



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

First Holy Communion Guidelines



The First Holy Communion program at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish partners with each family in preparing their child as they receive the Eucharist for the first time. How can you, as a parent, help your child prepare to receive First Holy Communion? Parents are the **primary educators** of their children for faith formation. There are many ways you, as the parent, can promote your faith, Parents can read a book with their children to discuss chi's most important Sacrament, they can discuss the Mass and its meaning, they can reflect on the presence of Christ together as a family. Your child can attend class and Mass on a regular basis.

PARENT PREPARATION

Parents should practice the following with their child to ensure he/she knows the following prayers. A list of all prayers is included in this information packet for your use.

- Sign of the Cross
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Act of Contrition

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION DATES – TO BE DETERMINED DUE TO COVID 19

English Mass

Portuguese Mass

REHEARSAL/PRACTICE – TO BE DETERMINED

Rehearsal is extremely important. Attendance is mandatory. If your child is not present for rehearsal, he/she will not be adequately prepared. Only Catechists, Volunteers and children are allowed in the rehearsal. Each Mass will have a separate rehearsal.

BAPTISM CERTIFICATE

Children receiving First Holy Communion must have a Baptism record on file. If you receive a call requesting a copy of the baptism certificate this means we do not have a Baptism record on file for your child. You must contact the Parish where your child was baptized and request a copy be sent to us. A copy is sufficient. Please do not send the original.

PEW ASSIGNMENTS

Each pew can seat approximately 8 people. The First Holy Communicant will be sitting on the end of the pew during the service. Please leave enough room for him/her to enter the pew. Each family has their own pew with a banner displaying their child's name. Extra guests may sit in any other unassigned pew including the choir loft.

THE DAY OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

(TO BE DETERMINED) But typically a parent bring their child to the chapel before the Mass. No food or drink should be brought to the chapel. Water will be available if

needed. We ask that only one parent/grandparent accompany the candidate we try to maintain a quiet, prayerful and reverent disposition at this time.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photo's are taken BEFORE the service. There are NO photo's after the service. Please adhere & respect this policy as there is a Mass immediately following our 10AM Mass which requires setup and rehearsal. Therefore ALL photo's are taken before the Mass including the group photo. Individual photo's may be taken with the priests ahead of Mass as well. We kindly ask that you respect these guidelines and not request photo's to be taken after the Mass. You are welcome to take photo's all around the church and property prior to the Mass.

COLLECTION DURING MASS

Please note, children receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion during a full Mass. As such, a collection is taken during Mass. For many, this will be their only weekly opportunity to make an offering to our Lord. Please note participation is optional.

WHAT YOUR CHILD SHOULD BE DOING AT HOME

- Practicing the Sign of the cross
- Practicing the Hail Mary
- Our Father
- Act of Contrition
- Practice receiving Communion.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

Thumb, pointer and middle finger together (Trinity)
Touch the forehead as you say "In the name of the Father"
Touch the breastbone/top of stomach as you say "and of the Son"
Touch the left shoulder, then the right shoulder as you say "and of the Holy Spirit" When completed you say "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.

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.

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

RECEIVING COMMUNION

- Child walks up to Priest with praying hands.
- Child will Bow
- Priest will say "The Body of Christ") and child responds "Amen"
- Child opens mouth for host or puts left hand over the right to accept.
- When placed in the left hand, the child then uses his/her right hand to pickup and put the host in his/her mouth.
- Then makes the Sign of the Cross
Returns to his/her pew.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION BANNER INFO

Each family is required to make a banner for their family pew. The banner can be as simple or elaborate as you like. Please make sure your banner fits over the pew before dropping off or it will be returned to you. Please do not pass it in WITHOUT trying it on the pew. The best way to ensure this is to use a stretch or elasticized ribbon to go over church pew.

The following details must be followed:

- The banner size should be as close to 11" x 15" and include:
- Your child's first name only.
- A symbol of our Christian Faith (i.e., cross, chalice, host, dove, praying hands)
- Robe or ribbon to hand the banner. It should measure 30" from the top left corner to the top right corner. This will allow the banner to be placed over the end of the pew. You must measure the ribbon or rope and it must be durable.
- Any material can be used, however, felt works nicely.
- The banner can be any color you and your child chose.
- The banner can be made by the parents or with the child's help.
- On the back of the banner write your Child's full name and their FHC assigned date.
- Hang on wire hanger to ensure your ribbons do not get tangled with other banners. •

**PLEASE CHECK TO MAKE SURE YOUR BANNER FITS
OVER THE PEW BEFORE HANDING IN.**

SAMPLE BANNERS

