

## **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Sacrament Preparation: What to Expect**

(1) **Weekly CGS sessions at SMA:** At the SMA school, children have been meeting in the atrium for weekly lessons, child-directed work time, and time for prayer and contemplation. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year, the lessons aim at a deeper reflection on the gifts of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. If your child does not attend SMA school, we can meet to make up these lessons outside of the school day.

(2) **Family Lenten Potluck Social:** **Friday February 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30pm-** The social is for families to meet, share a meal, and for parents to ask any questions while the children are fitted for the white garment (alb) they will receive at First Reconciliation and wear again at First Holy Communion.

(3) **Family Meditation Nights:** These (4) very special nights are for the entire family and include:

- A provided meatless Lenten supper for the first 3 meditations, **February 23, March 1, March 22,**
- An Easter Week dinner, **April 5<sup>th</sup>**
- family community building; childcare for both older and younger siblings in the school gym; and a different Sacrament Prep Scripture Meditation each week for the children preparing for Sacraments and their parents.

After the Scripture meditation (led by a CGS Catechist), the children will go to work time (journaling or illustrating what God has spoken into their hearts) while the adults enjoy continued discussion led by one of our priests, sisters, or a CGS catechist. **We begin at 5:30 and will end promptly at 7:30. The Family Meditations are all on Fridays.**

(4) **Sacrament Retreat Day:** **Monday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am-3:00 pm at SMA (no school that day.)** At the retreat, the children will review CGS Sacrament presentations, plan the Liturgy for Holy Mass that morning (parents are welcome to join us), work on specific activities for the celebration of their Sacraments, practice/rehearse how to receive the Sacraments, and spend social time with the other children.

(5) **First Reconciliation:** **Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 5-7:30 pm.** Children are brought to SMA at 5:00, families join in the church at 6:00.

(6) **First Holy Communion:** **Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 8:30-12:00am.** CGS First Communion happens during the 9:00am Parish Mass. Breakfast Reception to follow with families. The CGS children will join their fellow SMA classmates for First Communion pictures at 12:00 in the Parish Hall.

### **FAQ's**

#### **Why do we celebrate First Reconciliation immediately before First Communion?**

Children in CGS Sacrament Preparation will celebrate First Reconciliation on the Friday of the same weekend as First Holy Communion. This is due to the emphasis CGS prep places on the joy and the love between God the Father and each child is so great that a feast is in order! And not just any feast, but the greatest feast on earth...the Holy Mass.

#### **Why do the children wear white garments?**

The CGS First Communion Mass takes place during the regular 9:00 AM Parish Mass. The children will wear a white garment over their First Communion attire which is presented to them after celebrating their First Reconciliation. Since these children first entered the atrium, they have heard numerous presentations calling them to ponder on the meaning of the white garment they received on the day of their Baptism. The children

are aware that this is an outward sign that they are made clean through the waters of their Baptism. The white garment they receive after their First Reconciliation reminds them that their soul has been cleansed by God's love and mercy in this Sacrament.

### **Is it necessary for both parents to attend each Family Meditation Night?**

As your child's first teachers, parents' involvement in sacrament preparation is a fulfillment of the promises you made at your child's Baptism. By participating in the Family Social and Family Meditations, parents will have a renewed appreciation for the sacraments and be able to continue these discussions at home. Many parents find this time renews their own faith life, and the entire family often experiences an outflow of blessings! Of course, we understand if both parents can't make each session. Family life isn't easy! No worries, we will assist you in making up a session if needed, but please plan to attend each session.

### **Now that I'm at home, I have more questions!**

Please feel free to contact me to ask your questions! This is an important decision for you and your family, and we want you to have all the information needed to make an informed, prayerful decision.

Thank you for considering CGS Sacrament Prep! No matter which method your family chooses, please know you are in the prayers of our priests, religious sisters, and staff.

God Bless you and your families this very special year!

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