



St. Joseph's Church
9 North Alton Street • Telephone (618) 539-3209
Freeburg, Illinois 62243

January 18, 2010

Dear Parent:

Your son/daughter is preparing to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. This is a special time in the life of your child as they prepare to receive these sacraments for the first time.

You as parents, play a vital role in the continued growth of your child's faith life. As you know and have heard before, parents are the primary educators of a child. The love and forgiveness that a child experiences at home shapes the child's understanding of a loving and forgiving God. You are the first and most important model of lived faith. Children tend to model their life and faith on the significant adults in their lives - - especially their parents.

During this time of sacramental preparation, we, the staff of St. Joseph's, want to support, to encourage, and to guide you in your role as primary educators of your child. On Tuesday, January 26, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Center Meeting Room A, there will be a meeting for all parents concerning the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. It is mandatory that at least one parent of each child attend this meeting.

Soon your child will join your family and God's family at the Lord's Table for the very first time. First Communion will be a meaningful event in your child's life if the Eucharist is important in your life. The best gift you can give your child now is to attend Sunday Mass regularly with your child. Talk with your child about what happens at Mass and why you attend Mass. If you are not attending, now is a good time to begin. If we, as adults, do not appreciate the gift of the Eucharist, how can we expect our child to have devotion and a reverence for the Eucharist? It's never too late to make change in our lives.

Besides regularly attending Sunday Mass with your child, there are some other activities you can do at home with your child. A few suggestions would be:

1. Reading a story about Jesus from the Bible every day and talking about it.
2. Making up your own meal prayer. Have everyone name one thing for which they are thankful.
3. Setting aside some time for family activities (play games, go for a walk, take a ride, etc.)
4. Reading and discussing the children's activity page in the Messenger.

5. Reading through the textbook.

I'm sure that you will be able to come up with some other creative ideas.

The children's first celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be on Thursday, March 4 at 7:00 p.m. in Church.

First Communion will be on Sunday, April 18, at 10:00 a.m. Dress for First Communion will be as follows:

Girls: White dress (not floor length)
White veil
White ankle socks and white dress shoes

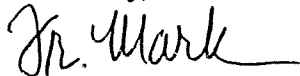
Boys: White shirt with a solid color tie
Dark pants
Dress shoes

Lifetouch Studios will take group and individual pictures after First Communion Mass. Order forms will be provided at a later date.

Information regarding practice for First Communion will be sent home prior to First Communion.

Please do not hesitate to call if you have questions. Let us pray for our children that they may come to know Jesus as a loving and forgiving friend.

Sincerely,



Rev. Mark D. Reyling
Pastor