

(OCIC families are also invited to participate in the May Crowning on May 3! Don't forget to wear your special First Communion outfits.)



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Is there a dress code?

The liturgical color for the celebration of Holy Eucharist is white.

**For girls:** Suggested dress code for girls is a white dress, shoulders should be covered (Please no spaghetti straps unless a sweater or wrap covers the shoulders.) Veils are optional. Please do not have your daughter wear gloves. (If your daughter receives on the palm of the hand, the Precious Body may only come in contact with skin.)

**For boys:** Suggested dress code for boys is dress pants, white dress shirt, and tie **or** bow tie. Sport coats/blazers or suits may also be worn but are not required. Boys are welcome to wear the traditional white suit.

### Can I take pictures at the Holy Mass?

No, because it is a distraction from the reverence we owe Christ at the Holy Mass. *A photographer will be at all First Eucharist Masses taking pictures of that are just stunning! We post these images on our Saint Luke Facebook page for you to download. Pictures will be taken of each child with clergy and family following the Mass.*



### Where can I purchase First Communion items?

There are many great Catholic stores in our area:

*Angels of Peace:* 305 South Military Road, Slidell

*Old Ursuline Convent Museum:* 1112 Chartres Street, New Orleans

*Pauline Books and Media Store* (also carries great gifts): 4403 Veterans Memorial Boulevard, Metairie

*FC Ziegler Co:* 6184 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge

### How many guests can attend my child's First Communion?

The only maximum is the Mass itself. If you will bring a large family or several friends, arrive early for your Mass so that you can get seats.

### What if we need to miss First Reconciliation or the First Eucharist Retreat ?

Please don't! First Reconciliation is an important first step to First Eucharist, so it is a necessary requirement to attend. But missing out also means that your child will have to attend at another time, on his or her own without friends and formators to provide encouragement and support.

The Retreat is part of the gift of preparation for your family. It allows your children to see and feel the great joy of anticipation of the Eucharist and being part of their parish family. Please add these two important dates to your calendar at the beginning of the year!

## Saint Luke the Evangelist



**WELCOME HOME**  
BUILDING UPON FIRM FOUNDATIONS

### PREPARING FOR FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST

## KEEP THE STORY GOING!

Throughout the year, your children will hear and experience how Jesus has been carefully inviting them - and you - along the wonderful story of salvation, because of His powerful love and your unique and unrepeatable worth.

Once your children receive First Eucharist, they are now part of the great story that will help them grow into the amazing leaders God is calling them to be. Holiness isn't for some, it's for ALL OF US!

From this point forward, the Lord will be wanting to share His mercy, His love, and His guidance with them. Their hearts will long for His presence. Now, imagine what it will be like for them if suddenly, they are no longer attending the Holy Mass consistently and often.

We all need Jesus, and the Sacraments aren't a sometimes lifeline - they are an ALWAYS lifeline! The Lord is always waiting to encourage, forgive, strengthen, and empower them to be holy, to feel worthy, and to know that the world needs their particular presence. Make every effort to attend Mass and receive Reconciliation as a family! I promise you will never regret the effort you make to keep them - AND YOU - close to our Blessed Savior!

*If you have any questions, please contact Teresa Hidalgo at [thidalgo@saintlukeslidell.org](mailto:thidalgo@saintlukeslidell.org) or by phone at 985-288-5781.*

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