

**THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY EUCHARIST
FOR SCHOOL-AGED CANDIDATES**



**THE PARISH OF
OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL**

Dear Parents and Guardians:

May the grace and peace of Our Lady of Good Counsel be with you.

Since its earliest days, the Church has recognized parents as the first educators of the faith. It is within the “domestic Church” created by each Christian family that baptized children first learn about God’s love for them. Little by little, they are taught to love God through simple prayer and good deeds. Within the family atmosphere, young consciences are formed and develop as they begin to recognize good and bad choices, and how these choices help or hurt their relationship with God and God’s people.

Your children are now of catechetical age. Their faith formation takes on more formal tones as they have been enrolled in a religious education program in our Parish. Although the practice and living of the Catholic faith is still the primary obligation of the parent, the School and PREP aid our parish families in the religious training of our Parish children. Now the religion lessons of the home are further developed intellectually and intuitively on an age-appropriate level.

As priests, we are commissioned by the Church to identify the goals and needs for our religious education program, and to also oversee the catechetical and spiritual preparation of our parish children. These responsibilities are especially highlighted during the time for sacramental preparation. We take this responsibility seriously.

This year is a very important time in your child’s faith life as he/she prepares to meet Jesus in a new way in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. In addition to classroom instruction, a parish sacramental program that includes parent meetings, activities, prayer services, and information packages has been structured to enhance parental involvement in this sacramental preparation. We urge you to take advantage of these opportunities. Also, take advantage of this special time to tell your child the stories about your own reception of the sacraments and about other personal faith moments. Pray daily at meal times and before bedtime. Talk to him or her about his/her guardian angel or about our Catholic saints. Most importantly, on Sundays, assist with your child at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the central mystery and belief of the Catholic sacramental life. May your child’s First Communion be a born again experience for you.

On **April 26, 2025** we invite our parish school-aged candidates to receive their First Holy Communion. This special moment of grace remembers the Baptismal promises that makes them children of God and recipients of God’s unconditional love. This sacrament opens them to God’s Holy Spirit and a Christian vision for a lifetime. As the parish anticipates this great moment of joy for your child, be assured of our continued prayers for all – priests, catechists, and parents – involved in this sacramental preparation.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel bless all our endeavors.

Devotedly,

Reverend Robert Suskey, Pastor

Reverend Msgr. Joseph A. Tracy

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Enclosed is important information regarding the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. Please take the time to examine this package carefully. Included in this booklet is a section called, “What does my child need to understand before receiving First Holy Communion?” which outlines the core curriculum for religious education in Grades 1 and 2. As parents and first teachers of the faith, I hope this outline is helpful to you. Be assured that the religious education program at OLGC is designed to aid you in this sacramental preparation as the catechists work hard to instill a love and reverence for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. In addition to work in the classrooms and the retreat, other formational experiences in the Catholic faith are provided such as the celebration of Mass, an opportunity for the sacrament of Penance and prayer services directly focused on the preparation for reception of First Holy Communion.

A sacramental timeline is also enclosed. You will note that the reception of First Holy Communion is **Saturday, April 26, 2025** (one Mass at 9:30am and one at 11:30am).

Included is a sheet with important sacramental information to be completed. This sheet is to be completed (**both sides**, in full), and dropped off or mailed to the Trinity Center, along with the sacrament fee of **\$50** (helps to cover the cost of the videographer and retreat, etc.), to the attention of the PREP office **NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 6, 2024**. The information you provide on this sheet is critical to both the smooth preparation of your child’s First Holy Communion Day, as well as the permanent records of the parish.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (215-357-1300, ext., 134). Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Kristal Alexander, DRE
Office of Religious Education & Sacraments

What does my child need to understand before receiving First Holy Communion?

The following beliefs of the Catholic faith are taught on a level that is psychologically and educationally appropriate for a primary school aged child. These guidelines have been developed and approved by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in answer to the Church's call to promote the faith through religious education. Please refer to your child's religion textbook for specific information.

YEAR ONE

The Trinity— God, the Father and Creator (and how we live in the world);
God, the Son and our Savior of the World, Jesus Christ;
God, the Holy Spirit, who lives in us and gives us grace
through the Sacraments of Initiation
The Church and the Liturgical Seasons
Mary—her feast days and special prayers and devotions
Prayers –Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Doxology (Glory be)

YEAR TWO

BUILDS ON YEAR ONE'S CONCEPTS AND INTRODUCES:

The Seven Sacraments (Initiation, Healing, & at the service of communion)
The Mass and its parts
The Mass and the Eucharist—praise, thanks, grace and community
Sacred vestments and vessels used at Mass
Sacramentals of the Church
Act of Contrition

CATECHESIS FOR THE RECEPTION OF 1ST PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

“Catechesis for children must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstances of individuals. It seeks, first, to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life; second, to help the child to recognize moral good and evil, repent for wrongdoing, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church; third, to encourage the child to see that, in this sacrament, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving; fourth, to encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly.”

(National Catechetical Directory, Article #126)

The theme of the Good Shepherd is used throughout this sacramental preparation.

- Relationship with God (the Good Shepherd)
- Moral sense of good (grace/community) and evil (sin/breakdown of relationship)
- Types of sin (mortal & venial)
- Examination of Conscience /The Act of Contrition/Rite of Confession

Sacramental Preparation for the Reception of First Eucharist

In their document, *“Sharing the Light of Our Faith”*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops state that a child who has reached the age of reason should be taught and have an understanding on his/her spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and psychological level for the following theological concepts before reception of his/her First Holy Communion:

1. God is a loving and a just God.
2. The Trinity is one God—Father, Son, and Spirit.
3. Jesus is the Son of God who was born and died for our sins.
4. The Holy Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Jesus and is different from ordinary bread.
5. Holy Communion is to be received devoutly* and in the state of grace.
6. Eucharist is the central mystery and heart of our Catholic faith.
7. A Catholic assists at Sunday Mass in order to be nourished by the Bread of Life or Holy Communion.

***THE COMMUNION FAST**

Regular meals and solid food or liquids may be taken up to one hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water and medicine may be taken at any time; they never break the fast.

These regulations apply at all times, whether Holy Communion is received at Mass in the morning, afternoon, evening or at mid-night. The sick and infirmed, as well as those who care for them, may receive Holy Communion even if they have taken something during the previous hour.

Just a reminder: gum and candy are solid foods; so, they may not be eaten within one hour of Mass.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION TIMELINE

Sacrament packet available for printing by September 1, 2024 on the parish website:

www.olgc.org

- Click on “Parish”
- Click on “Sacraments”
- Click on “Sacraments of Initiation”
- Click on “Eucharist”

Information sheet included in packet is to be filled out by the parent and returned, along with the \$50 sacrament fee (helps to cover the cost of the videographer and retreat), back to the Trinity Center office, attention: PREP, by Friday, December 6, 2024.

Mandatory Sacrament Talk for 1st Time Parents* Wednesday, January 15, 2025
(Gather in Trinity Center) 4:15-5:30 or 6:15-7:30

*This is a mandatory presentation for all 1ST time parents of sacrament children. Non-attendance will result in attendance at a faith formation session.

Mandatory First Holy Communion Retreat Wednesday, March 12, 2025
(child with a parent/guardian) 4:15-5:45 PM or 6:15-7:30 PM
Upper Church

CELEBRATION OF THE RECEPTION OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION ON SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025

9:30 AM – OLGc School 3rd Grade & Evening PREP 3rd Grade

11:30 AM – OLGc Afternoon PREP 3rd Grade

If your assigned time presents a conflict, the Office of Religious Education must be notified to make a time change. Please note that there is a limit of the number of children per Mass in order to allow for appropriate seating.

SEATING

There are reserved seats in Church for the candidate and his/her parents/guardians (**2 seats**). The remaining pews will allow for additional guest seating and is on a first come basis. We ask that you not come into the Upper Church until 9:10am for the 9:30am Mass and 11:10am for the 11:30am Mass.

ATTIRE

Girls: White dress, white veil, white socks/tights, and white shoes. Shoulders should be modestly covered – no strapless; off the shoulders; or spaghetti straps (a cardigan / bolero may be worn over the shoulders if necessary)

NO POCKETBOOKS MAY BE BROUGHT TO CHURCH; NO GLOVES OR CORSAGES MAY BE WORN DURING MASS.

Boys: White dress shirt, tie, dress shoes (no sneakers), any color suit (including white), or any color sports jacket with dress pants. **NO BOUTONNIERE MAY BE WORN.**

Please do not allow children to bring religious articles to Mass, as they are often lost and can be a distraction.





SACRAMENT OF HOLY EUCHARIST

For Office Use: Date _____

Check # _____

Amount _____

OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL PARISH
INFORMATION SHEET 1st HOLY EUCHARIST

Please print or type information! Thank you! **Child's Height:** _____

Candidate's Full Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

All information from last year (First Penance) is the same: _____ YES
NO (if NO, please complete this form in its entirety)

Address _____
(Street)

(Town) (State) (Zip)

Candidate's Date of Birth _____
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Candidate's Place of Birth _____
(Town) (State)

Candidate's Date of Baptism _____
(Month) (Day) (Year)

Please include copy of Baptismal Certificate if your child was NOT baptized at OLGC

Candidate's Church of Baptism _____
(Name of Church)

(Street Address)

(Town) (State)

Father's Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Mother's Name _____
(Last) (First) **(Maiden)**

Godfather's Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Godmother's Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Date of First Penance & Church _____

Name of Teacher/Catechist: _____ School _____ PREP _____

***PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM, WITH \$50
SACRAMENT FEE), IN AN ENVELOPE
MARKED:***

***Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Office
Attn: Mrs. Kristal Alexander, DRE
215-357-1300, ext. 134***

Due By December 6, 2024

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