

## **Sacramental Guidelines**

### **First Penance/First Eucharist**

Administration of the sacrament of First Eucharist will be based on a child's readiness.

1. Baptized children who have reached the age of reason (approximately 7 years old) and are showing signs of readiness may choose to begin the program from Dynamic Catholic called *Blessed*. This is a series of eight sessions to help prepare your child for receiving the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist for the first time.
2. This preparation program is available to families receiving ongoing catechesis through the *Family of Faith* Program or Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.
3. Once the *Blessed* program is completed, parents/guardians and the child will meet with the pastor (or another member of the staff) and discuss receiving the sacrament in the spring or fall. Children will receive First Holy Communion at a weekend Mass of their choice. Children will receive the sacrament of Penance as close as practically possible to the reception of First Holy Communion. If the parent or pastor feel the child needs more time, the parent may be asked to work with the child at home with materials provided.

Your role in this process is crucial. How you model your faith at home in your daily life greatly influences your child. You are their primary and most effective teacher of the Catholic Faith! The following are suggestions to ready your child to receive these sacraments for the first time:

- Involve your child in the life of the parish community.
- Use your own words to describe what is happening at different parts of the Mass
- Encourage your child to talk about the Mass by asking simple questions on the way home relating to the Scriptures or homily: What did you hear read from the Bible today? What was Father (or Deacon's) message in the homily?
- Nurture your child's faith at home. Say grace at family meals, encourage bedtime prayers, allow a quiet moment of prayer after you receive Holy Communion or after Mass before you embark again on the rest of your day.
- Read the story of the Last Supper with your child (See Matthew 26:26, Luke 22:14, or Mark 14:22). Help them to understand the great spiritual gift given to us through Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

Most importantly, help your child understand that Catholics experience the most profound union with God when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion. Your child should feel a longing and show excitement about receiving Holy Communion each week when we gather as a community of faith followers of Christ.