

## Church of the Presentation

### *Thoughts for Parents of First Communion Children*



Moms and Dads, if you're asking the question, "How can we - in our home - prepare our child for first Communion?" then, your child is already growing up in the atmosphere where believing, knowing, and experiencing God just runs in the family. It is and can be a part of the fabric of our everyday life! As you journey with your child this year, we pray that you all discover or re-discover the gift of the Eucharist and the reality of God's love made flesh. Enjoy seeing things through the eyes of your children!

**Talk together.** Share family stories. Tell stories about your "God" times. Use Scripture stories, and even children's literature that teach morals. Answer their questions, even the ones they're not asking!

**Stress the connection of their Baptism and the Eucharist.** Get out your photo albums and recall your child's baptism. Unpack the baptismal garment and tell its history: when and where you bought it or who made it, who else wore it. Celebrate your child's Baptism Day! Light their baptismal candle, say a prayer and have a cake! If you can, attend the Easter Vigil as a family to see our most wonderful celebration of the Sacraments.

**Celebrate the liturgical seasons at home.** Put out an Advent wreath and the crèche; have Epiphany house blessing; have a Lenten Rice bowl on your table; make Lenten sacrifices together; go to Reconciliation as a family. There are many ways to celebrate the sacredness of Lent.

**Put a little *extra* into family meals.** (they have a big connection to Eucharist!) Make it a point to eat together as much as you can. Let your child decorate the table for an evening meal. Have desert! Do the dishes together. Talk about special meals your family has shared. Fr. Bob always calls the altar "The best table in town" and your table is the second best!

**Pray as a family** – often and as a natural part of family life: mealtimes, bedtimes, happy times, worrisome times, after an argument, when someone is in trouble, always on special occasions. Create a prayer space in your home. Pray over your children. Pray for them. Also, pray before and after you receive the Eucharist at Mass.

**Make Mass a family event.** Sit near the front. Point out one or two things each week for your child to watch for. Talk about the homily on the way home. Before liturgy talk with your family about who you want to pray for during the General Intercessions; and what you want to thank God for during the Eucharistic Prayer. Have brunch afterwards! Spend the day together in a true Sabbath day – a day of rest.

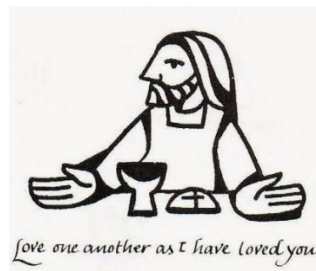
**Grow together in appreciation of God's Word.** On Saturday evenings, read the scriptures you will hear at Mass. What is God saying to your family this weekend? How can you put the readings into practice?

**Take a tour of your church.** Point out to your child where he or she was baptized, show him or her the altar up close, the tabernacle, the oils, etc. Help them be comfortable with the Church itself. When you have time, visit another church as well, to see the space and architecture.

**The Eucharist commits and connects us to the poor** (CCC #1397). Together fix a meal for a neighbor in need, sort through toys and clothing for gifts to the poor, visit a nursing home, add pennies to a charitable donation.

**Keep First Communion first.** It should be just what we call it: *first*. Don't put so much emphasis on this one. It's important because it is the *first of many*, the *first of a lifetime of coming to the Table*. There should be a second and a third and so on.

**Participate in Parish life.** You are FAMILY here! Join us for service projects and social events. Let Presentation be a hub for your family. Make sure your child(ren) know that they are loved and welcomed by everyone here.



This time of preparation is just another way to invite you to recognize the gift of your children. They will look with wonder on the meaning of the Eucharist in their lives, and they will offer this gift to you and all of us. Through *their* wonder, our entire parish community will learn again what it means to taste and see the Goodness of the Lord dwelling among us. Your children are gifts to our parish and to the entire Church!