



Preparing Your Child for First Communion

How Can I Support My Child to Prepare for the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

“How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith!”
Pope Francis

As a parent/guardian, you model the life of faith for your child. The following practices will help you to demonstrate why your faith is important to you:

- Now that the churches have reopened, it is essential that your child attends Mass as regularly as possible. If you are unable to book into Sunday Mass, due to restrictions on numbers, try attending a Mass during the week or on a Saturday.
- Pray with your child regularly. See the book of prayers for children on our webpage: [Sacramental Preparation at Home \(rercglasgow.org\)](http://rercglasgow.org)
- Prior to receiving the Eucharist your child should receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Encourage your child to examine their conscience regularly but especially before the Sacrament of Reconciliation. See the attached examination of conscience based on the Our Father or the audio file: [Examen for Children by Pray as you go \(soundcloud.com\)](https://www.soundcloud.com)
- Read Scripture stories and stories of the lives of the saints with your child. There are a few good websites that you can access: Catholic.Org , Loyola Press
- Create a prayer space in your home. You may wish to include a crucifix, a cloth with the liturgical colour, a Bible etc.
- Access the resources for the Sacrament of the Eucharist on our webpage: [Sacramental Preparation at Home \(rercglasgow.org\)](http://rercglasgow.org)
- Rehearse the Mass responses with your child. The Order of the Mass is available [here](#) or perhaps you could find a Children’s Missal that they can use to help them participate more fully in the Mass (see list below).
- Once your child has celebrated their First Communion, ensure that you regularly attend Mass as a family to help them grow in their own faith and love of the Eucharist.

Simple Examination of Conscience for Children Using the Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

How often do I think about God?

How often do I say my prayers?

Do I pay attention and participate at Mass?

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Am I kind to others?

Do I do what Jesus wants me to do?

Do I share with others?

Am I helpful to my family and neighbors?

Do I show respect to my teachers and classmates?

Give us this day our daily bread.

Do I remember to say thank you?

Am I sometimes greedy?

Do I appreciate the good things I have in my life?

Do I think of ways to help those who have no food, clothes, shelter or money?

Do I take things that don't belong to me?

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Do I say I'm sorry when I have been wrong?

Do I forgive and forget when someone does something bad to me?

Do I help solve problems between my friends or do I cause more trouble?

Do I say bad things about people who have hurt me?

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Do I play fairly in sports and games?

Do I cheat in school?

Do I tell the truth?

Do I let other kids tempt me to do things I know I shouldn't do? Do I tempt others?

Taken from Seven Frequently Asked Questions About Children and the Sacrament of Reconciliation,
written for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee by Kathleen D. Beuscher, 2010

Encouraging Your Child to Receive the Eucharist with Reverence

- Process with hands folded in prayer, singing the Communion hymn.
- When it is your child's turn, they should make a slight bow of the head — this is our sign of reverence.
- Everyone has the personal choice to receive on the tongue or in the hand. When teaching about how to receive in the hand, children should make a throne with their hands as if they are receiving a king. The hands should be one underneath the other, usually the right hand on the bottom (unless your child is left handed).
- When the priest says "The body of Christ," look at the host and respond "Amen".
- Use the underneath hand to pick up the host and consume it immediately.
- Fold hands in prayer and process back to your seat to make a prayer of thanksgiving.
- If receiving on the tongue, gently extend your tongue after saying "Amen."

A Simple Prayer of Thanksgiving

After receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, your child should return to their pew and kneel (or sit) to spend some time in quiet prayer. A simple prayer, that all children should be familiar with is the 3rd verse of *Away in a Manger*:

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care
And take us to Heaven to live with Thee there.

Perhaps your child could write their own prayer of thanksgiving or add something personal to the suggested prayer above.

Additional Resources

Preparing for First Holy Communion, a Guide for Families, Elaine Mahon

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Preparing-First-Holy-Communion-Families/dp/184730401X>

My First Holy Communion, Deirdrie Mary Ascough

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/First-Holy-Communion-Deirdre-Ascough/dp/1586177087>

My Mass Book, Sr Mary Lou Winters

<https://www.paulineuk.org/browse/item/my-mass-book/9781904785606>

My First Mass Book, Benigni Maria Luisa

<https://www.paulineuk.org/browse/item/my-first-missal/9781904785026>



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