

First Eucharist

If you were asked what is the “source and summit” of the Catholic Faith, what would you say? Some might answer “God the Father” while others might say the “Holy Spirit.” And though these answers would certainly be true, it is the Eucharist that has been called the “*the source and summit of the Christian Life*” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1324). Why? Because when we receive the Eucharist, our God, who became man and died for us, freely gives us the greatest gift we could ever receive—Himself! It is called the “summit” because through the Eucharist, we draw near to God as He draws near to us. We become united together with the family of the Church on earth and the worship of the angels and saints in Heaven. It is the “source” because we receive the grace, life, and strength needed to grow and persevere in our faith.



We believe that during the consecration at Mass, the bread and wine become the true Body and Blood of Jesus. Unlike some of our protestant friends who believe that bread and wine at Mass are just symbols of Jesus, we as Catholics believe that Jesus is really and entirely present in each of the two elements—bread and wine. They BECOME the body and the blood of Jesus in a magnificent miracle that we can only see and understand through the eyes of faith. How is this possible, you ask? If God can create everything out of nothing and become incarnate as man, then surely this same God can change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus.

Most Frequently Asked Questions about the Sacrament

How can I help foster my child’s faith growth, development and understanding of the Eucharist? The good news is you don’t have to be a Theologian to teach your child about the Sacraments. In fact, the best way to teach them is by showing them. The way they see you receive the Eucharist and approach going to Mass will speak more loudly than anything else you say. Celebrate the Eucharist Weekly, go to church as a family, talk about what you hear and see. Your children will learn from your reverence and enthusiasm. Make Sunday Special in some way to celebrate the Lord’s Day.

The more you learn about the Sacraments, the more you’ll get excited about them, and the easier it will be to talk about it with your children. Just as you keep yourself professionally and personally updated, attend faith activities and programs. Find the time to renew and refresh your own faith life. You deserve it!

Is it true that both my child and I, as parent, must attend the practice session scheduled one week before the actual date of First Communion? Yes! See the important dates & info sheet for times.

How do I know if my child is truly ready to receive First Eucharist? The child should know and understand that the body and blood of Jesus in Eucharist is different from the bread and drink we serve at our family meals; your child must have sufficient, age-appropriate knowledge to understand that this consecrated bread really IS the Body of Jesus; and that he/she has a real desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Talking with your child is the main way to discern a readiness to receive First Eucharist.

Should my child drink from the cup? The Church encourages the use of both species (bread and wine) during liturgy, especially on important occasions like First Communion. Children should understand that the wine consecrated at Mass is a special Altar Wine made specifically for use in liturgy. We encourage, but do not force, children to drink from the cup on First Communion day. Remember that when we receive from the cup, we do not “dip” the host into the chalice/cup even though we may have seen others do this.

Will you practice with the children by allowing them to taste the unconsecrated host and wine before the ceremony? Yes! Children in St. Brendan School, in the “Faith At Home” program and in the Faith Formation program will practice receiving the unconsecrated host and taste the wine. You will need to check the online lesson plan calendar for the dates. Teachers of children in our school will notify us when they are ready for the session on tasting the host and wine. Please let us know if your child has an allergy and is unable to receive the consecrated host because of its ingredients or cannot drink wine from the cup. Special hosts are available for those with allergies.

How should my child be taught to receive Eucharist, by mouth or in the hand? More than likely, your child will imitate whichever way you normally receive Eucharist. The two primary methods of receiving Holy Communion are in the hand or directly on the tongue. If receiving by hand, the communicant should not grab the Eucharistic bread from the priest or minister but receive it in their left hand, which is folded over their right hand (using their right hand to place the host in their mouth).

Are there “fasting rules” regarding the reception of Eucharist? Yes! Church law requires all Catholics to fast from solid food and beverage (except water) for one hour before receiving Communion. Medication is always exempted.

Is it all right to chew the host? Yes!

What about “the First Communion party?” Celebrating special occasions with family and friends is a part of life. However, the central focus and emphasis of First Communion should be placed on the Liturgy itself. Often when parents ask the child years later what he/she remembers most about First Communion, the answer is often “my party!” It’s natural and good for the child to be excited about the celebration. That is what a party given in a child’s honor should do, but reminding the child *why* there is a party, *why* we are celebrating, and *why* people are bringing gifts to honor the occasion needs to be as much a part of the “story” as anything else. It is a great teaching moment.

Can we take pictures during the ceremony? If you would like to take pictures please do so respectfully from the pews so as not to disrupt the sacredness of the Liturgy! Please refrain from using the flash, since it can pose a distraction. Also, feel free to use the church before and after the celebration for posed pictures around the Altar or in the Gathering Space.

Each of us here in the Ministry of Evangelization and Catechesis office, your child’s teachers at St. Brendan School and the Catechists/Aides all share in your joy. It is our pleasure to work with each of you during this preparation time. Our prayers remain with you!