

# PARENT'S GUIDE FOR FIRST COMMUNION

## Important Dates to Remember

Wednesday, Feb 2, 2011	Parents' and Candidates' Meeting 7-8 pm
Sat Feb 5, 2011 or Sun Feb 6, 2011	Commitment Ceremony at the 5 pm or 10 am Mass
Wed Mar 23 @ 7:30 pm OR Sat Mar 26 @ 4 pm	Parent Discussion/Questions
Wednesday, April 6, 2011	Candidate's Retreat from 6:30 pm to 8 pm
May 7/8, May 15 (ONLY) May 21/22, 28/29 OR June 4/5, 2011	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. **This year we are offering an opportunity for PARENTS to ask questions of, and discuss the Preparation journey with Ken Hagel, Coordinator of Sacraments of initiation and the Parent Volunteers for this Sacrament.**

## 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 six themes to read together with your child, and several activities to do with your child to meaningfully prepare to receive Holy Communion.

The six themes focus on learning more about Jesus and explain what the Mass is about. The booklet says it this way:

"You will

- help (your child) discover that Jesus shows them the way to God
- encourage (your child) to develop simple habits of prayer that will sustain their spiritual life while strengthening their character
- lead (your child) gradually to fuller participation at Sunday Mass by helping them learn the meaning of the rites and rituals and pray with Bible words
- instill in (your child) a deep desire to encounter Jesus often in the sacrament of Eucharist "

The booklet has recently been revised. It has been written in anticipation that some of the prayers in the Mass will be changed in the near future with the use of a revised Roman Missal. For example, when the priest says "The Lord be with you", the booklet has the response we will say when the change is made: "And with your spirit". We are in a time of change, so your patience is appreciated.

**PLEASE TURN OVER**

The booklet has a “Family Guide” in the Centre which helps you prepare for each of the six themes—by giving suggestions to help you to prepare; by giving suggestions about how to talk to your child about the things you read together; and 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.

The booklet suggests 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. Or you could make a prayer- corner for the whole family to use.

The booklet has Prayer Cards that you can cut out, one for each theme. With them, you can say morning and evening prayers with your child. The end of the book has a Prayer Book you and your child can cut out and make. This book has prayers from the Mass and traditional Catholic prayers.

### **Suggested Time Frames**

As the formal preparation period runs from February to May, you can spend about 2 weeks on each theme. The booklet suggests that you set up regular times to read the booklet and discuss it with your child.

### **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 six themes, as a positive way to handling these experiences.
3. Time to pray – The journey of preparation towards First Eucharist 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 has a Prayer Card for morning and evening prayers with your child.
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 932-2944, Tuesdays to Thursdays, 10 am to 4 pm. Fax at 932-4587 or email: [khagel@stmaryscochrane.ca](mailto:khagel@stmaryscochrane.ca)  
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