

Saint Bernadette Church
First Penance and First Holy Communion
Sacramental Preparation 2022-2023
FAQ and Parent Check List
First Communion Mass: Saturday, May 6th, 10am

WHAT

First Penance and First Holy Communion at Saint Bernadette Church

Our younger parishioners celebrate two essential sacraments of the Catholic faith — the sacrament of Reconciliation and the sacrament of First Holy Communion in the spring. Preparation is generally done during 2nd grade, but a student may prepare to receive these sacraments once they and their family are ready for sacramental preparation after the age of seven.

HOW

Religious Education Requirements

At Saint Bernadette, 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 or homeschooling with a Catholic curricula should consult the DRE about religious education expectations.

Parents are encouraged to learn more about the Sacraments and how they - as the first teachers of the faith - can support their child(ren) in their faith journey. Opportunities for parent participation in retreats and other events relating to your child's sacramental preparation will be provided.

Participating in these preparation processes may create some conflicts with athletics and other extracurricular activities. Because you and your child have chosen to receive these sacraments, please be generous in setting your priorities.

PARENT CHECKLIST

1. **Register your child for First Holy Communion by Oct. 31st, 2022.**
 - a. 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/>
 - b. The fee for the registration for First Communion preparation is \$100. 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.
2. **Send in Baptismal Records by January 31st, 2023.**
 - a. If the candidate was baptized at St. Bernadette, no action is required.
 - b. All other candidates are asked to submit a newly issued Baptismal certificate as soon as possible – but no later than **January 31st, 2023**. 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 Church, Attention: Jasmine Kuzner, DRE
70 University Blvd. E., Silver Spring, MD 20901.
 - c. The baptism certificate must be a newly issued (2022/2023) official copy. It needs to include the pastor's signature and the parish seal.
3. **If you are members of another parish who wish to receive FHC at St. Bernadette:**

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, 2023**. 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.

4. **If Your Child Was Not Baptized Catholic:**

For children who 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.

5. Be Ready to Sign Up for First Reconciliation.

First Penance: First Penance takes place on a series of Saturdays during Lent (**February 25th - April 1st**). 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).

6. Save the Date for the First Communion Retreat.

First Communion Retreat: **Sunday April 30th 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.

FAQ

What Should My Child Wear?

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.

Can photos be taken during the Mass?

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.

When is the FHC Mass?

Saturday, May 6th, at 10am. Children will meet in the MSR by 9:15am.

When is May Crowning?

Sunday May 7th 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. Attending Mass and the May Crowning with your family is the last but not least part of this beautiful weekend!

Whom Can I Contact in case of any questions?

All paperwork and questions should be directed to Jasmine Kuzner, the parish Director of Religious Education. You can reach her at reled@stbernadetteschurch.org or by leaving a message at the rectory (301-593-0357). The DRE office is adjacent to the chapel and is accessed through the school lobby. Paperwork can be dropped off at the rectory or school offices. It can also be mailed to: Saint Bernadette Church; Attn: Jasmine Kuzner, DRE; 70 University Blvd. East, Silver Spring, MD 20901.