

Good Shepherd Catholic Parish
First Reconciliation & First Eucharist
Program Syllabus

Fall 2023- Spring 2024

Office: GSCP Religious Education Office
506 N. Garden St. Visalia CA 93291

Office Hours: 9am- 5pm MON- FRI

Email Address:

- Year 1 email firstcommunion1.gscp@gmail.com
- Year 2 email firstcommunion2.gscp@gmail.com

Main Office Phone Number: (559) 734-9522

Parish Webpage: <https://www.gscparish.com/>

Welcome!

Thank you for entrusting us to guide your family through sacramental preparation for your child.

In this handbook you will find:

- Expectations for Parents & Families
- Expectations for Students
- Communication
- Program Requirements
- Class Structure
- Attendance Policy
- Attending Mass
- Student Safety

Expectations for Parents & Families

As parents, you are the primary teacher of the Catholic faith in your home. Your children look to you to set an example for living a Catholic Christian life and for how to build a relationship with Jesus. Our role as catechists is to deepen that understanding of God and our Church, and to prepare them in a special way to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The lessons we provide are only part of what a child should learn and experience during their faith formation. It is essential, and expected, that

you will help us by teaching and modeling the fundamentals of our Catholic faith in the home.

We ask that Parents support their students by:

- Ensuring weekly student participation and on-time arrival for classes
- Ensuring weekly completion of class assignments
- Talking about weekly topics, encouraging discussion & answering their questions
- Helping your student learn (memorize) their prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition
- Participating in mass every Sunday & Holy Day of Obligation

Expectations for Students

Students will pray regularly in class and it is expected that they learn and memorize their prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition

Students are required to participate in mass every Sunday & Holy Day of Obligation

Expectations for Students in class:

- Be on time
- Come prepared – always bring your workbook and a pencil, plus anything else your teacher has asked you to bring
- Be respectful
- Raise your hand if you have a question or something to add to the discussion
- Focus on the teacher and the lesson
- Have an adult nearby in case you need help

Communication

It is required that all families have an email address and cell phone number registered in our system, and that they check it regularly for communication from the Religious Education office and class catechists. You can expect to receive email and text messages through the parish's communication system, Flocknote. You may also receive email or text messages directly from your child's catechist.

If you have a question or need to communicate with us:

- Year 1 email firstcommunion1.gscp@gmail.com
- Year 2 email firstcommunion2.gscp@gmail.com
- Parish office (559) 734-9522

Program Requirements

Students must show proof of baptism to participate in the program.

Class Structure

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist is a 2-year program.

Year 1: First Reconciliation

In their first year of preparation the primary focus of instruction is understanding and forming relationship with Jesus the healer & redeemer as we prepare for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Our students are taught about the many ways God has blessed and rescued mankind throughout our salvation victory. We study the commandments and beatitudes we are given to protect us from sin. We talk about sin and forgiveness in our relationship with God & our neighbor. Lastly, we prepare by closely examining the sacrament of reconciliation, the process, the dialog, the experience. Our goal is for our students to feel not only at ease, but excited to go to confession; not just once but over and over again! Eager to return to Our Lord every time we sin.

At the end of their first year of preparation, students will receive the sacrament of reconciliation.

Year 2: First Eucharist

In their second year of preparation, the primary focus of instruction is understanding and forming relationship with Jesus the bread of life & light of the world. We study about the sacraments as gift for us from God. We focus on the establishment of the eucharist at the last supper as well as different parts of the mass. Lastly, we reflect on the church, a place where we gather as one body, filled with signs and symbols of our faith. Our goal is for students to believe in and love the Eucharist. For them to truly believe Jesus is present, hidden, in the Eucharist out of love and desire for closeness to them.

At the end of their second year of preparation, students will receive the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Program Calendar

- Please use your calendar as a guide for class dates and times. Be mindful that our breaks align with VUDS breaks and while class is not in session during those times, the expectation to attend mass remains the same.
- We have scheduled three program breaks during the year, which coincide with local school calendars:
- Thanksgiving break, Christmas Break, Spring Break.
- specific days/times for Parent Meetings, and other important reminders, will be communicated through Flocknote emails and texts.
- Sacrament dates for the spring have not yet been set. Typically, we do not know those dates until after
- The new year. The Religious Education office will share updated information with you on an ongoing basis as soon as it is available.

Attendance Policy

- Students are allowed 2 absences per semester. Any additional absences will result in a meeting with Student, Parents, and Director as well as possible postponement of Sacrament. Candidates are responsible for retrieving any late work, makeup work, or important information from the catechist if absent.
- Students will be marked as tardy if they arrive 10 mins. after class starts or leave 10 mins before class ends. Two tardies will count as one absence.

Student Safety

Safe and Sacred is the safe environment program for the Diocese of Fresno. The program includes safety policies and procedures for clergy, staff and volunteers, training for parents and students, and support systems for families and parishioners. For more information, visit:

www.dioceseoffresno.org/safe-environment/

All Religious Education staff and volunteers undergo Safe Environment training and certification, which includes fingerprinting and background checks.

Adults are NOT allowed to participate in our programs if they have not successfully completed the Safe Environment training and clearance through the parish.

All students receive Safe Environment training in the first weeks of the program. Content is age-specific and taught in a simple way for children to understand.

- First through third graders learn they are a gift from God. We talk about the difference Between good touches and bad touches. Students learn about the Golden Rule and the importance of not hurting others. They also learn how to 1) Say No, and 2) Move Away if they are being hurt.
- Fourth through sixth graders learn about personal space, trust zones, and how to use their head (knowledge) and heart (intuition) to make safe choices. We help students identify trustworthy adults they can confide in. They learn how to 1) Say No, 2) Move Away, and 3) Tell Someone when they are in an uncomfortable situation.
- Many teens today struggle with identity and morality issues. Seventh through ninth graders learn about the importance of boundaries and self respect. We discuss accountability, internet safety, and living a life of modesty and integrity.