

First Communion (Children)

Keep in mind the following, based on the guidance found in the archdiocesan document *Sacraments for Young People* and the [guidance recently issued on sacraments in the time of public health concern](#):

- Since sacraments are parish celebrations, the Mass for First Communion should be in the parish of the candidate and family during a regularly scheduled Mass. [This Mass could be on a weekday if needed.](#)
- There is no reason to unduly wait for the celebration of First Communion if children are prepared. [Even if these celebrations will be simpler and include fewer families, children who are prepared for this sacrament should receive it as soon as safely possible.](#)
- Those who are receiving Holy Communion for the first time have a unique role. They participate fully in this and every other Eucharist by taking part in the singing, the spoken prayer, by listening to the scriptures and the liturgical texts spoken in their name by the priest and now receiving Holy Communion. [There will be differences at this time - people will be sitting farther apart \(social distancing\); hymnals, missalettes, and other materials removed from the pews \(infection control\); water removed from holy water fonts \(infection control\); may be fewer servers or none at all \(social distancing\); everyone is encouraged to wear a face mask \(infection control\).](#)
- Candidates should not be involved in liturgical roles or ministries such as lector, reader of intercessions, cantor, server or special Eucharistic minister. Those who normally fulfill these liturgical roles in the parish would be the best choice for the persons to serve in these capacities at the liturgy. The celebration of a sacrament allows the parish community to minister to those who are candidates for the sacrament. [What other ways can they be 'involved in' the liturgy that do not take place *during* the liturgy? Maybe beforehand in preparations?](#)
- Candidates for First Communion and their families are sometimes included in the Entrance Procession. The purpose of the procession is to help unify the assembly and to draw those already in place into the action of gathering for the celebration. There is no liturgical requirement that the candidates or families be in the Entrance Procession. If the candidates and their families are included in the procession, they should have the necessary programs or hymnals that allow

them to participate in the singing of the entrance hymn. Be aware that there may not be an Entrance Procession at all.

- Especially at a Mass that includes First Communion, but on any Sunday, the blessing and sprinkling of water may replace the customary Penitential Act. Consider this option in light of the absence of blessed water at the doors of church and as a reminder of everyone's baptism, especially these children.
- The Procession with the Gifts can include some of the candidates bringing the bread and wine to the altar... There will not be a Procession with the Gifts for the foreseeable future. Bread and wine will be brought directly from the credence table to the altar.
- Helping the candidates know what to expect when receiving Holy Communion, both the bread and the wine, will enable them to be more relaxed and participate more fully in the sacrament celebration. Tasting the bread and wine and rehearsing how to receive the consecrated bread and how to drink from the cup are helpful to ensure a prayerful celebration. Practice is important, but do not over practice.
 - Note that neither the children nor others will be drinking from the chalice.
 - No physical contact at the Our Father or Sign of Peace (except family you live with).
 - Holy Communion on the tongue is **strongly** discouraged. Practice receiving in the hand numerous times.
 - There will be no Holy Communion from the chalice.
- The recessional or procession at the end of the celebration does not fulfill any liturgical function or need. Its purpose is to help the ministers in the sanctuary leave with a sense of order and dignity. Be aware that there may not be a Recessional procession at all.