St. Vincent de Paul Church

1502 E. Wallen Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Handbook

2022-2023

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL
CATHOLIC PARISH
1502 E Wallen Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825 Phone (260) 489-3537 / ext. 204 debbieblackburn@saintv.org

Dear Parents:

Can you remember when you received the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time? What about your First Communion? Celebrating a sacrament is an important step in your child's life as a Catholic. Most of us have clear memories of celebrating these sacraments tucked away somewhere; you may even have your dress or Mass booklet in a special place. St. Vincent de Paul Parish is very excited and honored to help in the preparation of your child for both of these sacraments.

This parent handbook will provide valuable information to assist you in preparing your child for the sacraments. Please take the time to read through the entire handbook; as this will be the main form of communication. Parent participation and support are crucial in the spiritual development of each child. As a family, attendance at weekly mass is the best form of support and education you can provide your child. It will bring the classroom teachings alive as your child can experience all that is being taught.

While the liturgies for each sacrament will be similar to those of the years past, please be sure to read the handbook to see the specific changes from past years. We are making every effort to create a welcoming and family-centered liturgy for your child at each sacrament. If you have questions throughout the year, please feel free to contact me at any time. I will gladly discuss the program with you.

God Bless,

Debbie Blackburn
Director of Family Faith Formation

What is Reconciliation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of Catholicism's most unique and beautiful aspects. Jesus Christ, in His abundant love and mercy, established the Sacrament of Confession so that we, as sinners, can obtain forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God and the Church. The sacrament “washes us clean,” and renews us in Christ.

What is Holy Communion?

First Holy Communion is one of the most important events in early life for a Catholic, along with Baptism, Reconciliation, and Confirmation. The First Holy Communion is a sign of Christian unity and a symbol of a Catholic’s faith and devotion. First Holy Communion is typically celebrated when a child is about seven years old.

Sacrament Dates

First Reconciliation:

Saturday, February 4 & 11 at 11:00 AM
St. Vincent de Paul Church
(Families may attend either day. No sign-up is needed).

First Holy Communion

April 30 and May 7 at the 1:30 PM Mass

Two 1:30 PM liturgies have been set aside as the principal ones for First Holy Communion. Please choose the Mass that is most suitable for your family.

We realize that for some families, there is a particular spiritual attachment to another Mass time, or the practical necessity of another Mass time (flight schedules of visiting relatives). Therefore, there is also the possibility of your child receiving First Holy Communion at the following liturgies:

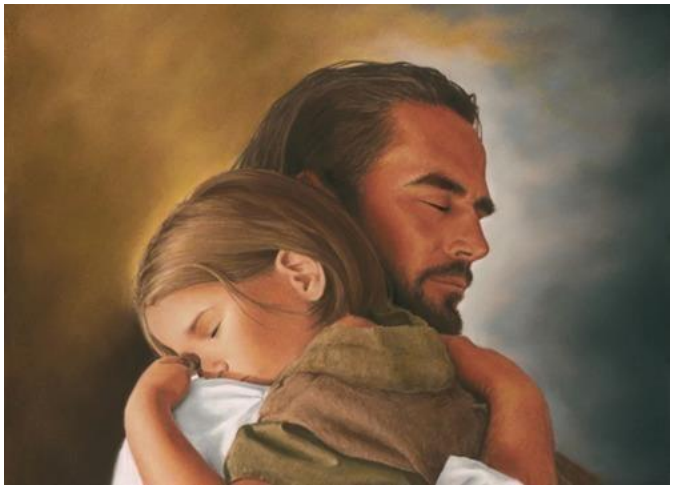
Alternate Mass Times

Saturday, May 6 - 5:00 PM

Sunday, May 7 - 7:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM or 5:00 PM

Mass selection will be made through SignUpGenius. The link for Mass registration will be sent by email following the First Communion Parent Meeting.

Sacrament of Reconciliation



Bless Me, Father
For I Have Sinned

The First Reconciliation Services will take place on Saturday, February 4, 2023, at 11:00 AM and Saturday, February 11, 2023, at 11:00 AM at St. Vincent de Paul Church.

Please attend on the **ONE** day that best fits your family's schedule. No sign-up is needed. ***If your child was not baptized at St. Vincent's and does not attend St. Vincent School, you must submit a copy of your child's baptismal certificate to the Family Faith Formation Office before First Reconciliation.*** The Sacrament of Reconciliation cannot be conferred without proof of Baptism.

The children and their parents will meet in the Church on the chosen date. A sign-in sheet will be available in the Gathering Space. The Reconciliation Service will include a welcoming and a reading from scripture, an Examination of Conscience, and reciting of the Act of Contrition as a group. The children will then go to a priest for individual confession of their sins and receive absolution. After all the children have received their First Reconciliation, each family member is encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be an example of faith for their child. After you and your child have completed your penance, you may leave. There will be no formal dismissal.

Discuss the Sacrament of Reconciliation with Your Child

1. Explain to your child that Reconciliation is a Sacrament of healing in which our sins are forgiven, and in which we are reconciled with God and the Church.

2. Teach your child that God is a loving merciful Father who is waiting for us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

3. Explain that Jesus granted the apostles and their successors (priests) the authority to forgive sins.

4. Teach your child how to make an examination of conscience and have them make it at the end of the day as part of their night prayers.

5. Make sure your child learns and memorizes the **Act of Contrition** and he/she understands Reconciliation as a way of preparing his/her soul to receive Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

6. Emphasize that the priest will never tell anyone their sins.

Act of Contrition

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong
and failing to do good
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ
suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.

Procedure for Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. Priests will be available to hear confessions in the stained glass window alcoves along the back of the church.

2. After the communal celebration, ushers will direct children to the alcoves where the priests will be stationed.

3. When each child approaches the priest, they begin with the Sign of the Cross and say, “Bless me Father for I have sinned, this is my First Reconciliation.”

4. They will tell their sins to the priest. (Review the Ten Commandments and use the examination of conscience included in this packet).

5. When done confessing, the child will say, “For these and those sins I may have forgotten, I am sorry.”

6. The child will be given a simple penance for his/her sins.

7. Typically, the priest will ask that the Act of Contrition be recited at this time. Since the Act of Contrition will be said as a group, the child will not need to recite it again after confessing.

8. The priest will raise his hand over the child, recite the prayer of forgiveness (Absolution), and say, “Go in Peace”.

9. The child will say, “Thank you, Father,” and then go back to his/her seat to say penance.

10. As a model of faith to your child, parents are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation after all children have confessed. If there is a priest with a much shorter line, parents can line up for confession with that priest before all children have confessed.

The Ten Commandments

(Students in second grade are not required to recite the Ten Commandments, however, for their confession to be valid, students must be very familiar with the Ten Commandments to examine their conscience.)

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember to keep Holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your Father and your Mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Examination of Conscience for Children

1. When I make choices, do I sometimes forget about what God wants me to do?
2. Do I pray every day?
3. Do I attend Mass every Sunday?
4. Do I try to see God in others?
5. Do I listen to my parents and teachers or do I ignore them?
6. Have I made fun of my brothers and sister or my classmates?
7. Am I selfish at school or do I share what I have with others?
8. When I am angry, do I say or do things to hurt whoever has hurt me?
9. Do I say, "I'm sorry" to the person I have hurt and "I forgive you" to the person who has hurt me?
10. Do I play fair or do I ever cheat at school or games?

First Holy Communion Retreat

Saturday, March 25, 2023, from 7:45 AM to noon
in the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Grade School.

Many parent volunteers are needed to make this day meaningful for your child, so please consider in advance whether you can help. Many session leaders are needed as well as volunteers to assist them. A Session Leader Volunteer Form is included in the First Communion Parent Packet. Please complete and return if you can volunteer in this capacity. Additional volunteer opportunities will be listed on the online retreat registration form. Please select the areas in which you can volunteer.

First Holy Communion Masses

Sunday, April 30 & Sunday, May 7 at the 1:30 PM Masses

The 1:30 PM liturgies have been set aside as the principal ones for First Holy Communion. Families will check in with teachers and catechists in the Gathering Space before entering the Church. Seats will not be reserved and First Communicants will sit with their family. Specific details will be sent as the First Communion Masses draw near.

Alternate Mass Selection

For some families, there is a particular spiritual attachment, or the practical necessity of another Mass time (flight schedules of visiting relatives). Therefore, there is the possibility of your child receiving First Holy Communion at the following liturgies:

Saturday, May 6 – 5:00 PM
Sunday, May 7 – 7:00 AM, 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM or 5:00 PM

Mass Selection

First Communion Mass selection will be done through SignUpGenius. The link will be sent by email to all families following the First Communion Parent Meeting. We will make every effort to accommodate your request. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Debbie Blackburn at debbieblackburn@saintv.org or 260-489-3537 ext. 204.

Requirements for First Eucharist

- Parents are required to read all information in the First Communion Handbook and complete and turn in all required forms by the due date indicated.
- **If your child was not baptized at St. Vincent's, and does not attend St. Vincent School, a copy of the baptism certificate must be turned in to the Family Faith Formation Office before January 25th. No sacraments can be conferred without it.**
- Candidates are to attend Mass regularly.
- Candidates are to know their prayers, sacrament definitions, and the proper procedures for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

Please make sure your child knows how to genuflect.

- Genuflection is an act of reverence or respect. One should genuflect when walking in front of the Tabernacle or when entering a church pew if the Blessed Sacrament is present.
- To genuflect, one must kneel with the right knee on the floor. While kneeling, one should make the Sign of the Cross with the right hand.

First Holy Communion Preparation

Students must know the following information before First Holy Communion. Please work with your child at home to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom.

The Sign of the Cross

Our Father

Hail Mary

Glory Be

Act of Contrition

Name and definition of the Sacrament of Baptism

Name and definition of the Sacrament of Penance

Name and definition of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist

RECOMMENDED DRESS-CODE FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Girls	Boys
Modest white dresses	White dress shirts
• Sleeveless is acceptable	Dark slacks (no jeans)
• No spaghetti straps	Dark shoes (no tennis shoes)
White veils (optional)	Dress ties (any color or pattern)
White shoes	**No jackets at the 1:30 PM liturgies**
White or natural colored stockings or socks.	
NO GLOVES	

Children should **not** bring prayer books, rosaries, or other religious articles to the liturgy that day.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Varsity Photo will be present at the May Crowning Ceremonies to take group and individual pictures for St. Vincent School students and students in the Family Faith Formation program. Specific information regarding photographs will be provided when the dates for First Communion draw closer.

If you wish to come to the church to take First Communion pictures before your child's First Communion day, please feel free to do so, however, we ask that you contact the church office before coming to insure church availability.

MAY CROWNING CEREMONY DATES

- **ST. VINCENT'S SCHOOL**: May Crowning Ceremony will be held on Friday, May 12 at the 8:15 AM All Mass. First Communion pictures will be taken following the May Crowning Ceremony. Specific details regarding this day will come from your child's teacher.

- **WEDNESDAY FAMILY FAITH FORMATION MAY CROWNING CEREMONY**: May 10, at 6:00 PM in the church. Second-grade students arrive at church with their parents by 5:30 PM dressed in their First Communion attire. First Communion pictures will be taken in the Church following May Crowning. This is the last class for the catechetical year.

- **SUNDAY FAMILY FAITH FORMATION MAY CROWNING CEREMONY:** May 10, at 6:00 PM in the church. Second-grade students arrive at church with their parents by 5:30 PM dressed in their First Communion attire. First Communion pictures will be taken in the Church after May Crowning. This is the last class for the catechetical year.