



ST. ANTHONY & ST. MARY PARISHES



FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST COMMUNION

HANDBOOK

2025-2026

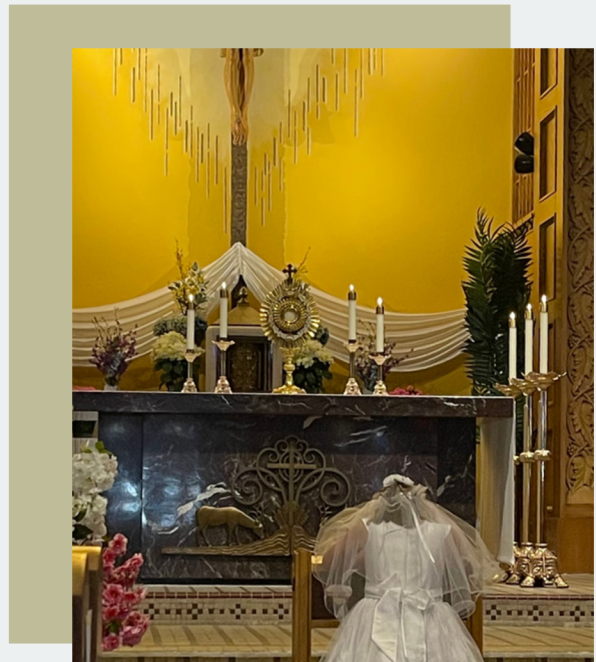
Welcome Message

Dear Parents,

We are truly blessed and consider it a great joy to support and accompany you in preparing your child for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion for the first time.

Preparation for these sacraments began before your child was even presented at church for Baptism. It has been fostered by every prayer spoken, nourished at every meal shared, told in every Bible story proclaimed, found in every act of forgiveness, every act of charity and love shared, and every liturgy attended. These acts of faith all help children form a relationship with Jesus and with the Church.

The foundation built in the life of your family is the beginning of a life-long experience, of countless opportunities for grace, which are celebrated throughout your child's lifetime. That is why we can say that the preparation that began for your child with the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are not complete, and it will never truly be concluded - because each of us, children and adults, continue to grow in our understanding of the mystery of the Eucharist and in our own relationship with God.



Dear friends, there is no doubt that an unforgettable meeting with Jesus is First Holy Communion, a day to be remembered as one of life's most beautiful. The Eucharist, instituted by Christ at the Last Supper, on the night before his Passion, is a Sacrament of the New Covenant, rather, the greatest of the Sacraments. In this Sacrament, the Lord becomes food for the soul under the appearances of bread and wine. Children receive this Sacrament solemnly the first time in First Holy Communion and are encouraged to receive it afterwards as often as possible in order to remain in close friendship with Jesus. -- St. Pope John Paul II

Important Dates:

Sacramental Meditation Series

6:30-7:30pm St. Anthony Church

attended by child and their adult

Parable of True Vine

Monday, March 16, 2026

Parable of Found Coin & Found Sheep

Monday, March 23, 2026

Parable of Forgiving Father

Monday, April 13, 2026

Healing of Roman Centurion's Servant

Monday, April 20, 2026

First Reconciliation/Communion Weekends

Parishioners may choose either weekend, regardless of parish affiliation.

St. Anthony Weekend April 25 & 26, 2026

Saturday, April 25

8:00am Family Mass
8:30-2:00 Retreat (child only)
2:00pm Reception of Reconciliation
(families attend)

Sunday, April 26

10:15am Children Arrive
10:30am Mass
11:25am Children Dismissed from Mass for
time of Thanksgiving
11:45am Pictures

St. Mary Weekend May 2 & 3, 2026

Saturday, May 2

8:00am Family Mass
8:30-2:00 Retreat (child only)
2:00pm Reception of Reconciliation
(families attend)

Sunday, May 3

9:15am Children Arrive
9:30am Mass
10:25am Children Dismissed from Mass for
time of Thanksgiving
10:45am Pictures

Optional Events:

First Communicants are invited to wear their first communion attire
and participate in the following parish events:

Crowning of Blessed Virgin Mary at St. Mary Parish.....all masses, May 9-10, 2026

Corpus Christi Procession..... June 7, 2026

Practicalities

01 Complete Registration

Please complete this [google form](#) to ensure that your child's reception of the sacraments are properly recorded. Thank you!

02 Baptismal Certificate

If your child was not baptized at St. Mary or St. Anthony Parish, please email (schlossere@stam.church) or mail (St. Mary Parish, N89W16297 Cleveland Ave, Menomonee Falls, WI) a copy of their baptismal certificate to Ellen Schlosser. *If your child was baptized in another faith tradition, please contact Ellen Schlosser to discuss your family's particular circumstances.*

03 Non-parishioners

As a courtesy, please submit written permission from your pastor for your child to receive at St. Mary's or St. Anthony's.

04 First Communion Attire

Appropriate attire for First Communion is simple, modest, and age-appropriate. Attire should not distract from the reception of the sacrament.

The parish has a limited number of boy's dress coats and pants as well as lovely girl's dresses available for free. Please contact Ellen Schlosser at schlossere@stam.church or 262-251-0220 to arrange to see them.

Boys:

Shirt: White, full button dress shirt.

Pants: Navy or black dress pants with **appropriate belt**.

Tie: Required and suitable for the occasion: solid/stripe/ or subtle print.

Shoes: Dark colored dress shoes with dark colored socks, please.

Suit Jackets encouraged, but optional.

Girls:

Dress: White, below or at the knee in length. Shoulders should be covered. No spaghetti straps.

Shoes and Socks: white, low-heeled dress shoes. No high heels. White ankle socks, tights or nude-colored hose.

Veil: A simple veil and headpiece is welcome, but optional.

No gloves, please.

First Reconciliation & First Communion Weekend

WHAT TO EXPECT

01 Day of Retreat

Please send with your child:

- a bag lunch
- a water bottle
- a healthy snack
- weather appropriate clothing

The retreat will be on Saturday from 7:55 am till 2:00pm. We will gather in the church at 7:55am for mass. You are welcome and encouraged to attend mass with your child; however, the rest of the retreat day is exclusively for the children.

Children will spend the day in prayer, illuminating candles, preparing for the sacraments, as well as enjoying community with their friends who are also preparing.

First Reconciliation 02

Parents and families are asked to join their child in the church on Saturday at 1:55pm for the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation. We invite all present to receive the sacrament at this time. After reception of the sacrament, parents are invited to light their child's candle from the Paschal candle, as a sign of how the sacrament of reconciliation has strengthened the light of Christ within them.



03 First Communion

The first Communion mass will be at 9:30am at St. Mary parish and 10:30am at St. Anthony parish. Children will be dismissed from mass after the final blessing for a short period of thanksgiving. They will return to the church for pictures at 10:45am (St. Mary) and 11:45am (St. Anthony).

Each family will have one pew reserved with their last name on it for the Mass.

The Role of Parents _____

in preparing the child for sacraments

01 Receive the Merciful Love of God

Before being able to extend merciful love to our children, we must open ourselves to receiving the merciful love of God our Father. Do you truly know that He sees you as His beloved, beautiful and good? Do you also look on yourself with a merciful gaze of compassion? Do you extend that same gaze to your spouse and to your children?

02 Primary Educator

"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children." CCC #2223 Parents primarily catechize their children by living Christian family life. Pray together. Eat meals together. Delight in your children. Enjoy spending time together. Allow your children to see you treat others with love, to hear you apologize, and to see you kneel before the God who loves you so much.

03 Attend Mass every Sunday.

Make it a family habit to attend mass every Sunday. Have discussions about what you hear, say, and see. Ask Father if you do not know the answers to the questions you have!

04 Make Confession a Family Habit

It is a great gift to your children to show them you are not perfect, that you are willing to admit that you are wrong and say "I am sorry," and that you know you are still greatly loved by God. Make Confession a monthly family outing (mandatory for all to go to the church, but each family member should be free to choose whether to receive the sacrament) - maybe followed by ice cream cones to celebrate the gift you received!

05 Live the Precepts of the Church

- 1.Attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- 2.Confession of sins at least once per year.
- 3.Receive the Eucharist at least once per year.
- 4.Observe the days of fasting and abstinence.
- 5.Provide for the needs of the Church.

At Home

Sacraments are moments and means of encountering God and becoming ever more united with Him by the action of the Holy Spirit and through Christ. The work of preparation does not belong to your Church community alone, but is shared by the family, including your child, and the Holy Spirit. In this time remaining before your child receives the sacraments, you may ask yourself, 'What can I or should I be doing at home right now?' The answer will be as varied as there are children and families preparing. So, you will want to reflect on your own families' situation as to what this preparation may look like. It may consist of ritual experience & expression, prayer, reading of Sacred Scripture, liturgical formation, and reflection. Rest in knowing that some of these elements will occur prior to your child's celebration of the sacrament, but much of it will occur following the actual celebration of the sacrament for the first time. **What is important for your child prior to the sacramental celebration is to have a desire to receive communion and to know and recognize the bread and wine as the Body and Blood of Christ.**

You may want to consider the following as you continue to explore the Mystery of God with your child at home:

- Describe to your child the day of his/her baptism and why that was such an important and wonderful day for you.
- Tell your child how you chose his/her baptismal name and also how you chose their godparents.
- Share memories about your own first Eucharist and confession.
- Give glory to God together for the gifts He gives you each day.
- Forgive and seek forgiveness. We begin our worship by asking for God's mercy. Our life at home is sweetened when we "forgive those who trespass against us."
- Pray in daily life. It prepares us to respond to the celebrant's call at Mass, "Let us pray." Use the siren of an ambulance, firetruck or police car to trigger an invitation to pray together for the safety of the person in need or the first responder. Pray for a safe trip when you get in the car or thank God every time you arrive safely at your destination. Say a brief prayer when you pass a Catholic Church, acknowledging Jesus' particular presence there.

Prayers to Know

While there is great beauty in your child offering praise, thanksgiving, and petitions to God in their own words, it is also a gift to your child to be introduced to a prayer language that enables them to pray together with others and to pray in the moments when words fail them. Rather than focusing on memorizing these prayers, pick one to pray as a family each day for a month.

Does your family already pray these prayers? Look to the liturgies of the Church and the Psalms for more options to pray as a family.

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. 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 thee; blessed are thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

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

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.

Nightly Examen

A nightly examen helps us to grow closer to Jesus by reflecting on our day with Him. We praise God for the many gifts received, consider what went well as well as our mistakes and sins, and ask Jesus to help us follow him more closely tomorrow.

Create Silence.

We quiet our hearts and our bodies, thanking Jesus for being with us today and opening our hearts to His presence. You can use the following words or perhaps you have your own:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. God, I know you are with me and you love me. Help me to see your love clearly.

Gratitude:

Replay your day through your head like a movie: What gifts of God did I receive today? Where did I feel joy?

All these moments were gifts from you, God. Thank you for helping me to know how much you love me and for helping me to receive the fullness of your life and joy.

Spirit of Truth:

Come, Holy Spirit. You are wanted. You are needed. Help me to see my day through you so I can know how much you love me and how to follow you better.

Review:

Replay your day through your head like a movie once more: What went well? What moments could I have lived better? What was the happiest moment? What was the most frustrating? What gifts of love did I give to others? What was a really difficult thing today? When did I choose not to love?

Pray the Day:

What do you think Jesus says about your day? What do you want to say to Jesus about your day? How can you live tomorrow better? Make your resolution actionable*!

Jesus, I love you. Thank you for the gifts of this day. I am sorry for the moments when I chose not to love. Help me to follow you more closely tomorrow by...

*An actionable resolution is specific and concrete. "I will smile and say hello to my teacher." or "I will not run at lunchtime." is better than "I'll be good tomorrow."

The Maxims:

An Examination of Conscience

Dear Parents:

The maxims (and the Summary of the Law – Matthew 22:37-39) is meant to be a resource for you and your child. As I mentioned at our Parent Meeting in October, we do not focus on the 10 Commandments when preparing for First Reconciliation. Instead, we look to the maxims – sayings of Jesus which encapsulate all that is contained within the 10 Commandments...plus much more! Beginning in the Spring, we will work with the maxims in the atrium and the classroom. These maxims are not guidelines but commands. He says that we “must” be perfect. But this doesn’t mean “we” must do it. We must ask Jesus to help us live the light we received from Him at our Baptism so that HE can make us perfect in love and His light might shine brightly in us. (That maxim is the most intimidating – the most difficult to understand. If you have questions on other maxims, please do not hesitate to ask me about them.) The children will use these Maxims as their examination of conscience before their first reconciliation. It is a gift to them to be familiar with them.

Your Job:

Please use these Maxims in your home. Perhaps you might incorporate them into your bedtime or dinner routine. Read one Maxim each night and have a short discussion about how to live that Maxim well...or better yet, let your child talk about how to live out that Maxim. You might be surprised at the depth of their understanding! You might choose to focus on one Maxim per week – revisiting it each night in light of the day’s events, or you could choose a new Maxim each day, repeating them until your child (and you!) know many of them by heart. If you have a Bible in your home, you and your child could also look up some of these Maxims. As you spend time reflecting on the Maxims, you might find one of them coming to mind as you reflect on situations in your day. **THIS IS THE GOAL!**

A Special Note:

I know that your lives are filled with many pressing needs and your time is so very limited. However, I cannot overemphasize the importance of your help in preparing your child for his/her First Reconciliation and First Communion. Your time with your children is so very valuable and you, as their parents, are the ones that they will use as models for their lives. Please make this a priority during these next few weeks and months...so that they will make it a priority throughout their lives! Thank you for your understanding and assistance, and thank you for allowing us to help you in your spiritual formation of your children!

Maxims

1. BE PERFECT, JUST AS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS PERFECT. (Mt 5:48)
2. YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. (1Cor 6:19)
3. WHEN YOU PRAY, GO TO YOUR INNER ROOM, CLOSE THE DOOR, AND PRAY TO YOUR FATHER IN SECRET. (Mt 6:6a).
4. ...FORGIVE...NOT SEVEN TIMES BUT SEVENTY-SEVEN TIMES. (Mt 18:21b-22)
5. ASK AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND; KNOCK AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED TO YOU. (Mt 7:7)
6. DO TO OTHERS WHATEVER YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU. (Mt 7:12)
7. LOVE YOUR ENEMIES. (Mt 5:44a).
8. I GIVE YOU A NEW COMMANDMENT: LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU. (Jn 13:34).
9. DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU. (Lk 6:27b)
10. GIVE TO THE ONE WHO ASKS OF YOU, AND DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK ON THE ONE WHO WANTS TO BORROW. (Mt 5:42)
11. WHEN YOU GIVE ALMS, DO NOT BLOW A TRUMPET BEFORE YOU. (Mt 6:2a)
12. LET YOUR 'YES' MEAN 'YES,' AND YOUR 'NO' MEAN 'NO.' (Mt 5:37a)

CONFESSION MADE EASY

YOU | PRIEST

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

As you make the sign of the Cross

1

May the Lord be in your heart and help you to confess your sins with true sorrow



Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been... weeks/months/years since my last confession

Approximate, if you don't remember

2

My sins are...

Then confess your sins, simply and sincerely



3

Priest gives some advice

He gives you a penance, which is usually to recite a prayer



You express contrition saying

Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner

Or you can say an act of contrition you may know

4

In Jesus' name, the priest then says



5

I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

He then invites you to go in peace, having been forgiven by God.



OUR LADY
QUEEN OF PEACE

Merrion Road, Dublin 4 Ireland
Tel: +353 (0)1 269 1825
www.merrionroadchurch.ie
info@merrionroadchurch.ie

Reception of Communion



Communion Fast

To prepare ourselves to receive Jesus, we fast from all food and drink, except for water and medication, for one hour before receiving communion.



Modes of Reception

As the day of first communion approaches, please discuss with your child how they would prefer to receive the sacrament as well as your familial preferences for receiving.



This is how we receive the Body of Christ:

Prepare your heart to receive Jesus by processing forward with folded hands.

Standing, on the hand

- As the priest holds up the Host for the person in front of you to receive, bow to show your love for Jesus.
- Extend your hands with palms facing up, dominant hand below the other hand.
- When you hear the words, "The Body of Christ," answer, "Amen."
- After the Host is placed in your cupped hand reverently pick up the Host with the hand on the bottom (dominant hand) and place it in your mouth before stepping away from Father. Make the Sign of the Cross, consume the Host by chewing normally, and return to your seat with your hands folded.

Standing, on the tongue

- As the priest holds up the Host for the person in front of you to receive, bow to show your love for Jesus.
- When you hear the words, "The Body of Christ," answer, "Amen."
- Open your mouth and extend your tongue with your head held up.
- After the Host is placed on your tongue close your mouth and consume the Host. Make the Sign of the Cross, consume the Host by chewing normally, and return to your seat with your hands folded.

Kneeling, on the hand

- Kneel on the kneeler.
- Extend your hands with palms facing up, dominant hand below the other hand.
- When you hear the words, "The Body of Christ," answer, "Amen."
- After the Host is placed in your cupped hand reverently pick up the Host with the hand on the bottom (dominant hand) and place it in your mouth before standing up. Make the Sign of the Cross, stand up and consume the Host by chewing normally as you return to your seat with your hands folded.

Kneeling, on the tongue

- Kneel on the kneeler.
- When you hear the words, "The Body of Christ," answer, "Amen."
- Open your mouth and extend your tongue with your head held up.
- After the Host is placed on your tongue close your mouth and consume the Host. Make the Sign of the Cross, stand up and consume the Host by chewing normally, and return to your seat with your hands folded.



I am the vine; you are the branches...Now, remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's command and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. John 15