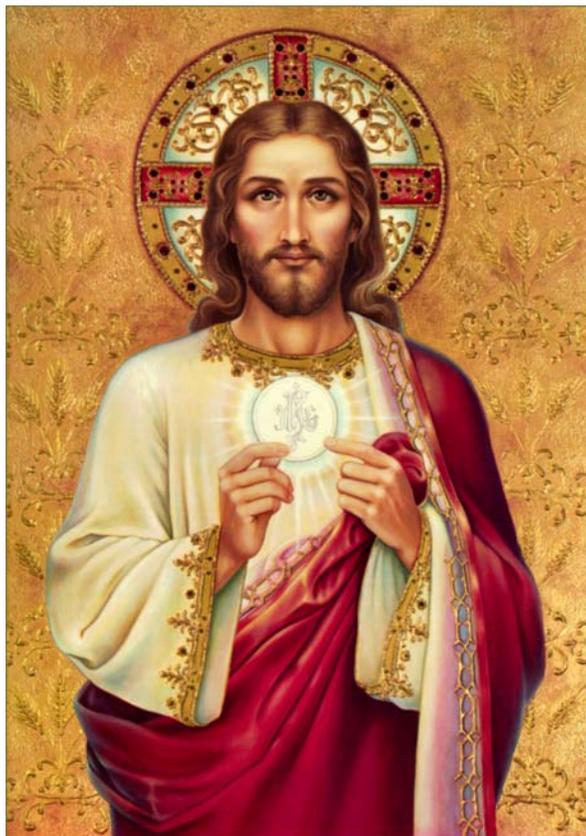


**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION &  
FIRST PENANCE  
2019**



**ST. MATTHEW  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
SPOTSYLVANIA, VIRGINIA**

Dear Parents,

February 2019

Welcome to St. Matthew's First Holy Communion Preparation Program. This booklet, *First Holy Communion and First Penance*, is designed to assist you in preparing your child for these sacraments as well as answer any questions you may have.

It includes:

- ✠ First Penance Information for Parents
- ✠ First Holy Communion Information for Parents
- ✠ General Information
- ✠ First Holy Communion Record Form

Due March 1, 2019

It is important that you review the attached forms and information. Your cooperation in completing the forms and returning them to the Religious Education Office in a timely manner would be greatly appreciated. You may deliver the requirements, either in person or by mail by the dates indicated.

Thank you for your support and cooperation. If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact the Religious Education Office at 540-582-5575 or [stmatthewre@comcast.net](mailto:stmatthewre@comcast.net).

Peace of Jesus Christ,

Joanne Warren  
Director of Religious Education

# *The Sacrament of Penance*

You began preparing your child for Confession long ago. Every time your child has seen or experienced loving forgiveness in your home, he or she has understood a little more about God's forgiving love. With the assistance of the Religious Education staff and volunteers, your child has begun preparation for this Sacrament.

## **Suggestions for Parents:**

- ✠ Take time with your child and read the parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7) and The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-31).
- ✠ Teach your child that to sin is to act against God's will. Make sure your child understands the differences between a mistake, accident, temptation, and sin by talking about some typical situations that illustrate these occurrences.
- ✠ Discuss this sacrament with your child. Your child may express feelings or concerns with you at home that may not have been mentioned in class.
- ✠ Take your child along when you go to Confession. (Your child should not accompany you into the confessional.)
- ✠ Take your child on a "field trip" and visit the confessional when confessions aren't being heard.
- ✠ Role-play "going to Confession". (Do not use real sins when role-playing; make up some pretend sins.) Take turns with your child being the priest and the penitent.
- ✠ Review Faith and Life Chapters 8-9 and 17-20 with your child.
- ✠ Help your child learn the Act of Contrition by simply saying it together once a day before dinner or at bedtime. Also, help your child with a short examination of conscience.
- ✠ View the nine-part program called *Forgiven* on [www.FORMED.org](http://www.FORMED.org). Session 4 "*How to make a great confession*" would be wonderful for your child to watch with you. This is a free service and the parish password is V3RRFV.
- ✠ Watch the movie "*Brother Francis: Forgiven*" on Formed.org which is great for both parent and child. We also have a copy in the Religious Education Office that may be borrowed.
- ✠ Dynamic Catholic has a six session series "*Blessed: First Reconciliation*" on their website [www.dynamiccatholic.org/blessed](http://www.dynamiccatholic.org/blessed). This is a free program and child appropriate.
- ✠ Above all, relax and remember that this will be just the first of many times that your child will celebrate the Sacrament of Penance. It is the first step in a lifetime during which your child's appreciation of the sacrament will grow and deepen.

Please keep in mind that after their First Confession it is your responsibility to make sure that your child is provided the opportunity to go to Confession on a regular basis (a good rule of thumb is once a month).



# FIRST HOLY COMMUNION INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

## Primary Duty of the Parent

*“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.”*

*“Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children.”*

*“Through the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2223 and 2225)*

The celebration of the Mass is the source and summit of Christian life. All other prayers, liturgical rites and good works of the Christian life are linked to the Eucharistic celebration, flow from it, and have it as their end.

Parents have a right and duty to be involved in preparing their children for First Holy Communion. Catechesis aims to help parents grow in their understanding, love, and appreciation of the Eucharist in order to catechize their children. Parents have a serious obligation to care for the minds, bodies, and souls of their children. As a parent, you have the *primary role* in the sacramental preparation for your child. You will help your child grow in faith as you prepare him/her for the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. *Your attendance at **Weekly Sunday Mass** and required events is vital!* Your interest, example, witness, and prayers make a difference in your child’s decision to receive the Sacrament with an open heart as they continue to grow in the Faith.

With this in mind, we remind you that the role of a religious education program can only be secondary to you, the parent. We encourage you to do all you can, and we promise to do the best we can to aid and guide the sacramental preparation for your child.

## ***The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist***

**Two requirements are essential for a child to receive the Eucharist:**

- † **He or she must understand and believe the Consecrated Host is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.**
- † **He or she must have a sincere desire to receive Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.**

## ***Suggestions for Parents:***

- ✚ When you attend Mass every Sunday, help your child to fully participate in the Mass.
- ✚ Arriving early to prepare prayerfully for Mass and staying after Mass for a prayer of thanksgiving are good ways of developing love for the Eucharist.
- ✚ Take your child to Church to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Explain how Jesus is waiting in the Tabernacle for us to come to Him, how He loves us to come and just be with Him.
- ✚ Attend a weekday Mass with your child. Often they are less crowded and shorter in duration. Sit near the front so your child can see what is happening.
- ✚ Read the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper as well as John Chapter 6 with your child.
- ✚ Review chapters 22 and 25-28 in the Faith and Life textbook with your child.
- ✚ View the Brother Francis videos *“The Bread of Life”* and *“The Mass”* available on [www.FORMED.org](http://www.FORMED.org). This is a free service; simply visit the website and use our parish passcode of V3RRFV. These movies are also available in the Religious Education Office.
- ✚ Dynamic Catholic has a six session series *“Blessed: First Communion”* on their website [www.dynamiccatholic.org/blessed](http://www.dynamiccatholic.org/blessed). This is a free program and child appropriate.
- ✚ Be a role model for your child. Remember that the reverence with which you receive Jesus in the Eucharist will be the example that will be followed by your child.
- ✚ Discuss the importance of going to confession on a regular basis. Explain to your child that we must be free of serious (mortal) sin whenever we receive Jesus in Holy Communion.
- ✚ Discuss and practice appropriate Church behavior with your child while showing him/her your own love of the Lord. *Practice the Sign of the Cross, Prayers, Genuflecting, etc.*



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## *Calendar of Events*

First Penance	March 16, 2019	9:30 a.m.
First Holy Communion Retreat	May 4, 2019	8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
First Holy Communion Rehearsal	May 4, 2019	11:30 a.m.-Noon
First Holy Communion Mass	May 18, 2019	10:00 a.m.
Crowning of Mary	May 19, 2019	All Masses

### ***March 1<sup>st</sup> ALL PAPERWORK IS DUE***

The First Holy Communion Record form and copy of baptismal certificate is due. Those children baptized at Saint Matthew's must also provide a copy of the baptismal certificate. The copy of the baptismal certificate must be turned in prior to your child's celebration of the Sacrament of Penance.

### ***FIRST PENANCE***

One parent should accompany your child. Once your child has been to confession, they are free to go and need not wait for all the other children. Parents are encouraged to ensure their child has an opportunity to celebrate this Sacrament again before First Communion during normal confession times.

### ***FIRST HOLY COMMUNION RETREAT***

All First Holy Communicants must attend this Saturday Morning Retreat to help them spiritually prepare to receive Jesus for the first time. Please inform the Religious Education Office of any scheduling conflicts as soon as possible.

### ***FIRST HOLY COMMUNION REHEARSAL***

This will take place in the church. ***It is important that at least one parent is in attendance during the rehearsal time so that they may receive any last minute information and to help their children with any questions they may have when they get home.***

## ***FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MASS***

Parents, please bring your children to the St Joseph Parish Center 30 minutes prior to the First Holy Communion Mass. Mass will be at 10:00 a.m. so arrive at 9:30 a.m. Parents should then proceed directly to the church.

## ***CROWNING OF MARY***

On the weekend of First Holy Communion, the First Holy Communicants will lead the procession during the May crowning prior to the regular Sunday morning Masses. The children are encouraged once again to wear their First Holy Communion attire. Plan now to attend. What a great way to say thank you to God by honoring His Mother in this special way!

## ***DRESS CODE***

Special clothes highlight a special occasion; however, you are reminded to stress the reception of Jesus as the most important part of the day. Your child will catch the right spirit from you. Keeping this in mind, *any dress clothes are appropriate*. However, if it helps your decision making, most girls in this parish have worn the traditional white dress and a veil. Boys usually wear dark dress pants, white shirt, suit coat and a tie.

Flowers or gloves are not permitted. If your daughter has a purse, we ask that you keep these items with you during the First Holy Communion Mass so that they are not lost. Whatever you decide to do, please keep your child and family focused on what is really important about the day: Jesus' giving of Himself!

## ***PHOTOGRAPHY***

Photography will be permitted during the entrance procession only. Once Father has arrived at the Altar no photographs should be taken at any time during the Mass. This includes video, digital, etc. We will pose for a group picture immediately after the Mass.



# FIRST HOLY COMMUNION RECORD FORM

Due March 1, 2019

*Please Print*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last

First

M.I.

Print Name as shown on the *Baptismal Certificate*

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth (City, State)

Father's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
First

M.I.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name

Mother's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
First

M.I.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Maiden Name*

Church of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print full name of Church)

Address of Church of Baptism:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street

City

State

Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Baptism\*\*

**\*\* Please attach a copy of the student's Baptismal Certificate to this form. Candidates who were baptized at St. Matthew's MUST also provide a copy of their certificate.**

**FAMILY PRIEST OR DEACON  
ATTENDANCE FORM**

**Due March 1, 2019**

**YES, WE HAVE A PRIEST/DEACON IN OUR FAMILY  
WHO WOULD LIKE TO CONCELEBRATE/ASSIST AT  
THE FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MASS WITH THE  
PASTOR OF SAINT MATTHEW.**

**Name of Priest:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**Name of Deacon:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parish** \_\_\_\_\_

**Diocese:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If not the Diocese of Arlington, please attach a letter from their Diocesan  
Bishop stating that the priest/deacon is in good standing**

**Name of Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship to  
Student:** \_\_\_\_\_