



Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish.

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****IMPORTANT FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION REGISTRATION INFORMATION****

October 2020

Re: Celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion / Year 2020-2021

Dear Parent(s):

You are receiving this letter because you have a child who has entered **Grade 2** in the fall of 2020, and therefore, we wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with some information about the Parish based, **Sacramental Preparation Program** for the sacrament of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion next year for those entering Grade 2 in 2020. This year planning can only be done tentatively due to the COVID-19 situation which is still very fluid. There are still many unknown variables regarding what things will be like in the winter and spring.

Please note that this Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are to be celebrated and received in the family's home parish (i.e. the parish where the family attends Sunday Mass).

Young people learn their faith first and foremost from their parents. It is in the home that they first learn about God and are introduced to the Christian way of life. This is considered the *initial preparation* for receiving the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Those who attend Catholic schools participate in religious education which is also part of this initial preparation, as is coming to Church to worship God, to celebrate the memorial of His Passion and Death, and thereby, thank God our Father for all His blessings, especially for the gift of His only son, Jesus.

Sacramental Preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion will be accomplished through a combined effort of the candidates themselves, their parents, school and Transfiguration of the Lord Parish:

Role of Parents:

This year parents will be required to assist with virtual learning lesson plans and guidance to teach their children the material for both sacraments **at home** over the course of the program. It is our hope that this will be a blessed opportunity for you to spend time with your children in their faith journey, by sharing your own experiences with them to help them understand their faith better and bring them closer to God. It gives your child a chance to ask questions, understand your upbringing and why their receiving of these sacraments is so important to you. It also allows you to revisit parts of your Catholic faith that you may have forgotten, and to grow along with your child. **It is expected, of course, that you will commit to attending mass each weekend with your family or watching mass online if we are still under the current pandemic restrictions.** It is the best opportunity for children to understand the parts of the mass, and to see you leading by example is the most important lesson and gift you can give them. Once they are registered, the students will be required to **complete a Journal after each weekend mass** for the duration of the program. **We will also be asking the parents to make a concerted effort to make sure the children know basic prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Guardian Angel prayer, as well as how to bless themselves and genuflect.**

At this time, we have created a virtual format for the preparation program classes. Students will be required to attend a ZOOM session every week with a parent present at all times during those virtual lessons. During this time, they will be required to be logged on and interacting with the program through these virtual classes. Attendance at all classes is absolutely mandatory, prior notice of absence must be given in advance.

Role of Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish – Program, Class and Confirmation Celebration Dates:

Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish will be providing the **Sacramental Preparation Program**. The team established to lead this program will consist of several members of our parish community including our Youth Minister, parents, parish and student volunteers. There is a fee of \$30 per candidate for the program.

Program and Ceremony Dates

This year planning can only be done tentatively due to the COVID-19 situation. There are still many unknown variables regarding what things will be like in the spring. The program is set to start the week of **January 11, 2021**. Once we have



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completed registration process for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, we will be putting together a structure and timeline for what class schedule will be. Due to the program being virtual, there are many new factors that will need to be taken into consideration for the safety of the students and our volunteers. This letter is intended to give you **advance notice** to make you aware of the time commitments for both your child and your family in connection with receiving these sacraments.

Classes will be held on a weekly basis (day of the week still to be determined). Within these virtual classes the students are required to participate and engage with the content of the program, while having a parent/guardian present with them at all times. The students will also be required to participate in Sunday Mass, whether it is here in our parish or at home through our Live Stream. They will also be required to complete a journal entry after each Sunday Mass (which will be explained further at a later time).

Due to the COVID-19 situation, we will not be announcing any ceremony dates at this time. Please be patient with us, as the protocols and restrictions continue to change, we will be waiting until the spring to choose and announce the dates. Please note that you will be given advanced notice for you to be able to prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

Volunteers

Volunteering is a wonderful opportunity for you to share more deeply in this grace filled journey to First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion with your child. We encourage parents to consider volunteering to co-lead a group of approximately 6-7 young people for the sessions that will take place on a virtual platform, Zoom. Throughout the program, the candidates view DVD segments related to the faith and the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. The volunteers then facilitate discussions in their small group about what was presented in the DVD. Many people who have volunteered with this program in the past have returned to assist in years when they don't have any children in the program because they found it to be such a rewarding experience.

You do not need to be an expert in Catechism to become a volunteer: you will be given a copy of the Leader's Guide, as well, our program coordinators are here to help and train you. You need only to be willing to engage with the youth and to do your best. You have a wealth of experiences that will benefit the youth in your group.

Requirements

- One Training Session done online via Zoom
- Approximately a half an hour of preparation for each class to review material to be discussed
- One and a half hours on the day of each class

Conclusion

We look forward to sharing with you in this God-given mission of leading our children to the Father through His Son in the Holy Spirit.

Yours Sincerely,

Fr. George Parayil
Pastor

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Schedule of PROPOSED Dates for First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion 2020/2021

<u>Event</u>	<u>Proposed Date</u>	<u>Explanation/Requirements</u>
ONLINE REGISTRATION	Tuesday, October 20, 2020 until Monday, November 30, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child must have been baptized in the Roman Catholic faith (attach copy of baptismal certificate) Child must be entering grade 2 Child/family must be attending Transfiguration of Our Lord Church on a regular basis Registration fee: \$30
Session #1 Session #2 Session #3 Session #4 Session #5 Session #6 Session #7 Session #8 Session #9 Session #10 Session #11 Session #12 Session #13 Session #14	Week of January 11 Week of January 18 Week of January 25 Week of February 1 Week of February 8 Week of February 22 Week of March 1 Week of March 8 Week of March 22 Week of March 29 Week of April 12 Week of April 19 Week of April 26 Week of May 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Reconciliation/First Holy Communion preparation sessions for all candidates. (Classes to take place for all candidates virtually from home using Zoom) Parents are asked to be present for the Zoom sessions for safety and security reasons (MANDATORY) Attendance at all sessions is mandatory for students to be able to participate in the celebration of the sacrament Workbooks will be available online, if you would like to have a physical copy you may contact the office to order a copy (cost of the book is \$25)
RETREAT AND RECONCILIATION	Dates TBD at a later time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are required to attend this event once the date is picked prior to ceremony
CEREMONY	Dates TBD at a later time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to current situation of COVID-19 and the restrictions and limitations constantly changing, we will be choosing dates for the ceremony at a later time.

**** please note that all dates and events above are subject to change with the uncertainty of the current situation of COVID-19**