

## **RECAP NOTES – FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION PARENT MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 11, 2021 via ZOOM**

*Heavenly Father, we come to you today asking for your guidance, wisdom, and support as we begin this meeting. Fill us with your grace, Lord God, as we begin the preparation for the children of our schools for the sacraments of reconciliation and holy communion. We ask that your presence with us tonight may remind us of your great love for us and your desire for our happiness. We ask these things through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

### CATECHISM:

#### **The Parish team introductions:**

- Fr. John Schnurr, Pastor
- Fr. Gregory Ogorzalek, Associate Pastor
- Mrs. Arden Ouellette, Lay Parish Minister

#### **Role of parents:**

- Parents have brought children for baptism and as such are the primary catechists or teachers of the faith for their children. Ensuring your child knows how to make the Sign of the Cross and how to recite common prayers (The Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary etc.) is an important element in faith formation and preparing them for sacraments.
- Parents are to be a good example of the faith to their children. The practice of your faith is important in the faith development of your child. It is important to practice the faith as a family – to pray together, to prepare for these sacraments together, to attend Mass together.
- Why is it important to prepare these children for a sacrament?
  - A sacrament is an outward sign, instituted by Christ, which gives grace.
  - Every sacrament is an encounter with the Risen Christ. Just as we prepare when we meet an important person, we need to be prepared for the sacraments to understand what is going on, and so that we can receive our Lord with the most reverence and dignity.

#### **Role of parish:**

- The parish does the sacramental registration, during covid we are making videos throughout the year that the school will share with the classes.
- Fr. Gregory will visit all Grade 2 classes a minimum of twice this year and Mrs. Ouellette will visit when possible.
- The parish provides weekly Sunday mass and encourages and welcomes all families to participate in the mass.
- The parish can provide sacramental and liturgical guidance to those who request it.

## **Role of schools:**

- The schools teach the curriculum which includes training on the sacraments as well as other liturgical and faith teachings that help the children develop a heightened understanding of the faith.
- The schools will work collaboratively with the parish to ensure information is shared, priest visits take place and provide children with an opportunity to explore and experience the faith in a variety of ways including school liturgies, daily prayer and special liturgical seasonal events.

**The celebration of these sacraments will happen at the Church – it is important to remember that the sacraments are a function of the church – they are not a school event. The church is where the sacramental life of the parish takes place. Therefore preparation, especially on the part of the parents, has to extend beyond the school and home.**

## Sacramental Overview:

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### ***First Reconciliation:***

The sacrament of reconciliation is an encounter with Christ who forgives sins.

**What is sin?** A break in our relationship with God – the break in our relationship can either be total or partial, if the sin was serious or less-serious. Mortal vs venial sin.

**Why do we need to be forgiven?** Sin isn't just "breaking the rules"; sin damages our relationship with God. Because the restoration of a relationship needs both parties (in this case, God and us), this is why we need to confess our sins.

**Why confess to a priest?** The priest is the representative of Christ and works on behalf of the Church. The mission of the Church is reconciliation of us with God. Everything that the Christ has done, and everything that the Church has done and continues to do, is for this main purpose: the reconciliation of us with God.

Everything – creation, the ten commandments, the prophets, the incarnation, the birth of Jesus, the ministry of Jesus, the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the founding of the Church and her mission for the last 2000 years - has been for reconciling us to God.

The following is a link to a short video which provides a good explanation of confession:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-mtrt\\_xyI0&ab\\_channel=uCatholic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-mtrt_xyI0&ab_channel=uCatholic)

### **Why at this point in the child's life?**

- Age of reason – what does this mean? Capable and culpable (guilty) of sin.
- Important to help the child know what sin is:
  - Sin is not a bad feeling or emotion:
    - It's not a sin to feel disappointed that you didn't win a hockey game
    - It's not a sin to feel sad if it's raining and you cannot play outside
    - It's not a sin to feel lonely if you don't have friends
    - It's not a sin to feel grief when a pet dies
    - It is not a sin to feel confusion when we don't understand something
  - Sin is not doing something accidentally
    - It's not a sin to break a dish accidentally
    - It's not a sin to not do your chores if you forgot
    - It's not a sin if a child swings the baseball bat and the ball hits another person
  - Sin has to do with the *intention*
    - It is a sin if the child chooses to avoid chores
    - It is a sin if someone throws a baseball at another person intending to hurt them in some way.
    - It is a sin if the child intended to cheat on a test
    - It is a sin if the child chooses to disobey their parents or fight with their siblings
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### **Why must the child do First Reconciliation before receiving First Communion?**

- Need to be in a state of grace for the reception of Holy Communion.
- We want to instill in them the necessity of the sacrament of reconciliation – parents should, as always, be a good example in the practice of the faith. It would be great if your children see you approach this sacrament – this shows them that there is nothing scary about this sacrament, and that all of us, even their parents need to approach the mercy of God.

### **Accommodations for students with difficulties.**

If your child needs assistance during confession (things written down or use of an Ipad or similar for nonverbal children) we will gladly support what is needed to make the sacrament a successful and positive experience for the child.

. At the very minimum, they need to express sorrow for their sins in some way. Please contact the parish office directly for guidance on accommodations if needed.

## ***First Communion:***

### **Overview of the Sacrament:**

- Holy Communion is an encounter with Christ – his very body and blood.
- The Eucharist is the Body of Christ – even if our faith is weak, and we have difficulty understanding this mystery, the Eucharist is still the Body of Christ. So, we need to be prepared for receiving Jesus even if our faith is imperfect.

### **Some catechesis on the Real Presence:**

- We believe in what Jesus tells us, even if we don't see it (heaven, God the Father, God the Holy Spirit)
- How can it be the body of Jesus? It's a mystery. Old word: Transubstantiation. Sacramentally present (*divine action in a physical thing i.e., Baptism, anointing of the sick, marriage*)
- Jesus makes himself into the appearance of bread; it is common, inviting and nourishing, so that we can approach him without fear.

### **Proper Dispensation to Receive Eucharist:**

- We need to have the proper disposition to receive Jesus – therefore the Eucharist is only for baptized Catholics, who have reached the age of reason, and received instruction before their first communion.
- Correlation with a pregnant mother – we act differently when we have someone inside us. How should we act knowing that Jesus is dwelling inside us? How should we prepare knowing that we are going to have someone within us?
- This should not be strange or unfamiliar for a catholic family. Parents should, as always, be a good example in the practice of the faith. It would be great if your children see you receiving the Eucharist and making Sunday Mass a priority in your life. The best training you can give to your child is for them to see that this is something important in your life. Especially leading up to your child's big day, my encouragement to you, is if you're not regularly attending Mass, is to start making this a priority in your life.

## **LOGISTICS AND IMPORTANT DATES:**

The sacraments will be celebrated by date – not organized by school or classroom. This is a much more manageable approach and enables families to choose dates/times that work for them. Additionally, the sacrament celebration is first and foremost a parish event, not a school event, and as such should be parish and family focused.

Parents will be asked to use our parish website Book Online feature to book for each sacrament. There will be maximum capacity limits for all services.

### **Online Booking:**

Online booking for BOTH First Reconciliation and First Communion opens Monday January 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm and closes January 17<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm.

Parents will be given further booking directions closer to the date booking opens.

### **Sacrament Dates:**

**First Reconciliation:** (booking will be done in 30-minute time slots) on the following dates:

- Thursday March 24 from 5:30pm to 7:00pm
- Friday March 25 from 5:30pm to 7:00pm
- Saturday March 26 from 11:00am to 12:30pm  
*(If you cannot attend any of these dates you can bring your child to regularly scheduled confessions anytime before their First Communion)*

**First Communion:**

- Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup> with services at: 11:00am, 1:00pm and 3:00pm
- Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup> with services at: 11:00am, 1:00pm and 3:00pm  
*(If your child cannot attend any of these dates, please contact the parish office)*

***Parents will receive updates about the sacraments from the parish throughout the year regarding other details. Watch your inbox for updates and contact us if you have any questions.***

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