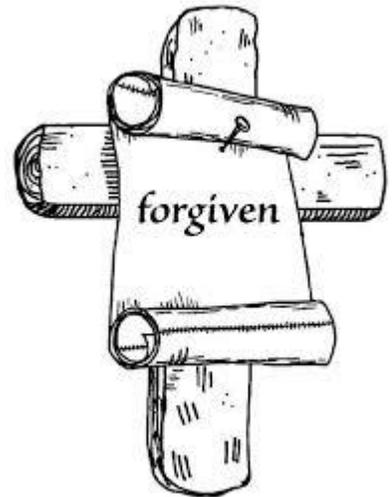


2017-2018

2nd Grade & RCIC First Communion
Parent Sacramental Handbook

**First
Reconciliation
and
First Holy Communion**



St. Columbkille Parish
Religious Formation Office
402.339.0990

SACRAMENT OF FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion is a 2-year program, beginning in first grade. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion are received for the first time in the second grade.

Our second grade classes in both St. Columbkille School and our Religious Education programs focus on preparation for the Sacrament of First Reconciliation the first part of the year. The second half of our year will focus on First Holy Communion preparation. The following pages of this booklet will provide a schedule with dates, information about the sacraments, helpful tips for parents and requirements.

The following information will be requested and collected at our first meeting:

- ✚ **Baptismal Certificate:** We must have a copy of your child's Baptismal Certificate—if your child was baptized at St. Columbkille, we have the certificate. If your child was baptized at another parish a copy must be requested from that parish—it can be delivered, mailed or faxed directly to our office at 402.339.3977.
- ✚ **Registration and Information Form:** This form will be completed and turned-in during our first meeting.
- ✚ **Sacramental Fee:** There is a \$25 sacramental fee due from all 2nd grade families. We cannot accept cash. Please make checks or money orders payable to St. Columbkille RE.

Eligibility

In order to receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion at St. Columbkille Parish, the student must:

1. Be baptized
2. Be registered in St. Columbkille School or our Religious Education program
3. Have had the first grade year of sacramental preparation through St. Columbkille School's religion classes or Religious Education classes
4. Be registered parishioners

Preparation Requirements

- ✚ Students must be receiving formation/education for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.
- ✚ It is required that at least one parent will attend the meetings with Father. Parent meetings are scheduled during the year so that parents may fully comprehend the content of the preparation and deepen their own understanding of the sacrament being received.
- ✚ Students and parents will attend the practice for First Holy Communion.

*The sacraments are Jesus'
chosen way of gifting
his life of grace
to us for all times.*

RECONCILIATION

Understanding the Sacrament

Reconciliation is the sacrament of forgiveness and peace. It is one of the most beautiful ways in which God chooses to forgive our sins. When we sin, we separate ourselves from God's love. Through reconciliation, we are able to obtain forgiveness and renew ourselves in Christ. *"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'"* (John 20:21-23).

Understanding Sin: Sin is an offense against God.... Sin sets itself against God's love for us and turns our hearts away from this love. Like the first sin, it is disobedience or a revolt against God through the will to become "like gods," knowing and determining good and evil. Children are introduced to the concept of sin within the concept of understanding the nature of their relationship with God. They learn about the love God has for us through their experiences with family and friendships. Through these experiences and stories about Jesus' love for them, children begin to understand sin. Sin is presented in terms of how relationships with ones they love change as a result of willful wrongdoing.

When children begin to understand how relationships with loved ones are affected by sin they will begin to learn that their relationship with God is also affected in the same way.

Communal Aspect of Sin: The Church is the family of God. We become part of this family at Baptism. At Baptism we become a child of God. Any time a member of God's family sins, the entire family is touched by this separation. Many times, reconciliation is a communal celebration where the parish family comes together to ask for God's forgiveness before we celebrate individual reconciliation.

Sorrow for Sin: Parents teach children from a very young age to be sorry for their sins. We teach our children to say, "I am sorry". God knew that all of us would sin, so he gave us the gift of repentance. The sorrow we feel when we come to a knowledge that we have broken one of God's laws for our happiness helps us begin the repentance process. This sorrow may include feelings of embarrassment or guilt. Parents help children experience apology situations by letting children witness a loving sincerity of words and actions when spouses or loved ones apologize to one another. We should not hesitate to apologize—to each other, to our children and to God. This can be done through words, actions and behaviors. When we say "I am sorry" it has to be heartfelt and not just an automated response like "thank you" or "excuse me".

In learning what it means to be truly sorry, children need help in understanding that if a person is sorry, that person is trying to change his/her behavior; doing something about the wrong he/she committed; or is making promises or resolutions to try and not repeat the wrongdoing.

Here are some familiar Bible stories you may like to share with your child:

- ✚ The Prodigal Son (Luke 15)
- ✚ The Paralyzed Man (Matthew 9)
- ✚ The Woman at the Well (John 4)
- ✚ The Woman at the House of the Pharisee (Luke 7)
- ✚ The Lost Sheep (Luke 15)

Examination of Conscience

- ✚ Do I give time every day to God in prayer?
- ✚ Have I used the words "God" or "Jesus" in anger?
- ✚ Have I used words that hurt another's feelings?
- ✚ Have I missed Mass on Sundays without a good reason?
- ✚ Do I respect and obey my parents?
- ✚ Am I a tattletale or bully?
- ✚ Do I fight with my brothers, sisters or friends?
- ✚ Do I share with others?
- ✚ Have I lied?
- ✚ Do I make fun of others to hurt their feelings?
- ✚ Have I taken things that were not mine?
- ✚ Have I destroyed another person's property for fun?
- ✚ Do I return things that I borrow?
- ✚ Am I honest in my school work?
- ✚ Are there kids I will not play with or are mean to because they look different?
- ✚ Am I mean to people because I see others being mean?
- ✚ Do I try to be helpful to my parents and those in need?
- ✚ Do I get jealous of what others' have?
- ✚ Why did I do things I knew were wrong?



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.

Amen.

Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. **I prepare to go to confession:** I think of my sins. I am sorry for my sins.
2. **I am greeted by the priest:** I go into the confessional or reconciliation room. I receive a kind welcome from the priest.
3. **We pray and talk:** I make the sign of the cross. The priest invites me to trust God. Sometimes the priest reads something from the Bible. I tell my sins to the priest. I accept the penance the priest gives me.
4. **I receive God's forgiveness:** Sometimes the priest says a few words to me. The priest absolves me from my sins.
5. **I leave:** I promise to try to do better. I say "thank you" and leave. I do my penance.

Parental Involvement in Preparing for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation

The Church teaches that parents are the first educators and catechists of their children. This means that parents have both a right and duty to instruct their children in the truths of our faith. God the Father entrusts you with the task of raising your children to know, love and serve Him so they can be happy in this world and the next. Parents should do all they can to learn about their Catholic faith so that they can hand it on to their children.

No matter what your child learns at school or in class, *your involvement is vital to their understanding of what the sacrament can mean to them.*

- ✚ Most important – attend Mass together as a family on a regular basis. The Mass provides an opportunity for the community to gather together and be reconciled with one another and with God.
- ✚ Show forgiveness and reconciliation in your own life. Your child will never learn what it means to forgive if he or she is witness to unforgiving attitude toward others. Our lives as Christians should be models of reconciliation in all that we do.
- ✚ Pray together as a family. Ask God's forgiveness as a family. Prayer itself can be a very powerful means of achieving reconciliation with God, with one another, and with ourselves.
- ✚ Know what your child is learning in class. Maintain regular communication with your child's teacher or catechist. Ask your child to bring home his or her work each week. Try to reinforce at home what your child is learning in the classroom.
- ✚ Listen to your child, discuss the process, any concerns or fears your child might have, and practice what he or she might do at Reconciliation. Remember to reinforce that your child's conversation with the priest is private and that they don't need to tell you, or anyone else what is said.
- ✚ Celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation yourself. Families are encouraged to receive Reconciliation along with their 2nd graders. When children see you participating, they will know the importance of the celebration.

SACRAMENT OF FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST COMMUNION SCHEDULE

Group 1

St. Columbkille 2A & 2B and
RCIC-First Communion Students

Saturday, January 27, 2018

10:00 am in the Church

Short reception to follow in the social level

Group 2

Mon & Wed RE 2nd Graders and
2017 Summer RE 2nd Graders

Saturday, January 27, 2018

12:30 pm in the Church

Short reception to follow in the social level



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Understanding the Sacrament

First Holy Communion brings us into fullness of our life in Christ. Receiving Holy Communion routinely brings us graces that affect us both spiritually and physically. Spiritually, our souls become more united to Christ, both through the graces we receive and through the change in our actions that those graces effect. Frequent Communion increases our love for God and for our neighbor, which expresses itself in action, which makes us more like Christ. *"Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins"* (Matthew 26:26-28).

What Your Child Will Learn:

Preparation for First Holy Communion immediately follows the celebration of First Reconciliation. During those months, your child will be experiencing a very important part of his or her spiritual growth. We want to support your child and your entire family, to get the most out of the experiences to come. Please try to reinforce at home what your child is learning in class.

- ✚ **The Sacraments:** Your child should have a basic understanding of the meaning of a Sacrament. At a child's level of understanding, the Sacraments are special events (usually taking place at church) that bring us closer to God. Your child should be familiar with the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- ✚ **The Eucharist:** All of what your child is learning relates to the Eucharist, but the following are specific points that he or she should understand:
 - Why do we celebrate the Eucharist?
 - What happens to the bread and wine during the Mass?
 - How do we prepare ourselves to receive Holy Communion?
 - What are the proper ways to receive Holy Communion?
- ✚ **The Mass:** Your child should have a basic understanding of the Mass, including the following points:
 - Why do we go to Mass?
 - What happens at Mass? What are the two parts of the Mass? (i.e., the Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist)
 - How do we participate in Mass?
- ✚ **The Life and Teachings of Jesus:** Your child should know about the basic life and teachings of Jesus, especially as they relate to the Eucharist. Important biblical stories include the "Last Supper" (Luke 22:7-20) and the "Beatitudes" (Matthew 5:3-12).
- ✚ **Community:** Your child should understand what "community" means and what kinds of communities we belong to, including our Church. Your child should understand that the Eucharist is a community celebration in which all Christians participate. Your child should also understand that we have responsibilities toward the communities to which we belong.
- ✚ **Christian Service and Living:** Your child should understand that the Eucharist calls us to a life of Christian morals and service.
- ✚ **Prayers:** Your child should know basic Catholic prayers, especially the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary".

PRAYERS



The Lord's Prayer (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.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed are 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.



A Memorable Occasion

- ✚ Talk with your child about the hopes and plans he/she has for First Holy Communion Day. Share memories about your First Holy Communion.
- ✚ Be sure your child attends Mass every week. Tell your child to watch as others receive the sacrament so they get a sense of what is happening. Talk about the homily, the songs that were sung and how they relate to the Bible story that was read.
- ✚ Talk with your child about why you chose their name. Tell them if their name holds a special meaning in your family or if you picked it because of a particular saint.
- ✚ Think about ways that you can reflect Christian living in your home. Decorate your home for the Liturgical seasons and make your child an active part.
- ✚ Plan a family service project during Advent or Lent.
- ✚ If you have never had a special prayer time together in your family, you might begin one at bedtime or before meals.
- ✚ Talk to your child about the day of First Holy Communion. Make plans for celebrating the day with family and friends. Make this a very special day.

SACRAMENT OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION SCHEDULE

Group 1 Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 2:00 pm

***Practice: Saturday, April 14th at 9:00 am in the church for 2nd grader and parents
(Please arrive by 8:45 am to check in)*

Group 2 Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 4:30 pm

***Practice: Saturday, April 14th at 10:30 am in the church for 2nd grader and parents
(Please arrive by 10:15 am to check in)*

****Please mark your calendar for the practice day and time. The child and at least one parent must attend.**

Seating

First Communicants and their two parents will process in together. Other family members, including younger siblings and guests are invited to sit elsewhere in the church.



Attire

BOYS

Long sleeve shirt (if not wearing a jacket or suit) Please wear pastel colors only – no bright colors.
Suit or dress slacks
Dress shoes with socks

GIRLS

White or ivory dress – short or long
White or ivory veil, headpiece or flower
Dress shoes with socks or stockings

****Girls may not wear gloves.****

Children are not allowed to carry purses, rosaries, prayer books, missals, candles or flowers.

Pictures

More information about Individual and Group First Communion Pictures will be distributed at a later date.

Please Note:

Due to the sanctity of the Sacrament, we ask that you **stay in your pews** during the Communion liturgy. Photos or video-taping is allowed during Communion Mass from the loft area only.

NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY, NO TRIPODS, NO STANDING IN THE AISLES FOR PICTURES

Photos may be taken after Mass in the church or in the courtyard outside.

Your cooperation is necessary in making this Sacrament beautiful and meaningful for your child, your family and those also celebrating this special day.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION TEAM

The First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Team has the responsibility of assisting parents in preparing the children to live the faith of the Christian Community by living lives which recognize the Lord's presence and salvation in the world.

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