



ORIGIN FAMILY

First Reconciliation
&
First Communion

SACRAMENT PREPARATION
PARENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

Last updated 10/13/2023

SACRAMENT PREPARATION INFORMATION (GRADES 2-7)

Preparation for First Reconciliation & First Communion for Grades 2-7 is completed under our Origin | Family program in a blended format, with weekly preparation at home *plus* workshops and specific onsite events during the year.

"At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'" (CCC 1323) Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, proclaims the Eucharist as the "source and summit of Christian life." (LG1 11).

This sacrament of initiation defines us as Catholics, nourishes us to live out our faith, and binds us together as one community; is so essential that we are called to celebrate Mass and receive the Eucharist every week.

At St. Francis, we support our families desire to prepare their children to receive their First Holy Communion beginning in 2nd grade. Children are prepared for this sacrament by:

- Living in a Catholic family where they observe their parents and siblings attending Mass and receiving Communion weekly.
- Hearing the Word of God in the family and through Origin: Family and other activities.
- Fully participating and completing our sacrament preparation program for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and celebrating that sacrament first.
- Fully participating and completing our sacrament preparation program for the Sacrament of the Eucharist.
- Assessment of readiness by the parents, Origin Team and pastor.

All families with children preparing for Sacraments in grades 2-7 must be enrolled and participate in Origin: Family. Sacramental Preparation programming is in addition to Origin: Family, not in replacement of.

Beginning in 2020, Sacrament Preparation is now readiness based dependent upon the child, no longer based on 2 years of enrollment. Students who are in 2nd grade or up and determined “ready” may receive after one year of dedicated preparation. Please see the readiness assessment below to help in your discernment of your child’s readiness.

-  You are regularly attending Mass on Sundays.
-  Your child is at least 7 years old and in 2nd grade or higher
-  They have a relationship with Jesus and basic understanding that He died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead so we can have a relationship with him.
-  They have some understanding of the difference between right and wrong, morally good and bad.
-  They are learning to know the difference between sins and accidents or mistakes.
-  They are capable of apologizing.
-  They are beginning to know God as a loving Father who forgives us.
-  They can (for the most part) pay attention at weekly Sunday Mass.
-  They have some appreciation that God works through miracles.
-  They show curiosity about the Eucharist.
-  They can follow directions on how to (physically) partake in the Eucharist (without playing or disturbing others during the sacrament at Mass)

ENROLLMENT & PREPARATION INFORMATION

There is a Sacrament preparation fee of \$100 per student and this includes all costs associated with Sacrament preparation, including all materials, Learning Centers, Workshops, priest fees for First Reconciliation Nights, additional Masses, etc.

Sacrament Enrollment Guidelines

It is required that all Sacrament Preparation students must be baptized and provide a copy of their Baptism Certificate (with the priest's signature and/or parish seal) at the time of registration. If you do not have a copy, you have 45 days from the date of registration to provide a copy to St. Francis. Please contact us if you expect to be delayed in submitting this vital document.

- If your child has not been baptized and is age 6 or younger, please contact Susana Minjares at sminjares@stfoafrisco.org to get more information for your child to be baptized.
- Children of Catholic parent(s) who have reached the age of 7 (age of reason) and have not been baptized are invited to participate in the *RCIA Adapted for Children* program. Please contact Jennifer Alameda at jalameda@stfoafrisco.org to enroll your child in this program.
- Discernment of your child's readiness using the readiness checklist provided.

Preparation will be completed at home, with parents' guidance, using *Prepared for Grace - Augustine Institutes online sacrament preparation program. Signs of Grace: You Are Forgiven will be used for Reconciliation preparation and Signs of Grace: You Are Loved for Eucharist preparation. A link to access your child's online account will be emailed to the Primary Parent's email from your Origin Family registration form.

Completion of your child's online sacrament preparation will be monitored by the Origin Faith Formation Office. Each online lesson takes at minimum 30 minutes to complete. *Any students reported completion time that is less than 3.5 hours in total for each sacrament may be required to complete an in-person assessment with a Priest or Origin Staff member.*

All lessons will need to be completed before each sacrament is received.

**See addendum available for students in grades 6-7.*

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS & STUDENTS

1) ATTEND MASS WEEKLY

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. It is critical that we attend Mass on Sundays to worship God and honor his commandment to “keep holy the Sabbath.” Our Catholic faith is meant to be lived, not just learned about, it is essential that your family attend Mass together to fulfill your Sunday obligation.

Weekly Mass attendance provides an excellent hands-on opportunity to explain the Mass to your child as well as giving an opportunity for your child to understand and practice communal participation. All families are expected to attend Saturday Vigil/Sunday Mass in order to grow in understanding of their Catholic Faith. Please visit our parish website, stfoafrisco.org for a full list of opportunities for your family to attend Mass even with busy schedules.

CCC 2182 Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2) ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLETING THE REQUIREMENTS

It is your responsibility to participate fully in the Sacrament Preparation components, including but not limited participating in our Origin: Family faith formation program, the online sessions through Augustine Institute specific to First Reconciliation and First Communion, Learning Centers, Workshops and required Rehearsals.

Please understand that neglect or unwillingness to meet these expectations may result in sacraments being delayed until a later time. No child will be denied Sacraments, but they must be properly prepared to receive them as outlined in the Handbook.

SACRAMENT LEARNING CENTERS

Parent led learning centers are an important preparatory tool in your child's sacrament preparation and should be used as an opportunity to assess your child's understanding of each sacrament. These learning centers are intended to be completed onsite by 2nd - 7th Graders preparing for First Reconciliation and Eucharist and must be accompanied by a parent during the various days and times that are offered.

You may choose from the times listed below. Reservations are not necessary. As we are preparing over 300 students for First Reconciliation this year, some of the times listed below may be busier than others. We thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

2023-2024 First Reconciliation Learning Centers*:

- Friday, December 1 from 4:00pm – 7:00pm
- Saturday, December 2 from 9:00am – 7:00pm
- Friday, December 15 from 4:00pm – 7:00pm
- Sunday, December 16 from 9:00am – 7:00pm

2023-2024 Eucharist Learning Centers*:

- Friday, March 8 from 4:00pm – 7:00pm
- Saturday, March 9 from 9:00am – 7:00pm
- Friday, March 15 from 4:00pm – 7:00pm
- Saturday, March 16 from 9:00am – 7:00pm
- Saturday, March 23 from 9:00am – 4:00pm

**These dates & times may be subject to change, please monitor your email for updates as they are available.*

SACRAMENT WORKSHOPS

These parent/child workshops will focus on the importance of the sacrament they are preparing for and provide an opportunity for children to learn how to properly complete each sacrament.

First Reconciliation Workshop (English): Saturday, January 20 at 9:00am–10:30am

First Eucharist Workshop (English): Saturday, April 20 at 9:00am – 10:30am

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

First Reconciliation Services: The Reconciliation Services will be held in the Church for all our Sacrament Preparation children. We will have several confessionals set up throughout the Church.

Thursday, January 25th and Friday, January 26th beginning at 6:00pm.

Advance sign up is required. Invitations to sign up will be sent once all requirements to receive the Sacrament have been met.

First Eucharist Masses:

Pending Approval – 2 Weekend options will be available

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION AT ST FRANCIS:

- 1) Greet the Priest by making the sign of the cross and saying, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"
- 2) The priest will greet you, after which you say: "Bless me Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession. These are my sins"
- 3) Tell your sins simply and honestly to the priest. The say (or something similar) "I am sorry for these and all of my sins"
- 4) Listen to the advice the priest gives you and accept the penance from him. *If you cannot hear the penance you are given, you may ask the priest to repeat.*
- 5) Make an Act of Contrition for your sins.
- 6) Listen quietly while the priest gives you absolution.
- 7) The priest will then dismiss you with a prayer similar to this one: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace." And you respond by saying: "Thanks be to God."
- 8) After leaving the confessional, go to a pew and kneel in prayer. Spend some time with Our Lord thanking and praising Him for the gift of His mercy. If the priest has given you specific prayers as your penance, this is when you would complete them.
- 9) The sacrament is not complete until your penance is complete.

PRAYERS TO KNOW FOR RECONCILIATION

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be world without end. **Amen.**

Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come. thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. **Amen.**

Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. **Amen.**

Act of Contrition

My God,

I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.

In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,

I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things.

I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more,

and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.

In his name, my God, have mercy. **Amen**

PRAYERS TO KNOW FOR FIRST COMMUNION

The Confiteor Prayer

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do,
(strike chest 3 times while saying following line)
through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault;
therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers, and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Invitation to Communion Response

In the Roman Catholic Church the words of this invitation and our response is inspired by scripture.

The priest holds up the sacred species and says, *“This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (from John 1:29) to which is added, “Happy are those who are called to the supper of the lamb.” (from Revelation 19:9).*

Then the priest and the assembly respond together:

“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed” (from Matthew 8:8).

HOW TO RECEIVE FIRST COMMUNION

PROCESSING (approaching the Altar):

Face the person in front of you, be respectful (No talking or dragging your feet, you should be thinking of the gift of Jesus you are about to receive!)

- Prayerful hands while in line
- **Bow** as the person in front of you is receiving
- Come CLOSE to the Eucharistic Minister (EM)

Receiving on the TONGUE:

- Open mouth wide and place tongue far out (to allow easy and safe placement)
- Close mouth before stepping away

Receiving in the HAND:

- Strong hand (the one the child writes with) underneath the weak hand
- Weak hand is "cupped" (We call it "making a throne") but open so that the host may be placed easily
- "Throne" (both hands) should be level with the heart. (This is an appropriate way to keep their hands raised high enough)
- Priest, Deacon, or Eucharistic Minister (EM) says "The Body of Christ"
- Communicant responds "**Amen**"
- The host is placed in their hands. Eyes on the host at all times
- Carefully use strong hand to place host in mouth before stepping away.
- Weak hand should remain under (but NOT touching) the strong hand (to make sure if the host falls, it does not fall on the ground) until the host is in their mouth and mouth closed
- Consume the host in front of the Priest, Deacon, or Eucharistic Minister before walking away

After Communion:

- Prayerfully thank God for your life, your family and friends, and all He has done for you. Ask Him to help you live the life He has called you to. If it's hard to remember this, always at least say an Our Father

DRESS GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

The Sacrament of First Eucharist is a beautiful occasion and one to be held with reverence. When we receive the Eucharist, it is important that our attire portray the significance of what we are about to receive to us, our family, and the church community. Our dress should show our respect and reverence for the Sacrament.

Below are some basic guidelines for appropriate attire for First Communion Mass at our parish. If you have any questions regarding attire for the First Communion Mass, please contact any member of our Origin Faith Formation Team.

Dress Guidelines for Girls:

- Dress must cover shoulder and have a modest neckline (no spaghetti straps)
- Dress must be at or below knee (floor length dresses are discouraged due to high frequency of tripping for younger students)
- Traditionally, First Communion dresses are white but this is not a requirement.
- Veil is optional
- Dress shoes (no flip flops, or open backed shoes), a small heel is ok.
- Students should not wear gloves and should not carry a purse.

Dress Guidelines for Boys:

- Dress Pants/Slacks (no jeans)
- Dress Shirt with a collar
- A Coat and Tie are customary, but this is not a requirement.
- Dress shoes (no athletic shoes, flip flops, etc.)

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Parish Contact Information

Phone: 972-712-2645

Web: www.stfoafrisco.org/originfamily

Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9am-12pm & 1pm-5pm

Friday 9am – 12pm

Origin Faith Formation Team

Rachel Hansen – Family Faith Formation Manager – English

972-712-2645, ext. 232, rhansen@stfoafrisco.org

Blanca Balderas – Family Faith Formation Manager – Bilingual

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