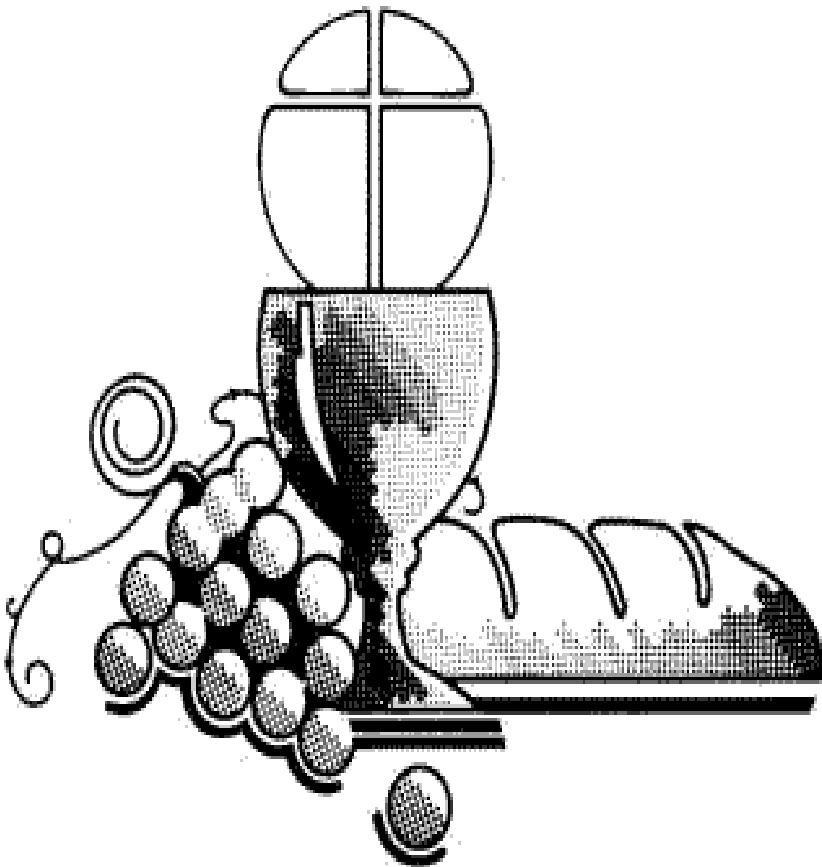


First Reconciliation &
First Holy Communion
Handbook
2023-2024





St. Christina Religious Education

Fostering your Child's Religious Education from K thru 8th grade

Welcome First Holy Communion Class of 2023-2024

Dear Parent and Guardians,

At St. Christina, the Holy Communion Program is the first opportunity for our children to receive our Blessed Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Students typically receive their First Holy Communion during second grade, but we also welcome older children who have not yet received their First Holy Communion.

Preparation involves a two-year commitment. The reason that we require a two consecutive year program is because celebrating a sacrament should involve becoming familiar and comfortable with our parish community and faith life. It includes class participation, Reconciliation, parent meetings, and attendance at Mass. A student must attend one year of class at St Christina School or through our Religious Education program, prior to the year they will be celebrating the sacrament. The first year of class participation is considered "Level I Sacramental Prep." The second consecutive year of class participation involves more detailed sacramental preparation. This is referred to as "Level II Sacramental Prep." Class participation and regular church attendance are important parts of our program. Students who attend our classes have the opportunity to meet peers and share their faith. They will also have opportunities to meet our priests, and develop relationships with their teachers and catechists.

New this year, we will have online reservation for Communion through the Religious Education website and the St. Christina school website. Communion will be on Saturday, April 20th, 2024. There will be a 10 am service and a 1pm service. Please request your days off in advance if you are scheduled to work that day. If you have any questions, please contact me at 773-780-1438 to schedule a meeting.

Peace,

Pam Waldrom
Coordinator of Religious Education

What is Holy Communion?

First Holy Communion is one of the most important events in early life for a Catholic, along with Baptism, Reconciliation and Confirmation. The First Holy Communion is a sign of Christian unity and a symbol of a Catholic's faith and devotion. First Holy Communion is typically celebrated when a child is about seven years old.

What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation offers grace and the remission of sin to whoever receives it, and at whatever age. Each person's approach to Reconciliation is different. Depending on age, stage of life, and development, people often adapt Reconciliation to a particular milestone or stage of life rather than adapting themselves to the Sacrament Reconciliation.

If the time assigned to your child is difficult for your family, please contact Sue Carter as soon as possible so she can decide to accommodate you with the Mass that better fits your needs.

Parent & Student Orientation Information Sessions

Reconciliation: The first Parent Orientation meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 4, 2023** at 6:00 p.m. at St. Christina Church. Kathryn McNicholas will explain the importance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Sue Carter will also explain how your child will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and appropriate dress attire.

Communion: The second Parent Orientation will be held on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024** at 6:00 p.m. at St. Christina Church. Kathryn McNicholas will explain the importance of the Holy Communion Sacrament. Sue Carter will explain all the details of First Holy Communion.

We ask that one parent and the communicant are present for both of these meetings.

Reconciliation

Monday, November 6th 5:30 -6:30pm for the 10am Communion Group

Monday, November 6th 6:30-7:30 for the 1pm Communion Group

The children and their parents will meet in the Church at the time they have chosen. We will have a communal celebration. This will include a welcome and a reading from the Bible. We will do an Examination of Conscience and say the Act of Contrition as a group. The communicants will then go to the priest for individual confession of their sins and receive individual absolution. After all the children have received their First Reconciliation, each family member is encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be an example of their faith for their child. After you and your child have completed your penance in your pews you may leave. There will not be a formal dismissal or final song. Each child will receive a certificate of Reconciliation in class the following week.



Bless Me Father For I Have Sinned.

Practice the Sacrament of Reconciliation with Your Child

1. Explain to your child that Reconciliation is a Sacrament of healing in which our sins are forgiven and in which we are reconciled with God and the Church.
2. Teach your child that God is a loving merciful Father who is waiting for us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
3. Explain that Jesus granted the apostles and their successors (priests) the authority to forgive and retain sins.
4. Teach your child how to make an examination of conscience and have them make it at the end of the day as part of their night prayers.
5. Make sure your child learns and memorizes the **Act of Contrition** and that they understand Reconciliation as a way of preparing their soul to receive Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist.
6. Emphasize that the priest will never tell anyone their sins

The 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.
Amen.



Procedure for Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. When your child is ready to receive the Sacrament, they will be asked to step forward by an usher or teacher.
2. Teachers will direct your child to an available priest.
3. When each child approaches the priest, they begin with the Sign of the Cross and say, “Forgive me Father for I have sinned, this is my first Reconciliation.”
4. The priest will guide them through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
5. When the Sacrament has been received, your child will be given a simple penance, which they are asked to say in the pew while kneeling

Examination of Conscience for Children

1. When I make choices, do I sometimes forget about what God wants me to do?
2. Do I pray every day?
3. Do I pay attention at Mass?
4. Do I try to see God in others?
5. Do I listen to my parents and teachers or do I ignore them?
6. Have I made fun of my brothers and sisters or my classmates?
7. Am I selfish at school, do I share what I have with others?
8. When I am angry, do I say or do things to hurt whoever has hurt me?
9. Do I say, “I’m sorry” to the person I have hurt and “I forgive you” to the person who has hurt me?
10. Do I play fair or do I ever cheat at school or games?
11. Have I taken something that does not belong to me?

First Holy Communion Retreat

January 16, 2024	Parent and Communicant Meeting for ALL 6:00PM	St. Christina Church
Monday January 22, 2024	Retreat and Banner Pick up 10AM Communion Group Communicant and Parent 6:00 pm	St. Christina Church, Parish Center, Gym
Tuesday January 23, 2024	Retreat and Banner Pick up 1pm Communion Group Communicant and Parent 6:00 pm	St. Christina Church, Parish Center, Gym

If your assigned session does not work for your family, please let Sue Carter know so that she can adjust the class list prior to the Retreat.

This Retreat is a part of the preparation for receiving the Eucharist. This is a mandatory Retreat for your child and you. We encourage that both parents attend, however, we also understand if there are other children at home who need supervision. This Retreat is designed to help teach your child the meaning of Eucharist. There are several activity stations each offering a different yet related experience.

St. Christina First Holy Communion Practice and Mass

10 AM COMMUNION		
Thursday April 18 2024	Holy Communion Practice 10AM Communion Group Communicant and Parent 5pm-6:30pm	St. Christina Church
Saturday April 20, 2023	Holy Communion Mass 10:00am 10AM Communion Group Holy Communion Pictures from 8:30 am – 9:30 am Holy Communion Pictures 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	St. Christina Church
1 PM COMMUNION		
Thursday April 18, 2023	Holy Communion Practice 1PM Communion Group Communicant and Parent 6:30pm-8pm	St. Christina Church
Saturday April 20, 2023	Holy Communion Mass 1PM 1PM Communion Group Holy Communion Pictures from 11:30am – 12:30pm Or Holy Communion Pictures from 2pm-3pm	St. Christina Church, Gym

At least one parent must be at the practice with the communicant. Your child will be better prepared and understand what to do at the Communion Celebration so please have them present for their practice time. Important information is provided and final details explained so it is important for both parent and child to attend.

Seating for Family Communion

Family Communion allows for the communicant to sit with their family members during the entire Mass. Up to **eight family members** may sit comfortably in the pew with the Communicant. If you have a larger family, there will be additional seating elsewhere in the church. You will receive your seating assignment on the evening of the Communion Retreat which is on January 22 or 23, 2024.

On the night of practice, we will show you how the entire family will receive the Eucharist along with the Communicant. As you will see, it will be a very beautiful and spiritual experience for all the family members!

Dress Attire for First Holy Communion

Boys

White shirt
Choice of tie
Dark pants
Dark dress shoes - no sandals
Suit coat optional

Girls

White dress and veil
White gloves – optional for **pictures only**
White socks
White shoes – no sandals or flip-flops

Photographs

Art Lynn Photography will be taking professional pictures in the gym the day of Holy Communion. There will be a fee sheet and order form sent home later this year. The completed order form and payment should be brought with you to the photo session on First Communion day. Below are the session times however, you may attend the time that best fits your schedule.

First Holy Communion Students 10AM Mass

April 20, 2024 at 10am

Holy Communion Pictures from 8:30 am – 9:30 am
Holy Communion Pictures 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

First Holy Communion Students 1PM Mass

April 20, 2024 at 1pm

Holy Communion Pictures from 12:00p.m. -1:00pm
Holy Communion Pictures 2pm – 3pm.

During the Mass, the photographer will take a beautiful picture of every child receiving Holy Communion. This picture is a gift from St. Christina Parish. If you have any specific questions regarding the purchase of pictures, please contact Art Lynn Photography directly at 708-425-8080.

St. Christina Parish
2023-2024 First Holy Communion Calendar

Date	Event	Location
Monday, October 2, 2023	First Holy Communion Online Sign-Up begins Time is TBA	Online
Wednesday, October 4, 2023	First Informative Meeting at 6pm Parents & Communicants regarding Reconciliation	St. Christina Church
Sunday October 15, 2023	Second Grade Mass at 10:30am Honoring all children preparing for Reconciliation and Holy Communion	St. Christina Church
Monday, October 23, 2023	First Holy Communion Online Sign-Up ENDS Time is TBA	Online
Monday November 6, 2021	Reconciliation for Parents and Communicants for 10am Communion Group 5:30-6:30pm For 1pm Communion Group 7-8pm	St. Christina Church
Tuesday, January 16, 2024	Second Informative Meeting at 6pm For Parents and communicants regarding Communion & Retreat	St. Christina Church
Monday January 22, 2024	COMMUNION Retreat and Banner Pick up at 6pm 10AM Communion Group Communicant and Parent	St. Christina Church, Parish Center, Gym
Tuesday, January 23, 2024	COMMUNION Retreat and Banner Pick up at 6pm 1PM Communion Group Communicant and Parent	St. Christina Church, Parish Center, Gym
Thursday, April 18 2024	Holy Communion Practice for Parents & Communicants For 10am Communion Group 5pm-6:30pm For 1pm Communion Group 6:30-8pm	St. Christina Church
Saturday April 20, 2022	R.E. Holy Communion Mass 10:00am Holy Communion Pictures from 8:30 am – 9:30 am Or Holy Communion Pictures from 11:30am-12:30 pm	St. Christina Church, Gym
Saturday April 20, 2022	R.E. Holy Communion Mass 1:00pm Holy Communion Pictures from 11:30pm-12:30pm Or Holy Communion Pictures from 2:00pm-3:00pm	St. Christina Church, Gym

**St. Christina Parish
Communion Information Form**

A COPY OF YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS FORM.

In accordance with the Archdiocese of Chicago, it is **required** that the information requested below is verified and recorded prior to Reception of the Sacrament. All areas of this form must be completed in full. Please print clearly.

Child's Full Name _____ Date of Birth _____
(Last) (Middle) (First)

City of Birth _____ M/F Country _____

BAPTISMAL INFORMATION

Please provide a copy of the Baptismal Certificate with this completed form.

Child's Name on Baptismal Cert. _____

Mother's Name on Baptismal Cert. _____

Father's Name on Baptismal Cert. _____

Date of Baptism: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____ City of Birth: _____

Church of Baptism _____ City _____ State _____

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Father's First Name _____ Last Name _____

Mother first name: _____ Last Name: _____

Maiden Name: _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Home Number: _____ Cell Number: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE completed this entire form. Attach a copy of your child's Baptismal Certificate This form must be returned on **October 4, 2024** at our first meeting. **If you have turned this in prior to 10/4/2024 do not fill out.**