**FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION is a two-year program that begins in the 1st grade.**

As Jesus Christ taught in the Gospel of John (Jn 6:53-56), and the Catholic Church has faithfully handed down through his Apostles (cf. 1 Cor 11:23-29), Holy Communion (the Holy Eucharist) is the very body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ given by him to us as his Supreme Gift.

Because the Diocese of Kalamazoo recognizes that Holy Communion is the most intimate expression of love that Christ gives us, the diocese requires a two-year program of preparation for children receiving the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. **Parents should enroll their children to begin preparation for the reception of First Holy Communion when they enter the first grade.**    
   
Students who complete the two-year preparation requirements will receive First Reconciliation (also known formally as the Sacrament of Penance or informally as "confession") in the Spring of the second year of the program before their reception of First Holy Communion. See the below 2024-25 Calendar for the date schedule of all children's faith formation sessions.

The Catechetical Series used in 2nd Grade (Year II Sacramental Preparation) is Dynamic Catholic’s [**Blessed series**](https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/plus/blessed-seasons.html) which is both video and textbook based.

**Weekly Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation Mass Requirement**

Weekly Sunday Mass and Holy Day of Obligation Attendance is one of the five Precepts (Obligations) of the Church, and, as such, is a requirement of *all* Catholics to remain in the state of grace and receive Holy Communion without incurring grave sin. **Because your parental Catholic example is critical to the salvation of your child, children and their Catholic Parents (or Legal Guardians) in Year I and Year II Sacramental Preparation MUST attend Weekly Sunday Mass for the child to remain in the program.**

**Knowledge and Prayers**. 2nd Grade sacramental prep candidates and their parents will be given an information sheet for their children to memorize certain prayers and church teaching. The sheet also includes information that they will need to be able discuss in their own terms and optional family prayers for at-home use. This also helps the parent and to engage with their child in their role as primary educators, formators, and influencers in their Catholic faith in what Pope John Paul II called, the “Domestic Church”, that is the church at home.   
   
**Interview.** As per diocesan norms, each child will be interviewed by one of the priests, deacons, or faith Formation staff as a means to see how they are progressing in their growth in the Catholic faith. The interviewer may ask the child to recite the prayers and information they are asked to memorize. This is also an opportunity to get to know the child and the family better.

**What if my child did not receive their first reconciliation (i.e. the sacrament of penance/confession) and First Holy Communion in 2nd Grade?**   
Children who are "off-cycle", that is, beyond the usual age for receiving First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion a determination will be made as to how to proceed. **If your child is in this situation, please contact us at faith@stcatherinesiena.org.**    
   
**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

We are seeking volunteer **catechists**, catechist **assistants**, **substitutes** and hall monitor/drop off/pick up Safety/Traffic Guards. If you can lend a hand, please contact the Faith Formation Director at 269-978-2347. We cannot run the program without your help!    
   
**INFORMATION ON OUR CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION TEXTS**

[**Allelu!**](http://www.allelu.com/vision.html)**is used for our Pre-K & K faith formation program. It is published by Our Sunday Visitor and purchased courtesy of our local Knights of Columbus Council #6980.**

* Built upon the same 7 catechetical themes as the older children's curriculum, [**Alive in Christ**](https://aliveinchrist.osv.com/aicinfo/overview/parish), and includes Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Church, Sacraments, Morality, and the Kingdom of God.
* [**Allelu!**](https://www.allelu.com/vision.html)  incorporates the latest research in child development and specifically includes child-initiated activities in every lesson.
* Provides a seamless transition to our older child (grades 1, 3 &4) textbook series, [**Alive in Christ**](https://aliveinchrist.osv.com/aicinfo/overview/parish)

The [**Alive in Christ**](https://aliveinchrist.osv.com/aicinfo/overview/parish)series is used for CFF programming in grades 1, 3 and 4. It is also published by Our Sunday Visitor. [**Alive in Christ**](https://aliveinchrist.osv.com/aicinfo/overview/parish) is a comprehensive religious curriculum that leads students and their families to understand and live a Catholic life of discipleship. We will use the Parish edition, which invites children into a personal relationship with Christ while helping them to discover the beauty of their Catholic Faith.

For 2nd grade, which is Year II Sacramental Preparation, our parish uses Dynamic Catholic’s, [**Blessed**](https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/plus/blessed-seasons.html)series, which is both video and textbook-based.