Holy Cross & St. Anne Parishes

1st Holy Eucharist Parent Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2014

“We are the Body of Christ”

When we gather every Sunday as the Body of Christ we fulfill the Lord’s command to “do this in memory of me.” Luke 22:19

***Enriching your understanding:***

Your family and the entire parish community are preparing for a wonderful event: the celebration of First Holy Communion. This is a very special time for your family. It is also a very special time for the entire parish community. At baptism your child was welcomed with great joy by the parish community. From that moment on, the community offers all those baptized their love and support throughout their lives.

Preparing for First Holy Communion is a continuation of the faith journey that begins with Baptism. First Communion is a very important celebration in the life of the Church. First Communion preparation is much more than learning “how” to receive communion. For the very first time your child will participate fully, consciously, and actively in the celebration of the Eucharist from beginning to end. Our participation in the Mass culminated in our eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ.

***Goals of the Sacramental Preparation Program***

\*To help children understand that participation in the Eucharist is to become a full member of the Body of Christ.

\*To focus on the prayers and primary symbols of the liturgy as the starting point for sacramental catechesis.

\*To introduce the idea and importance of the mystery of the Mass and lifelong reflection.

\*To provide a process for parents and other adults to actively participate in the sacramental preparation of the children.

\*To acknowledge the place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.

***Readiness for the reception of the Sacrament of Eucharist***

\*”Parents and the parish catechetical leader, along with the pastor are responsible for determining when children have attained the age of reason and are ready to receive First Holy Communion. Parents also have the right and the duty to be involved in preparing their children for the sacrament.” CCC 1322

\*Along with preparing the child for the sacrament, parents should also be involved in discerning the child’s readiness for the Eucharist. In general, readiness to receive the sacrament includes awareness of the Church’s belief about Jesus Christ, knowledge of the difference between the Eucharist and ordinary bread, and a desire to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

\*The Church requires that the children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time prior to First Holy Communion.

The following questions are helpful in determining a child’s readiness for the Sacrament of Eucharist. Remember, actions speak louder than words. Look to a child’s behavior as well as the words they use.

*Does the child understand:*

\*The Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and that what appears to be bread and wine is actually his living body? (Suggestion: When speaking to your child about the Eucharist, refer to it as “Jesus” or “Him” which will instill a greater understanding of the true presence of Jesus.)

\*Does the child know the difference between the Eucharist and ordinary bread?

\*Does the child participate actively and appropriately at Mass?

\*Does the child display an attitude of reverence at Mass?

\*Does the child know the proper way to receive Holy Communion on the hand and on the tongue? (This will of course be covered in class, but each family should determine which method they prefer and be practiced and discussed at home.)

\*Does the child *desire* to receive the Eucharist?

***“Monkey See ~ Monkey Do”***

By far, the best way to form your child is by your example. Make a commitment to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday and Holy Day of obligation with your family.

“The Sunday celebration of the Lord’s Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church’s life. Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church.” CCC #2177

***And the Lord rested on the 7th Day***

\*Strive to make Sunday a special day in your home. Establish a routine for Sunday that always includes celebrating the Eucharist and includes special family activities and meals.

\*Teach your children to make the Sign of the Cross with reverence. Make sure they know the words, “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Remind them how they were marked with the Sign of the Cross at their baptism. Sign your children on their foreheads each night before they go to bed. Make the Sign of the Cross as you pray before you eat or at other prayer times in the house.

\*Talk to your children about their baptism. Explain that on this day they became members of the Body of Christ; they became part of the larger family called the Church.

***Best Ways to Celebrate the Liturgy on Sunday***

\*Arrive on time. The Introductory Rites of the Mass are a very sacred time. *Sit up front where children can see* the entire action of the Mass.

\*Open the hymnal to the correct number for your child and encourage them to sing this prayer along with the community.

\*Make sure your child signs themselves along with the community.

\*Help your child to know the responses and prayers during the Mass. This usually occurs naturally through repetition and familiarity.

\*Children learn by doing and seeing. You are the best role model. Your child will participate in the Mass as fully as they see you pray, sing, gesture and respond during the celebration.

***Children’s Attire for First Holy Communion***

Girls should wear a traditional white dress, white veil, along with either white tights or ankle socks, white shoes. Gloves are optional, but if chosen, please make sure your daughter understands the gloves must be removed if she plans on receiving Jesus on the hand. Girls should not be wearing make-up. Jewelry should be understated and simple.

Boys should wear black dress pants, a white dress shirt and a dark colored tie, along with black dress shoes and socks. Black sports jackets are optional. Athletic shoes may not be worn.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

Wed. April 23: Parent & Child 1st Communion Retreat at Holy Cross Parish Center from 6:00-7:15pm. Meet in the gym. (This date is different than listed on the RE Schedule due to conflicting with Soup & Stations at St. Anne’s.)

Sat. April 26: Parent & Child 1st Communion Practice

Holy Cross families at 9am (meet in the church)

St. Anne families at 10:30am (meet in the church)

SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2014 SACRAMENT OF 1st HOLY COMMUNION

St. Anne’s Parish at 10:00 am

Holy Cross Parish at 1:00 pm