

August 2016

Dear Parents,



We are writing to you today because you have a child who is about seven or eight years old. This is the traditional age at which a Catholic child goes to Confession and Holy Communion for the first time. We invite you and your child to prepare with us during the coming months for these sacraments. Preparation for First Reconciliation will occur this fall; preparation for First Eucharist will begin in January, with the celebration of First Eucharist taking place on weekend of May 6 & 7.

Here at St. Mary's, we are using a process for preparing your child that involves learning together. YOU become the actual teacher of your child, but we guide you through every step. This is a memorable time of your child's life – and the memories you make during this preparation period will be cherished for a long time.

We know that households and families take many shapes today. Therefore,

- If you are a single parent, we invite you and your child to attend together.
- If you're a married couple, we invite both of you and your child to attend together.
- If one of you is not Catholic, we invite you both nonetheless, and we provide a lovely welcome and orientation for the one who is not Catholic.
- If you are Catholic but have not been active in parish life yourself lately, we welcome you! We have resources to help you get up to speed and help your child learn certain Catholic prayers and customs.
- If you are living in a separate or divorced situation, we invite you to decide whether both parents can be involved.
- If there is another significant person involved in the raising of your child whom you feel would benefit your child to be involved, he or she is also welcome!

We hope we've covered all the bases here. The important thing for us is that you know we welcome you, regardless of your situation in life, and we will give you all the resources needed to really prepare your child well for this turning point in his or her life.

The preparation sessions will be held at **St. Mary's Parish in the Visitation Commons** at the times listed on the back. There are a total of eight preparation sessions (one per month, September through April) which both you and your child will attend, plus the celebration of the sacraments. These will be wonderful times!

You'll receive a helpful guide and your child will receive a beautiful text. With our leader assisting, you and your child will work through this text and then try a few lessons at home by yourselves. You'll be amazed at how much you'll enjoy this process!

Preparation sessions for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist will be held at **St. Mary's Parish in the Visitation Commons**. Sessions will be held from **5:15-6:15pm** on Wednesday evenings.

The eight sessions will be held on:

<b>Wednesday, September 14:</b>	Session One
<b>Sunday, October 2:</b>	Rite of Enrollment (10:30am Mass)
<b>Wednesday, October 12:</b>	Session Two
<b>Wednesday, November 9:</b>	Session Three
<b>Wednesday, December 7:</b>	Session Four
<b>Sunday, December 11:</b>	Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, 4:00 pm
<b>Wednesday, January 11:</b>	Session Five
<b>Wednesday, February 8:</b>	Session Six
<b>Wednesday, March 15:</b>	Session Seven
<b>Wednesday, April 19:</b>	Session Eight
<b>Friday, May 5:</b>	First Eucharist Pictures and Rehearsal (5:30pm)
<b>May 6 &amp; 7:</b>	Celebration of the Sacrament of Eucharist at all Masses

In addition to the sessions listed above, there will be a **First Eucharist Activity Evening on February 22** from 5:00-7:00pm at St. Mary's (Marian Hall) for parents and children. Supper and childcare will be provided.

Registration for participation in this sacramental preparation program will occur on September 14 when we first gather. There is a \$25.00 registration fee that will cover the cost of materials for the program. Childcare will be provided for any younger children that you may need to bring with you.

Thank you for being part of our faith community. We look forward to walking with you as your child learns and grows in his or her faith.

With blessings and all good wishes,

Fr. James Berning  
Pastor, St. Mary's Parish

Annmarie DeMarais  
Family Coach/Facilitator

Julie Walch  
Director of Faith Formation  
St. Mary's Parish