

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
Religious Education Program



First Communion Details

CEREMONIES

Saturday, April 29th at 9:00 am

Saturday, April 29th at 11:30 am

Sunday, April 30th at 9:00 am Family Mass

CORRESPONDING REHEARSALS

Friday, April 28th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Thursday, April 27th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Wednesday, April 26th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Dates for Making Banners: **Sunday, February 5th & Wednesday, February 8th**

CEREMONY & PEW ASSIGNMENT

The First Communion celebration is designed to support the faith, comfort and confidence of your child while also promoting a valued sense of shared community. Keeping these important goals in mind, assigning classes as a whole to either the 9:00 am or 11:30 am Mass also attempts to balance the number of people in the church in an effort to ensure a more personal, spiritual experience for each family.

Each year there are numerous requests for reconsideration of a family's Mass assignment due to individual concerns. With a wish to be both sensitive to the issues surrounding these requests yet also fair to one and all, the protocol for reconsideration is as follows:

- A request to participate in the Sunday morning 9:00 am Family Mass should be made prior to January 1st. If there are over 20 requests, a random lottery process will be used to select participants, otherwise all requests will be granted regardless of circumstance.
- A request for a specific Saturday morning First Communion Mass will be reviewed after assignments have been received.
- A request identifying the extraordinary circumstance necessitating reconsideration must be submitted in writing/email to the Religious Education Office.
- A request must be received by February 28.
- Children sit with their families in a pew, which is determined by lottery at a later date. A family moving between Masses will not be eligible for this lottery, but will be allotted a subsequent pew.
- Families will be notified by March 15 if their request has been granted. Please feel free to contact the office with any questions or concerns.

If, for some reason, your child is unable to attend any of the scheduled ceremonies please alert the Religious Education Office. Arrangements will be made AFTER the scheduled ceremonies and scheduling will depend on how many children are affected and the availability of our priests.

THE REHEARSALS

- Children arrive at the Upper Church at 3:30 pm, where pew seating maps will be posted.
- Parents do not stay for rehearsals.
- Dismissal will be promptly at 4:30 pm from the Upper Church.

THE CEREMONY

Each ceremony will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

ARRIVAL: First Communicants should arrive at the Chapel, on the lower level of the Church, one half hour prior to the start of the ceremony.

SUGGESTED DRESS CODE:

Girls: white dress, white shoes, headpiece (flowers, ribbon, veil), *please no gloves or purses*

Boys: sport jacket, dress pants, white/light colored dress shirt, tie, dress shoes

SEATING: Children will be sitting with their families at the end of their pew, assigned by lottery prior to rehearsal. The pew will be reserved for your family and will be identified by your family banner. A seating directory will be in the gathering area at the rehearsals and at each ceremony. There will be additional seating beyond the last assigned pew. Most pews sit 6 - 8 people.

PICTURES: To maintain the solemnity of the Mass, please be aware that pictures **may only** be taken during the *procession* and *recession*. **No** pictures or video cameras are allowed during the Liturgy. A professional photographer will take a picture when your child receives Communion and at the end of the ceremony for a group picture. Pictures will be available in the vestibule of the rectory in June. Notification will be in the bulletin and via email.

PROCESSION: The children will gather in the Chapel a half hour before the ceremony. They will process in as a group. You **may** take pictures at this time. The children will process to the front of the Church, line up on the steps of the altar and join in the opening hymn. They will then join you in the family pew for the Liturgy, so please be sure to keep a seat open for them.

COMMUNION: At Communion time, the First Communicants will receive the Sacrament before family and friends. The Sacrament will be offered in host form only at the First Communion ceremony. A professional photographer will take individual pictures as each child receives First Holy Communion. The children will then sit in the choir section that will be reserved for them. They will sing while the congregation receives Communion. After Communion, they will line up on the steps of the altar for a song and a group photo.

RECESSION: Following the picture, the children will recess out. You **may** take pictures at this time. The children will recess down to the Chapel where you will pick them up. Please take your child's banner and prayer book home with you as a memento.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION: Families will receive an email regarding participating in the ceremony as a reader or gift bearer, please reply to the email with your child's name and role preference. We will pick names out of a hat and communicate roles prior to the week of rehearsals.

FAMILIES: If parents or family members are Eucharistic Ministers or Altar Servers and would like to serve at Mass, or if older siblings would like to distribute programs, please let us know.