

# 2020 First Holy Communion Retreat at Home

Normally, this time of year often finds those of us who prepare children for First Holy Communion in our final weeks of preparation. In our parish, our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children receive First Holy Communion two Saturdays following Easter Sunday. We typically would have a morning retreat for them on the Saturday before. It's a chance to come together and do some activities together, take an up close tour of the church, practice the songs for Mass and practice how to receive.

However, this year is very different for all of us. We are all experiencing "firsts" and finding ways to tap into our creative minds to try and make it as "normal" for the children as possible. It is the first time I can ever recall the church closing! And with the ban on public gatherings, I have tried to find a way to duplicate the First Holy Communion Retreat your child would have been attending on April 25, 2020.

**Here is an outline with the resources I normally use for the children's First Holy Communion Retreat.** Since this is being done at home due to the ban on public gatherings, I have amended it to make it as easy for you to lead and invite the family to join in to make it as enjoyable as possible for your little Communicant.

**Plan In-home Retreat for a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon, whenever is most convenient for all to participate. Should take approx. 2 hours**

**Opening Prayer** – Pray 1 each of the **Our Father**, **Hail Mary**, and the **Glory Be**.

**Retreat includes 4 activities. Each activity should take about 20 - 30 minutes.**

**Activity #1 The Weight of a Mass: A Tale of Faith** by Josephine Nobisso (click on link)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICDdm-NgtoQ>

There is also a book available, if you have not read it, I highly recommend it. It is an amazing story with beautiful illustrations.

**Watch the YouTube video with your child.** Not long into the video, your child will come to understand what is happening and the meaning behind the actions within the Mass.

**Activity #2 Communion Banner** (you may order the kit online). See pages 5 & 6 with of this retreat At Home Retreat outline.

**Activity #3 The Last Supper:** Bring the "Last Supper" to life for your child. Read the story of "Jesus' Special Supper" to your child before you begin this activity. See the "*Enactment of the Last Supper*" on page 2 & 3 of this At Home Retreat outline. Enlist the help of other family members to play the various parts listed and then do the short reenactment with unleavened bread and grape juice.

**Activity #4 The Making of Communion Bread** (click on link)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryL3xLPAPqk&t=18>

This is an awesome video that not only demonstrates how hosts are made, but explains what the Eucharist means to us. A Passionist nun of Erlanger, Kentucky is our guide for this brief ten minute video.

**End with a Purposeful Snack** Mix the following ingredients together in a large bowl, telling what each ingredient represents.



**Church Tour, Rehearsal and follow-up when we can gather together again.**

**Church Tour:** I will take the children to the church for a tour and end with rehearsal for their Sacrament Mass.

I will start by taking the children into the Sacristy to show and explain the use of the various vessels used during Mass along with a handout for them to take home. This is also an opportune time to ask a few questions to assure they understand the real presence of Jesus is in the Eucharist.

Then we will proceed into the main body of the church. As we enter they are reminded to dip their fingertip into the Holy water font, make the sign of the cross with the holy water.

We will line-up in size order and practice our procession to the front pews (boys on the St. Joseph side, girls on the Mary side) 1 child per kneeler. The children will be reminded of how to genuflect upon entering the pew; we will review their Mass responses and postures. Sacrament time...we will practice how exit the pew and how to receive Holy Communion.

If available, our music ministry, ORDINARY TIMES, who will be our musical accompaniment at Mass, will be on hand to teach the songs we will use at the Mass.

We will close in prayer in the Church followed by dismissal.

## **THE LAST SUPPER (Enactment)**

(A TABLEAU ADAPTED FROM JOHN 13 AND 1 CORINTHIANS 11)

**Cast - Assign each family member a role or two to play:**

Narrator, Jesus, Peter, Judas Iscariot

**Names of an Apostles – Announce who the guests were that attend Jesus' Last Supper.**

Andrew, John, James the Greater, Philip, Simon, Bartholomew, James the Lesser, Thaddeus, Matthew, Thomas

**Set the Scene:** You will need the following supplies – If you have a rectangular, low table (*a coffee table*) so that everyone can sit on the floor, would present a more realistic image for your reenactment. Jesus should be seated in the middle, along one of the long sides of the table. In front of him place a platter with “unleavened bread” Matzo crackers ; ½ filled wine chalice (grape juice); one Chalice (wine glass); pitcher of water; empty wooden (salad) bowl; 1 small towel (to dry feet).

### **Scene 1:**

**Narrator:** Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that His time had come to pass. During supper, He took a towel off His outer garment and tucked it into His waist. He poured water into a bowl and began to wash the disciples' feet. When He came to Simon Peter....

**Peter:** “Master, are you going to wash my feet?”

**Jesus:** “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will understand later.”

**Peter:** “You will never wash my feet.”

**Jesus:** “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.”

**Peter:** “Master, then not only wash my feet, but my hands and head too.”

**Jesus:** “Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over. So you are clean, but not all over.”

**Narrator:** Jesus knew who would betray Him which is why He said, “Not all of you are clean.”

**Jesus:** (*sitting back down at the table*) You call me Teacher and Master, and rightfully so, for I am. If I washed your feet, you are to do the same for one another. I have given you an example to follow. I came to serve not to be served.

## **Scene 2:**

*(Jesus and His disciples are reclined at the table and had just finished eating)*

**Narrator:** On the night of Jesus' Last Supper, before He was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, blessed it, broke it and gave it to the Apostles, and said:

**Jesus:** "Take it, this is my body which will be given up for you. Do this in memory of Me."

**Narrator:** In the same way, Jesus took the cup, again held it up giving thanks said:

**Jesus:** This is my blood of the new covenant, which will be shed for many. Whenever you drink of it, do this in remembrance of Me.

## **Scene 3:**

**Narrator:** And so the supper Jesus shared with His friends, the Apostles ended. The Apostles left the room with Jesus. They went with him into the Garden of Gethsemane where he asks them to wait with him while "He prays to his Father in heaven."

**Narrator:** This was the last time before Jesus was crucified that Jesus and His friends, the Apostles were able to share a meal together. It was their Last Supper.

The Last Supper, was "The First Mass," where Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and the Priesthood (Holy Orders).

**AT THE END OF THE STATION REENACTMENT, PRAY THE FOLLOWING PRAYER:**

**"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."**



## First Communion Banner Kit

### Materials Needed:

1. Start with a 12" x 18" piece of stiff felt. ("EZFelt" works well.)
2. Dowel Rod approx. 13" long
3. Felt scraps, fabric paint, stencils for letters & numbers. (ask for the self-adhesive felt cut-outs)
4. Cord, Ribbon or Yarn for hanging on pew.
5. Fabric Glue (Tacky glue)

## **Instructions:**

- ~ Banners should be made vertical for ease of display.
- ~ We ask that the banner not be too heavy.
- ~ Leave 3 inches from the top blank (to create pocket for dowel).
- ~ Banner design should include your child's name; a picture of your child is optional; symbols relating to First Holy Communion (wheat, grapes, chalice, bread, cross; and the year 2020).
- ~ Fasten the banner to the dowel. Then attach the hanging cord securely at the ends of the dowel approx. ¼" in from ends. Be sure hanging cord is strong enough to support the banner.
- ~ These banners will be hung along the center aisle, on the end of the church pews on the weekend of First Holy Communion, Saturday & Sunday.

**Please have your child hand in their completed banner on the day of our First Holy Communion Rehearsal (date to come).**

## **ORDER ONLINE:**

[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

[www.catholicsupply.com](http://www.catholicsupply.com)

[www.faithmattersinc.com](http://www.faithmattersinc.com)