

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

First Eucharist



First of all, I thought it was called “First Communion”? “Communion” in this sense means the communion between Jesus and the recipient of the Eucharist “Eucharist” comes from the Greek word for thanksgiving. Actually the entire Mass can be called “Eucharist” because we remember the words and actions of Jesus and give thanks as He did by eating and drinking bread and wine. However now this bread and wine is the “Eucharist,” the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, who is really and **substantially present**.

What is going to happen at the First Eucharist Mass? Each family will be assigned a pew; and your First Communicant will sit closest to the aisle. ***It is very important that your family arrive 30 minutes prior to Mass to get settled.*** During this time, you may take family photographs. At 10 minutes prior to start of Mass, First Communicants will line up on the steps of the church to process in. The GRANDPARENTS that are present WILL BE WELCOMED and then the Parents. After we thank the family members for passing on the faith; 5 minutes prior to mass the students names will be called and they will enter the center aisle, bowing at their designated pew, and sit with the family. During the Eucharist, ushers will direct the First Communicants ‘pew by pew’, to receive from the Priest or Deacon. **The parents, grandparents, and the rest of the guests in your pew wait to be ushered as regularly served at our two church sites.** No one should **leave** their pew to take photos or advance when the Holy Eucharist is given.

What if we have guests/grandparents/godparents/sponsors attending? Additional family and friends may sit in the remaining reserved pew or in a (non-reserved) pew anywhere in the church. Our Diocese does not suggest sponsors since the children are at an age of reason to receive. Our parish and Diocese realize the sole responsibility for getting your child to mass on a weekly basis are the parents. If your culture prefers having a sponsor; they are welcome to sit in your pew or where you indicate; but again, no one will escort the child to receive for the first time.

I have guests coming to our child’s First Eucharist who are from other faiths. What do they do during the Eucharist? Our faith encourages ecumenism, or the “movement toward Christian unity.” Your family and friends are *more* than welcome here at The Holy Name of Jesus — **indeed they are embraced.** Eucharist however is a sacrament that signifies the unity of belief of the Catholic Church. For that reason, our Church asks that only eligible Catholics receive Eucharist. **Guests from different faiths and/or Catholics who are not able to receive at this time are encouraged and asked to process up for a blessing. Arms folded over the chest will indicate that a blessing is requested.**

What about photos and videotaping? If you would like pictures or video during Mass, you may have someone designated to do this from the choir loft of either church. The priest may allow you to take a photo when HE indicates. If not; the only time it is permitted from the pew is when the student processes in prior to the start of mass; and when he/she receives for the first time. Once Mass has ended, the First Communicants will assemble outside on the steps or around the altar. A professional *photo hobbyist* – will take Sacrament photos, a large group photo and these are available at a nominal pre-package pricing.

What should they wear? Girls should be dressed in white. Dresses or a skirt/top combo are acceptable. The style of the dress is left up to you and your child’s preference. Spaghetti strap dresses are discouraged, but if you choose a dress that has spaghetti straps a sweater or covering **must be worn** during the Mass out of reverence for the sacrament. Optional accessories are a veil or a simple flower wreath, head band or barrette. Boys need to wear dark, tan or white pants and a white shirt is preferred. Dress shoes. No sneakers. A tie, sweater, vest or jacket is suggested but optional.

Reverence: No high platforms. No sneakers flip flops, gum chewing, Mohawks, or excess exposed skin. This includes the length of dresses. **Parents please respect this request for reverence, for your child and yourself.**

Can they have gloves, missals, rosaries, etc.? All of those things are terrific. HOWEVER, we do need to remember two things. First, when they receive the actual Eucharist they need to have bare hands and second, if your child has too many things to remember, hold, wear, or keep in their possession during this time, it can add to their stress level. Remember, they are already nervous. Our task is to take the focus OFF the event as something that they are “performing” and put the focus **ON the sacrament**, the fact that they are to receive Christ the first time. ***Simplicity is key.***

Will there be time to have devotional items blessed? Yes. At the Sprinkling Rite in our Mass; we ask all the parents, students, and guests to hold up their **1st Communion items & keepsakes to be blessed.**