



Dear Parents,

The words of the Lord Jesus about the power of the Eucharist never fail to leave a lasting impression: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him” (John 6:54–56).

With love for the Holy Eucharist, we share your excitement as your child prepares to receive his or her First Holy Communion. This is a great event, and a day that your child will remember forever. It begins with preparation to receive the Sacrament of Penance (also known as Confession or Reconciliation) for the first time.

Because First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are so important, our Church asks that there be a suitable period of preparation before receiving these sacraments. Accordingly, we would like to review with you the expectations regarding your child’s preparation:

- Attend Mass each Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation (If you can’t attend Mass for reasons of safety, we encourage you to watch Mass via livestream at home).
  - Punctually attend all First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion classes (see back page for dates).
  - If not enrolled at St. Benedict Catholic School, partake in religious education at St. Benedict.
  - Prepare at home: memorize basic prayers (Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and Act of Contrition), and learn how to go to Confession properly: the instructions for the Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitent with above prayers can be found on the parish website.
  - There is a \$30 fee to cover the cost of curriculum materials for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. However, if your son/daughter enrolls in K-5 religious education at the parish, the fee for First Reconciliation/Communion is already included. Please do not let finances be an issue. If you are in need of any assistance, please contact us.
- Submit a new Proof of Baptism with notations issued by Church of Baptism by **November 7**. (**Copies of original certificate are not accepted**). Please have the parish where your son or daughter was baptized mail this Proof of Baptism to:

*St. Benedict Catholic Church  
ATTN: Ben Fleser  
300 N. Sheppard St.  
Richmond, VA 23221*

If your child was baptized at Saint Benedict parish, a proof of Baptism is not necessary; simply email Ben Fleser (bfleser@saintbenedictparish.org)

When your child was baptized, you, as parents, were gifted with the amazing role of being the primary teachers of your child in the faith. This means that your instruction, example, and witness of the faith are important. Therefore, as parents, we kindly ask you to attend the parent meetings that will take place during the same

time as your child's classes. Only one parent is required to attend (the attending parent must be a Catholic). We also encourage you to use this wonderful event in your child's life to deepen your own relationship with God by sharing your faith with your child.

We thank you for helping your child to meet Our Lord Jesus Christ in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. If there is anything we can do to assist you in this task, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Father John David Ramsey  
Pastor

Ben Fleser  
Director of Evangelization and Catechesis

### **First Reconciliation Preparation Dates in 2021**

Located at St. Benedict Catholic School

Sunday, Nov. 7, 9:45-10:45am  
Sunday, Nov. 14, 9:45-10:45am  
Sunday, Nov. 21, 9:45-10:45am  
Sunday, Dec. 5, 9:45-10:45am

#### **First Reconciliation Date:**

- **Friday, December 10, 7:00pm-8:00pm**
- **Saturday, December 11, 10:30am-12:00pm**

### **First Holy Communion Preparation Dates in 2022**

Located at St. Benedict Catholic School

Sunday, February 27, 9:45-10:45  
Sunday, March 6, 9:45-10:45  
Sunday, March 13, 9:45-10:45  
Saturday, March 19: First Communion Retreat, 9:00am-12:00pm

#### **First Communion Date:**

- **First Communion Rehearsal: Saturday, April 30, 9:30am-10:30am**
- **Reception of First Communion: Sunday, May 1, 11:00am**

### **Special Notes**

It is customary for a child to be both prepared and receive these sacraments in his or her own parish. However, if you belong to another parish, but your child attends St. Benedict Catholic School and wishes to receive these sacraments with his or her classmates here, please know the following: Your child must be prepared for the sacrament at St. Benedict Parish. The preparation for and reception of the sacrament must take place at the same parish. This means that your child cannot be prepared at one parish and receive the sacraments at

another. Additionally, prior to beginning preparation, your pastor must grant permission (in writing) for your child to be prepared and to receive the sacraments at Saint Benedict's. This letter or email must be received at the parish office two weeks prior to the first class.

Preparation for First Penance and First Holy Communion can begin if a child will be seven by the start of the First Penance classes (November 3). Typically, a child receives First Penance and First Holy Communion during 2nd grade, although this is not absolute; the decision to begin preparation is left to the parents. Furthermore, the religious education curriculum for 2nd grade is focused on the Eucharist, which complements the sacramental-preparation classes.

**Registration:** Please register online at <https://www.saintbenedictparish.org/holy-communion>