

# Sacramental People

AS MEMBERS OF THIS PARISH COMMUNITY PREPARE FOR SACRAMENTS,  
WE THE FAITHFUL JOURNEY WITH THEM.

## We Belong

### Baptism as Entrance into the Life of Christ and the Church

It may seem strange to start preparing children for their First Communion by discussing Baptism. But, in fact, nothing could be more logical.

Baptism is the very first of the sacraments, and only those who are baptized may approach the table of the Eucharist. Because of Baptism we belong to God's family and have a right to sit at the table of the Lord's Supper. It is Baptism that makes us sharers in the life of Christ and members of the Body of Christ, and



joins us to the community of the Church.

In the waters of Baptism, God claims us as his very own children with an irrevocable love. We are a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation," thanks to the special relationship with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—that we receive when we are baptized.

## Faith Focus

**B**aptism joins us to Christ and to the members of the church community.

## The Church Says . . .

**B**aptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children, a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. (See *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, 2)

## Prayer

**G**od, our loving Father,  
we thank you for the gift of our baptism.  
You welcome us into your Church.  
Send us the Holy Spirit  
as we learn to live as children of God.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## For Reflection

**W**hat difference does it make in my life that I am baptized?

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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## **What does the Church ask of parents in sacramental preparation?**

The Church views the role of parents in the religious formation of children as both a privilege and an obligation. When you presented your child to the Church for Baptism, you were distinctly reminded that you have the responsibility to “bring [your child] up in the practice of the faith” (*Rite of Baptism* 56). This privilege and obligation extend to sacrament preparation.

## **How does my child’s Eucharist book include the family?**

The child’s book includes a “Together as a Family” section on the Scripture and doctrine pages in each chapter. In addition, an entire page is devoted to “Together as a Family” at the conclusion of each chapter.

## **How will I know if my child is ready for first Eucharist?**

The first question to ask yourself is, “Is my child at Mass regularly?” If your child attends Mass each Sunday and is capable of paying attention to what is going on, that is the first step. The second question to ask is, “Does my child have a sincere desire to share in the Eucharist?” When children attend Mass regularly, eventually they want to participate more fully. This is a logical progression that leads the child to ask, “When can I go to communion?” Finally, ask yourself, “Does my child understand that this consecrated bread and wine is truly the Body and Blood of Jesus?”

## **How can I help my child understand that the Eucharist is Jesus’ Body and Blood?**

The easiest way to gain an insight into your child’s appreciation into this mystery of our faith is to ask your child, “What is different about the bread and wine we share at Sunday Eucharist?” Your child may immediately say that it is Jesus’ Body and Blood. Or your child may simply say that the bread and wine

have been blessed by the priest. If the latter happens, continue the discussion by asking, “How do the bread and wine change when the priest blesses them?” At this point a child usually will remember that the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

## **Are there prayers my child should learn?**

As children come to readiness for First Communion, they should be learning the acclamations, responses, and prayers of the Mass. Initially, a child will learn to pray the Our Father with the rest of the assembly at Mass. Then gradually, a child should be able to sing or pray the Holy, holy, holy acclamation, the memorial acclamation, the Great Amen, and other brief responses. Children can learn these simply by being at Mass and hearing them every week. Also, you can find them in the back of your child’s Eucharist book in the “Celebrating the Mass” section on pages 62–71.

## **How should my child behave at Mass?**

As your child now begins to share in the Eucharist, remind your son or daughter that he or she is an important part of the community gathered for Mass. Encourage your child, by your participation, to participate in the music and prayers, rather than bring along a prayer book or other form of amusement, which distracts from his or her active participation. Remind your child that at Mass we sing, pray, and sometimes are quiet. Help your child receive the Eucharist with reverence. Even the most agreeable and well-behaved children need to be reminded of these things often.

## **What is the Church’s rule about fasting before going to communion?**

Church law requires Catholics to fast from food and beverages, except for medicine and water, for one hour before going to communion.