

Confirmation / First Eucharist Parent Handbook

St. Maria Goretti Parish
Scottsdale, Arizona
2009-2010

Parents,

You are requesting sacrament preparation for your child from St. Maria Goretti Catholic Parish. This handbook will outline for you a schedule for this preparation and the expectations we have of you, as parents.

We have adopted this agenda following diocesan guidelines and the mandates of the Church since Vatican II, which state that sacramental preparation (initiation) for children be modeled after the Rite of Christian Initiation and that initiation is accomplished in and by the community. Since the family is the primary community for children, parental involvement in the preparation process is essential.

The attached pages are designed to help you understand the importance of this preparation process and to answer your questions in regard to your child's prior preparation and age appropriateness. Attendance in all weekly classes and the extra sessions are essential to this experience. We understand that emergencies and unforeseen circumstances can occur. Please call the office to report an absence and to make other arrangements if necessary.

Welcome to this journey of faith in sacramental preparation. May it be enlightening and fulfilling to every member of your family!

Yours in Christ,

Father Doug Lorig
Pastor

Mary Arnold
Coordinator of Elementary Religious Education

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MYSTAGOGY: A LIFELONG PROCESS

The Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, are the rites by which we become members of the Body of Christ taking our place in full communion with the Church. Candidates, when preparing for the sacraments, spend time in prayer and study. Yet, it is in embracing the life-long journey into conversion that we truly become faithful disciples of Jesus.

It is important to realize the Confirmation and 1st Eucharist are a beginning of our education and conversion. If we attempt to live our lives as Catholic followers of Jesus with the understanding of a 3rd grader, or a 6th grader, or a sophomore in high school, we are not truly living up to the call of Jesus to be His disciple. His call is life-long, and we need continuously to update ourselves and foster within our families, and within ourselves as individuals, a deeper understanding and appreciation of our faith.

Mystagogy is what the Church refers to when we are challenged to continuously “grow in deepening our grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it a part of our lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity.” (Rite of Christian Initiation, 244) It is a lifelong introduction into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message we have learned and above all through our experience of the sacraments we have received. As we grow and mature, we are called to “derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world.” (Rite of Christian Initiation, 245)

Throughout the period of preparation for the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, the pastor and catechetical leaders are to call the attention of the parents and the candidates to the need for Mystagogy – the need for on-going education and experience of our Catholic faith following reception of the Sacraments. Indeed, it would be a sign that a family is not ready for the experience of initiation if the intention is to neglect Mystagogy as their children grow and mature.

Mystagogy is a new word for many, but an important concept for our families. To become a domestic Church, parents need not only to seek preparation of their children for sacramental experiences, but to be committed to:

- On-going education and formation for their family
- Participating fully, actively, and consciously in the Mass
- Participating in the life and ministry of their parish community
- Participating often in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

This gradual living through the mystery of God's love for us and discerning and committing ourselves to our role in the salvation story is something that comes to pass as we mature in Christ. This is the *mystagogy* of our lives. It is important to acknowledge and articulate that reception of the Sacraments of Initiation is not the end of our formation as Christians. It is but the beginning.

It is crucial that parishes continually offer opportunities for ongoing education and formation for all ages and stages of life to help the initiated come to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the gifts they have received . . . *gifts from on high*.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

“In him you also, had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him and were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit. . .” Ephesians 1:13.

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Acts 2:42

POLICY 3: CELEBRANT

Confirmation will continue to be celebrated by the Bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix, by visiting Bishops, and by selected priests with delegated faculties from the Bishop of Phoenix for conferring Confirmation. First Eucharist will be celebrated in the same liturgy.

“In the Latin Rite, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. Although the bishop may for grave reasons concede to priests the faculty of administering Confirmation, it is appropriate from the very meaning of the sacrament that he should confer it himself, mindful that the celebration of Confirmation has been temporally separated from Baptism for this reason. Bishops are the successors of the apostles. They have received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The administration of this sacrament by them demonstrates clearly that its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ.”
CCC 1313

POLICY 3.1: TO ARRANGE FOR CONFIRMATION CELEBRANT

To schedule and request the necessary forms, contact the Office of the Chancery at (602) 354-2477.

SEASON OF CELEBRATION

Confirmation and First Eucharist will be celebrated both Fall and Spring.

POLICY 3.2: REGISTRATION OF CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST

After confirmation has been celebrated, the pastor or his designate is to record the names of those confirmed in the Confirmation Register. This information includes the minister, parents, sponsor, date and place of confirmation. Canon 895.

Confirmation information, of those who were baptized in your parish, must also be documented in their Baptism record. Notification is to be sent to the places of baptism of each Confirmand so proper notification can be made in their baptismal registers. Canons 535 §2 , 895.

Note: First Eucharist information is not sent to the church where baptism took place. This information need only be recorded only at the parish where the Celebration of First Eucharist takes place.

All-powerful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, by water and
the Holy Spirit you
freed your sons and
daughters from sin
and gave them new
life. Send your Holy
Spirit upon them to be
their helper and guide.
Give them the spirit of
wisdom and
understanding, the
spirit of right
judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge
and reverence. Fill
them with the spirit of
wonder and awe in
your presence.

We ask this through
Christ our Lord.

Rite of Confirmation

Confirmation/First Eucharist Checklist

Documentation due by February 28

Registration form and fees paid

- \$65.00 for Atrium sessions for Faithful Family members
- \$55.00 Sacramental Materials fee (for two sacraments, \$35 for one)
- Copy of baptismal certificate turned in
- Sponsor information sheet turned in
- White garment from last year turned in (in a zip lock bag with name)

Calendar

Atrium Sessions are weekly beginning the third week of September until the middle of May.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Nov. 3 | Meeting for parents 7pm in Piper II |
| Feb. 28 | Parent / child workshop #1 9:45AM John 23
Mass of Enrollment parents & children 11am
Sponsor info due |
| March 21 | Workshop #2 10:30am -12:00 in John 23
Saints name essay due |
| April 18 | Workshop # 3 10:30am -12:00 in Piper Hall
Sponsors/Parent/Child
Community Service paperwork due |
| April 30 | Retreat for Child 8am - 3:00pm |
| May 1 | Retreat for child and parents 8:30– 12:00pm
Sponsors come at 12pm |
| May 2 | Confirmation and 1st Eucharist Mass 1:00pm
Children and sponsors meet in John 23 Hall at 12:30pm while parents can be seated in the church |

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Questions of Readiness for Parents

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Questions of Readiness

My relationship with God: As seen through my child's eyes:

Do we attend mass regularly and actively participate in it?

Is my heart set on God, so that I really love Him, above all things and are faithful to his Commandments?

Are there any false gods that I worship by giving them greater attention and deeper trust than I give to God? (Money, material possessions, work, superstitions, new age spiritualism, sports, hobbies collecting)

Have I used God's name in vain: lightly or carelessly?

Have I shown respect for the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the Saints?

Am I able to respond knowledgeably to the questions my child may have regarding the readings or any part of the mass?

Do I pray with my children?

Do I give praise to God for the gifts we receive as a family?

My relationship with my neighbor:

Have I a genuine love for my neighbor?

Do I speak badly of others behind their back?

Do I gossip in front of my child?

Do I forgive others when I am wronged?

Do I ask forgiveness from my child if I am wrong?

Have I controlled any vices, especially in front of my child?

Have I indulged in reading, conversation, shows, and entertainments, that offend against Christian and Human decency?

Do I share my fortunes with the less fortunate?

Do I share in the apostolic and charitable works of the Church and in the life of my parish?

Discerning my Child's Readiness

My child's relationship with his/her neighbor:

Can my child distinguish actions which are right and wrong from accidents?

Does my child understand the interrelationship among love of God, neighbor and self?

Does my child know how sin hurts his/her relationship with God?

Does my child assume personal responsibility for his/her actions and show true sorrow for failure to love? (Can he/she express it in his or her own words?)

Does my child understand that she/he must change unloving behavior and also the desire to act in an unloving way?

Does my child understand that the Sacrament of Eucharist is a special action of Jesus' real presence among us?

My child's relationship with God:

Does my child pray?

How does my child pray?

When does my child pray?

Does she/he speak about a God who loves them?

Does my child speak freely of his or her love for God?

Does he or she recognize the gifts God has given?

Confirmation/First Eucharist Mass of Enrollment

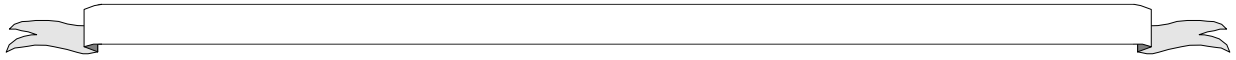
At the Mass of Enrollment we introduce the children to our parish community, marking the beginning of their preparation for the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. This will take place on Sunday, February 28, 2010 at the 11AM Mass.

Workshop #1 and Mass of Enrollment:

On the morning of the Mass of Enrollment, families will gather in John the 23rd Hall at 9:45 A.M. We will have our first meditation. Please have children bring Bible and workbook as well as Mass booklet.

At 10:55AM All will proceed to the church for mass and seated in reserved seating at the front of the church. At the end of the liturgy, the children will be called forward to be blessed by the priest and the assembly. Some of the children will proceed to the doors to distribute the names of the children to parishioners for continued prayer during this time of preparation.

Coffee and donuts are served after the 11AM Mass in Piper Hall.



The Family Pledge for Sacramental Preparation

We promise to worship God by participating in the Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation.

We promise to participate in the Sacramental life of our parish throughout this preparation time, as a witness to our faith.

We promise to help our children learn the basic prayers of our faith and incorporate them in our family prayer time.

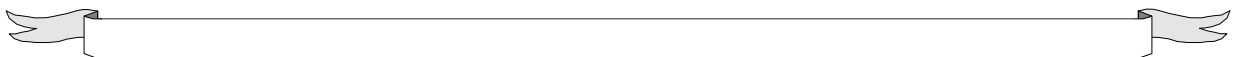
We promise to participate in our child's sacramental preparation by spending time completing all assignments, talking about the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit, reading the Bible, and finding time to pray together.

We promise to support our child's weekly attendance in the Atrium and the meetings and workshops required.

We promise, with God's help, to continue sharing the gift of faith with our family and our parish community after this sacramental preparation has ended.

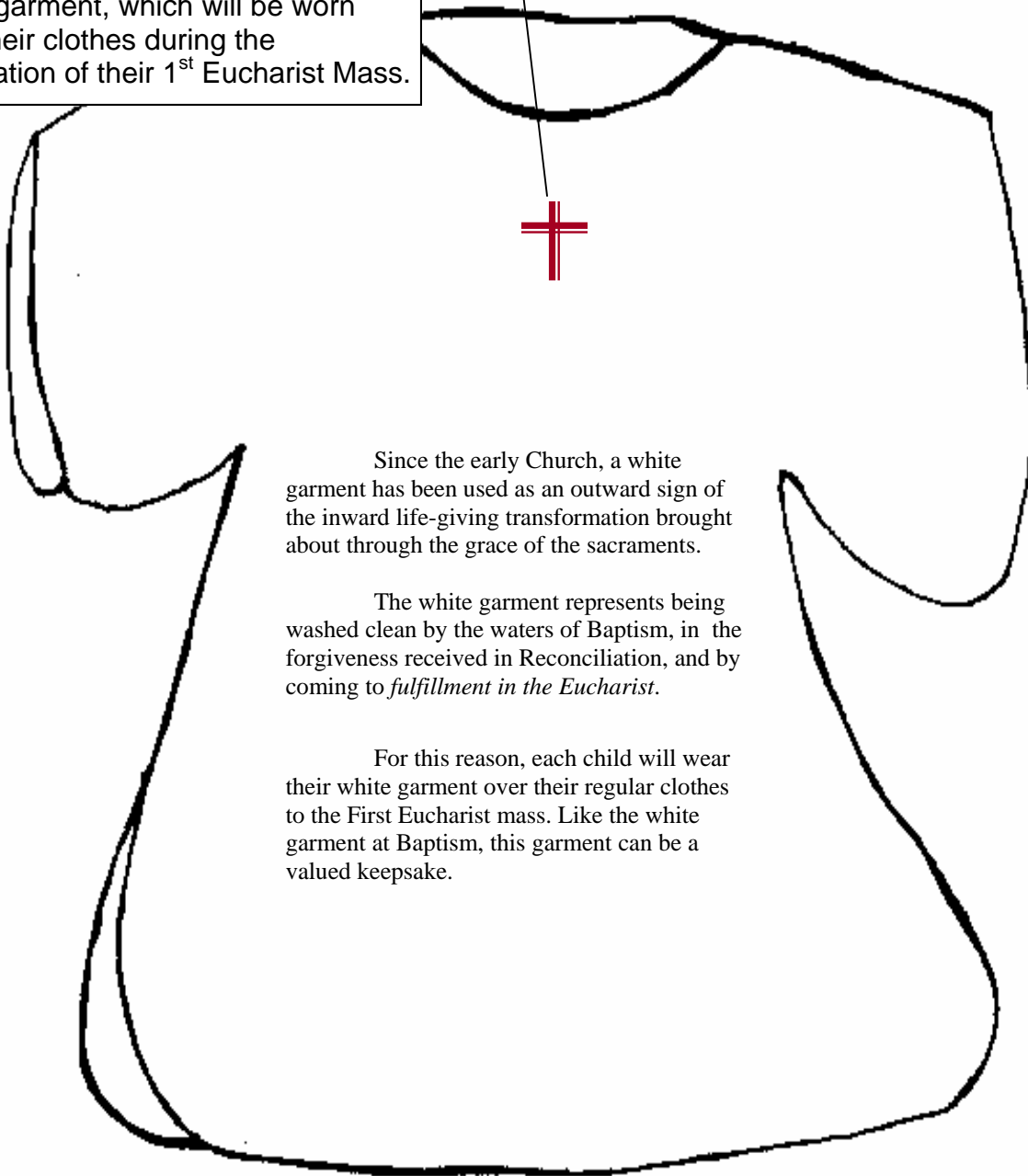
Parent's Signature

Date



The White Garment

Prior to the retreat, if your child is receiving First Eucharist, you must bring in the white garment your child received at 1st Reconciliation. We will provide a new white garment for those who were not here last year. At the retreat each child will be embroidering a red cross on the front of the garment, which will be worn over their clothes during the celebration of their 1st Eucharist Mass.

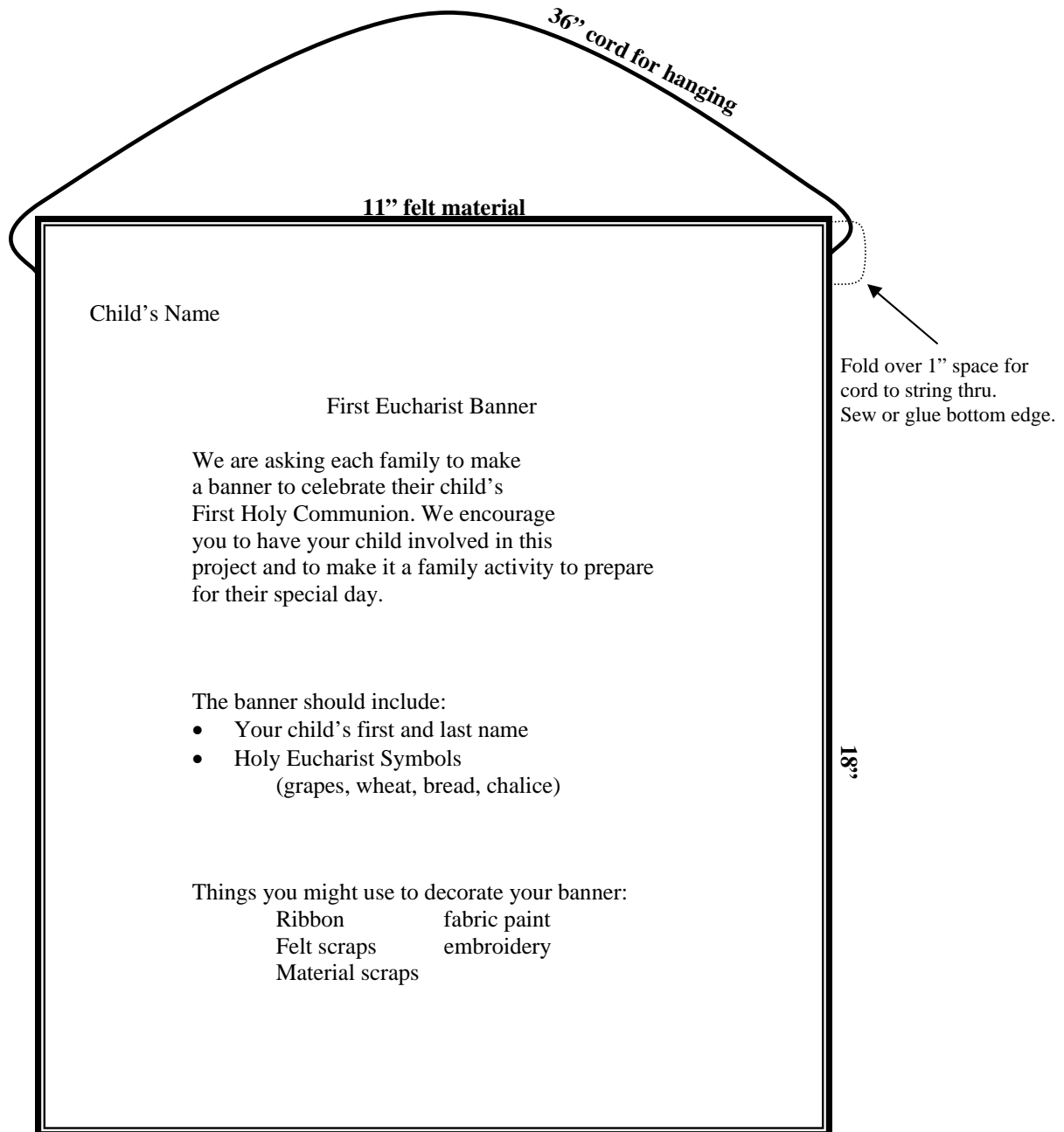


Since the early Church, a white garment has been used as an outward sign of the inward life-giving transformation brought about through the grace of the sacraments.

The white garment represents being washed clean by the waters of Baptism, in the forgiveness received in Reconciliation, and by coming to *fulfillment in the Eucharist*.

For this reason, each child will wear their white garment over their regular clothes to the First Eucharist mass. Like the white garment at Baptism, this garment can be a valued keepsake.

Banner Instructions



1st Eucharist and Confirmation Retreat

As part of your child's preparation for Confirmation and 1st Eucharist, it is a requirement that he/she attend a two-day retreat on the weekend of Confirmation/ First Holy Communion. It is held on Friday and Saturday of the sacrament weekend in Piper Hall with the sacrament mass on Sunday at 1:00pm.

Children come to the retreat Friday, April 30th beginning with 8:00am Mass. (parents may join them for mass) The retreat will proceed in Piper Hall until 3pm. The retreat continues in Piper Hall on Saturday, May 1st from 8:30am to 12:00pm for parents and children. Sponsors join in at 12:00pm Saturday for practice in the church.

Preparation for the Retreat

Prior to the retreat you will need to bring in the white garment your child received at 1st Reconciliation. We will provide a new white garment for those who were not here last year. The children will be embroidering a red cross on the front of the garment, which will be worn over their clothes during the celebration of their 1st Eucharist Mass.

Parents will be notified by the snack and lunch committee to provide food and drink for the retreat..

What happens on this Retreat

During this quiet retreat the children have time to deepen their reflection on the work they have already come to know in the Atrium. They will also be engaged in various contemplative tasks preparing their hearts to receive Confirmation and First Eucharist, focusing on God's love and the peace He can bring to their lives. This is a time of great joy for the children and they find that they want to remain in this experience for as long as they can.

The children will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the retreat as part of their preparation for receiving the Eucharist. This is an act of respect for the Eucharist; that is, to be in a state of grace before receiving the sacraments.

On Saturday, the parents will join their children in the preparation process for the day. The children and all present will renew their Baptismal promises. The white garment is then presented to the First Eucharist child, by the parents or Godparents, as a sign of the purity regained in Baptism and Reconciliation. Each child receives "the light of Christ" from the Paschal candle and having been made beautiful inside and out. Those who have already received First Eucharist will join with them in renewing their love for the Eucharist. Everyone goes home in joyful anticipation of the next day.

**Celebration
of the
Sacrament of Confirmation/
First Eucharist
May 2, 2010
1:00pm**

The children have come to take their place at the banquet that never ends! They should arrive 30 minutes before Mass begins dressed in the following: Boys; dark pants, white shirt, (tie optional), dark shoes. (no jeans or sneakers) and white garment. Girls; white dress, white shoes, something in the hair (ribbons, flowers, may wear veils) and white garment. No gloves or purses. We will be meeting in John XXIII Hall. At this time, the catechists will review with the children specific tasks, etiquette and prayer. Parents proceed to church to find a seat. Sponsors stay with the children.

Those receiving the sacrament of Confirmation only will wear red (tie, shirt, top, ribbon, shawl,..)

The children and sponsors will process in before Mass and be seated in the front reserved rows of the church. The Eucharist banners will be hung at the end of each pew throughout the church.

After the homily those making **Confirmation** will be introduced to the assembly. They will stand and kneel as instructed. Then they will proceed with their sponsor to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

When it is time to receive the Eucharist, the First Communicants will come forward to receive under both species if desired. After receiving, the child and sponsor will return to the pew. This is the time for prayers of thanksgiving and praise as the rest of our parish family shares in the Feast.

Photography

A special mention needs to be made and all cooperation is greatly appreciated that ***no photography or videotaping will be allowed during the liturgy!*** After Mass you may take all you want.

Reception

Please join all the families after Mass for a hosted reception in honor of the children. Children may pick up their gift from the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program at this time.