
FIRST SACRAMENTS HANDBOOK

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PARISH

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. 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



SACRAMENT DATES

First Reconciliation

- Sat., Feb. 1 at 11:00 AM
- Sat., Feb. 8 at 11:00 AM

First Holy Communion

- Sun. April 27 at 1:30 PM
- Sun. May 4 at 1:30 PM

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

"It is through the sacrament of Penance that the baptized can be reconciled with God and with the Church." CCC980

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.

DISCUSSING 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 the Sacrament of 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.



The 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.

Amen

WHAT MAKES A SIN

Sins are our bad choices. Sins are not mistakes that happen by accident. When we do something that we know is wrong, we sin. Sin hurts us and others and pushes us away from God. All sins are choices against loving God and others.

There are a few signs that help us know if our choice is a sin. Our choice is sinful if:

- It is a choice that we make (NOT something we do by accident).
- It is a choice to do something that God tells us not to do.
- It is a choice NOT to do something that God tells us to do.
- It is a choice that is bad for us and the people around us.
- It is a choice that pushes us away from God and heaven.

Additional children's resources to check out:

[Blessed animated video series for kids](#)—explains the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist in a fun and understandable way. I highly recommend! (Can be found online by searching Dynamic Catholic Blessed sacramental prep series).

[Brother Francis—The Blessings of Confession and The Mass videos on formed.org](#)

If you haven't registered on formed.org, here's how:

Registering for FORMED is easier than ever: Go to [formed.org/signup](https://www.formed.org/signup)

1. Select your parish by entering your name, city, and/or zip code.
2. Enter your name and email address.
3. Check that email account for a link to begin using FORMED.
4. Some of you may already be registered! In this case, type in your email address to access videos.

Types of Sin

Mortal Sin - Serious sin that needs serious repair. Mortal sins are big injuries to our souls. Just as our bodies need special help from a doctor for a broken bone, our souls need special help from a priest when we commit a mortal sin.

How do I know if a sin could be a mortal sin?

- Was it very serious?
- Did I know it was very serious?
- Did I choose to do it anyway?
- Go to Confession!

Venial Sin - Venial sins are small injuries to our soul just like cuts or bruises are to our bodies. If we don't repair small cuts and bruises, they can become infected and cause more harm.

Taken from Renewed by Jesus
Ascension Press

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Using the Ten Commandments

First Commandment: “I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.

- ◇ Did I act like other things, activities, or people are more important than God?
- ◇ Did I spend time with God each day in prayer?

Second Commandment: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”

- ◇ Did I always use God’s name with love and respect?
- ◇ Did I use bad language or curse words?

Third Commandment: “Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day”

- ◇ Did I miss Mass on Sunday or a holy day of obligation on purpose without a good reason (like being sick or not having a ride)?
- ◇ Did I complain about going to Mass?

Fourth Commandment: “Honor your father and your mother.”

- ◇ Did I help my family at home? Did I complain about chores?
- ◇ Did I argue or fight with my brothers or sisters? Am I kind to them?

Fifth Commandment: “You shall not kill.”

- ◇ Did I make fun of others or call them names?
- ◇ Did I talk badly about others or gossip?

Sixth and Ninth Commandments: “You shall not commit adultery.” “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.”

- ◇ Did I look at disrespectful images, videos, TV shows, or movies?
- ◇ Did I try to treat my body and others’ bodies with respect?

Seventh and Tenth Commandment: “You shall not steal.” “You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.”

- ◇ Did I take something without permission? Did I purposely not return something?
- ◇ Am I jealous of what others have or what they can do?

Eighth Commandment: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

- ◇ Did I lie? Did I tell half the truth?
- ◇ Did I cheat on school work or in a game?



FOR THIS IS THE
LOVE OF
GOD, THAT WE
KEEP HIS COM-
MANDMENTS, AND
HIS COMMAND-
MENTS ARE NOT
BURDEN-
SOME FOR
WHOEVER HAS
BEEN BORN OF
GOD OVERCOMES
THE WORLD; AND
THIS IS THE VIC-
TORY THAT HAS
OVERCOME THE
WORLD: OUR
FAITH.
1 JOHN 5:3-4

REVIEW THE PROCEDURE FOR RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION WITH YOUR CHILD

1. Priests will be available to hear confessions in the reconciliation rooms and the stained glass window alcoves along the back of the church.
2. After the communal celebration, ushers will direct children to the locations for reconciliation 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.

Forgiveness

God never wants us to be hurt or far away from him. He is happy when we are sorry for our sins and ask for forgiveness. God never gets tired of forgiving us! There is no sin no matter how serious that God will not forgive. Forgiveness is God healing us from our sin. God will be disappointed by our sin, but instead of being angry or turning away from us, he offers us his love. This gift from God is called mercy. Jesus taught us that if we want God to forgive us we must forgive others from our heart. When we pray the Our Father, we ask God to, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." This means we must forgive others the way we want God to forgive us.

Taken from Renewed by
Jesus
Ascension Press



THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Dates and Celebration Expectations

First Reconciliation

- **Saturday, February 1 at 11:00 AM or**
- **Saturday, February 8 at 11:00 AM**

First Reconciliation will take place in St. Vincent de Paul Church. Come on the day that works best for your family. No registration is necessary. ***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 by January 22th.*** The Sacrament of Reconciliation cannot be conferred without proof of Baptism.

How to Dress

This is a Prayer Service, and we ask the children to dress as if they were attending Sunday Mass.

Guidelines

- Please arrive by 10:45AM and check in at the designated table in the Gathering Space of the Church.
- Be seated near the front of the church.
- The Reconciliation Service outline:
 - ◇ Prayer & Scripture
 - ◇ Examination of Conscience
 - ◇ Reading of the Act of Contrition as a group (A copy of the Act of Contrition will be available for each child.)
 - ◇ Individual confessions
- After the communal celebration, ushers will direct children to the reconciliation rooms and alcoves where the priests will be stationed to hear confessions.
- As a model of faith to your child, parents are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation after the 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.

Families are free to leave when finished. For the sake of privacy please leave down the center aisle and through the Gathering Space, not around the back circle of the Church.

The Great Commandment

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

Luke 10:27



Jesus Law of Love

This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

John 15:12



THE MASS

Of all the things you do, Mass is the most special because Jesus is there. He loves you so much, he makes himself truly present in the Eucharist. The Eucharist will look like bread and wine, but it will really be Jesus. Mass is the only place this miracle happens. You will watch it happen! Jesus is glad to see you at Mass. He loves you, and he is happy you are coming to spend time with him.

YOU BELONG TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church is universal. This means that there are Catholics going to Mass in every place on earth. Did you know that the Mass has the same parts everywhere in the world?

We go to Mass to worship God and to keep God's commandments, especially the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy. God gave us the commandments to show us how to live a happy and holy life. To have a happy and holy life, it is important to spend time with Jesus. Every time you go to Mass you spend time with Jesus. At Mass you worship God and show him that he is the most important thing in your life. The more you love God first, the more you can love your family, your friends, and yourself. Going to Mass helps us grow stronger in love.

Taken from Renewed by Jesus
Ascension Press

Adult Resources About the Mass and What Catholics Believe

- [Sacraments 101 The Eucharist bustedhalo.com](#)
- [Do I Have to Go to Mass? The Sunday Obligation Explained YouTube video. By Fr. Mike Schmitz](#)

...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." The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life; it is Jesus himself (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1324, 1374).



*"Do this
in
memory
of me"
John 6:35*

PREPARING FOR THE MASS

Prayers to Know

Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

Hail Mary

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with Thee.
Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.
Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen

Glory Be To The Father

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen

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 to 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.
- If there is time, take out the **Missalette** which contains the readings and parts of the Mass, and familiarize yourself and your child with what is about to happen and the readings you are about to hear. On the back of the **Missalette**, you will find common Catholic prayers. Read some of these with your child each week at Mass!
- It will also be helpful to review with your child the First Communion/Mass booklet in the First Communion Parent Folder.



Receiving Communion

The Body of Christ



“Amen” I Believe

Prayer After Communion

*“I love you, Jesus.
You are my God.
Help me to love
you more.”*

This is how we receive the Body of Christ.

- Prepare your heart to welcome Jesus with folded hands.
- As the person before you is receiving the Body of Christ, ***bow in reverence to our Lord.***
- You can choose to **receive the Host in your hand.**
 - ◇ ***Extend your hands*** with palms facing up, put the hand that you write with under your other hand. This makes a little throne for Jesus.
 - ◇ When you hear the words, ***“The Body of Christ,”*** answer, ***“Amen.”***
 - ◇ After the Host is placed in your cupped hand, step to the side and ***reverently pick up the Host with the hand on the bottom (your writing hand) and place it in your mouth.*** Consume the Host as you prepare to receive the Blood of Christ, or return to your seat with your hands folded.
- You can choose to **receive the Host on your tongue.**
 - ◇ After you answer “Amen,” open your mouth and put your tongue past your teeth and lips. The priest will place the Host on your tongue.
 - ◇ After the Host is placed on your tongue close your mouth and consume the host as you prepare to receive the Blood of Christ, or go back to your pew with your hands folded.

This is how we receive the Blood of Christ.

- As the cup is extended towards you, when you hear the words, ***“The Blood of Christ.”*** You reply, ***“Amen.”***
- Take the cup ***with your own hands and reverently bring the cup to your mouth.***
- Take a small amount of the Blood of Christ and then carefully ***give the cup back using both hands,*** and then walk back to your pew.

When you get back to your pew, this is your most special time with Jesus. Your body has become a tabernacle! Kneel down to talk to Jesus from your heart.

Watch “How Should We Receive” on Bustedhalo.com

IMPORTANT DATES

First Communion Retreat

Saturday, March 22 from 7:45 AM to Noon in St. Vincent School

This retreat is a day of fun and excitement for your child as their special First Holy Communion day draws near. Students will make bread dough, play games, paint a First Communion chalice, participate in a Bible study lesson, practice receiving the Eucharist, and eat snacks! To make this day successful, many parent volunteers are needed to lead these sessions. Please consider whether you can help! A Session Leader Volunteer Form is included in the First Communion Parent Folder. Please complete and return this form if you can help in this capacity. Additional volunteer opportunities will be listed on the online retreat registration form when you register your child for the retreat. You will sign up for these volunteer opportunities at that time. We would love to have your help in any way!

First Communion Mass Times

- **Sunday, April 27 at 1:30 PM in St. Vincent Church**
- **Sunday May 4 at 1:30 PM in St. Vincent Church**

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. General seats will be reserved for First Communicants and their immediate family members (parents and siblings) in the two sections to the right and left of the baptismal font. First Communicants will be seated on the isle on whichever end of the pew they are seated. Specific instructions and diagrams will be sent closer to the date of the First Communion Masses. Additional guests will be seated in the remaining sections of the church.

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 3 – 5:00 PM

Sunday, May 4 – 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.

OTHER INFORMATION ABOUT FIRST COMMUNION

Dress Code

Girls

Modest white dresses

- Sleeveless is acceptable
- No spaghetti straps

White veils (optional)

White shoes

White or natural colored stockings or socks.

NO GLOVES



Boys

Dark slacks (no jeans)

Dark shoes (no tennis shoes)

White Shirt

Dress ties (any color or pattern)

No jackets at the 1:30 PM liturgies

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

MAY CROWNING AND 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 16 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.
- **FAMILY FAITH FORMATION MAY CROWNING CEREMONY:**
Wednesday, May 7 at 6:00 PM in the church for both Sunday and Wednesday families. Second-grade students will 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.