



Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community

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January 7, 2011

Dear Parents of First Communicants:

Happy new year from the parish office! We have the great privilege of working with you this year to help your children prepare for two very important Sacraments: Reconciliation (also known as Penance and Confession) and the Eucharist. I write to share some important information regarding both.

This year, **first Penance** will take place on **Saturday, February 26**, from **9:15 a.m.- 12:00 pm**, starting in **Quinn Hall**. The morning will include a Family Workshop on Penance, followed by a Communal Penance service with individual confessions. (Family members are also encouraged to participate in the sacrament). ***Please do make the Penance workshop and liturgy a priority over sports and similar activities.*** We communicate so much to our children by our priorities, and putting the sacraments first communicates their importance in our lives as Catholics.

We will need volunteers to assist with the workshop and celebration. This would involve help with running the video, participating in the skit, assisting with a craft, and purchase of bagels and coffee. If you are available to help, please let me know.

To accurately record your child's sacraments, certain paperwork is required. Enclosed is a First Penance/Eucharist Information Form, which is also available on the parish website at www.blessedsacramentcc.org/education/religiouseducation.htm. Please complete this form and **return it to the parish office** no later than **January 28, 2011**. Thanks in advance for your help in keeping this deadline!

You will notice your children occasionally bringing home one of 2 booklets which supplement the text. *Penance* and *Eucharist* review very specifically what the children should know in order to receive their sacraments. Additionally, I have attached a copy of a "script" for Confession so that you may review this with your child for his/her comfort level. Included in the script are 2 versions of the Act of Contrition, one of which your child should know for Confession.

Between now and March, you are encouraged to introduce your child to the priests, indicating that s/he is preparing for the sacraments. You might also consider visiting the confessionals (found in the daily Mass chapel across the hall from the main church) so

that your child can observe firsthand the difference between the “face-to-face” and “behind the screen” set ups. The more we all do to approach Confession in the most positive light, focusing on reconciliation with God, the less likely our children are to be anxious.

First Communion will be addressed more specifically after First Penance. The options are set for **Saturday, May 7**, at 9:30 a.m., 11:30 am, or the 5:00 pm parish Mass. You may indicate your time preference on the information form. A rehearsal and workshop will be held on **Saturday, April 16, from 9-11 am**. Again, more information will come as we approach that date.

I look forward to working with you, and sharing in the great celebration of your children’s sacraments. Please feel free to contact me, should you have any questions. My email address is: bscc_dre@yahoo.com or you can call my office at 703-998-6100 x.12.

Sincerely,

Susan Doyle
Director of Religious Education