



Ten ways to Celebrate your Child's First Communion

Your child's sacramental experience begins at home. Here are some ideas for enveloping your child in an atmosphere of faith and love as First Communion day approaches. The suggestions are not just for parents. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, older siblings, godparents, neighbours all have an important role to play in passing on the gift of faith.

1. Share memories

What do you remember of your own First Communion day? Bring out the photos and momentos and share that part of your life with your child. It's all part of telling our story as a Christian people.

2. Mealtime magic

Well-celebrated family meals lay the groundwork for imparting a eucharistic faith to your children. Add special touches to your family meals in the weeks leading up to the big day. Invite family members to toast the First Communion candidate: 'A toast to (*name*) because he/she brings (*name the gift*) to this family!' Pray for your child when you say grace before meals.

3. Gifts that go on

Give First Communion gifts that will be a continuing part of your child's faith journey. A child's missal, rosary beads, a statue of a special saint, a crucifix or holy picture for the bedroom wall. Don't let them gather dust on the shelf after the event; use these symbols as a talking point and focus for prayer.

4. Enjoy the Scriptures

With your child, enjoy bible stories with a eucharistic theme: Last Supper, Miracle of the loaves and fishes. Locate children's books or DVDs to assist; the local parish school may be a resource.

5. Get ready for Jesus

Without getting too anxious about it, prepare your home for First Communion day by cleaning it and adding a few special touches: decorations, flowers, ice creams in the freezer... whatever will signal to your child: 'It's your special day'.

6. Enjoy one another

Fill your home with the grace of the body of Christ! Invite some wonderful people of faith to your home—family or friends who will take an interest in your child's First Communion. Perhaps team up with the family of another candidate. Being involved in the parish sacramental program is also a key opportunity to be in touch with the wider faith family.

7. Create a prayer corner

Is your family's 'sacred space' in need of some TLC? Revitalize it and adorn with symbols of wheat and grapes and other eucharistic symbols. Make it a pleasure to gather there by candlelight to pray each night.

8. Make it to Mass

As obvious as it might sound, it's worth saying! The Sunday Eucharist is central to our faith as a Church—like family meals to a family. The best way you can teach this to your child is to be committed to the Sunday Eucharist yourself.

9. Build communion at home

Like marriage, the Eucharist is a sacrament of unity. Couples: What a gift to your child's eucharistic preparation to rekindle the romance of your love. Widowed parents: Envelop your child in memories of your love; share your faith in the resurrection. Divorced parents: A powerful gift to your child might be to forgive your ex-husband/wife.

10. Reach out

Look for ways to support other families in their efforts to prepare a child for First Communion. It might be as simple as a phone call to a neighbour ('Can we give you a lift to the parents' meeting?') or an invitation to share a celebratory cake.

Helpful Hint

When it comes to teaching a child about the Eucharist there are two lifestyle practices which are hard to over-emphasise in their importance: the Sunday Eucharist and family meals. Revitalize both as a gift to your child.