

January 13, 2015

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays were fun, yet relaxing and that your children are happy being back at school. This letter is to remind you the time has come to begin your child's formal preparation for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist.

The second meeting to help you prepare your child for First Eucharist, will be held on **Tuesday, February 10, 2015 from 7-9 p.m.** in the lower hall. This meeting is for PARENTS ONLY. Please plan on being present for the entire two hours. There will be no make-up session, so do make arrangements now for the care of your children.

In the event of snow, this meeting will be moved to Wednesday, February 11, from 7-9 p.m. in the Hall. We follow Baltimore County for weather closings ... when school closes early due to weather, evening meetings are canceled; when school is closed for the day parish activities are canceled; when school opens late, evening programs occur as planned. When in doubt, phone the parish office (410-785-0356) and choose option 2, for updated weather messages.

Attached you will find a First Eucharist registration form on which you can note your Mass preference. Please complete and mail/drop off/email or fax it to me (pallshouse@ccsfx.net; 410-785-1628 – FAX) on or before February 10th. Or you may bring this with you that evening. In addition, I will need **a copy** of your child's Baptismal certificate as explained below.

Baptismal Certificate If your child was baptized at the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, you only need to provide the date of his/her baptism indicating CCSFX as the place of baptism. **If your child WAS NOT baptized at the Catholic Community of St. Francis Xavier, I will need a COPY of your child's Baptismal certificate.** Please bring this on February 10th and make sure it is a copy, not the original certificate.

Parent-Child Retreat Date Our Parent-Child Retreat will be held on **Saturday, March 7, 2015 from 8:30-11:30 a.m.** This experience is one of the highlights of our preparation process and is for you and your child. No provisions will be made for siblings, so please make arrangements for their care. Both parents are welcome but only one must be present. You will be asked to bring your child's completed banner and candle to the retreat, the materials for which you will receive at the meeting on 2/10.

First Eucharist Liturgy Dates First Eucharist celebrations will be held at the following liturgies in April. Please note we have added a Mass.

- Saturday, April 18 @ 5 p.m.
- Sunday, April 19 at 9:30 am
- Sunday, April 19 at 11:30 am

Please indicate your preference on the enclosed form.

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Communion Breakfast

Our Community Activities Committee will host a breakfast for you and your family on the morning of Saturday, April 18, from 9-9:30 am. This will be followed by practice for liturgy which will culminate in a prayer service with the lighting of your child's first Eucharist candle. Please plan on being present from 9-12 N. Do let your child's coach, scout leader, dance/art/music/riding instructor, etc. know your child may be late for practice/game on this date. I cannot make any exceptions.

Liturgical Minister

If a family member currently serves as Eucharistic Minister, Lector or Altar Server and would like to participate in this way at your child's First Eucharist liturgy, please note this in the space indicated on the attached form. Be sure to provide their contact information (complete mailing address; email; phone) so I can send them instructions.

Following our meeting in February, I will send you an email confirming the Mass time you have been assigned. Trust me ... everything will work out!

Parents, are far better at determining whether a child is mature enough to celebrate a sacrament. If you have concerns about your child's readiness for First Eucharist, please contact me.

Preparing for First Eucharist is a wonderful time for you, your child and our parish! Your witness strengthens our community of faith. When your child joins the rest of the community at the table of the Lord, the Body of Christ here on earth is strengthened. Savor this time of preparation. Make it special. Strive to awaken a sense of wonder and awe in our loving God. Your children will amaze you with their faith-filled trust. And remember during this time of preparation make an effort to sit up front ... volunteer to carry up the gifts ... model for your child what it means to participate in Mass ... help him/her follow along in the hymnal. Your children will thank you. I continue to keep all of you in prayer.

Blessings,

Pat Allshouse
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