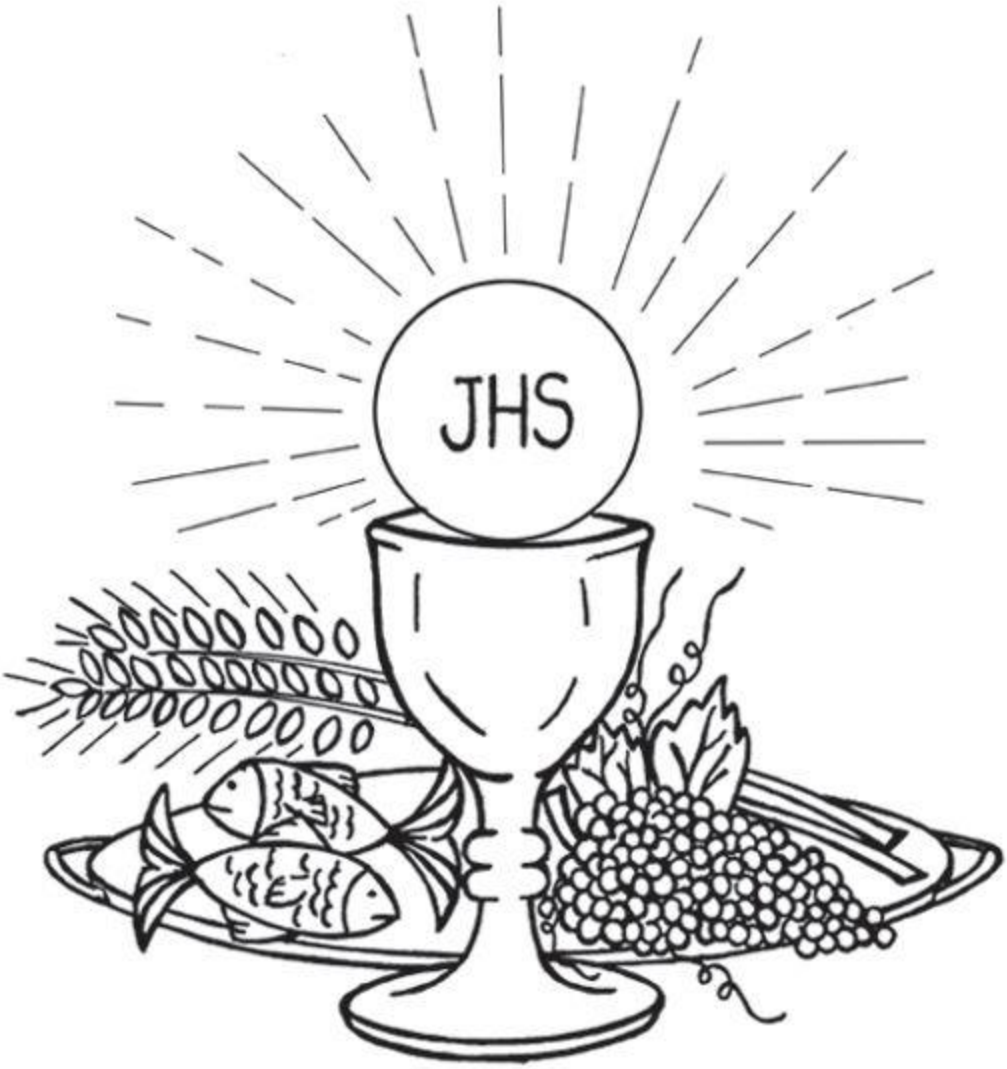

First Holy Communion

Family Handbook

Good Shepherd Catholic Church

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The Catholic Church of The Good Shepherd
Catechist

Dear Sacramental Parents of GSCC,

Firstly, we are very excited and happy to be sharing in the gift of the Sacraments with your family. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn and grow in the faith along with your child. Our children are about to take two of the biggest steps in becoming full members of our Christian Faith Community, receiving the forgiveness of Christ through the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation, and receiving his living sacrifice when they receive the Eucharist for the first time.

This is a time of joy for our students and for our church's families. We want to keep this a positive and interactive learning environment so that families and students can learn together. For our second year students, our curriculum will focus on the theme of JOY:

J- Jesus

O- Others

Y- Yourself

Sacrament prep will be broken up into 3 distinct lessons, each focused on a different part of finding **JOY**. Families will be provided with the lesson plans for class a month before the session meeting date. These newsletter-style lessons are to be completed at home **as a family** and brought back to class with the student and parent/adult. Each newsletter will be full of activities and readings to help prepare students for a hands-on learning environment on class day. There is even a "Parents' Corner" section, with readings and videos available for adults and family to do together to help them along their own faith journeys.

We're looking forward to meeting everyone,

Thank you and God Bless,

Victoria Carney,

Sacrament Preparation Coordinator

First Sacraments Requirements

1. **Provide a copy of Baptismal Certificate**
   a. Any person receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist must have been previously Baptized in the Catholic church.

2. **Complete TWO years of Faith Formation Classes**
   a. Complete homework for any missed classes within a week.

   b. Typically, children begin Kindergarten as their Intro Class, complete 1st & 2nd grade and receive First Eucharist at the conclusion of 2nd grade.

   c. If a child begins later than 1st grade, it is still a 2 year program.

3. **<u>During Year 1</u>**
   a. Complete Mass Passport
   b. Begin completing Faith Life Activities throughout the year.
   c. Participate with your family in the Rosary Challenge
   d. Attend one (1) hour of Adoration as a family.
   e. Complete all student workbooks with your family

4. **<u>During Year 2</u>**
   a. Complete Mass Passport
   b. Complete any remaining Faith Life Activities
   c. Complete all student workbooks with your family and attend all scheduled Sacrament Preparation classes.
   d. Attend 2 parent-student retreats & practicum (one for Reconciliation and one for Communion).
   e. Participate with your family in the Rosary Challenge.
   f. Attend one (1) hour of Adoration as a family.

5. **Make 1st Reconciliation**
   a. All students must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving First Communion.

6. **First Communion will be celebrated in the Spring of child's 2nd Year of Sacrament Prep.**

Important Dates to Remember

Sept 6, 7, 10 ..……...Reconciliation Class I

Oct 4, 5, 8 ……..... Reconciliation Class II

Nov 8, 9, 12 ...……... Reconciliation Retreat
~Act of Contrition Due at this class~
Jan 10, 11, 14 ……...……Communion Class I

January 18 ……....First Reconciliation Service

Feb 7, 8, 11 ...…….…..Communion Class II

March 7, 8, 11 ……Communion Class III

April 22~First Communion Retreat for all 2nd year students

May 1 ……..First Communion Rehearsals

May 6 ……...……First Communion Masses

First Communion Dress Code

Girls:

- White Dress, veil or a circlet of flowers, white tights or socks, & white shoes.
- Dresses should show modesty.
- Can be long or short, with shoulders covered.
- ***No gloves or purses.***

Boys:

- Suits are recommended.
- If suit is not available: white button-down dress shirt, jacket, tie, & dress shoes.
- Either solid color suit or blazer and slacks (solid colors). {eg navy blue blazer & khaki pants}
- Ties should be solid color or with tasteful, small design (stripes, dots, etc., no cartoon characters)

Class & Session Information

Year 1:

Workbook #	**Assignment Dates**	**Topics:**
Workbook 1: "What is a Sacrament?"	Available: 9/13/16 Due by: 10/22/16	- What is a Sacrament? - How do the Sacraments relate to the life of Jesus? - What are the Names of the 7 Sacraments?
Workbook 2: Sacraments of Initiation	Available 10/19/16 Due by 11/19/16	- What are the Sacraments of Initiation and how do they help us become part of our Christian Community?
Workbook 3: Sacraments of Service	Available: 11/16/16 Due by 1/7/17	- What is a vocation in the Church?
Workbook 4: Sacraments of Healing	Available 1/4/17 Due by 2/18/17	- How do the Sacraments heal our bodies and souls?
Workbook 5: Preparing for Reconciliation & The Eucharist	Available 2/15/16 Due by 3/18/16	- Grace is God's FREE GIFT for us!
Sacrament Day	TBD	TBD

Year 2:

Class Date:	**Session #**	**Topics:**
Tues Sept 6, 6-7pm Wed Sept 7, 6-7pm Sat Sept 10, 11-12pm or 1-2pm	Reconciliation Class I (homework due at beginning of class)	• God's Plan for Us • Making good choices
Tue Oct 4, 6-7pm Wed Oct 5, 6-7pm Sat Oct 8, 11-12pm or 1-2pm	Reconciliation Class II (homework due at beginning of class)	• What are sins • How to do an Examination of Conscience
Tues Nov 8, 6-7pm Wed Nov 9, 6-7pm Sat Nov 12, 11-12pm or 1-2pm	Reconciliation Class III & Retreat (homework due at beginning of class) ***Act of Contrition will be tested at this class.**	• How we receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation • How we forgive others
Tue Jan 10, 6-7pm Wed Jan 11, 6-7pm Sat Jan 14, 11-12pm or 1-2pm	Eucharist Class I (homework due at beginning of class) • Celebrating Mass1: Welcome-Gloria	• You are part of the Body of Christ
Wed January 18th	**First Reconciliation Service**	**Families meet in church by 5:45pm**
Tues Feb 7, 6-7pm Wed Feb 8, 6-7pm Sat Feb 11, 11-12pm or 1-2pm	Eucharist Class II (homework due at beginning of class) • Celebrating Mass2: Liturgy of the Word	• How do I live like Jesus? • What happens after the Sacrament? • The Rosary & Virtues
Tues March 7, 6-7pm Wed March 8, 6-7pm Sat March 11, 11-12pm Sat March 11, 1-2pm	Eucharist Class III (homework due at beginning of class) • Celebrating Mass3: Liturgy of the Eucharist	• Transubstantiation • How to receive Christ in the Eucharist
Saturday, April 22nd 8:30	**First Communion Retreat**	**Sign-in begins at 8:00AM. All children should be in pews for Rosary by 8:15**
Saturday, May 1st	First Communion Rehearsals	Report to Assigned Classrooms
Saturday, May 6th	First Communion Masses	Report to Assigned Classrooms

Children's Faith Community Options

When we share the Eucharist, we are not only receiving the Body and Blood of Christ as the consecrated Host, we also become part of the Body of Christ when we share the Eucharist with our Faith Community.

Receiving the Eucharist is one of our Sacraments of Initiation, which make us a full member of our Faith Community. To help our students prepare for their responsibility as a member of our Catholic Family, they are asked to participate in different activities as members of our Church.

These events range from acts of Charity, like our annual canned food drive, fun activities for the family, like Breakfast with Santa, or even prayer services, like our Living Rosary.

Each child is asked to choose 2 activities for each Faith Formation year, for a total of 4 activities by the time they receive their First Eucharist.

Activities will be updated throughout the year. You will receive a flyer and information in your homework or in Sacrament class, notices will be in the bulletin, and information will be posted on our First Sacraments bulletin board in the PLC.

*** In addition to these options, all families must attend Adoration together at least once during the Faith Formation year during both Year 1 and Year 2. Adoration begins following 9:00AM Mass on Thursdays and ends with Benediction at 8:45PM on Friday. For more information and to reserve an hour with the Lord, please visit the Parish website: http://gsrcc.net/avada/spirituality/**

Parent Faith Community Options

We ask that parents help to role-model their Faith Life, by also choosing two community options for each year their child is preparing for the Sacraments.

1. CPR: Catholic Parent Revival: (Free)
    - An evening of worship and fellowship. Speakers and presenters will cover different strategies for participating in our faith as a family.
    - September 10, 2016, 7-9pm in the gym

2. Parent Lectures: Free (may ask for a donation)
    - Parent classes and lectures are given throughout the year in the Teen room. These classes will be announced as they are scheduled for anyone interested in attending.

3. Volunteer to lead or assist in a Sacrament class
    - Class outlines, materials, dialog guideline and PowerPoint will be provided.

4. Volunteer for the First Communion Retreat

5. Volunteer to set-up/clean-up for First Reconciliation and/or First Eucharist Receptions (for first year parents only)

6. Volunteer for Family or Children's Faith Community Options

7. Volunteer for Pentecost/Church Birthday Booth at Parish Picnic (for 1st & 2nd Year parents)

*If you are already actively involved in a Parish ministry that role models our Faith Life, please email Vicki.

Communion Banner Requirements

Banners have been used throughout Church history to unite and educate people about the different stories and symbols of our faith. The purpose of our banner project is to give each student the opportunity to personalize their First Eucharist. Students will learn about the different symbols in the church, then choose symbols that they identify with and feel represent their faith to create their own banner that will hang at all the First Eucharist masses.

- For more information about the use of banners in the Bible and church to celebrate God's people and the church community, try this site:

http://www.reformedworship.org/article/december-1994/lift-banner-land-banners-and-paraments-can-enhance-worship

http://www.worshipexpressions.net/biblical-use-of-banners.html:

- For more information about the symbolism of Communion banners, try this blog:

https://threesidedwheel.wordpress.com/tag/banner-for-first-holy-communion/

http://stgilesparish.org/Sacraments/First%20Communion%20Symbols%20of%20the%20Eucharist.pdf

Banner Requirements:

- First Communion Banners should be on an approximately 9” x 12” felt background.
- You can use the entire space for your banner. We will hang banners from the back.
- You **do not** need to put a dowel or other hanging device on the banner.
- Your **First Name only** should be displayed on the ***front*** of the banner, but include your first name, last name and class section on the back.
- Choose a variety of symbols to represent your faith on the banner.
    - You should have at least 5 different symbols on your banner.
    - Symbols should be cut from felt or other fabric
- You can use any variety of “puff paint,” glitter, or colored/glitter glue on your banner, but all elements must be attached and dry before you turn it in.

If you would like, several stores also offer a Communion Banner Kit for purchase at reasonable prices:

Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=communion+banner

Party City: http://www.partycity.com/product/communion+pennant+banner+decoration+kit.do?from=Search&navSet=communion%20banner&bypass_redirect=1

Catholic Supply: http://shop.catholicsupply.com/bannerkits

- **Completed banners are due at sign-in at the First Communion Retreat on April 22, 2016**.

Communion Banner Symbols

Colors:

Purple: Penance and Prayer

Red: Holy Spirit and the color of Pentecost

Brown: empty tomb on Easter

Green: Hope

Black: Mourning, Jesus death for us

Blue: Heavenly love, Truth, the color of Mary

Pink: Grace

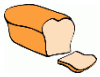
White: Purity, Innocence

Symbols

Heart: Our loving God

Cross: Faith as Christians

3-Leaf Clover: The Trinity in the Eucharist



Bread: The body of Christ present

Grapes: Wine that becomes the blood of Christ

Chalice: The cup of Faith

Flames: Holy Spirit

Dove: Holy Spirit

Rainbow: Covenant with God

Lamb: Victory over death; purity and innocence

Fish or Icthys: “Jesus Christ Son of God the Savior”

Host: Body of Christ

Bible: Word of God

Palm Frond: Victory and Martyrdom

Scallop Shell: Baptism

Butterfly: Resurection; New Life

Chi Rho: Symbol for Christ

AΩ Alpha & Omega: “the beginning and the end” ; symbol for Jesus Christ.

First Reconciliation Information

First Reconciliations will take place Wednesday, January 18, 2017.

All First Sacrament families should plan to arrive and be signed in and seated in the church no later than 5:45pm.

We will begin with a short prayer service at 6:00PM. Reconciliations will take place in the church- either on the altar, or in the cry room for the children- or in the confessionals for parents/adults.

After receiving their First Reconciliations, students can do their penance in the pews while waiting for their families and vice versa. After completing their Penance, students and families are invited back to the Hospitality Room for refreshments and to receive their First Reconciliation certificates.

Reconciliation, like Baptism, must be received before a student can receive their First Eucharist.

Reconciliation can be received multiple times throughout a person's life. As Catholics, we are required to receive the Sacrament **at least once per year**. However, it is recommended that good Catholics receive Reconciliation **once per month**.

Anyone who is aware that they have committed a mortal sin must receive Reconciliation before they can receive the Eucharist, either for the first time, or before receiving Eucharist again during Mass.

Appendix:

I. When are my classes?

In order to keep class sizes small and provide as many scheduling options as possible, we have added a fourth class for Sacraments!

If you are registered for Faith Formation…	**Then your classes will meet…**	**Class Dates:**
On Wednesdays at 6:00	Tuesday 6-7	9/6, 10/4, 11/8, 1/10, 2/7, 3/7
On Wednesdays at 4:30	Wednesday 6-7	9/7, 10/5, 11/9, 1/11, 2/8, 3/8
On Saturdays	Saturday 1-2	9/10, 10/8, 11/12, 1/14, 2/11, 3/11
In Summer session, or home school	Saturday 11-12	9/10, 10/8, 11/12, 1/14, 2/11, 3/11

If you are unable to attend one of your specified class times and would like to join us in another class, please send an email to vcarney@gsrcc.net to switch classes. However, please note- a child cannot miss a scheduled Faith Formation class to attend a Sacrament class.

Tutoring is also available on Wednesday nights from 5-9pm for families finding difficulty with the homework. On nights with Sacrament classes, tutoring will be 7-9pm.

Program FAQs

1. **Who is teaching my child?**
   - **a.** My name is Victoria (Vicki) Carney. I began as a catechist in 2000 at St. John Vianney in Lithia Springs, and my family and I have been parishioners here for about 2 years. I am a new member of Good Shepherd's staff, the Family Faith Life Coordinator. I am working with our
     Parish to provide a more in-depth faith experience for our families to experience the joy and love of God together. I will be coordinating all Sacramental preparation and teaching the classes for our students and families. We will also have a few other volunteers on hand acting as a bilingual assistants and student tutors for our classes.

2. **How many classes/how often are we required to come to church outside the regular mass times and faith formation classes?**

   a. The curriculum for Reconciliation is set up to include 2 class sessions, a retreat and Sacrament day. First Eucharist classes will also include 3 sessions, a retreat and Sacrament day, but there will also be a rehearsal the week before Sacrament day.

   The prep classes will last one hour and happen at the same time as other Faith Formation classes during the school year.

   Wednesday 4:30 Students: Wednesdays 6-7PM

   Wednesday 6:00 Students: Tuesdays 6-7PM

   Saturday Students: Saturdays 1-2

   Homeschool/Summer Students: Saturdays 11-12PM

   ****Please refer to the attached calendar for class dates and times.**

3. **What's with these booklets?**
   - **a.** The booklets you pick up today are a foundational tool to help prepare for the lessons we will learn in our Sacrament Prep sessions. These are designed in 5 parts: the general lesson and vocabulary for the month; the parable of the month for the children; comprehension activities to gauge your readiness for class; "The Parents' Corner," with readings and explanations to help adults better understand the Sacrament; and a monthly homework calendar with a different activity for each night. Each month you will bring your completed booklet to class with you and we will review and check the answers in class. At the end of the session each family will receive the booklet for the next month's class.

4. **Why are there so many family activities? Why do the booklets have to be completed as a family?**
    a. As a rule, parents are the primary instructors of Faith Formation in the Catholic Church. The goal of the workbooks and class sessions is not to be a sole provider of Faith Formation or Sacrament Preparation, but rather a tool for parents to use to help open up communication between themselves and their children to share their faith, belief system and values.

5. **What if we have to miss a class?**
    a. In the event that you cannot attend the session your family is scheduled for, please contact Vicki to reschedule your class time. If you are unable to be rescheduled for any of the sessions in a given month your family will need to make up all work at home and bring the work back in to be turned in.

6. **What if none of these dates work for us?**
    a. If, for some reason you and your family are unable to attend any of the prep sessions, you will need to contact Vicki and we will set up a date to conference with Deacon Ralph in order to set up an alternative home-study method for Sacrament Prep.

7. **Can I just drop my child off for class?**
    a. Our class sessions are also designed to give parents and students more tools to develop their path on their own Faith Journey. Classes will be set up in a hands-on learning environment, with all activities designed for parents and students to do and learn together.

8. **Why does the booklet include a family prayer session?**
    a. The family prayer session is a time for everyone in the family to come together at the end of the work and school week to refocus and prepare for the upcoming Sabbath. During this time, students and their families can take some time to reconnect over the week's events and will discuss their prayer intentions for the week.

9. **As we learn more about the Sacraments, we have even more questions about their meaning and how/why they are celebrated in our faith. Where can we find more resources?**
    a. While the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sets forth all the precepts for celebrations in the church, many resources are available to help them make sense to our everyday lives. The church library has a lot of available resources. There are also many youtube clips available from *Busted Halo*, *Sophia Sketchpad*, and several other church-approved sites. If you have any questions or ever need any kind of further clarification, please do not hesitate to ask, email or call. If I do not know the answer for sure, I will be more than happy to find the answers for you.

10. **My child needs a modified lesson plan/extra academic help- what is the penalty for being unable to complete the given work?**
    a. If for any reason, we need to modify lesson plans for your student, please do not hesitate to contact me so we can find some new options for your child. If you are working through your booklet during the month, reading the Bible passages together and discussing God's love in your family, then you are preparing your heart for the Sacraments. If your child is legitimately unable to complete the written activities for the month, do not worry, we will review those answers in our class sessions each month.

11. **How will my child/I know they are ready to receive a Sacrament?**
    a. We as Christians are called to be Christ-like and emulate his words and actions in all aspects of our lives. Loving God is not an IQ or memorization test. We will review how to prepare your heart for receiving Sacraments in Sessions 2 & 3 for both the First Penance & Reconciliation and for First Eucharist.

12. **English is not my first language. Where can I find extra help/resources?**
    Tutoring for homework in both English and Spanish is usually offered each Wednesday from 5-9pm. If there is a class that evening, tutoring will be from 7-9pm.

13. **What is a "Mass Passport"?**

    a. In order to help everyone build the habit of celebrating their faith and life as a member of the Church Community, Mass Passports are an easy way to keep track of all the activities that students attend in our Church. The passport itself has several slots, one for each Sunday of the year and for Holy Days of Obligation.

Prayers

Act of Contrition

Due by November

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

Glory Be

Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end, Amen.

The Fatima Prayer

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy.

Amen

OUR FATHER

Our Father, who art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed art you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.