

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION - FORMING FAITHFUL DISCIPLES

Dear parents and guardians of our First Reconciliation & First Communion candidates,

INVOLVING PARENTS MORE & SHARING OUR FAITH EXPERIENCE – A GREAT GIFT FOR ALL!!

I am writing this letter to you as the school year comes to a close, letting you know that we as a family of parishes (the five Catholic churches in Chatham) are getting ready for sacramental preparation now. This fall we are making a major shift in our sacramental preparation that we hope will strengthen the gift of your faith and build up our family of parishes sharing and living the Good News. Here are some things you need to know:

1. All ministries and programs in our faith community, especially sacramental preparation, will focus on **forming disciples** who will follow Christ every day **reaching out to all**.
2. All our sacramental preparation programs will use a small faith sharing group model that encourages everyone to share their experience of faith together, supporting one another.
3. Since the primary faith educators of children are their parents, we as a parish, support parents in forming these young disciples. **This will require the attendance and participation of at least one of the candidate's parents or grandparents at each of the preparation sessions.**
4. The three basic foundations of our sacramental preparation will focus on **sharing one's own faith experience** (seeing how faith connects with real life), building a greater sense of **community** and **catechesis** (understanding the teachings of faith).



This is a significant change from past years, but it is one that we hope will have a strong, positive impact on candidates, families, and the parish. We are taking a more intentional approach supporting not only the candidate, but parents, grandparents, and family members together hoping to further integrate everyone into the life of Christ through the family of parishes.

I know that change can cause some frustration and difficulty, but we all realize that there needs to be a better and more impactful way to prepare our candidates and their families for the sacraments. With the change in focus and method, we are also changing the schedule.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION – A FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE

I understand the busy lives families lead today, especially in our post-pandemic world. I really think that they are too busy!!! Children are involved in so many amazing programs, sports, and activities. The Chatham Catholic Family of Parishes wants to be as flexible as possible making things manageable for families that are constantly on the go. With this in mind, we are offering First Reconciliation & First Communion preparation twice in the upcoming year. Families will be able to choose the cycle that best meets their schedule. This change will also mean the opportunity to celebrate the sacraments throughout the year when the candidates are ready and when families can truly rejoice together.

The two cycles of preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion will take place Saturday afternoons prior to the 5:00 PM Mass at the Blessed Sacrament Church Hall (4:00 to 5:00 pm) and on Sundays after the 9:00 AM Mass at the Blessed Sacrament Church Hall (10:15 to 11:15 am). Each sacrament will have 4 weekends of mandatory preparation. Families will be able to choose from the Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning gatherings each of those weekends. With this schedule, families will be able to attend Mass together as part of the preparation for the sacrament. There will also be one MAKE-UP Saturday morning for each round just in case to once again be as flexible and adaptable to the needs and schedules of busy families.

FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST COMMUNION PARENT MEETINGS (for parents only)
CYCLE A - Thursday September 22, 2022 – 6:30 PM at the Blessed Sacrament Church Hall
CYCLE B – Thursday January 12, 2023 – 6:30 PM at the Blessed Sacrament Church Hall

CYCLE A

First Reconciliation Preparation:

ROUND #1

Meeting #1: October 1/2, 2022
Meeting #2: October 15/16, 2022
Meeting #3: October 22/23, 2022
Meeting #4: October 29/30, 2022
Make Up Class – Saturday November 5 – 10 AM
(All sessions at Blessed Sacrament Church Hall)

First Communion Preparation:

ROUND #1

Meeting #1: November 19/20, 2022
Meeting #2: November 26/27, 2022
Meeting #3: December 3/4, 2022
Meeting #4: December 10/11, 2022
Make Up Class – Saturday December 17 – 10 AM
(All sessions at Blessed Sacrament Parish Hall)

CYCLE B

First Reconciliation Preparation:

ROUND #2

Meeting #1: January 14/15, 2023
Meeting #2: January 21/22, 2023
Meeting #3: January 28/29, 2023
Meeting #4: February 4/5, 2023
Make Up Morning – Saturday February 11 – 10 AM*
(Meetings 1-4 at Blessed Sacrament Church Hall)
(*Make Up session at St. Ursula Church Hall)

First Communion Preparation:

ROUND #2

Meeting #1: March 4/5, 2023
Meeting #2: March 25/26, 2023
Meeting #3: April 1/2, 2023
Meeting #4: April 15/16, 2023
Make Up Morning – Saturday April 22 – 10 AM
(All sessions at Blessed Sacrament Parish Hall)



(There are scheduled First Reconciliation Celebration dates for candidates who complete preparation. Once candidates complete First Communion preparation, families will be able to pick any weekend Mass during the year to receive the sacrament. Registrations to celebrate the sacraments will be via the family website)

*****For more information, please check out family of parishes website.**

You will see a link on the main page---www.chathamcatholic.ca***

HOW DO I REGISTER MY CHILD FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST COMMUNION?

Step #1 – Go to the family of parishes website at www.chathamcatholic.ca and look for the FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST COMMUNION REGISTRATION link. (Registrations open July 4, 2022)

Step #2 – Fill out the online registration form by answering all the questions and all the contact information required. You will be asked which cycles of preparation for each sacrament you will attend. You can prepare in whichever order is easier for you and your family.

Step #3 - We ask for a donation of \$40 to help with materials and other communication expenses.

- donate via e-transfer to bsacramentparish@dol.ca (Add to message-Child's name & Sacraments)
- in person at the family of parishes office (St. Agnes Church—52 Croydon St.)
- at the Parent Information Sessions or at any of the preparation meetings on the weekends

Step #4 – You will receive a confirmation email to let you know that your child has been registered. Further information will be sent to you in preparation for the parent meeting and the sessions in the fall.

REGISTRATION FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST COMMUNION WILL BE LIVE ONLINE AT THE FAMILY WEBSITE STARTING JULY 4. (www.chathamcatholic.ca)

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ali Chinnick, our pastoral minister responsible for First Reconciliation & First Communion – achinnick@dol.ca or at 519-352-9483 ext. 227. We are all here to help!!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. John".

Fr. John Jasica - Pastor