

Saint Bernadette Church
First Penance and First Holy Communion
Sacramental Preparation 2020-2021

Director of Religious Education: All paperwork and questions should be directed to Neil Sloan, the parish Director of Religious Education. You can reach him at reled@stbernadetteschurch.org or by leaving a message at the rectory (301-593-0357). The DRE office is located at the front end of the School Hall.

Registration and Fee – Online Registration: All First Penance & First Communion candidates must be registered with the Religious Ed office. Registration should be completed online at: <https://silverspringcatholic.com/religious-education-submit/>

The fee for the registration for First Communion preparation is \$80. This fee covers materials, a retreat, certificates, and other costs. The fee can be paid online with a credit card. You may also select to speak with the DRE, either to pay by cash or check, or to request financial assistance.

Religious Education Classes: Two consecutive years of religious education are required for First Communion. This is typically fulfilled in 1st and 2nd grade. Saint Bernadette school students receive this education during the school day. Students attending public school and homeschool should sign up for Religious Education classes on Sundays. Students attending other private Catholic schools should consult the DRE about religious education expectations.

Baptismal Records to be sent to Saint Bernadette Church by January 31st, 2021

If the candidate was baptized at St. Bernadette, no action is required. All other candidates are asked to submit a newly issued Baptismal certificate as soon as possible – but no later than **January 31st, 2021**. To submit the necessary Baptismal record, contact the parish where your child was baptized (via phone, letter, or email) and request that a new certificate be sent. You can make this most direct by asking that it be sent to Saint Bernadette Catholic Church, Attention: DRE, 70 University E., Silver Spring, MD 20901. The baptism certificate must be a newly issued (2020/2021) official copy. It needs to include the pastor's signature and the parish seal.

Parish Registration: It is typically expected that children will receive sacraments at their home parish. If you are not a registered parishioner of Saint Bernadette, but would like your child to celebrate First Communion here, please ask your pastor to send a letter noting his approval to Msgr. Smith. This letter is **due by January 31st, 2021**. For school students who are not Saint Bernadette parishioners, pastors normally approve of children being allowed to receive the sacraments at the parish where they attend school.

If Your Child Was Not Baptized Catholic: For those children we were not baptized Catholic, but are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church through the reception of Holy Communion, there is a special rite (the “Profession of Faith”) to recognize their desire and to welcome them to the Church. Please contact the DRE to discuss this process.

First Communion Attire: Boys typically wear a suit or dress clothes with a sports coat and tie. Colors may vary. They must wear shoes (no sneakers). Girls typically wear a white dress. Girls should not wear gloves and should not be carrying anything in their hands at the Mass. Some boys and girls outfits have been donated to the Religious Ed office. See the DRE if you would like to look at them.

Photographs: We ask that no photographs be taken during the First Communion Mass. Pictures may be taken in the church after Mass. We will have a professional photographer to take pictures of the Mass, including the moment when each child receives his or her First Communion. These photos will be available for purchase.

First Penance: First Penance takes place on a series of Saturdays during Lent (Feb 20 - March 27). A Sign-Up Genius will be sent out in January to allow families to sign up for a particular Saturday. Children come with their parents just before the regular Saturday Confession time (meet at 2:45pm in the Church).

First Communion Retreat: Sunday April 25th from 1pm-4pm on the parish grounds. This retreat for the children will give them time together in prayer and will also be an opportunity to practice the reception of the Eucharist with Msgr. Smith. We will assess the status of COVID and current safety protocols in the spring before finalizing the retreat logistics.

First Communion: Saturday May 1st at 10am. Children will meet in the MSR by 9:15am.

May Crowning: Sunday May 2nd at 10:30. Children wear their First Communion attire to the 9am or 11am Mass and join the parish in the crowning of Mary and the recitation of the rosary between Masses.