

***Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish***  
*Office of Religious Education*

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Dear First Communion Parents;

In accordance with Church tradition, Sacred Heart Parish confers the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist on children for the first time during their second-grade year. In order to adequately prepare the children for the reception of these sacraments and to ensure the continuation of their faith formation begun in grade 1, our Parish's Grade 2 program includes both a doctrinal component and a sacramental component.

We use the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd ("CGS") Faith Formation method last year for grade 1 and in both the doctrinal and sacramental components of our grade 2 program.

CGS is a wonderful method of faith formation that is centered on the joy of the children in their encounter with God. It uses scriptural and liturgical themes that most resonate with children's religious needs according to their age levels to nourish this joy. CGS eliminates most of the scholastic elements of faith formation and instead, aims to become an experience of life, an education in faith, and a celebration of the encounter with God the Father.

Father Richard and I are so pleased with the responses of the children who prepared for their sacraments using CGS. I am excited to continue with your children this year, using this method and seeing the fruits of their work from last year

**The Doctrinal Component - Weekly Atrium Sessions**

This portion of the program will be taught by myself and volunteer catechists in our especially prepared environment called the Atrium using the CGS methodology. Many of the topics presented this year will provide direct preparation for the sacraments and will need to be made up if your child is absent that day. I will present more information on the CGS methodology at the Parent Meeting.

**Sacramental Preparation Program**

This component is taught by me, with assistance, through a series of retreat sessions, in the weeks immediately prior to First Communion. The children will also be making their First Confession during the session on May 2. In addition to meeting Diocesan requirements, this format develops an increased sense of community among the children and desire for these sacraments. **Attendance at all retreats is required for the reception of the sacraments.**

**Parent Commitment**

By Church tradition, initiation in sacraments is a community event – the joy of bringing the children into a deeper relationship with Christ and His Church is felt by both the immediate and Parish families. The initiation of children into these sacraments is the responsibility of the whole community. **Celebrating Mass as a family with our Parish community is strongly encouraged always, but especially during this preparation period.**

Retreat descriptions and schedule are included on the opposite page. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to joining you and your child during this special year in their journey of faith.

Yours In Christ,

Amy Donahue

### **Mass of Enrollment**

***Saturday, March 13, 2027; 4PM***

#### ***Upper Church***

The Children will be presented to the Parish, receiving the gift of the Word in the Gospels. As they proclaim their intention to prepare to join in the Eucharistic meal, each child will place his "sheep" at the feet of the Jesus, Our Good Shepherd.

### **First Session – Parent/Child**

***Saturday, April 3, 2027; 4PM Mass, followed by Parent/Child Meditation in the Chapel Room***

These four sessions provide for time to contemplate, as a family, these most special encounters with Christ through the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. This session's topic will be a meditation of Jesus as the True Vine. The meditation will take 45-50 minutes, and a snack will be provided.

### **Second Session – Parent/Child**

***Saturday, April 10, 2027; 4PM Mass, followed by Parent/Child Meditation in the Chapel Room***

The topic of this session is a continuation of Jesus as the True Vine.

### **Third Session – Parent/Child**

***Saturday, April 24, 2027; 4PM Mass, followed by Parent/Child Meditation in the Chapel Room***

The topic of this session is a meditation on the parables of the Found Coin and the Found Sheep.

### **Fourth Session – Parent/Child**

***Sunday, May 2, 2027; 10AM Mass, followed by Parent/Child Meditation in the Chapel Room***

The topic of this session is a meditation on the parable of the Forgiving Father. During Mass, the children will be committed to our Blessed Mother's loving care by leading the parish in the May Crowning of the Mary.

### **Fifth Session – Child Only**

***Saturday, May 8, 2027; 4PM Mass, followed by Parent/Child Meditation in the Chapel Room***

The topic of this session will be the Rite of Penance, as we begin our contemplation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### **Retreat Day**

***Saturday, May 15, 2027***

***9AM-10:30AM – Children only***

***Chapel Room, Lower Church***

In this session, we will complete our contemplation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the children will make their First Confession. A snack will be served.

***10:30AM-12PM with Parents***

***Lower Church***

***Last Meditation***

The topic of the final meditation will be the Healing of the Centurion's Servant. We will end our day with the children receiving their First Communion cross. A short First Communion rehearsal will also be held.

### **First Communion**

***Sunday, May 16, 2027; 1PM***

***Upper Church***