



ASCENSION RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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September, 2016

Dear First Communion Parents,

Ascension Parish is very excited that your child is preparing for the next step in being a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church. Our faith tradition has three sacraments that mark our journey to becoming people who are claimed, fed and strengthened by God. When a child first joins the rest of us at the Lord's Table, it is a significant moment in his or her life, and in the life of our parish. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with your family during this time of preparation and we pledge our support.

The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the entire Christian life" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, n.11). The program used by Ascension Parish is based on *We Celebrate the Eucharist*, -a.k.a. "The Gold Book". It recognizes that parents have a primary role in their children's initiation. Parents and children work together to come to a deeper understanding of each of the nine themes presented in the program. Each theme offers a different perspective on the meaning of the Eucharist. As a whole they give a very broad understanding of the sacrament. We recognize that most of us have not thought about what the Eucharist is since we made our First Communion and are not sure how to pass on something we really don't understand ourselves.

To equip you with adult knowledge and appreciation of the sacraments, we will be having three parent-only formation meetings throughout your child's year of preparation. These meetings are offered so you can renew your understanding and application of our Catholic traditions, giving you the confidence to assist your child in his or her preparation. New this year, you will also have the opportunity to be "coached" on chapter 1 of the Gold Book with your child in a session we are calling "Gold Book Together" on October 16.

It is very important that your family attend Mass regularly in order for your child to realize they are being prepared to join the community at the Lord's Table. If a child does not attend Mass there is a real disconnect between all the hoopla and not really understanding what is going on. It would be like asking a child to play in a serious soccer match when they have never seen a ball before or never been to a practice or played in a scrimmage.

To make Mass more accessible to your child, I invite you to attend our 9:00 am Mass which has Children's Liturgy of the Word. Also, we will be asking each family with a child preparing for First Communion to be part of a Mass by bringing up the gifts. We will be sending out a volunteer-spot sign-up in an email after our September 29 parents meeting.

This year, First Eucharist will be celebrated at Masses on May 6, May 7 and May 13. Please fill out the Register Information /Mass Choice Form and return it to your teacher or the RE office. Also mark your calendar with all the dates on the attached sacramental calendar.

During this time of preparation our prayer for your family is one of peace and joy as together you approach the Table of the Lord. May all of us draw ever closer to Christ who is the Bread of Life. If you have any question, please do not hesitate to call the Religious Education Office.

Sincerely,

Diane Moriarty, DRE

