

Church of Saint Pius X



First Reconciliation
and
First Communion
Parent Handbook

Church of Saint Pius X

Religious Education Program

Sacrament of First Reconciliation and First Communion Program Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion at the Church of Saint Pius X, each child must:

1. Be a baptized Catholic.
2. Be part of a registered family in the Parish.
3. Be a second-grade or older student registered in our Religious Education Program.
4. Have attended Religious Education classes at our Parish or, if transferring to our Parish, have attended religion classes for one year prior to the Sacramental preparation year in another Catholic religious education program.

PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS

Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Communion includes:

1. Instruction in the faith by the child's parent and through religious education classes.
2. Formation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion conducted within classes.
3. Attendance/participation by parents/guardians at the parent meeting.
4. Assurance the student has a basic understanding of the Catholic faith including an evaluation of Sacramental readiness by his/her Catechist, Teacher, Director of Religious Education and/or Pastor.
5. Attendance and participation at practices for the Sacrament (conducted within class).

If any of these requirements is not satisfied, the Sacrament of Reconciliation or the Sacrament of First Communion may be delayed.

BASIC PRAYERS TO LEARN BEFORE RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

The prayers below are basic to our faith and should be memorized by each child before he/she receives the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

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. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespassed against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen

GLORY BE

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen

NOTE: Parents/guardians should say these prayers each day with their child so the child memorizes them.



PROCEDURE FOR THE RITE OF RECONCILIATION

Our 2nd grade students become familiar with the Sacrament of Reconciliation in class. Please note the large type/bold are actual statements the children will say during Reconciliation.

CHILD: While sitting in the pew, each child is asked to examine his/her conscience by thinking about his/her sins. We ask him/her to think about things for which he/she is sorry. When it is the child's turn, his/her teacher will direct him to the Confessional.

PRIEST: The priest greets each child.

PRIEST: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (The child makes the sign of the cross on himself/herself.)

CHILD: (child answers) **Amen.**

CHILD: **Bless me Father for I have sinned. This is my first confession. These are my sins.**

PRIEST: The Priest talks to the child about his/her sins, gives him/her a penance and asks the child to say the Act of Contrition.

CHILD: **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. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. Amen**

PRIEST: The Priest says a prayer over the child and absolves him/her of his/her sins. The prayer will end with the Priest saying: "I absolve you of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (The child makes the sign of the cross on himself/herself.)

CHILD: (child answers) **Amen**

PRIEST: Go in Peace. Accept one another as Christ accepted you.

CHILD: Thank you, Father. (The child leaves the Confessional, goes back to his/her pew, kneels and prays his/her penance silently or says a prayer of Thanksgiving. Please note part of the penance may be an action that the child will do to show he/she is really sorry.)

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR CHILDREN FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION*

During class, the children will learn how to make an examination of conscience in preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Some of the questions your child will be asked to reflect on include:

1. When I make choices, do I sometimes forget to think first about what God wants me to do? Have I done what God wants?
2. Have I used the name of God or Jesus in a bad way?
3. Did I worship God at Mass each Sunday?
4. Have I disobeyed the grown-ups who take care of me?
5. Have I been angry with or cruel to others?
6. Have I forgotten to show respect for myself or for others?
7. Have I taken anything that is not mine or treated others unfairly?
8. Have I always told the truth?
9. Have I hurt someone by what I have said or done? Have I been jealous of others?
10. Have I refused to help people who are in need? Have I been selfish?

*See the addendum for the Examination of Conscience for Adults.



WHY DO WE CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION RATHER THAN GO DIRECTLY TO GOD?

A priest assists us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the following reasons:

1. Catholics should pray to God each day. Before entering the Confessional for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we should engage in personal reflection and private prayer.
2. Jesus gave the power of forgiveness to the Apostles during His first appearance after His Resurrection. John 20:23. There also is other Scriptural support for the Church possessing the ministry of forgiveness, including:
 - Matthew 16:19
 - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20
3. Writings and practices from the first generations of Christianity show a clear understanding of the Church as having the key role in conveying penance and reconciling the sinner with the community of faith.
4. In reconciliation, we reconcile to self, God and the community. Sin is not just about an individual and God. The priest represents the community (that has been fractured by one's sin) in his role as confessor.
5. If we examine our sinfulness alone, we may rationalize sin away or we may judge ourselves too harshly.
6. The penance given in the Sacrament of Reconciliation serves as a reminder that sorrow and forgiveness need to connect with actions that orient us to a new way of living.
7. The Sacrament of Reconciliation offers a decisive moment of forgiveness in the sacramental process.
8. Experiencing understanding and forgiveness through the priest is often powerfully healing and freeing. The priest may offer insights which can result in a more hopeful perspective going forward.
9. In the case of serious (mortal) sin, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is necessary to restore us to spiritual well-being (state of grace).
10. The Sacrament of Reconciliation conveys a grace that strengthens us for living our baptismal identity more faithfully.

***"I WILL GIVE YOU THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. WHATEVER YOU
BIND ON EARTH SHALL BE BOUND IN HEAVEN; AND WHATEVER YOU
LOOSE ON EARTH SHALL BE LOOSED IN HEAVEN."(MATTHEW 16:19)***

TERMINOLOGY AND TEN COMMANDMENTS

During classes, your child will learn about sins and the Ten Commandments.

Mortal Sin:

-a serious offense against God involving conscious serious immoral acts or grave matters contrary to the Ten Commandments that cause eternal separation from God.

Venial Sin:

-a less serious offense against God without full knowledge of how wrong the offense is that does not destroy our relationship with God.

Social Sin:

-the collective effect of sin over time that corrupts society and its institutions by creating “structures of sin” such as racism, sexism and institutionalized poverty.

Capital Sins (Seven Deadly Sins):

-lead to and reinforce all sorts of other sinful actions, thoughts and omissions that increase the tendency to sin and cause us to turn away more and more from God. The seven deadly sins are:

1. Pride: believing you are better than others; disrespecting others
2. Greed: hoarding money or things
3. Envy: resentment we direct to others who have success, things, or privilege
4. Wrath: strong anger to seek revenge that prevents reconciliation
5. Lust: undisciplined, unchecked desire
6. Gluttony: excessive eating or drinking
7. Sloth: habitual laziness, failing to put forth effort and take actions

Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange Gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord’s Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.

FIRST COMMUNION ATTIRE

Please ***DO NOT*** have your child wear or bring flowers, corsages, shawls, purses, gloves, rosaries or arm bands to Mass on their First Communion Day. These items tend to be a distraction. If you wish, we suggest you give these items to your child after Mass.

If you have any question, please call the Religious Education Office at (914) 472-5594.



FIRST COMMUNION BANNER

The banner material, symbols of grapes, cup and host are supplied to you. Banners may be decorated as you wish with beads, sequins, fringe or lace.

Please put your child's ***FIRST*** name and **date of his/her First Communion** on your banner. See examples below. Your child's finished banner should be returned to the Religious Education Office at least one week before Communion.

If you have any questions, please call the Religious Education Office at (914) 472-5594.

Blue felt is given to you.



Decorate with various colors of felt, braid sequins, beads, fringe or lace.



ADDENDUM

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE (for adults)

- A. Do I fully give myself to God? Am I seeking the Lord in a deeper, personal relationship? Do I reverence the Holy name of God at all times? Is my daily life a reflection of the gospel values?
- B. Do I truly love my neighbor? Do I see God in those with whom I live and work? Have I inspired my neighbor to seek a personal relationship with God? When did I last see Jesus in the least of my brothers and sisters?
- C. In what direction is my life going? Do the things I do for the good of others affect my surroundings? Am I a leader in bringing the gospel values to my community?
- D. What steps am I taking to grow closer to God and to others? Do I turn to God often during the day, especially when I am tempted?
- E. Do I participate at Mass with attention and devotion on Sundays and holy days? Do I pray often and read the Bible?
- F. Do I use God's name and the names of Jesus, Mary and the saints with love and reverence?
- G. Have I set a bad example through my words or actions? Do I treat others fairly? Do I spread stories that hurt other people?
- H. Am I loving of those in my family? Am I respectful of my neighbors, my friends, and those in authority? Do I show respect for my body and for the bodies of others? Do I keep away from forms of entertainment that do not respect God's gift of sexuality?
- I. Have I taken or damaged anything that did not belong to me? Have I cheated, copied others work for my own or lied?
- J. Do I quarrel with others just so I can get my own way? Do I insult others to try to make them think they are less than I am? Do I hold grudges and try to hurt people who I think have hurt me?
- K. Does my life reflect that I am a believer – a person of faith?
- L. Am I aware that my life can be a sharing of and a participation in the life of God?
- M. Do I really believe how important I am to God?
- N. Am I happy?
- O. Do I rejoice always in God's love for me?
- P. Where do I look for happiness?
- Q. Do I carry around security blankets – thinking they are my salvation?
- R. How joyful is it to say from deep in my heart: God is my Savior?
- S. How do I react to the way God enters my life? ...through the Scriptures, ...through the Sacraments, ...through the Church?
- T. I am loved by God dearly and deeply. Does it make a difference to me?
- U. Do I forgive others as God has forgiven me?