

Christ the King - St. Stephen Parish



**Parent's Sacrament Handbook
2023-2024**

WELCOME

Dear Parents,

There are many “firsts” in the life of a child. Their first cry, first word and first steps all occur within the context of the family. With your initiative and faith, your child received the first Sacrament of the Church, Baptism. Afterwards, it was you who first spoke to your child about God. It is by your example that your children have learned the importance of faithful weekly mass attendance and active celebration of the sacraments. Now, it is the time for your child to recognize the saving love of God in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

At the Second Vatican Council, the Church taught that the family is the “Domestic Church,” and parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the Faith to their children. While appreciating all your efforts to nourish the spiritual life of your child, we, your pastors, and all the parishioners of Christ the King, pledge our support and assistance in preparing your child for these Sacraments.

Whether your child attends CTK School or our Religious Education program, we will be having some preparation sessions at the church, some designed for you and your child, while others are for your benefit and enrichment. We will also be providing you with some material for you to work with, with your child, at home, in preparation for these Sacraments. We ask you to make a commitment to attend all of the sessions at the Church and to do the homework with your child. Your child’s readiness for these Sacraments will only be as good as the efforts you put into making it happen, and to fail to do so deprives no one but your child.

I look forward to celebrating these Sacraments with your children with great excitement. You will be in my prayers.

Your Loving Pastor,

Father Paulson Mundanmani, Pastor

This is a very special year of preparation and spiritual growth for your child. As you assist them in their preparation, they will come to understand the serious and sacred nature of the Sacraments. By working closely with them, parents and children will have an opportunity to grow into a deeper faith in God and love for Jesus.

This handbook provides the information you will need regarding the Sacrament Program. Please keep it in a safe place and refer to it for times and dates of upcoming events.

After you have taken the time to read and understand the information provided, please sign the parent commitment sheet, and return one copy to the Religious Education Office **no later than November 2, 2023.**

We look forward to working with you and your child at this special time.

May God richly bless each of you and your families!

Deacon John Ashmore
Director of Faith Formation

Sacrament Preparation Program Requirements

Preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist is a family affair. Children are required to have two consecutive years of Religious Education to celebrate these sacraments. Parents must also prepare by actively practicing the faith. Faithful attendance at Sunday Mass, frequent reception of the sacraments and daily family prayer communicate loudly the importance of the faith to your child. It is our prayer that every family is renewed in their faith as they prepare their children to receive the Sacraments.

Attendance Policy

While your child has many interests, sacramental preparation should take precedence over other activities. In prioritizing this preparation, you give witness to the importance and sacred nature of the sacraments the child is about to receive. Therefore, as was the policy prior to the pandemic, children enrolled in Sacramental Preparation classes are only allowed two excused absences during the school year. Children who are sick should stay home, but parents must email or call the Religious Education Office to inform us of the reason for their absence.

2023-2024 Curriculum

CTK Religious Education and CTK School are using the Word of Life program for the sacramental preparation program again this year. Word of Life is produced by the Augustine Institute and Ignatius Press to provide the best possible catechetical learning experience for your child. The weekly lessons focus on scripture, prayer, the lives of saints and other faith topics. Parents can access their student's textbook, via the Student-Parent Portal, to reinforce their child's weekly lessons. Families are also invited to use the ideas on the "Family Faith" page to participate more fully in their child's sacramental preparation. Students can access their weekly lessons digitally on the Student-Parent Portal, and can access videos that will enhance their learning. Using the written word, video and audio formats supports the varied learning style of students.

If you have not yet accepted the invitation to get started with Word of Life, please do so now. It is simple to do, and CTK School and RE are here to assist you in getting started with Word of Life.

Important Parent Participation Dates

Parents of children preparing for the sacraments are **required** to attend two **Parent Sacrament Meetings**. The Sacrament meetings this year will be on the following days:

- ❖ Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the Parish Hall
- ❖ Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 7:00 PM in the Parish Hall

Parents of children preparing for Reconciliation are also **required** to attend one Parent Reconciliation Workshop. These are scheduled as follows:

- ❖ Thursday, November 9, 2023, from 6 until 9:00 PM in the Parish Hall
- ❖ Saturday, November 11, 2023, from 9:00 AM until Noon in the Parish Hall

Parents of children preparing for First Holy Communion are also **required** to attend one Parent Eucharist Workshop. These are scheduled as follows:

- ❖ Thursday, February 29, 2024, from 6 until 9:00 PM in the Parish Hall
- ❖ Saturday March 2, 2024, from 9:00 AM until Noon in the Parish Hall

One parent of each child preparing for First Eucharist must attend their child's Eucharist Retreat day.

One parent of each child preparing for First Eucharist must attend their child's Eucharist Practice/Rehearsal.

Sacrament students must complete and return weekly homework assignments.

The CTK Church and School Sacrament Parent Commitment Sheet must be read, signed and returned to the Religious Education Office by November 2, 2023.



Sacrament of Reconciliation

Reconciliation Practice

“Practice” Reconciliations will be held in the Church on the student’s regular class day. Sunday students will practice on Sunday, November 26, from 11:45 AM until 12:45 PM. Tuesday and Wednesday Students will practice on their respective class days from 4:00 until 5:00 PM.

First Reconciliation will be celebrated Communally on Saturday, December 2, 2023 as follows:

Students with Last Names A through L: 10:00 AM

Students with Last Names M through Z: 11:00 AM

To prepare your child for Reconciliation, please rehearse the included First Reconciliation Format with him or her. With practice, memorization of this format is not out of the reach of 2nd grade students and has been the standard format of Reconciliation for decades. Practice this format repeatedly and your child will know it by heart on their day.

While everyone is encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation often, we ask that parents not come forward to receive the sacrament on your child’s First Reconciliation Day. There is no certificate provided for students who have completed their First Confession.



The Sacrament of First Holy Communion

First Eucharist Retreat Dates

One parent must attend their child’s First Eucharist Retreat. Two Retreats will be held on each of the two days scheduled. Your child’s schedule date and time corresponds to their First Eucharist date and time. Retreats will be held in the Parish Hall as follows:

- ❖ Saturday, April 13, 2024, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM & 1:30 – 3:30 PM
- ❖ Saturday, April 20, 2024, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM & 1:30 – 3:30 PM
- ❖ Saturday April 27, 2024, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM (Older Sacrament Students)



The Sacrament of First Holy Communion (Pg 2)

First Eucharist Practice Sessions

Rehearsals will be held on the Thursday prior to your child's First Communion Mass. These Practice Sessions are **mandatory** for both one parent and their child. You must attend the Practice session on your scheduled date and at your scheduled time. Practice Sessions will be held in Church as follows:

- ❖ Thursday, May 2, 2024, 3:30 to 4:30 PM, and 4:30 – 5:30 PM
- ❖ Thursday, May 9, 2024, 3:30 to 4:30 PM, and 4:30 – 5:30 PM

First Holy Communion Mass Dates & Times

Your child's First Eucharist date and time will be determined using a Signup Genius program. We will open 25 spaces for each mass, and they will be available on a "first come, first served" basis. Noting the sacred nature of the day, children should be dressed in their "Sunday Best." Traditionally, girls wear white dresses and shoes, veils are optional gloves are not allowed. Boys should wear suits or sport coats, dress shirts and ties, dress slacks and dress shoes. Masses will be celebrated as follows:

- ❖ Saturday, May 4, 2024, 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM
- ❖ Saturday, May 11, 2024, 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM

2024 Retreat, Rehearsal & Eucharist Matrix

The Eucharist Retreat for Sunday students of Ms. Sherry Cartmill and Wednesday students of Mr. Mike Aliscad will be held on April 27, 2024, from 10:30 until 12:30 PM.

| First Eucharist Date & Time | Retreat Date & Time | Rehearsal Date & Time |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| May 4, 2024, 10:00 AM | April 13, 10:30 – 12:30 | May 2, 3:30 – 4:30 PM |
| May 4, 2024, 12:00 PM | April 13, 1:30 – 3:30 | May 2, 4:30 – 5:30 PM |
| May 11, 2024, 10:00 AM | April 20, 10:30 – 12:30 | May 9, 3:30 – 4:30 PM |
| May 11, 2024, 12:00 PM | April 20, 1:30 – 3:30 | May 9, 4:30 – 5:30 PM |

Christ the King-St. Stephen Parish & School Sacrament Parent Commitment

Recognizing the serious and sacred nature of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion, and understanding our obligation to prepare our child/children to receive these sacraments, I/we commit to the following:

- ❖ I/we have read and understand the Parent's Sacrament Handbook.
- ❖ I/we will attend and celebrate Sunday Mass with my/our child.
- ❖ I will assure that my/our child attends all Religious Education classes, unless they are seriously ill.
- ❖ I/we will register in the Word of Life program and use the Parent Portal to support my/our child's/children's faith formation journey.
- ❖ I/we will assist my child with weekly homework and return completed work in the provided manila envelope.
- ❖ I/we will pray with my/our child/children and help him/her learn the traditional prayers of the Catholic Faith, the Sign of the Cross, The Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Act of sorrow and the traditional Reconciliation Rite format and prayers.
- ❖ I/we will attend and participate in:
 - The Parent Reconciliation Enrichment Day on November 9th or 11th, 2023
 - The Parent Sacrament Day on February 1, 2024
 - The Parent Eucharist Enrichment Day on February 29th or March 2nd, 2024
 - My/our child's sacrament celebration days and all rehearsals and retreats.

We, the _____ family will participate in all the
Sacrament Commitments required for _____

(Child's First Name, Last Name)

Parent Signature _____

(Post this copy prominently in your home as a reminder of your commitment.)

First Reconciliation Format

1. Approach the priest and bow your head as a sign of respect.
2. Make the sign of the cross and say, "Bless me Father, for I have sinned. This is my first confession. I am sorry for all of my sins especially for...."
3. Be ready to hear words of advice from the priest and to be given a penance for your sins.
4. Make a sincere Act of Contrition, praying: "My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin."
5. The priest, sitting in the person of Christ, will say the prayer of Absolution: "God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in Peace."
6. The penitent makes the sign of the cross and says, "Thank you, Father," bows his head and returns to his pew.

Christ the King-St. Stephen Parish & School Sacrament Parent Commitment

Recognizing the serious and sacred nature of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion, and understanding our obligation to prepare our child/children to receive these sacraments, I/we commit to the following:

- ❖ I/we have read and understand the Parent's Sacrament Handbook.
- ❖ I/we will attend and celebrate Sunday Mass with my/our child.
- ❖ I will assure that my/our child attends all Religious Education classes, unless they are seriously ill.
- ❖ I/we will register in the Word of Life program and use the Parent Portal to support my/our child's/children's faith formation journey.
- ❖ I/we will assist my child with weekly homework and return completed work in the provided manila envelope.
- ❖ I/we will pray with my/our child/children and help him/her learn the traditional prayers of the Catholic Faith: The Sign of the Cross, The Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Act of sorrow and the traditional Reconciliation Rite format and prayers.
- ❖ I/we will attend and participate in:
 - The Parent Reconciliation Enrichment Day on November 9th or 11th, 2023
 - The Parent Sacrament Day on February 1, 2024
 - The Parent Eucharist Enrichment Day on February 29th or March 2nd, 2024
 - My/our child's sacrament celebration days and all rehearsals and retreats.

We, the _____ family will participate in all the
Sacrament Commitments required for _____

(Child's First Name, Last Name)

Parent Signature _____

(Return this copy to the Religious Education Office by November 2, 2023)