

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion

Generally, this process begins when the child starts the first grade. Completion of the First grade at St. Martin's is generally required to be enrolled in the Second Grade. It is a two-year preparation program that assists parents in readying their child in the reception of these two sacraments.

Religious understanding, not age or school grade, will determine a child's readiness to encounter Christ in a sacramental celebration. This decision of readiness rests with the parents and the child in dialogue with the teachers and pastoral leader. Many factors enter into a child's readiness to receive these sacraments. The child may be unable to understand sufficiently about either of the sacraments.

We are all on our own faith journey, and this journey becomes easier when families:

1) Talk about God and faith at home, 2) pray as a family, 3) celebrate Saturday/Sunday Mass regularly, and 4) help one another with their Religious Education lessons. If, instead, a child is not hearing about God or Jesus at home, seldom prays, or attends Mass infrequently or not at all, his/her faith journey will be much slower even though attending religious classes. Parents know their child better than we do. However, we can identify concepts in class that might be giving a child difficulty. The teacher will inform parents in this case, so that the parent can give extra assistance at home.

We will need a Certificate of Baptism (if the student was baptized here at St. Martin of Tours, we should have it on file).

Students making their first confessions will be taught a simple examination of conscience and the method of the sacrament, including the Act of Contrition.

The second graders will also be prepared to make their First Holy Communion, which normally occurs on the **first Sunday in May**. These students will be taught, at their level, about the *Real Presence* of Jesus in the sacrament.

They will also have a practice session the weekend before the first Sunday in May, to be attended by at least one parent/guardian of each student. Each student, along with a parent, will attend a Saturday morning session before the First Communion, to make a personalized communion banner, which will be hung in church for the First Communion Mass.