

Some Dos and Don'ts for Parents: Eucharist

Do be aware that you teach more by who you are and what you do than by what you say. Basic attitudes of faith and love will grow in your child gradually if he or she witnesses you trying to live a life of faith yourself. Be aware of how your actions support what you want to teach your child about faith.

Do pray together as a family each day. Choose the most appropriate time according to your family circumstances. Allow each member of the family to mention something happy that has happened that day or share a particular challenge she or he is dealing with. Everything can be brought to God in prayer.

Do worship together as a family every Sunday. Participate in Sunday Mass together and sit up front where your child can see what is happening. Family participation in the weekly Eucharist will help your child understand the faith tradition that inspires the Catholic Church community.

Do talk with your child about your own experience of First Eucharist. Tell your son or daughter about your own First Eucharist or, if you are not Catholic, what you understand about the sacrament; ask any older children in the family to do the same.

Do ask your child to share his or her hopes and fears about First Eucharist. Keep an open line of communication about your child's experiences as he or she continues the sacrament preparation process. Encourage your child to share excitement as well as any concerns or fears. This will be important as you journey with your child through the preparation process.

Do reflect on how your family might live as an active part of the parish community. Select some simple commitments to the Church community, such as offering an elderly person a ride to Mass on a regular basis or providing a meal to a family in crisis.

Do take time to relax and enjoy one another as a family. Setting a regular time works best. Try to make at least one family meal a week a special event. This provides an opportunity to talk, share what's happening in your lives, and it reinforces your commitment to one another as a family.

Don't pick the busiest, most hectic time of day to complete or review the weekly activity booklets. It is important to choose a time when you and your child can focus on the lesson without distractions.

Don't feel that your child has to receive First Eucharist just because she or he is a certain age or in a certain grade. If you have concerns about your child's readiness, your



pastor or director of religious education can help you assess whether your child is ready to begin preparation for First Eucharist.

Don't make First Eucharist something it's not. It is an important day, but stressing that this should be the happiest day in a child's life can create unrealistic expectations and detract from his or her appreciation of future celebrations of the Eucharist. Each and every celebration of the Eucharist is special.

Don't overemphasize externals. Gifts, clothing, pictures, and parties are certainly part of the day, but they are not the essence or the most important part. Keep the focus on the sacrament.

