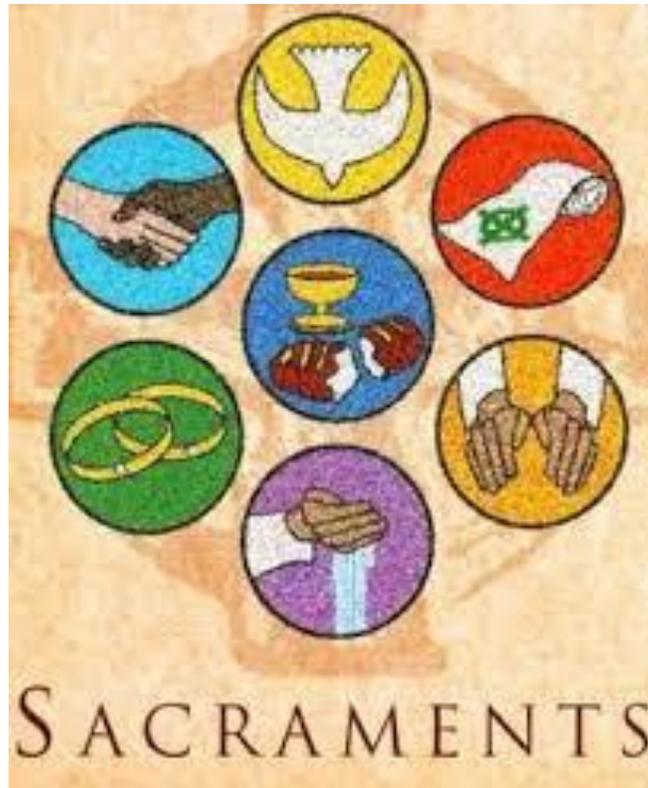


Sacrament Preparation Parent Handbook

REVISED 2019



Making Disciples....

Building up the Body of Christ....

Putting children in communion with Jesus Christ

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
8000 Eldorado Parkway
Frisco, TX 75033
972-712-2645



Important Phone Numbers

Phone number during office hours

972-712-2645

Phone number during sessions

972-712-2645; ext 233

Attendance Email

faithformation@stfoafrisco.org

Fax: 972-712-1087

<https://www.stfoafrisco.org/k-5-childrens-ministry.html>

Children's Ministry Staff

Director Ext. 229

Rachel Hansen

Coordinator Ext. 232

rhansen@stfoafrisco.org

Children's Ministry Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9:00am-Noon and 1:00pm-3:00pm

and occasionally during session times

Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 9:00am-Noon and 1:00pm-5:00pm

Friday 9:00am-Noon

Mission Statement

Our mission at St. Francis of Assisi is to build up the Body of Christ by putting children and youth in communion with Jesus Christ through worship, catechesis, sacraments, building community and service to others.

Children's Ministry

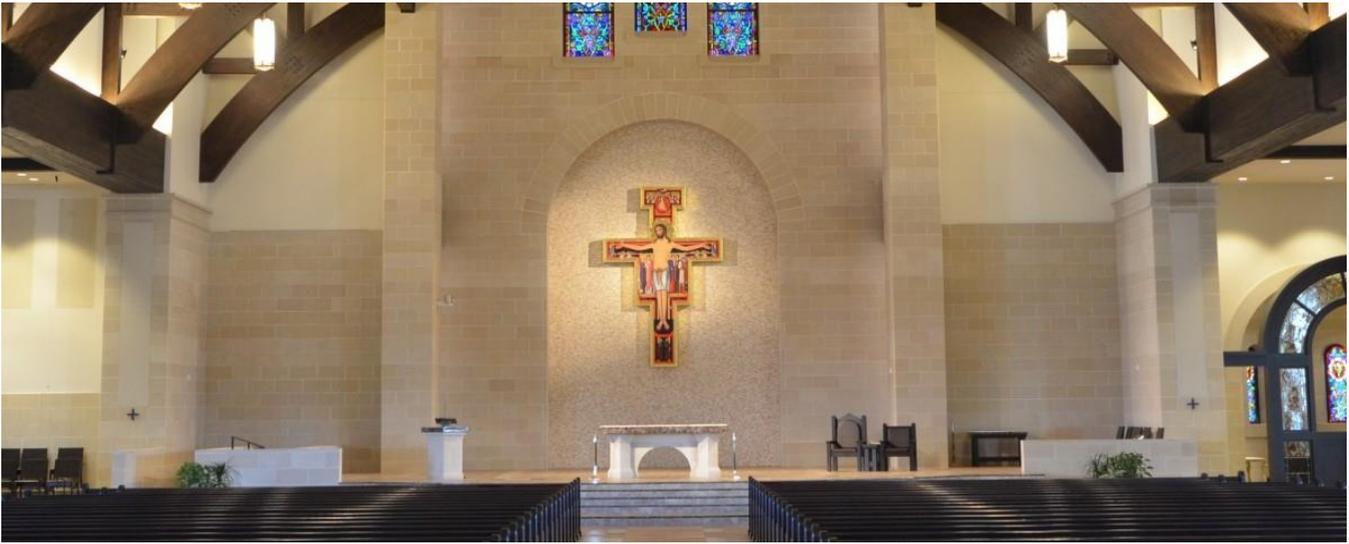
Welcome to your child's sacrament preparation years. We are so excited to share in the responsibilities for your child's spiritual development and faith formation. This handbook contains pertinent information to your child's Faith Formation year. As acknowledged on your child's registration form, you agreed it's the parent's responsibility to read, understand and adhere to the Faith Formation policies. There are also several mandatory events scheduled throughout the catechetical year (dates are listed on the CM calendar and later in this packet). Please make sure to make these events a priority. Make-up opportunities will **NOT** be offered if the event is missed.

Sacrament Enrollment Guidelines

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas has issued guidelines to all parishes in regards to Faith Formation and Preparation for receipt of Sacraments. Children are to be enrolled in a formal Faith Formation program for one full year prior to the year of preparation and reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Typically, children begin this process in 1st grade and receive the sacrament in 2nd grade. However, we do offer sacrament preparation for all children.

It is required that all 2nd year Sacrament Preparation students must be baptized and provide a copy of the Baptism Certificate (with the priest's signature and/or parish seal) at the time of registration.

- If your child has not been baptized and is age 6 or younger, please contact Cathy Maranon at cmaranon@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 process. Please contact Rachel Martinez at rmartinez@stfoafrisco.org to enroll your child in the program.



Mass Attendance

Because our Catholic faith is meant to be lived, not just learned about, it is essential that your family attend Mass together on a weekly basis. The instruction received in our Faith Formation Program does not replace your child's participation in Sunday Mass or Holy Days of Obligation. Rather, our Faith Formation Program revolves around the Mass, the Eucharist and sees to it that each child grows in their understanding of their Catholic Faith through a full participation in Mass and class. 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 participation behavior during Mass. All students are expected to attend Saturday Vigil/Sunday Mass weekly in order to grow an understanding of their Catholic Faith. There are plenty of opportunities for your family to attend Mass even with your busy schedules.

Mass Times

Saturday

8:30 a.m. (Chapel)*

5:00 p.m. (Vigil)

Sunday

8:00 a.m.

9:45 a.m.

11:30 a.m.

5:00 p.m. (Youth Led)

Weekdays

6:30 a.m. (Thursday, Chapel)

8:30 a.m. (Monday - Friday, Chapel)*

6:30 p.m. (Monday & Wednesday, Chapel)

** The Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet and other prayers are said following the 8:30 a.m. Mass*

Parent's Responsibilities

“Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” (CCC 2226)

Arrival

Please ensure that your child arrives on time for class, no earlier than five minutes before class time begins and no later than 15 minutes after class has begun. Each child **MUST** be signed in by a parent or authorized adult (16yrs of age or older). For your child’s safety, children are not allowed to be dropped off in the parking lot outside the Education Wing to walk in by themselves. Should this happen, you will be called to pick up your child and they will be counted absent. **DO NOT leave your child in the classroom until there are two Catechists (Safe Environment cleared adults) present.**

Tardy

Students arriving once class has begun will be counted tardy. Three tardies will be count as one unexcused absence. A student arriving more than 15 minutes late will be counted absent and the class must be made up within the same week.

Dismissal

Please be prompt in picking up your child. Our Catechists and Team Leaders are volunteers who have their own children and families to attend to once class has finished. Please respect their service by picking up your child no later than 5 minutes after class ends. If there is an emergency or you will be late, please call and inform the Faith Formation Desk at ext. 233. If your child must be picked up before the end of class, please notify the Team Leader and your child’s classroom teachers (preferably in writing for our records).

Authorized pick-up by non-parent

Only the parent or an authorized person 16 years of age or older may pick the student up at the classroom door. Students will only be released to authorized persons. The authorized person may be asked for a photo ID before the child can be released. Please email Rachel with any changes of authorized adults otherwise your child may not be released.

Attendance

All children are expected to maintain good attendance throughout the year. Please keep our CM calendar handy and mark the dates your child is in session on your family calendar. If your child exceeds 4 absences, you will be contacted by the CM office.

- **Reporting an absence:** If your child is ill and cannot attend their assigned session, please send an email to faithformation@stfoafrisco.org the day **before** or **day of** and **DO NOT** send your child to class. In your email please include your child’s name, and session (ex. Bella Ramirez-Sunday 8:15, 2nd Grade). Phone calls **WILL NOT** be accepted as a means of communicating an absence due to illness. Any email received after your child’s assigned session, will be counted as un-excused.

- **Making up a missed session:** if your child misses their assigned session, it is expected that your child will make up the session during the same week. Sessions run Sunday through Wednesday with a new week beginning on Sundays. Please email faithformation@stfoafrisco.org at least a week prior to your anticipated absence so we may schedule a make-up session for you. While we understand, emergencies happen, we will do our best to accommodate your child, however we may not be able to schedule your child on short notice. Repeated requests for make-up classes due to anticipated absences will be subject to approval by CM Staff. If your request is denied, the absence will be counted as unexcused.

Class Change requests:

If your schedule has changed and you wish to change your child's Faith Formation session, you may submit a request to Rachel Hansen at rhansen@stfoafrisco.org after the 2nd week of classes. Changes will be accepted if space is available. Class change requests may **NOT** be submitted after December 2019.

Inclement Weather

Faith Formation classes will **NOT** be held on days that Fisd cancels school due to inclement weather. Classes will be canceled when snow or ice make driving conditions hazardous or the parking lot. We will do our best to notify families before sessions begin. A message will be sent out on Flocknote (email) informing Children Ministry families of cancellations. If time permits, The CM staff will ask catechists to contact parents to inform them of cancellations.

Child's Responsibilities

Student responsibilities for having a positive experience in religious education will include:

- Attending class regularly and arriving on time
- Bringing folders and class materials weekly (as assigned by Catechist)
- Actively participating in activities, listening and sharing ideas in appropriate ways
- Be respectful, attentive and cooperative with classroom teachers and other adult volunteers
- Follow classroom rules established by catechists and conduct themselves in a manner that is caring, responsible and respectful.
- Leave all electronic devices at home.
- Observe all safety rules.

Conduct

Children in Faith Formation are expected to:

- Act in a Christian manner of being courteous, respectful, and helpful to all.
- Use appropriate language and only speak kindly and respectfully to and about others.
- Complete class assignments and participate in class.
- Walk in the building (no running).
- Wear appropriate clothing for a learning environment (See Dress Code)
- Refrain from chewing gum during class.
- Remain quiet in the hallways and church areas.
- Refrain from disruptive behavior in the building and on the grounds.
- Respect St. Francis property and the property of others.
- Be responsible for their actions and the consequences of those actions.

Dress Code

- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Shorts are allowed but must be mid-thigh length or longer.
- Tube tops, bare midriff, halter type blouses, see through shirts are **NOT** permitted.
- Clothing or items with provocative, drug/alcohol related or profane words, pictures or slogans will not be permitted.
- Baseball caps may **NOT** be worn in the classroom, church or chapel.
- Heelys (shoes with wheels) may **NOT** be worn in the Education Wing or parish building.

Discipline

The Catechist will handle normal discipline problems. If a problem becomes persistent, the Children's Ministry Director will be notified. A continuing problem may necessitate a call or note home to the parents. A parent may be requested to attend class with a child. In extreme cases removal from the program may be necessary. Disciplinary infractions include, but are not limited to abusive language, fighting, disrespect to catechist or other students, inability to follow directions and/or refusal to listen, vandalism, stealing, and leaving the building during class time.

The standard disciplinary procedures are as follows: *(please note that all circumstances are different and these are for reference only; some circumstances may require alternative consequences):*

- **1st offense:** Reminder (example: "Remember, ____, chairs are for sitting")
- **2nd offense:** Warning and separation from distraction
- **3rd offense:** A student discipline form to be sent home with the student.
- **Excessive behavior needing immediate attention:** If the student is using in appropriate language, substantially disturbing the teaching and learning of other students, throwing objects or harming others, or makes threats, the student is to be removed from the classroom immediately by the Team Leader and a meeting with Melissa will be scheduled.

Although we hope it to be a last resort, we reserve the right to remove your child from our program due to disciplinary issues.

Safe Environment Program

St. Francis of Assisi adheres to the Diocese of Dallas Safe Environment Program in order to provide a safe environment for the protection and well-being of our children, youth and adults. All priests, staff, and lay ministry volunteers go through a criminal background check and Safe Environment training before serving the children and youth. As part of the program we must have **Two Cleared Adults** (cleared through St. Francis in conjunction with the Diocese of Dallas), with children at all times. This means that each religious education class must have two cleared adults for the class to begin each week. We depend on the dedication and responsibility of the catechists and other support team members such as team leaders and substitutes to administer to this policy. We ask that parents discern and register to be a substitute during your child's session so they can assist when we are short Catechists. Especially during the cold and flu season, we rely heavily on substitutes to hold sessions. If you are interested in serving as a Faith Formation volunteer, please contact the Faith Formation office.

For the safety of the student's certain items may not be brought to any class. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Real or toy knives
- Real or toy guns
- sharp objects
- matches or lighters

Parental Permission Release

I grant permission for my child to participate in the St. Francis Faith Formation program. The Faith Formation program will take place under the guidance and direction of the employees and volunteers from St. Francis. I understand that as a parent/guardian/conservator, I remain legally responsible for any personal actions taken by the participant named on this form.

Liability Waiver

I agree on behalf of myself, my son/daughter/participant named herein, our/his/her/heirs, successors and assigns to hold harmless, the Diocese of Dallas, the Bishop and his successors, employees, agents, volunteers, St. Francis Parish, its employees and volunteers from any and all claims for illness, injury, death and the cost of medical treatment therewith, arising from or in any way connected with my son's/daughter's/participant's attending the FF program named above.

In the event, any legal action is taken by either party against the other party to enforce any of the terms and conditions of this agreement, it is agreed that the unsuccessful party to such action shall pay to the prevailing party therein all reasonable court costs, reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses incurred by the prevailing party.

Medical Release

I, who by law may do so, authorize the administration of emergency medical treatment for the subject of this release form. I understand that all reasonable safety precautions will be taken at all times by St. Francis of Assisi Church or its agents for any accident, injury or disease incurred by the subject(s) of this form. I understand that, in the event medical intervention is needed, every attempt will be made to contact the person listed on this form immediately. I understand that providing the information requested on registration form is required for registration in St. Francis FF Programs.

Photographing/Videotaping/Information of Children Consent

I grant St. Francis and its employees and volunteers (i) the right to capture my child(ren)'s likeness via photographing, filming, taping, and/or other recording whether you are aware or unaware of such activities; and (ii) the unconditional, royalty-free, and transferable right to use the foregoing, as well as your child(ren)'s name, image, likeness, and voice, in connection with St. Francis.

Should you request that NO PICTURES be taken of your child, you must submit this formal request in written form (email will suffice) with an attached photo of your child. This request must be followed up in person via appointment with a CM office staff member.

Parking Lot Policy

As Faith Formation serves many students, we expect all families to abide by all parking laws, including, but not limited to:

- No unauthorized parking in handicap spaces (cars must display handicap permit)
- No blocking of handicap spaces
- No parking or standing in fire lines
- Children/pets should never be left in a vehicle in our parking lot.

If any of the above violations are noted, a fine between \$100-\$500 per occurrence will be issued. If problem is consistent, the police will be called.

Communicable Disease Policy

During the school year various communicable diseases make an appearance wherever children gather. These diseases include, but are not limited to, chickenpox, measles, influenza, viral hepatitis A (infectious hepatitis), viral hepatitis B (serum hepatitis), and chronic: human immunodeficiency virus (HIV infection), AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis.

CHRONIC DISEASE

Children with a chronic, reportable disease will be allowed to attend Faith Formation with the approval of his/her doctor. The Director of Faith Formation shall function as the liaison with the child's doctor.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity of a person with a reportable disease is confidential and every precaution shall be taken to maintain that confidentiality. Knowledge of the disease shall be confined to those persons with a direct need to know, e.g. the Pastor, Director of Faith Formation. Information may be released only to physicians, nurses or other healthcare personnel who have a legitimate need to know in order to provide for the child's welfare.

Information may be released upon written authorization by the parents specifying the persons to whom the information can be released.

LICE POLICY

According to Texas law, a child must be sent home from school if live lice are found in his/her hair. St. Francis of Assisi will abide by this law and the child will be allowed to return to class only after receiving a medicated treatment. The parish has also established a "NO/NIT" policy for the best interest of the other children attending the same class session. A child who repeatedly returns to school with live lice will be asked, after the **THIRD** episode, to remain home for a period of two weeks. This period of time allows the parents to continue to treat the child's scalp and eliminate all evidence of eggs. The child will be admitted back into their sessions after two weeks with evidence of no nits or live lice found at arrival time.

POLICY OF THE DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Regarding Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Children with AIDS will be allowed to continue in the group setting under ordinary circumstances. Decisions affecting children who have tested positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) AIDS or who have been diagnosed with AIDS Related Complex (ARC) will be made on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with physicians, parents and public health officials. Regulations regarding children who have HIV, ARC and AIDS are based upon current medical knowledge and law and will be subject to continual review.

1st Grade Themes

The curriculum being used in 1st grade is *Discover, Finding Faith in Life*, by St. Mary's Press. The curriculum follows a systematic Scope and Sequence organized around key themes of Catholic teaching that repeat each year within a grade-level focus, building on the child's knowledge of the faith at each developmental stage.

- Unit 1 – God Loves Us
- Unit 2 – God Sends His Only Son
- Unit 3 – Jesus Teaches Us
- Unit 4 – Jesus Is with Us Now

1st Year Themes

The curriculum used in 1st year is Faith Fusion-Elementary Edition, by Our Sunday Visitor. The *Faith Fusion, Elementary Edition* curriculum is balanced between Scripture and Tradition, which are the two central elements of our Catholic Faith.

- The Profession of Faith
- The Celebration of the Christian Morality
- Life in Christ
- Christian Prayer

1st grade/1st year Sacrament Preparation

All children in enrolled in 1st grade or 1st year Sacrament Preparation are **REQUIRED** to attend the Parent-Child Learning centers in February. Not attending these centers will delay your child's registering for 2nd grade/2nd year.

What are Learning Centers? What days and times are available?

The 1st grade/1st year Learning Centers are required for all Sacrament Preparation students as it is an important component to their 1st year of Sacrament Preparation. Children will review material that has been or will be covered in their classes. There will be a sign-in to record who attends. **Missing the 1st grade/1st year Learning Center will delay your child registering for their 2nd grade/2nd year of Sacrament Preparation, so please mark your calendars and give this top priority.** The Learning Center are scheduled in the Education Wing for the Saturday's of February 15, 22, & 29, 2020 in addition to their regularly scheduled Faith Formation classes. You choose which day and time to attend the Learning Centers. Completing the Learning Centers will take about 1-1 ½ hours to complete. If you run out of time, you may return at a different time or day to complete the centers. Please note that the times listed below are the times the learning center is **open** and do not reflect the duration of time you and your child will spend completing the learning center. A parent must accompany their child during the times available:

- **Saturday, February 15**, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00pm (doors will be closed at 6:00pm)
- **Saturday, February 22**, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. (doors will be closed at 6:00pm)
- **Saturday, February 29**, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. (doors will be closed at 6:00pm)

2nd Grade/2nd Year Sacrament Preparation

Sacrament reception is readiness based. Signing up and attending classes is not an automatic guarantee of sacrament reception. Students must demonstrate readiness through attendance, mass participation as well as demonstrating his/her knowledge of content and the desire to live the Catholic Faith.

Important Dates to Remember for Reconciliation:

November 9, 10, 13 & 16: Mandatory Parent-Child Reconciliation Learning Centers

What is the Reconciliation Learning Center? What days and times are available?

The Reconciliation Learning Center is required for all Sacrament preparation students as it is an important preparatory tool in First Reconciliation Preparation. There will be a sign-in to record who attends. **Missing the Reconciliation Learning Center will delay your child's reception of the Sacrament, so please mark your calendars and give this top priority.** The Reconciliation Learning Center is scheduled in the Education Wing for the week of November 9, 10, 13 & 16, 2019 in place of regularly scheduled Faith Formation classes. You choose which day and time to complete the Reconciliation Learning Centers. The centers take roughly about 1- 1 ½ hours to complete. Please note that the times listed below are the times the learning center is *open* and do not reflect the duration of time you and your child will spend completing the learning center. **Also, note that the parish is closed on Monday and there will be NO Learning Centers available on Monday.** A parent must accompany their child during the times available:

- Saturday, November 9, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00pm (doors will be closed at 6:00pm)
- Sunday, November 10, from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. (doors will be closed at 3:00pm)
- Wednesday, November 13, from 3:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. (doors will be closed at 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, November 16, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00pm (doors will be closed at 6:00pm)

First Reconciliation Services

The Reconciliation Services will be held in the Church for all our 2nd year Sacrament Preparation students. We will have several confessionals set up throughout the Church. We invite families to also participate in the reception of the sacrament once all children have received.

1st Reconciliation Assignments will be sent out in November 2019 through the Faith Formation classes, Flocknote and email. Students are required to attend with their Parent/Guardian. A sign in sheet will be provided to record who attends.



First Communion

1st Communion Parent Meeting

On **January 23, 2020**, there will be a parent meeting where we will discuss this part of the handbook and much more pertaining to your child receiving the sacrament of 1st Eucharist. This meeting is not mandatory; however, we highly suggest you attend. The meeting will begin at 6:30pm in the Great Hall center section. An evite will be sent out in December so we can plan accordingly for the evening.

Important Dates to Remember for First Communion:

March 14, 15, 18 & 21: Mandatory Parent-Child Eucharist Learning Centers

The First Communion Learning Center is required for all Sacrament preparation students as it is an important preparatory tool in First Communion Preparation. There will be a sign-in to record who attends. **Please note that the First Communion (Eucharist) Learning Centers offer different information than the Reconciliation Learning Centers, so attendance at both learning centers is required.** Missing the First Communion Learning Center will delay your child's reception of the Sacrament, so please mark your calendars and give this top priority. The First Communion Learning Center is scheduled in the Education Wing for the week of March 14, 15, 18 & 21, 2020 in place of regularly scheduled Faith Formation classes. You choose which day and time to complete the Eucharist Learning Centers. The centers take roughly about 1- 1 ½ hours to complete. Please note that the times listed below are the times the learning center is *open* and do not reflect the duration of time you and your child will spend completing the learning center. A parent must accompany their child during the times available:

- Saturday, March 14, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00pm (doors will be closed at 6:00pm)
- Sunday, March 15, from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. (doors will be closed at 3:00pm)
- Wednesday, March 18, from 3:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. (doors will be closed at 6:00 p.m.)
- Saturday, March 21, from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00pm (doors will be closed at 6:00pm)

1st Communion Assignment/Practice

1st Communion Mass and practice assignments will be distributed in December. Mass dates and times are assigned by class. These assignments will be distributed through your child's assigned 2nd year class, Flocknote and email. **Please note that the assigned practice time is mandatory and attendance is required for your child to participate in the First Communion Mass. Students who skip the practice will not be able to attend their assigned 1st Communion Mass, but will be given a "make-up" day.** Please keep this in mind when you receive your child's practice and Mass assignments and plan accordingly.

Due to the large number of first communicants, requests to change your Mass times are strongly discouraged. However, if you have a significant reason for a Mass change, requests to change dates or times must be made, in writing, **no later than February 1, 2020 to Rachel Hansen (rhansen@stfoafrisco.org)**. In requesting a Mass time change, you must include the reason for the requested change. No changes will be permitted after February 1st due to liturgy planning and preparation. All Mass change requests are subject to the approval of the Children's Ministry Director as well as to the limited space.

1st Communion Dress Code

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 processing and going up and down stairs)
- Traditionally 1st Communion dresses are white. However, it is not required that the dress be white
- Veil is optional
- Dress shoes (no flip flops, or open backed shoes) small heel is ok.
- **NO GLOVES OR PURSE**

Boys

- Dress slacks (no jeans)
- Dress shirt
- Coat and tie are optional
- Dress shoes

1st Communion Photographs/Recording

Professional photographers will be taking pictures of the children as they receive their First Communion in May. Photo ordering will be available on-line approximately 3-4 weeks after your child's First Eucharist Mass. We will also record the Mass and will sell DVD's for those interested. DVD ordering will be included in the photography ordering information.

******IMPORTANT!** If you did not give permission for your child to be photographed on our registration form in the beginning of the year, your child will **NOT** be able to participate in the class or individual picture unless you inform us, in writing, with your permission to do so.



The office of Faith Formation reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time. Updated handbooks will be maintained on the CM website