

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

➤ REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST

- Read together the story of the Last Supper in Matthew 27:17-30.
- Remind your child that the bread and wine are not just symbols. While they still look like bread and wine, they become the Real Presence of Jesus. We don't exactly know how the bread and wine become the Real Presence; it is a mystery that we think about. We believe it happens, though, because Jesus said, "Take my body...Take my blood..."

➤ COMMUNION FAST

- To prepare our bodies, minds, and hearts to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, we fast from food and liquids (except water) for at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion.

➤ CHURCH MANNERS – *Just as we behave in certain ways at school, we behave in a certain way at church.*

- Entering church...
 - Go to the baptismal font, dip your fingertips in the holy water, and make the Sign of the Cross. We do this to remind ourselves of our Baptism, that we are children of God and members of the Body of Christ.
 - Bow to the altar as you enter the pew. *(We genuflect to the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, but the tabernacle is in the chapel. So when we enter our pew, we simply bow to the altar.)*
- During the Mass...
 - It is important for us to participate in the entire Mass, from the opening procession to the closing song.
 - We need to be present for all of the parts of the Mass, especially the readings and the entire Eucharistic Prayer (after the Presentation of the Gifts/the collection to Communion). *[Have your child use the restroom before Mass begins so that s/he can be present through the entire Mass.]*
 - We participate in all of the parts of the Mass joyfully and reverently.
 - Our joy comes from the gift of Jesus we receive in the Word and Communion.
 - We show reverence by acting thoughtfully, not talking through the Mass, walking slowly, participating in the prayers and responses of the Mass, and being respectful of the people around us.

➤ RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

- Use a small cracker or piece of bread and a cup of juice or water.
- Prepare your hands – Make a throne for Jesus.
 - Hold out your eating hand (the one with which you hold a fork), palm up.
 - Place your other hand, palm up, on your eating hand.
 - Cup your hands slightly to receive the Body of Christ.
- Receiving the Body of Christ.
 - When the Extraordinary Minister of Communion (EMC) says, "The Body of Christ," you respond, "Amen."
 - The EMC will place the Body of Christ on your top palm.
 - Using your eating hand, pick up the Body of Christ with your fingertips, and place it in your mouth.
- Receiving the Blood of Christ.
 - The EMC says, "The Blood of Christ," and you respond, "Amen."
 - The EMC will hand you the cup.
 - Hold the cup firmly with both hands and tip it to your lips to take a small sip.
 - Hand the cup back to the EMC and return to your seat to kneel and join in singing the Communion Song.

➤ **MASS TIPS**

- **Attend Mass every week.** Your child's preparation for First Communion is based on the weekly Mass, so participation is very important.
- **Get to Mass on time and stay until after the last song.**
- **Sit where your child can fully participate in the Mass.** Children especially like to see what's happening so that they can participate more fully.
- **Be sure your child sees you receive Communion every week.** You are your child's best role model for living your Catholic faith.
- **Talk about the Sunday readings.** You may find the readings in the parish bulletin or at www.usccb.org. Discuss what is happening in the readings, who are the characters, and what God might be teaching us.
- **Talk about the homily.** After Mass, ask your child and other family members what they heard in the homily. Ask "What difference does the readings and homily teaching make? How does what we've heard call us to live?"