

Important Information for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion

****Saturday March 18 12:00 pm–FIRST RECONCILIATION****
(PLEASE NOTE THIS DATE HAS BEEN CHANGED)

Sunday, April 2nd, 2017: First Communion Retreat
Beginning with the 12 PM Mass

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Class Day	Date of First Communion	Mass Time
<u>Monday</u>	Saturday, May 13, 2017	10 am
<u>Tuesday</u>	Saturday, May 13 2017	1 pm
<u>Wednesday</u>	Saturday, May 20, 2017	1 pm
<u>Sunday FFF</u>	Saturday, May 20, 2017	10 am

For the Sacrament of First Reconciliation:
dress is “Sunday best”-no sneakers or jeans please

For the Sacrament of First Holy Communion:*
Girls: White dresses of any length; headpieces optional, (veils, headbands, floral wreaths etc.)

Boys: Blazer and tie with any color dress pants-or a suit

** If you would like your child to have other accessories (rosary beads, gloves, purses, or Bibles), we ask that you hold onto these items for the duration of Mass. They may be used for pictures at the end of Mass.*

We are blessed to share these special moments for your children with your families. Please help to retain the solemnity of the Sacraments by maintaining a respectful manner in the church-please keep talking to a minimum and refrain from taking pictures in an invasive manner

Preparation for First Holy Communion

Catholic Belief:

Each celebration of the Mass is a representation of the Last Supper of Our Lord. We believe in a four-fold presence of Christ at Mass: *in the People of God gathered together, in the Word of God proclaimed, in the person of the priest, in the sacrament of Eucharist.* The Eucharist provides the nourishment we need to be Christ to the world.

The Eucharist also provides us with an intimate union with Jesus Christ. Jesus says in John 6:56, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.” Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet.” Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.” (John 6:57)

Readiness to receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion includes:

- Belief in the **real presence of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine**
- Basic understanding of the transformation that occurs each time the Mass is celebrated
- Familiarity with how we celebrate the Mass and the ability to respond with your Faith Community
- Basic understanding of why we come together for Mass (to be nourished by God’s Word and the Sacraments and to go into the world to make a Christian difference)
- Knowing how to pray and participate in the Mass (including the “Our Father”)

The **best way** to prepare your child to receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion is to **bring him/her to Mass every Sunday** because our Loving God is experienced in a very deep and real way during the Eucharist.

On the Day of First Holy Communion

Arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled Mass. (for example- If you are scheduled for the 10am Mass, arrive at the Faith Center at 9:30am)

Observe the Fast: We fast from food and drink (except water) for **one hour before we receive the Eucharist.** We do this as a reminder that we are hungry for Jesus, our True Food. Since your children will be arriving 30 minutes early for their First Holy Communion, they will already be in observance of the fast. However, this should be a regular practice in every Catholic home.

Seating: The first several pews on either side of the church will be reserved for the First Communicants. Seating is open throughout the rest of the church. Please be considerate of other families and avoid saving whole pews.

Reception of Holy Communion: The children will receive the Body of Christ first, and they will be taught to receive both in their hands and on the tongue. They will not be taught nor will they receive the Most Precious Blood on this day.

Other: Please contact the Religious Education Office by phone or email if seating is required for friends or relatives attending the First Communion who may have special needs (wheelchairs etc), or if you have a priest or deacon in the family attending the Mass.

Religious Education Office Hours and Contact Information

Monday-Wednesday: 12pm-6pm

Thursday-Sunday: **CLOSED**

Phone: (203) 259-4800

Email: reled@st-pius.org kclegg@st-pius.org

Preparation for First Reconciliation

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are God's special laws. Following the Commandments helps us to live as God's children. We show our love for God, ourselves, and others by obeying the Ten Commandments.

How to make good and loving Choices

1. When you have a choice to make, find a quiet place where you can think. Think about each of the choices, good and bad, that you can make.
2. Pray:
Holy Spirit, help me to make good and loving choices.
3. Now think about each of your choices, and ask yourself these questions.
Will this choice show that I love:
 - ❖ God?
 - ❖ Others?
 - ❖ Myself?If I say "yes" to loving God, others, and myself, it is a good choice.
4. Ask someone you can trust to talk with you about your choices.
5. With God's help you can choose to do the good and loving thing.

Preparing for Penance and Reconciliation:

How to Examine your Conscience

God has given each person a conscience. This gift helps a person to know what is right and what is wrong. We can prepare to celebrate the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation by examining our conscience. This means we think about our thoughts, words, and actions. To examine your conscience, think quietly and prayerfully about the times you chose to do what you knew to be wrong. At these times you sinned, or disobeyed God's law on purpose.

At the Ceremony

The children will sit with their classes during the ceremony. All family members will sit in the open pews behind the assigned seats designated for the students receiving the Sacrament.

The children will WALK up to the altar with their class in a similar fashion to receiving communion, and will sit with priests individually for their First Confession.

Please remind the children that when they sit with the Priest, they will start by making the sign of the Cross and saying "Bless me Father, for I have sinned, this is my First Confession and these are my sins" (we will give them cards that they can take up with them so they may read this prayer).

They will then confess their sin(s). When the Priest absolves them of their sins, he will make the sign of the cross and say, in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit." While the Priest does this please remind the children that they should be making the sign of the cross on themselves. –We will be practicing beforehand with all of the children, but practicing at home truly helps.

When they return to their pews, the children will then pray their penance.

Please remind the children that during the ceremony, there should be no talking or fooling around. It should be a time of quiet and respectful prayer and reflection.

Please do not allow the children (*ANY children –not just those receiving the Sacrament*) to play on any electronics during the ceremony.