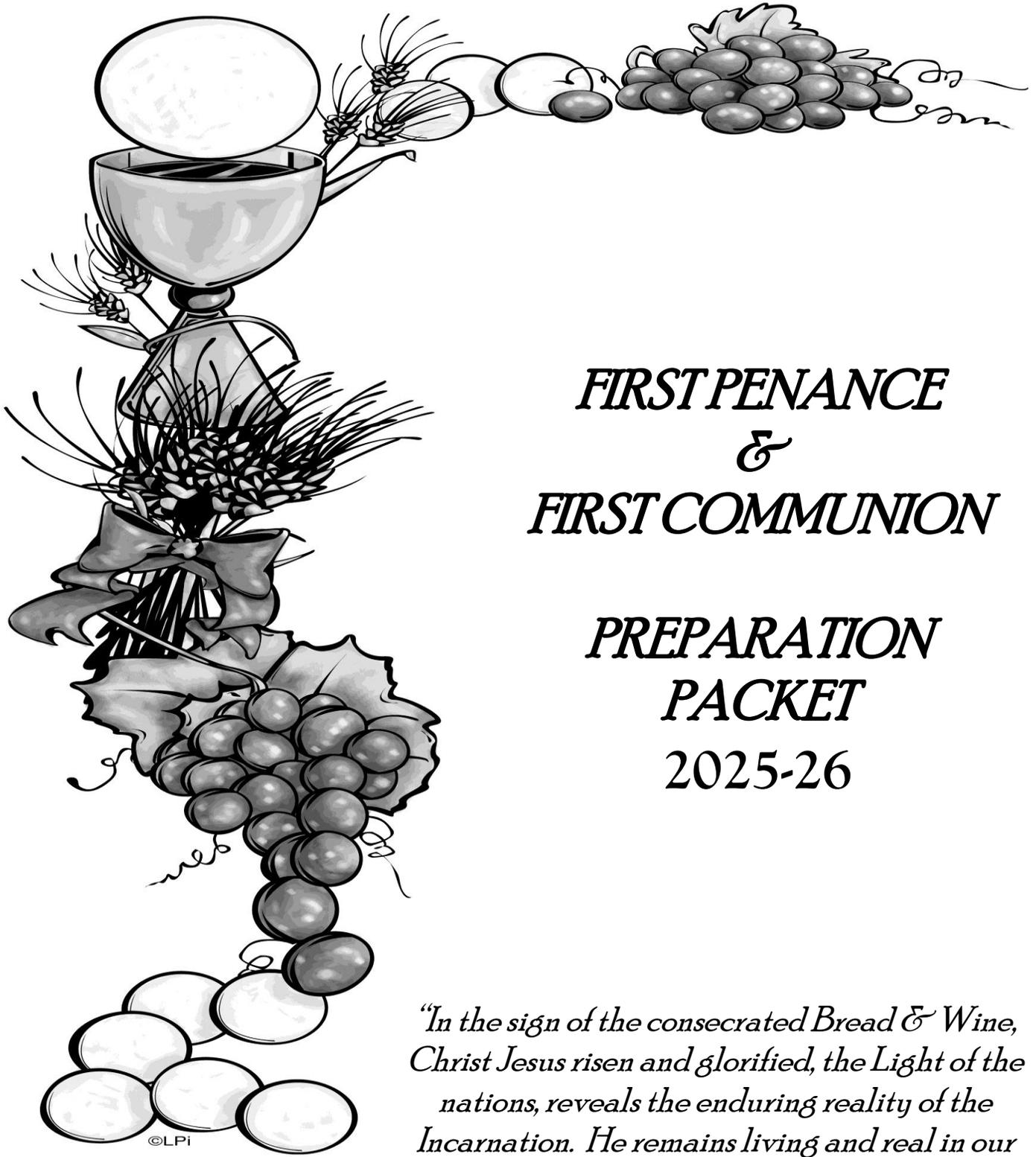


St. Benedict Church



*FIRST PENANCE
&
FIRST COMMUNION*

*PREPARATION
PACKET
2025-26*

“In the sign of the consecrated Bread & Wine, Christ Jesus risen and glorified, the Light of the nations, reveals the enduring reality of the Incarnation. He remains living and real in our midst in order to nourish the faithful with His Body and Blood.” (IM, #11)

The reception of First Penance and First Holy Communion at St. Benedict's takes place **during the second year of catechetical formation**. Families are required to attend 4 Sacramental Formation Sessions ("Family Days") in addition to regular faith formation classes for the children, and a rehearsal for reception of the Sacrament. In addition, we gather for a special Liturgy, the Enrollment Mass, which families are strongly encouraged to attend. Sessions are as follows:

- Initial Information meeting FHC/First Penance prep Part 1 (Formation Session 1) (Parents only)
- Enrollment Mass
- FHC/First Penance Prep Part 2 (Formation Session 2)
- FHC prep (Formation Session 3)
- Gathering Day/First Communion Retreat (Formation Session 4)
- First Communion rehearsals.

The reception of First Holy Communion is scheduled at most Saturday and Sunday Masses during the Easter Season. There are 8 spots at each Mass for families to choose from. A link to sign up for a First Communion Mass will be sent out to families following the initial Information Meetings, on Sunday, October 5th at 7pm.

I. Spiritual Preparation --- Fall 2025

A. Initial Formation Session

- At the opening session an overview of the First Sacraments program is presented, and includes background on the theology of the Sacraments as well as reflection about the particular themes being addressed this year. Particular attention is paid to the role of the parents in passing on the Faith. Initial catechesis on the Sacrament of Reconciliation will also take place.
- The following will be distributed at the session:
 - Important Dates Calendar (with First Communion date options)
 - Prayers to know
 - Enrollment Mass activity
 - First Communion "Readiness" overview/Dress Code
 - First Reconciliation "Readiness" Parents' Resource

The First Formation Session will take place on Monday, September 29th at 5pm (option 1) or Tuesday, September 30th at 6pm (option 2) or Sunday, October 5th at 11am (option 3).

B. First Sacraments Enrollment Mass/Reception

- At the Enrollment Mass, we present those children preparing to receive First Penance and First Eucharist to the wider parish community. The Enrollment Service therefore takes place at a Sunday Mass.
- The children prepare for the Mass at home prior to its celebration, reflecting on the chosen theme and working on an activity to present during the Mass.
- An overview of the Mass is provided at the opening formation session. Materials will be distributed to prepare at home with your child.
- A pizza dinner will be served for the 1st Communion families following Mass. An RSVP for the Mass and Dinner will be requested prior to the event.

**The Fall Enrollment Mass will take place on
Sunday, October 19th at the 5pm Mass. Dinner follows.**

C. Home Activities

- Enclosed with the First Sacraments preparation packet is a set of prayers the children should know. It is important to practice these prayers at home with the children, as well as incorporate them into regular family prayer time.
- The First Communion “Readiness” overview provides a list of “Things to Know” which will help the children celebrate their First Communion Mass in a more active way.
- Enrollment Mass activity should be completed in time to bring to the Mass on 10/26. If you can’t attend the Mass, there will be a basket in the Gathering Space of the Church beginning 10/11, to drop off the completed activity.

D. Second Formation Session

- Our second formation session provides an in-depth look at the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents and children will reflect together on the great love and hope Christ offers us in this sacrament of healing and forgiveness.
- The steps for the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be introduced, explained and reviewed. Take home materials will be provided to continue to prepare for and “practice” reception of the sacrament at home.

**The Second Formation Session will take place on
Sunday, November 2nd at 10:30am (option 1) or
Monday, November 10th at 4:30pm (option 2) or 6:30pm (option 3) or
Tuesday, November 11th at 5:30pm (option 4).**

E. First Penance Celebration

- The children will receive First Penance as part of the Parish Advent Penance Service.
- Families are invited to participate, and there will be an opportunity for them to receive the Sacrament as well.

**First Penance will take place on Sunday, December 8th starting at 2:30pm;
Families with Last Names: "A-L" at 2:30pm &
Families with Last Names: "M-Z" at 3pm.**

II. Spiritual Preparation --- Winter'25/Spring '26

A. First Holy Communion Formation Meeting:

- Our third formation meeting focuses on immediate preparation for First Communion. We will reflect on the meaning of Jesus' Real Presence, body & blood, soul and divinity, in the Eucharist, and begin to practice reception of the Sacrament.
- The following resources will be provided at the formation meeting:
 - Guidelines for reception of Communion (for review at home)
 - Communion banner packets. Banners are used to identify "family pews" at First Communion Masses. The packets provide Eucharistic symbols for decorating the banners. Letters are also provided for adding the child's name (first and/or last). If you use only the first name, please mark the back of the banner with the child's last name. Banners should be returned at the First Communion rehearsal.

**The Third Formation Session will take place on
Sunday, February 22nd at 10:30am (option 1) or
Monday, February 23rd at 4:30pm (option 2) or 6:30pm (option 3) or
Tuesday, February 24th at 5:30pm (option 4).**

B.

C. FHC Gathering Day

- Gathering Day is a morning of reflection/retreat in anticipation of First Holy Communion, providing more substantial time of catechesis, to help the children deepen their understanding through various activities, prayers & Crafts. It also provides time for additional "practice" in the Church. Parents are encouraged to participate as volunteers, but are not required to attend.

Gathering Day will be held on Saturday, March 7th from 9:00am-Noon.

III. Practical Preparation

- A. **Rehearsals**: will be scheduled in the weeks leading up to the First Holy Communion Masses. There will be at least 4 options to choose from.
- B. **Baptismal Certificate**: is required even if the child was baptized at SBC. If there is no copy on file in the RE office, we will contact you.
- C. **First Penance/First Communion Dress Code**: is provided separately.
- D. **Program Fee**: of \$50.00 covers program-related expenses for First Penance/First Communion, and is usually paid at registration. If the payment is still outstanding, you will be notified by the RE office.
- E. **Communion Dates** are as follows:

Saturday, 04/11/2025	5:00pm
Sunday, 04/12/2025	8:00am , 9:30am , 11:00am & 5:00pm
Saturday, 04/18/2025	5:00pm
Sunday, 04/19/2025	8:00am , 9:30am , 11:00am & 5:00pm
Saturday, 04/25/2025	5:00pm
Sunday, 04/26/2025	8:00am , 9:30am, 11:00am& 5:00pm
Saturday 05/2/2025	5:00pm
Sunday, 05/3/2025	8:00am , 9:30am, 11:00am & 5:00pm
Saturday, 5/9/2024	5:00pm
Sunday, 05/10/2025	8:00am , 9:30am , 11:00am & 5:00pm
Saturday, 05/16/2023	5:00pm
Sunday, 05/17/2025	8:00am, 9:30am, 11:00am & 5:00pm

IV Family Day Requirements

The four formation sessions indicated on the First Holy Communion Prep Calendar fulfill the Family Day requirement component of regular RE Formation (SA or TRE). If siblings (up to Grade 5) attend, this qualifies for their Family Day requirement as well. Due to the nature of the activities, the sessions are generally not appropriate for Grades 6 & 7. These students are welcome to participate for service hours. Special circumstances can be discussed on a case-by-case basis. Please note: First Penance is considered a Family Day for any sibling who attends and receives the sacrament.