

PARENT'S GUIDE FOR FIRST COMMUNION



Important Dates to Remember

- Wednesday, Jan. 27, 2010** Parents' and Candidates' Meeting 7-8 pm
- Saturday Jan. 30 or
Sunday, Jan. 31, 2010** Commitment Ceremony at the 5 pm or 10 am Mass
- Wednesday, March 24, 2010** Retreat and Rehearsal from 6:30 pm to 8 pm
- April 24/25, May 1/2, 8/9,
or May 15/16** First Communion at the 5 pm Mass on the Saturdays
First communion at the 10 am Mass on the Sundays
(A later date can be arranged if it is more convenient)

We wish to support you in preparing your child for First Communion. We recognize that you, the parent, are the primary and most important teacher of your child. Certainly, your attitudes and behavior are most influential upon your child.

The Home Study Booklet

These comments are meant to help you get the most benefit out of the home study booklet, *We Share in the Eucharist*. The booklet has seven themes to read together with your child, and several activities to do with your child to meaningfully prepare for this sacrament.

The seven themes involve and are tied to an explanation of the Mass, and how the Mass is connected to our everyday life. The booklet says it this way:

"We are pursuing three main goals:

- To help children follow the unfolding of the celebration of the Mass and understand the meaning of the symbols, gestures and words that are part of it;
- To help children see how the gestures and words in the Liturgy are connected to everyday life;
- To help children appreciate the spiritual enrichment they can gain by taking an active part in the Mass, and to awaken in them a desire to participate."

The booklet has a "Family Guide" in the Centre which helps you prepare for each of the seven themes—

- 1) by giving suggestions to help you to prepare;
- 2) by giving suggestions about how to talk to your child about the things you read together; and
- 3) by giving some suggestions to take what your child has learned from the reading and practice it in daily life.

Attending Mass regularly will also encourage your child's interest in the booklet.

This booklet is the second of a series, which presumes your child has used the first booklet to prepare for First Reconciliation. However, **our Diocese starts with Eucharist**, in order that your child

may experience the great love of God first. Thus, you will find it helpful to read pages 14 to 16 of the Family Guide right away in order to have better background to your preparations.

As well, **two double-sided pages** from that first booklet about Reconciliation are attached to this document, in order to help you. One page teaches the “Our Father”, which is talked about on Page 15. The other page is a game called the “Breath of Life”, referred to on Page 8 of the Family Guide.

Both booklets suggest that you and your child set up a “prayer- corner” in your child’s room. You just need a small space to put in whatever items will help your child to pray. A crucifix, a prayer book, a religious drawing that your child has completed, are examples of things that could be put in a prayer-corner.

Suggested Time Frames

The booklet suggests that you set up regular times to read the booklet and discuss it with your child. It recognizes we are participating in Lent and celebrating Easter during the time of this home study. It suggests that there be a break between Themes 5 and 6 for Holy Week. Thus, the following time frame is suggested. (You may find it easier to start the home study in the fall and do a review of the booklet using this schedule, especially if you wish to celebrate First Communion on April 18 or 19, 2009)

Theme 1 to be read between January 31 and February 6

Theme 2 to be read between February 7 and February 13

Theme 3 to be read between February 14 and March 6
(it is the longest one)

Theme 4 to be read between March 7 and March 17

Theme 5 to be read between March 18 and March 28

*Holy Week is from March 29 to April 4.. Mass on Holy Thursday (April 1) is at 7:30 pm.
Good Friday Service (April 2) is at 3 pm.*

Theme 6 to be read between April 4 and April 14

Theme 7 to be read between April 15 and April 24.



A Joyous Spiritual Journey

The following are suggestions to make this spiritual journey with your child one of joy, of further understanding God’s love, and of strengthening your relationship with your child.

1. Chat with your child – After reading a few pages together from the program booklet, talk with your child and find out their reactions to what you just read. Use the questions and activities found within each theme to stimulate discussion to further enhance their understanding.

2. Pay particular attention to your child's daily life. At this time of preparation, it is important to be more attentive than usual to your child's good and bad experiences. Reflect on these experiences. Encourage your child to put into practice what they have already discovered as they journey through the seven themes, as a positive way to handling these experiences.
3. Time to pray – The journey of preparation towards this sacrament provides a good opportunity to develop the habit of daily prayer with your child. It is a good idea to pray with your child. Each theme provides simple suggestions that can make this time a rich and joy-filled experience for both of you.
4. Attend Mass regularly- Celebrating Eucharist is the heart of our life. It confirms our Christian faith and practices. Jesus is most fully present to us in all aspects of the Mass. Thus we are strengthened by His love and share in His joy and peace.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Ken Hagel at the Church Office at 403-932-2944, Tuesdays to Thursdays, 9 am to 4 pm. Fax at 403-932-4587 or email: khagel@stmaryscochrane.ca
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