

First Confession & First Holy Communion

Parent Information Meeting

September 16, 2023



St. Mary Help of Christians

Aiken, South Carolina



ST. MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Corner of Park Avenue & York Street
Post Office Box 438 Aiken, South Carolina 29802

September 16, 2023

Dear Parents,

This is an exciting time in your child's life as he or she prepares to receive the Sacraments of First Confession and First Holy Communion. It is through the Sacrament of Confession that we receive the great gift of God's mercy and the forgiveness of our sins, and it is in the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist that we receive the body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this packet are the information and materials needed for parents of students preparing for First Confession and First Holy Communion at St. Mary Help of Christians. Enclosed you will find the following:

- Schedule and Due Dates at a Glance
- Examination of Conscience/How to Make Your Confession
- First Holy Communion Dress Code
- Sacramental Preparation materials

Please pay close attention to designated deadlines and dates for events. I will continue to be in contact with you throughout the year with updates and further instructional materials. If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at 803.215.7040 or email at jlaborne@charlestdiocese.org

Thank you!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Joan Marie LaBone

Director of Youth Formation and Ministry

First Confession and First Holy Communion
Schedule and Due Dates at a Glance

Please turn in all materials to Joan LaBone at the parish office or to the teacher at St. Mary's School.

- **Friday, December 15, 2023:** Registration and a copy of the Baptismal certificate is due.
- **In February – date will be announced a Saturday in February: Behind the Scenes tour** of the Church. For First Holy Communion children and their parents. There will not be a make-up for those who miss this event.
- **Saturday in February 24 at 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM GIFT OF GRACE RETREAT** for child with parent. 8:00 AM Mass will be followed by Sacramental Conversations, an examination of conscience, First Confession, a sacramental activity, and will end with lunch. Place: St. Angela Hall and the Church.
- **Saturday, April 27, 2024 at 10:00 AM: Rehearsal** First Holy Communion. Children meet in the Church. Parents meet in Mother Teresa Hall for the parent meeting.
- **Sunday, April 28, 2024 at 2:00 – 3:00 PM:** individual pictures in the church with Scott Webster of Webster Photography.
- **Saturday, May 4, 2024 at 10:00 AM: FIRST HOLY COMMUNION** in the Church. *Please take your child to St. Michael Hall at 9:40 AM.*
- **Sunday, May 5, 2024: May Procession.** First Holy Communion students are invited to lead the procession wearing their First Holy Communion clothing. First Holy Communion Fathers are invited to carry the bier with the Statue of Mary.

Parental Sacramental Preparation

Some things to do all the time:

- Take your children to **Mass** every Sunday (even when you're traveling), and sit near the front so they can see the sanctuary. Take your children to daily Mass occasionally; daily Mass is shorter and less crowded, making it a bit easier to follow what's happening. Participate in the Mass, ie, respond and sing with gusto. And don't forget to chat with Father outside afterwards!
- Take your child with you when you go to **confession**. Seeing you go to confession is one of the best ways to help your child prepare.
- **Visit churches** when you travel, or plan a day trip to visit the church in the next town. Walk around to see the statuary and windows, and identify the saints and bible stories (sometimes this is hard!). Say a prayer and light a candle for your loved ones. Stay for Mass if you can.

To prepare for First Confession (in February):

- Work with your child to complete the pamphlets that are being sent home from their teachers.
- During the **Church Tour (date to be announced)** students will be able to go inside the confessionals. (This will only be a small part of the fascinating tour).
- On **FORMED**, find the study FORGIVEN and watch the two sessions
For Parents: Preparing Your Child for First Confession
For Children: How to Make a Great Confession (watch this one with your child)
to register on FORMED, go to: <https://formed.org/signup>
and enter St. Mary Help of Christians, Aiken

To prepare for First Holy Communion (May 4th):

- Work with your child to complete the booklet due April 29th
- On **FORMED**, find the study PRESENCE and watch the two sessions
For Parents: Preparing Your Child for First Holy Communion
For Children: The Miracle at Every Mass (watch this one with your child)
to register on FORMED, go to: <https://formed.org/signup>
and enter St. Mary Help of Christians, Aiken
- Take your child to **Confession**. Confessions are held in the church
 - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 4:45 – 5:15 PM (before 5:30 PM Mass)
 - Saturday 3:30 – 4:30 PM (before the 5:00 PM Mass)
 - Sunday before the Spanish 12:30pm Mass

First Holy Communion Dress Code (*reminder*)

Attire for girls:



- **White dress with sleeves**; if sleeveless, please wear a white sweater for Holy Mass or add cap sleeves to the dress.
- **White dress shoes** with a back or strap. Please do not wear flip-flops or sneakers.
- **White veil** attached with headband, barrette, or wreath of flowers.
- White gloves and stockings are optional.

Attire for boys:



- **Blazer and dress pants** (A suit is also acceptable - any color)
- **Dress shirt** with a **tie/bow-tie**
- **Dress shoes.** (Please do not wear flip-flops)

HOW TO GO TO CONFESSION

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and then say:

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.

This is my first confession.

I accuse myself of the following sins:

2. Now, briefly – but completely – tell the priest your sins.

3. When you have finished telling the priest your sins, say:

For these and all my sins I am truly sorry.

4. The Priest may give some brief counsel. As medicine for the soul, the Priest will give you a penance to complete outside of the confessional.

5. Then the priest will invite you to make an Act of Contrition. You may use one you know or the following:

ACT OF CONTRITION

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. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

6. The Priest then gives the 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.

Penitent: Amen.

7. The Priest then sends you forth:

The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace.

Penitent: Thanks be to God.

An Examination of Conscience for Children

Directions: Go to a quiet place before bed, say some prayers, do this Examination of Conscience, and then make an Act of Contrition.

Responsibilities to God

- Have I prayed every day?
- Have I prayed my morning prayers and night prayers?
- Have I prayed with my family?
- Have I been moody and rebellious about praying and going to church on Sunday?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me whenever I have been tempted to sin?
- Have I asked the Holy Spirit to help me do what is right?



Responsibilities to others

- Have I been obedient and respectful to my parent(s)
- Have I lied or been deceitful to them or to others?
- Have I been arrogant, stubborn, or rebellious?
- Have I talked back to parent(s), teachers, or other adults?
- Have I pouted and been moody?
- Have I been selfish toward my parent(s), my brothers and sisters, my teachers, or my friends and schoolmates?
- Have I gotten angry at them? Have I hit anyone?
- Have I held grudges or not forgiven others?
- Have I treated other children with respect, or have I made fun of them and called them names?
- Have I used bad language?
- Have I stolen anything? Have I returned it?
- Have I performed my responsibilities, such as homework and household chores?
- Have I been helpful and affectionate toward my family?
- Have I been kind and generous with my friends?

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Act of Contrition

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. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.

Saint Mary Help of Christians Church
FIRST HOLY COMMUNION REGISTRATION 2024

___ Sunday morning School of Formation ___ St. Mary Grade School
___ Home School- Program used _____

[Please print clearly]

Child's Full Name _____
(Name from the Baptismal Certificate)

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Family email _____

Father's Full Name _____

Mother's Full Name _____

Mother's Maiden name _____

Parish in which your family is registered _____

Child's Date of Birth _____

Child's Date of Baptism _____ Baptism Parish _____

Baptismal Parish Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

A copy of the child's baptismal certificate must accompany this form.

