

St. Matthew Catholic Church

First Eucharist

Parent Handbook



Welcome

We are truly excited to be able to support you in preparing your child for the first time they will receive the sacred body and precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Over the coming weeks, the children will learn about the awesome gift that Jesus gives to us; the gift of Himself in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is Jesus' true presence here on earth. In addition, the children will explore all parts of the Mass and will be introduced to the music, readings and responses that will be a part of the Mass of First Eucharist. We look forward to continuing this sacramental journey with your family.

With joy,

Lori Mathews

My Communion Prayer *

Dear God,
I know that You give me many gifts.
The gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ in Holy Communion
is the greatest of all. How can I ever thank You
enough for this special gift?
At Mass we are called to be like Jesus, by loving
and serving one another in the world.
As I become more like Him, please continue to
help me. Show me the places and ways that
I can bring Your love, kindness, and peace
to others....
 in my family,
 in my neighborhood,
 in my community,
 with my friends.
I ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

**Prayer taken from Our Sunday Visitor*

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Contact Information

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extension 4

Throughout this guide, are links to additional on line resources. Check them out!



*“Do this
in
memory
of Me.”*

John 6:35

The Mass

For Catholics, one of the most important things we do is coming together to celebrate Mass. Mass is the heart and soul of our worship of God. It is the celebration that gives us the strength we need to live a Christian life. Because of its importance the Church places a serious obligation on all its members to take part in the Mass each Sunday and on holy days.

The Eucharist: What We Believe

The Mass is a memorial of the sacrifice Jesus offered God the Father at the Last Supper. During that meal, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and told his followers, “Do this in memory of Me.” Although the Eucharist is a mystery, we, as Catholics, **accept on faith the fact that bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus because Jesus told us this is so. “The whole Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine.”** The Eucharist is **the source and summit of the Christian life; it is Jesus himself (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1324, 1374).** The Eucharist is Jesus’ true presence here on earth. At Mass, we come together as a community, the Body of Christ, to worship and to receive His presence into ourselves.

For a more in-depth exploration: [The Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist: Basic Questions and Answers](#), USCCB

Check out the resources on [Formed](#).

Select “Register Now” and you’ll be prompted to set up a free account to access Formed.

- Parents, checkout the YDisciple— Sacraments Series, Session 3: The Eucharist on Formed.
- Kids, check out the Brother Francis videos on Formed.org
Brother Francis: The Mass and Brother Francis : Bread of Life

Additional Resources to help explain the Eucharist to your child:

[Busted Halo—Holy Eucharist](#)

Additional Resources for a Parent’s refresher on the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist:

[Bishop Barron on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist](#)

[Busted Halo: Transformed in the Eucharist](#)

[Busted Halo: Advanced 201 Eucharist](#)

The Mass in the Liturgical Year

Like the natural seasons, the Church has seasons too. They are called liturgical seasons. One of the clearest signs of these seasons is the changing liturgical colors. With each change of seasons, the Church changes the color of vestments (clothing worn by the priest, or celebrant, and cloths adorning the altar). The following colors are used:

Green is a symbol of hope and life. This is the color worn during ordinary time.

White is a sign of joy and celebration. This is the color worn during the seasons of Christmas and Easter, and for some designated Holy Days. This is also the color worn for sacramental celebrations, such as Baptism, First Eucharist, Holy Orders and Marriage. It is also worn for funerals, in honor, memorial and celebration of a person's life in Christ.

Violet (Purple) represents penance and reflection. This color is used during the seasons of Lent and Advent. It is also seen during the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

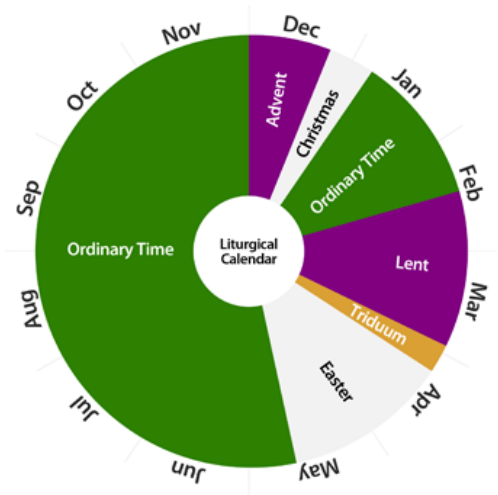
Rose is the color of joy and the promise of light. We see this color only two times during the year, on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday).

Red symbolizes the blood of Christ and martyrs of the Church, it also represents the Holy Spirit. The priest will wear red on Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Pentecost. It is also worn for the Feast Days of martyrs, and for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

For additional information:

[Liturgical Calendar](#), Our Sunday Visitor

[2019 Liturgical Calendar](#), USCCB





“Take and eat for
this is My Body.

Then he took the
cup and said,

“Drink it all of
you, this is my
blood, which seals
God’s covenant.”

Matthew 26: 26-28

The Mass in a Church Building

As Catholics, we gather as a community to celebrate the Mass. What began in the homes of the early Christians has evolved into the celebration in the beautiful physical structures of Catholic Churches all over the world. As you enter St. Matthew Church look around you.

The Nave is the main space within the church where the congregation sits. The other rooms in the church are the **Narthex**, or “lobby” area; the **Vesting Room** where the vestments (clothing worn by the priests, deacons or altar servers) are kept; and the **Sacristy** where the items used for communion and the celebration of the Mass are kept.

The Sanctuary is the elevated space within the church where the **Main Altar** resides. The Altar is the large, high table where the Eucharist is celebrated. It is “dressed” with a white **Altar Cloth**, and may be adorned with the colors of the Liturgical season.

A Lectern (ambo) is the place where the readings are done, Gospel proclaimed, and the homily given. It is located to the left of the altar. In many churches, like ours, there is also a lectern (Cantor stand) to the right side from which announcements are made and used by the cantor.

The Paschal Candle is the large, white candle by the **Baptismal Font** which contains Holy Water. Each Easter, a new candle is blessed and brought into the Church. The candle is lit during the Easter season, for Baptisms and for Funerals. Otherwise it remains unlit.

The Cross or Crucifix is placed near the altar and on the altar, to remind us of God’s love and sacrifice for us.

The Tabernacle is a safe, locked vessel which holds a place of prominence near the altar. This is where the consecrated hosts (Christ) are placed following communion. Christ is present when the **Sanctuary Lamp**, or red candle by the Tabernacle, is lit.



Preparing for the Mass

Just as you would prepare to host guests at a celebration with a meal in your home, preparations are made before each celebration of the Mass.

The Sacristan is the person who prepares the items needed for the celebration of the Mass. This includes:

- Lighting the **altar candles**;
- Preparing the table which holds the gifts (**ciborium with unconsecrated hosts & cruet of wine**) to be brought forward;
- Preparing the **Credence Table** to the side of the altar which holds **ciborium with unconsecrated hosts and common cups with unconsecrated wine** which will be brought to the altar for consecration at communion time.
- Setting out the vessels that the priest uses for the Eucharist:
 - The **Chalice** to hold the wine that will become the Precious Blood,
 - The **Paten**, or plate, which holds the bread that will become the Body of Christ,
 - A **Corporal**, or “placemat” to collect any crumbs or spills, and
 - A **Purificator**, a linen cloth which is used to wipe clean the Chalice and the Paten

The Priest prepares by wearing special **Vestments**. The wearing of vestments arose at the same time the celebration of the Mass was moved into church buildings as a way for people to tell who the various ministers were. The vestments we see the most are:

- An **Alb** is the first garment placed on by the priest, and is long and white. This is also what is seen being worn by **Altar Servers**.
- The **Cinture** is the cord tied around the waist of an alb.
- The **Stole** is a narrow cloth, similar to a scarf, draped around the neck of the priest. It symbolizes the authority given by the church and sacredness of his role.
- The **Chasuble** is the outer garment, similar to a poncho, and will match the color of the liturgical seasons.



The Sacrament of Reconciliation

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist. We are encouraged to receive Communion frequently and devoutly. In order to be properly prepared to receive, one should not be conscious of a grave sin, and should have fasted for one hour prior. The best practice is to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation with enough frequency to have a clear heart and conscious when coming to receive our Lord in the Eucharist.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins because of Your just punishment, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Your grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

Prayers to Know

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

Glory Be To The Father

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

Preparing for the Mass

The guests also prepare to come to your home for a celebration. In the same way, each person coming to Mass should prepare and respect the holy place they are entering.

Here are some ways you and your child can prepare:

- When first entering the **Church**, stop and dip the fingers of your right hand in the **Holy Water Font** placed by each of the entrances, and then make the **Sign of the Cross**.
- As you choose a place to be sit during Mass, be aware of your child's perspective... the more they can see, the more engaged they will be.
- Before entering your **pew**, turn towards the **Tabernacle** and **genuflect**. This is a sign of reverence towards Christ, and is done by kneeling on one knee and making the Sign of the Cross.
- Once in your pew, take a moment to kneel and talk quietly with God. This also gives your mind and body a moment to transition from the noise of the world to the peace of the Mass.
- If there is time, take out the **Roman Missal** which contains the readings and parts of the Mass, and familiarize yourself and your child with what is about to happen and the readings you are about to hear. On the back of the **Missal**, you will find common Catholic prayers. Read some of these with your child each week at Mass!



The Order of Mass

Introductory Rites

- **Procession.** We stand as the priest-presider and other ministers enter the assembly. We sing a gathering song. The priest kisses the altar. He then goes to the chair where he presides over the celebration.
- **Greeting.** The priest leads us in praying the Sign of the Cross together. The priest greets us and we say, "And with your spirit."
- **Penitential Rite.** "I confess to Almighty God..." We admit our wrongdoings. We thank God for his mercy.
- **Gloria.** "Glory to God in the Highest" We praise God for all the good he has done for us (this is omitted during Advent and Lent).
- **Opening Prayer.** The priest leads us in praying the Opening Prayer. We respond, "Amen."

"I am the bread of life." John 6:35

Liturgy of the Word

- **First Reading.** Read by lector usually from the Old Testament or from the Acts of the Apostles.
"Thanks be to God"
- **Responsorial Psalm.** The cantor leads us in singing a psalm. This helps us think about what we heard in the first reading.
- **Second Reading.** The lector reads from the New Testament, but not from the four Gospels. Daily Mass usually omits this reading.
- **Gospel Acclamation.** "Alleluia!" The cantor sings it first and the congregation repeats. We stand to honor Christ present with us in the Gospel. (During Lent the word alleluia is omitted).
- **Gospel.** Taken from one of the four Gospels, it is read by a priest or deacon, never by a layperson.
- **Homily.** Delivered by priest or deacon, explaining the Scriptures and it's application of what it means to us.
- **Profession of Faith.** "I believe in one God..." All join in this declaration of beliefs. We pray the Nicene Creed.
- **Prayer of the Faithful.** "Lord, hear our prayer." Also known as General Intercessions. We are lead in praying for those in need.



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

The Word of
the Lord.
Thanks be
to God

In this sacrament, we become what we receive: the Body of Christ.

The Order of Mass

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- **Preparation of the Altar Gifts.** This is also called the offertory. We sit as the altar table is prepared, the collection is taken up, and the gifts of bread & wine are brought forward.
- **Eucharistic Prayer.** The priest invites us to join in praying the Church's great prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father. We stand, then kneel for this prayer. During this prayer the ordinary bread and ordinary wine, become the extraordinary body and blood of our Lord.
- **Communion Rite.** *"Lord I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."* This part begins with the *Our Father*, followed by the Sign of Peace. After praying the Lamb of God, we receive the sacred body of Christ in the consecrated host, and have the option of receiving the precious blood.



Concluding Rite

- **Greeting and Blessing.** *"In the name of the Father..."*
- **Dismissal.** *"Thanks be to God!"* We are sent forth to do good works, praising and blessing the Lord.
- **Recessional.** We stand as the altar servers, lectors and the priest leave the altar. Out of respect, we do not leave our pews until the priest has fully recessed out of the Nave.

"Go forth the Mass is ended."

Additional Information:

[Order of the Mass](#), USCCB

[Parts of the Mass](#), USCCB

[That Catholic Show: 001: Sit, Stand and Kneel](#)

The How-To Book of the Mass, by Mike Dubruiel

Receiving Communion

This is how we receive the Body of Christ.

- Prepare your heart to welcome Jesus with folded hands.
- As the person before you is receiving the Body of Christ, **bow in reverence to our Lord.**
- You can choose to **receive the Host in your hand.**
 - ◇ **Extend your hands** with palms facing up, dominant hand below the other hand.
 - ◇ When you hear the words, **“The Body of Christ,”** answer, **“Amen.”**
 - ◇ After the Host is placed in your cupped hand **reverently pick up the Host with the hand on the bottom (dominant hand) and place it in your mouth.** Consume the Host, prepare to receive the Blood of Christ or return to your seat with your hands folded.
- You can choose to **receive the Host on your tongue.**
 - ◇ After you answer “Amen,” open your mouth and **extend your tongue with your head held up.**
 - ◇ After the Host is placed on your tongue close your mouth and consume the Host. Prepare to receive the Blood of Christ or return to your seat with your hands folded.



This is how we receive the Blood of Christ.

- As the cup is extended towards you, when you hear the words, **“The Blood of Christ.”** You reply, **“Amen.”**
- Take the cup **with your own hands and reverently bring the cup to your mouth.**
- Take a small amount of the Blood of Christ and then carefully **give the cup back using both hands.**



[Busted Halo—Holy Eucharist: How to Receive](#)

After Receiving Communion

Jesus is within you now. Kneel and quietly share whatever is on your heart with Him. Give thanks, ask for help or just quietly rejoice in his presence within you!

Remain kneeling, and sing the Communion song with your parish family. Watch as the Altar table is cleaned, and how the vessels are cared for. Watch for the **Priest or Deacon** to take the Body of Christ back to the **Tabernacle**. Once this has occurred, you may be seated until the final blessing.

Reception of Communion Fellow Christians and Non-Christians

As Catholics, we welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist, and pray that our common baptism and the Holy Spirit will draw us closer and dispel the divisions which separate us. Because we believe that Christ is fully present in the Eucharist, reception of this sacrament is discouraged among those who do not share in our faith in Jesus Christ, or those whom are members of churches not fully united in the Christian, catholic faith. We do ask, during this time of the Mass, that they offer their own prayers for peace and the unity of the human family. (Code of Canon Law, canon 916 & 844)

Follow-up to Your Child's First Eucharist

Communion

Prayer

My Jesus, I
believe that You
are truly present
in the Blessed
Sacrament. I love
You above all
things, and I long
for You in my
soul.
Amen

The preparation is over and your child has now joined you at the Eucharistic table. So that your child's First Eucharist does not become a memory of a once only past event, you might find these suggestions helpful.

- **Go as a family to Mass each Sunday. *Make sure your child can see, hear and actively celebrate.*** As a family participate in the life of the parish.
- Meal times are especially key to fostering the sense of being a "Eucharistic" people. **Say grace at meals. *Let your home and table be places where all are welcome and included.*** Special family occasions should be celebrated around the table with extended family members and friends.
- **Eucharist equals thanksgiving.** Encourage your child to be thankful for all they have and to be aware of those less fortunate than themselves.
- **Encourage your child to be faithful to prayer.** Share in his/her bedtime prayers.
- **Be the person you want your child to think you are...** be the example to let your child experience what it means to be "bread for others"—to be the Body of Christ in the world—through your day-to-day family living, your friendships, your kindness and service to others.

"We are His Body, living as
one; our God is here!"



First Eucharist Preparation

Year 2 & 2nd Grade MACS Students

My First Eucharist Celebrating Mass Booklet

The 'Celebrating Mass' booklet is designed to help your child participate and grow in understanding of the Mass. As part of your child's preparation, we require the Mass booklet to be returned to the Faith Formation Office.

Due Date: Saturday, April 6 at Retreat.

Sacramental Parent-Child Retreat: Saturday, April 6, 2019

(8:00AM-10:30AM or 11:00AM-1:30PM or 2:00PM-4:30PM)

This is a mandatory part of your child's preparation, and one parent is required to be present as well. Please make every effort to clear your schedule for this one Saturday.



RCIC YEAR 2 (4th Grade and up)

My First Eucharist Celebrating Mass

The 'Celebrating Mass' booklet is designed to help your child participate and grow in understanding of the Mass. As part of your child's preparation, we require the Mass booklet to be returned to the Faith Formation Office.

Due Date: Sunday, April 7 at Retreat.

Sacramental Parent-Child Retreat: Sunday April 7

(12:30pm-3:30pm (we begin with 12:30PM Mass).

This is a mandatory part of your child's preparation, and one parent is required to be present as well. Please make every effort to clear your schedule for this one Sunday.

First Eucharist Family Banner

All First Communicants

We ask that all First Communicants take part in our beautiful St. Matthew tradition of making a First Eucharist Banner! We will display the banners in the Narthex the weekend of the celebration of First Eucharist. It is our way of allowing the entire St. Matthew community to be a part of the celebration.

Banner Requirements:

Materials needed may be purchased at any craft store (i.e. Michaels, A.C. Moore, Wal-Mart).

- **9" x 12" Soft Felt, NO LARGER & NO STICKY BACK & NO DOWELS!**
- Personalize your banner using art & materials pertaining to the Eucharist. However, please keep the weight of the banner to a minimum so it won't fall. The Eucharist Parent page will have additional information regarding the banners.
- Your child's **FIRST NAME** displayed on the banner. You can also include your child's **PHOTO**.
- Please put your child's First and Last Name on the back of the banner so we can return the banner to you.
- **Banner Due Date:**
 - **Year 2 & 2nd Grade MACS Students**—Saturday April 6 @ Retreat
 - **RCIC Year 2 Students**—April 7 @ Retreat



Mass of First Holy Eucharist

Friday, May 3, 2019

- ◆ 7:00PM

Saturday, May 4, 2019

- ◆ 9:00AM
- ◆ 11:30AM
- ◆ 2:00PM

Is there a dress code?

Girls: The suggested dress code for girls is a white dress. Veils are optional. No tennis shoes. Please no gloves, hand-held flowers, rosaries or prayer books. Your child cannot carry these items in the processional.

Boys: The suggested dress code for boys is a white long-sleeved shirt, a tie and dress pants. A suit or suit-coat is optional. No tennis shoes. No rosaries or prayer books. Your child cannot carry these items in the processional.

Where can I purchase First Communion items?

St. Matthew has a Gift Shop located in the Narthex. Hours of operation:
Tue-Fri, 9AM-3:30PM and after all Masses on Saturday evening and Sunday.

How can I get a picture of my child receiving his/her First Communion?

A photographer will be at all First Eucharist Masses taking a picture of each child receiving First Communion. Families will receive additional information at Retreat. A representative from Event Images will be at the First Eucharist Retreat on April 6 to answer any questions.
eventimages@aol.com, 704-321-1033.

When can my child and I receive Reconciliation before his/her First Communion?

St. Matthew offers Reconciliation:

Main Campus every Saturday afternoon from 4:00-5:00 and every Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:15.

Waxhaw Campus every Saturday 3:45 to 4:30pm

Is there reserved seating?

Quite simply, no. A seating chart will be posted, so you will know which seats work best for you and your family. Out of consideration for others we ask you **do not** reserve seats for family members arriving later.

Instructions:

Selection of Parent-Child Retreat & First Eucharist Mass Times

1. You will receive an email on the morning of **Monday, January 28**, with a link to the registration website.
2. Registration will open at **12:00 noon** on that same day.
3. Complete all information on the form and submit your preferences.
4. You will receive a confirmation email at the end of February.

Registrations will only be accepted from those who have attended a Parent Learning Opportunity and have submitted a copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate.

If you have any questions, please contact Lori Mathews at lmathews@stmatthewcatholic.org or by phone at 704-541-8362, extension 4