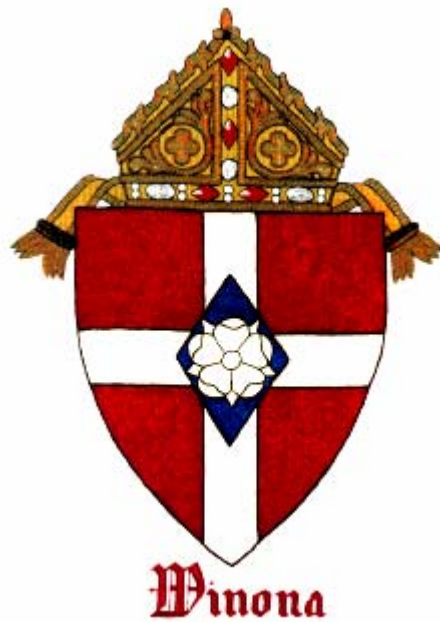


**LITURGICAL GUIDELINES FOR
THE CELEBRATION OF
FIRST COMMUNION**



THE DIOCESE OF WINONA



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF WINONA
Pastoral Center

January, 2008

Dear Friends in Christ,

First Communion is one of the three sacraments of initiation. The process of preparation for first communion is our opportunity to help children to form strong life long habits as Catholics.

Initiating people into the faith community is a major focus of parish life. Parents approach the Church to baptize their children and in later years bring them again to celebrate confirmation and first communion.

I have identified the process of initiation as one of the four initiatives of our Diocesan ministry. The process of the *Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) is the primary model of initiating all people into the life of the church. We welcome people, we spend time with them, show them how to live the life of faith, we invite them to our prayer, and we ritualize their growth in the Spirit.

These guidelines help leaders to plan the First Communion liturgy for children baptized as infants. I want to continue to encourage you in careful planning of good celebrations that foster full and active participation for all people in the liturgy. It is here that children see and experience the faith of the parish community in the Eucharist. The full, conscious, and active participation of all the faithful forms them to live out the true Christian spirit. All of our liturgies need to express the strong Catholic faith of our people who live to worship God with thanksgiving in their hearts.

Please use your diocesan resources often. The director of Faith Formation and the director of Liturgy are always willing to be of help in any sacramental preparation and celebration. Let us initiate our children well in the faith so they may enjoy the peace of salvation all their lives.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Bernard J. Harrington
BISHOP OF WINONA

LITURGICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

THE DIOCESE OF WINONA



August, 2007

The purpose of liturgical guidelines for the celebration of First Holy Communion is to implement a diocesan wide vision of the First Communion liturgy that will unify the quality, dignity, and theological focus of the celebration throughout the diocese. We encourage parish leaders to implement these guidelines gradually over time.

A principle is a fundamental value that articulates a truth or law. We base guidelines upon current Roman Catholic liturgical principles. The celebration of the liturgy constitutes us as Church. Liturgical documents contain rules and regulations that are a result of liturgical principles articulated by Church leaders. The foundation for planning liturgical celebrations is sound liturgical principles that express the unity of our Catholic faith.

First principle:

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE LITURGY OF ALL THE FAITHFUL

As on any Sunday, the goal, to be considered before all else, is active participation of all the people in the liturgy.¹ As a result, planners for the First Communion liturgy choose familiar music, responses, and ritual so adults and children alike can comfortably celebrate the liturgy. Catholics know that the liturgy forms every person in the true Christian spirit through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration and reception of the Eucharist. So that every Catholic will absorb the true Christian spirit, every person takes part in the liturgy by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, prayers, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes.² It is very important for planners of the First Communion liturgy to remember that all the people need to participate actively in the liturgy, not just the children. As a result, the liturgy should not be a “children’s liturgy” but should be celebrated like a Sunday liturgy.³ After all, active participation in the Sunday liturgy is the goal of catechesis, initiation, and life-long practice of the faith.

Second principle:

FIRST COMMUNION IS A SACRAMENT OF INITIATION

¹ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 14

² Ibid, no. 30

³ Directory for Masses With Children, no. 12. Even in the case of children, the Liturgy itself always exerts its own inherent power to instruct. Yet within religious-education programs in the schools and parishes, the necessary importance should be given to catechesis on the Mass. This catechesis should be directed to the child's active, conscious, and authentic participation. . . This is especially true of the text of the Eucharistic Prayer and of the acclamations by which the children take part in this prayer. The catechesis preparing children for first communion calls for special mention. In it they should learn not only the truths of faith regarding the Eucharist but also how from First Communion on -- after being prepared according to their capacity for penance -- they can as full members of Christ's Body take part actively with the people of God in the Eucharist, sharing in the Lord's table and the community of their brothers and sisters.

As Catholics, we consider the process of initiation serious business. Preparing a person to celebrate initiation into Catholic life through the sacraments of initiation, (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation) is a privilege, which, for the initiated, is a life of faith in a faith-filled parish community.

The *Second Vatican Council* helped Catholics all over the world to reflect on the way we prepare others to live the Catholic faith. Pope Paul VI decreed, in 1972, that preparation for life in the Catholic Church should be divided into a series of steps involving instruction and practice, which liturgical rites would sanctify. We call this the catechumenate (RCIA) in which people over the age of seven take at least two years to prepare for the sacraments of initiation into the Catholic Church. Through the catechumenate, unbaptized people over the age of seven are initiated during the Easter Vigil each year, celebrating baptism, then confirmation, and, finally, first communion in the Mass. The church asks us to reflect upon the catechumenate as the most excellent model for preparing a person for initiation into the Catholic life.⁴

At the same time, we baptize infants born into the Catholic family. The baptism of infants is the Church's loving embrace of the infant who is formed in Catholic habits throughout his or her life by the Catholic family. When a child begins initiation into the Catholic life as an infant, the process of preparation occurs throughout the life of the child. The baptized child gradually absorbs faith and faith practices from the family and celebrates the other sacraments of initiation later in life.

The rites for the catechumenate (RCIA) paint for us a picture of the basic process of initiation. The rites sanctify various periods of instruction. The periods of instruction give a person first hand experience of Catholic living. The witness of other Catholics who pray, study, and act in the name of Christ presents the nuance of Catholic-Christian faith to those who watch and learn.

Children, baptized as infants, have been watching, practicing, discerning, and living the Catholic faith for approximately seven years. They have a developed sense of imagination, which helps them to engage in liturgy with its stories, ceremonies, and ritual. They learn the story of Jesus and his friends from parents and catechists.

Children use their imagination and their knowledge of Jesus to discern how to model their lives on the life of Jesus. They learn the stories of other Christians and saint-heroes who dedicated their lives to Christ. As we all know, a child is concerned about the evaluation and feedback of other significant people in his or her life. Children absorb images of God and the way God relates to his people through their experience of parents, siblings, and extended family.

This is a tender time in the faith life of the baptized Catholic. His or her relationship with adults in the community will form or de-form his or her relationship with God. The influence of these people will shape the young person's desire to be a witness in faith on a daily basis.

⁴ Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), Appendix III: National Statues for the Catechumenate, no. 18, 402.

The parish community continues the initiation of their children in the celebrations of the Eucharist where they experience the presence of Christ and his community gathered around the Table of the Lord.

Let us be thoughtful of every moment we witness to these tender ones of faith. Since every parish is initiating young people baptized as infants all year long, the parish is an initiating parish.

Third principle:
WEEKLY CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

We assume that children celebrate the Eucharist with their families every Sunday in the local parish.

As they accompany the family, they gradually absorb the symbols, rituals, and theology expressed in the liturgy. They hear the proclamation of the Bible, the Word of God. Gradually, they learn the prayers and responses of the liturgy which are imprinted in their memory forever. They witness others who go to communion regularly to become what they eat, the Body and Blood of Christ. They watch and learn as believers implement the **Word and Sacrament** in their lives through acts of mercy and justice in the world.

Parents and teachers teach children that the Mass consists of the **Liturgy of the Word** and **Liturgy of the Eucharist**.⁵

By the time the parents present their children for First Communion, the child is very experienced with the celebration of the Eucharist and has developed a love and longing for their First Communion.⁶

Fourth principle:
THE FIRST COMMUNION LITURGY BELONGS TO THE CHURCH

The Church consists of the universal Church (Rome and all Catholic Churches throughout the world), the diocesan Church (led by the local bishop), and the local Church (your pastor and parish). This is the basis of our catholic identity. The word “catholic” means universal.

This dimension in our identity as Roman Catholic people guards against any parish becoming self-determined or “congregationalist.” In the liturgy, this means that every parish celebrates the liturgy as the Church asks, under the leadership of the pope and the local bishop. This helps us to be united. As Catholics, we follow the universal, Roman Catholic plan of liturgy outlined in our books, the Sacramentary (Roman Missal), the Lectionary, the sacramental book of Rites, the Ordo, and our Catholic hymnal.

Fifth principle:

⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC),1656-1657

⁶ CCC, 941, 942, 1389, 1383, 1408,2698

WE CELEBRATE THE LITURGY AS THE CHURCH ASKS

When we celebrate a sacrament within the context of the Mass, there are a number of elements of the liturgy that are already determined for us. Here are some helpful steps to take in the planning of the First Communion liturgy:

1. SEASON: Most often, the parish will celebrate First Communion on a Sunday during the Easter season. The first liturgy of Easter is the vigil of Easter after sunset on Holy Saturday. In this liturgy, the universal Church initiates adults into the Catholic faith. For the next fifty days of Easter, the universal Church customarily invites baptized children to the Table of the Lord. This practice mirrors the experience of the elect at the Easter Vigil. It is the best expression of our catholic identity to celebrate First Communion between the second Sunday of Easter and Pentecost.
2. SCRIPTURE: Plan to use the scriptures of the day, the prayers of the day, as well as hymns and songs of season. Include references to the liturgical feast or season in the celebration. Because these elements continue to catechize the children and the adults who accompany them, children do not proclaim the scriptures on Sunday, First Communion liturgies, or other large public Masses. For Masses with Children in which the assembly is made up of a great majority of children, children may function as a lector, psalmist, usher, greeter, and presenter of gifts.⁷
3. MUSIC: Use liturgical music. The character of liturgical music is music the people know how to sing very well so that they can freely sing the liturgy.
 - a. The “alleluia” and the memorial acclamations (Holy, Holy, Christ has died, etc., Amen) should be very well known. Choose melodies you know people from other local Catholic churches will know, too.
 - b. Catholics sing the liturgy. As a result, the texts of songs are from the psalms, from scripture of the day, from Mass texts, or texts that express Catholic Eucharistic doctrine. Popular Christian songs that focus on “me and Jesus” are not appropriate for singing the Catholic liturgy because our spirituality is communal (community based) and expresses our unity in the Body and Blood of Christ. Our songs express “we” not “I” as we sing the liturgy.

⁷ Directory for Masses with Children (DMC), 20. “In addition to the Masses in which children take part with their parents and other family members (which are not always possible everywhere), Masses with children in which only a few adults take part are recommended, especially during the week. . . 21. It is always necessary to keep in mind that these Eucharistic Celebrations must lead children toward the celebration of Mass with adults, especially in the Masses at which the Christian community must come together on Sundays. Thus, apart from adaptations that are necessary because of the children's age, the result should not be entirely special rites, markedly different from the Order of Mass celebrated with a congregation. The purpose of the various elements should always correspond with what is said in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* on individual points, even if at times for pastoral reasons an absolute *identity* cannot be insisted upon.

- c. Refrain from introducing new (never before sung by the adult community) acclamations, songs, or hymns into the First Communion liturgy. The choir or ensemble might offer new music as a prelude or a postlude. However, during the liturgy, the goal is to keep the people singing with familiar melodies and texts.
4. LITURGICAL MINISTERS are fully initiated, Catholic adults. For the First Communion liturgy, they are the normal parish liturgical ministers (lectors, cantors, music ministers, ushers, extraordinary ministers of communion, etc.) for a particular ministry who know how to do their ministry well in your particular church building.
5. MAKING FIRST COMMUNION SPECIAL: To make First Communion “special” for a seven year old, focus him or her on the wonderful event of receiving communion for the first time, on the Gospel of the day, and on family and friends. It is best not to over-load expectations of them. Give them spiritual room to focus on Christ. Putting children in the role of lector, prayers of the faithful, or a “special song” at the end of Mass, dissipates their focus on the Eucharist and demands additional performance for the sake of others. We do better to encourage the children to participate actively in the Mass as they do on Sunday and free them up to remember their First Communion as a spiritually rich day.
6. COMMUNION: Plan to distribute communion under both forms at First Communion. With the permission of the pastor, a catechist may give the child an *unconsecrated* host to taste it before First Communion so the taste of the host is not a surprise for the child on First Communion day. The catechist may show the child how to sip (not drink) *unconsecrated* wine before he or she receives Jesus in the Eucharist. They deserve to know the taste and texture of Holy Communion before they receive it publicly. In some cases, the practice taste session might occur more than once for the benefit of the children.

Sixth principle:

EUCHARIST LEADS TO WORKS OF MERCY AND JUSTICE

On the day of First Communion, we hope that the children experience unity in Christ at the Table of the Lord. Due to their preparation, they understand that they are united with others in the Church to be the Body and Blood of Christ. After Mass, they are all sent into daily life to be the presence of Christ in the world. The Body of Christ has been broken and shared. The Blood of Christ has been poured out and shared. Our Catholics ancestors tell us that we become what we eat, the Body and Blood of Christ.⁸ Parents and catechists teach the children that they become Christ for the world and they accept the mission of Christ. As Christians, they love all God’s people, care for them, and give them what they need to live a life of dignity and grace. Jesus did this in his own life.

Part of preparation for First Communion should include exercises in being the presence of Christ to others. Children can learn to be visitors of the elderly in the family, neighborhood, or nursing

⁸ St. Augustine taught, “When you eat earthly bread, it is changed into you, but when you eat the Bread from Heaven, you become what you receive, you are joined more closely with Jesus the Savior. “ The Fathers of the Church, *Sermons of St. Augustine of Hippo*, The Fathers of the Church, Inc. New York, NY, 1959.

home. Children can learn to clean their closets and rooms monthly and give away extra toys and clothes to those in need. Children can learn to read simple stories to younger children, to help parents with household chores, and do school work before taking time to play. All these things can be done with the intent of projecting the presence of Christ with joy and peace.

United as a member of Christ's Body and Blood, these children begin a life-long commitment to live like Jesus and carry on his mission.

Sixth principle:

ENVIRONMENT AND THE LITURGICAL YEAR

Rather than replacing seasonal environment with First Communion banners and symbols, let the environment reflect the liturgical season since this is the basic catechetical purpose of liturgical environment. Allow the Liturgical Year to continue to catechize parents, children, and the general assembly.

- Plan a worship environment that will enhance the liturgical season. Use color, fabric, vestments, plants, and flowers thoughtfully.
- Take care to keep the area around and on the altar completely clear of flowers or other objects so the space can be accessible for ritual purposes.
- Parishioners can place flowers and art works throughout the church, that is, not only "in the altar area" but also within the assembly of the people and outside of the church building near the doors.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The discussion above gives us an insight into the importance of respecting the Church's celebration of the liturgy. There is a lot at stake every time we gather because each experience of the liturgy forms every person in the faith.

On the day of First Communion, we expect the liturgy, its symbols and gestures, its prayerful action, and its formative power to continue to shape all the people in the church in Catholic faith, especially the first communicants.

The first value, then, must be on the prayerful celebration of the sacrament. Our goal is to help the first communicants to remember this day as a Christ-centered, prayerful, time.

Praying the liturgy is a subjective experience. It involves the mental, physical, and spiritual attention of each individual in the church. With this kind of attention, each person wills to unite with every other person in the church until the individual sees him or her self as part of the Body and Blood of Christ. All attention is to praise and thank God the Father for his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. We teach this prayerful Catholic manner to first communicants.

As a result, prepare families in advance of the celebration. Remind them to take pictures and videos of the first communicants at home, outside before the liturgy, and inside after the liturgy is over. Taking pictures during the liturgy distracts every person away from prayer, draws attention

to the person upon whom the camera or video-camera is focused, and draws attention to the person taking the pictures.

In every liturgy, the focus is on Christ present in Word and Sacrament. First communicants learn this in their preparation sessions and we, by our behavior, must reinforce this teaching of the Church.

As a result, please ask that everyone with a camera or video camera – family and friends alike – turn off their cameras, video cameras, and cell phones when they enter the door of the church and leave them off. It is especially inappropriate to take pictures during communion. As a concession to this guideline, parish leaders may designate one person to take a video of the entire liturgy and make copies for each family. It will be important to inform the assembly of this designated person so others will not assume during the liturgy that all may take pictures.

Before the liturgy begins, it might be helpful for a catechist to invite family and friends to help to make the Mass prayerful for the children. All adults can help to create an environment for the children so that the church emits a *prayerful experience* for the first time they receive communion. All can help them to keep their attention on Christ in His Body and Blood.

THE MASS

First Communion

You may prepare a **worship aid** for the candidates and people **with the music** printed within the order of service. National law requires **legal permission from the publisher to reprint the music and/or words** and requires correct acknowledgements. You may read guidelines and law texts by going to the website: http://www.mpa.org/copyright_resource_center/church_musician

According to the Directory for Masses with Children, a “children’s liturgy”, is one in which the general attendance is dominated by children with adults in small numbers such as in a school Mass.⁹ Most first communion liturgies do not fall into this category.

GATHERING RITE

Welcome/Prelude

Greeters and ushers give the atmosphere of hospitality. Because there are guests at the First Communion liturgy, it is prudent to assign extra people for hospitality to help people find the way from the parking lot to the door and to address other needs.

Schedule the best and most experienced parish music leaders and other liturgical ministers to facilitate active participation. Parish liturgical ministers, who know the local church building well, help the assembly to sing comfortably, to respond fervently, and to process for communion with ease and confidence.

Prelude music, either sung by the choir or played instrumentally, is festive and adds to the joyful atmosphere 15 minutes prior to the liturgy. Prelude music stops precisely at the time Mass is to begin and does not delay the start of the liturgy.

Procession

The children may be in the procession at the beginning of Mass and sit as a group or they may arrive in designated places with their parents. If they are in the procession, children go before liturgical ministers. If they sit in a group, parents will need designated places reserved so they can remain in close proximity to their children.

The assembly sings the gathering hymn.

▶ **HINT:** Song leaders appropriately invite the assembly with, “**Let us stand and sing # _____, title _____**” or simply hold up the worship aid. That is all that is needed. The priest’s job is to introduce the liturgical day and welcome all in the name of Christ.

⁹ *Directory for Masses with Children*, nos. 12-17

The procession of ministers includes the following:

1. Incense Bearer
2. Processional Cross
3. Candle-Bearers\ servers
4. First Communicants (optional)
5. Lectors
6. (Deacon – if present - with the Book of Gospels)
7. Concelebrants
8. Presider

Colored banners carried by other members of the parish may lead the procession and another might mark the location of the first communicants if they are in the entrance procession. Banners should reflect the liturgical season thereby helping the children to identify the liturgical season.

Greeting

Following the procession, the priest begins the liturgy without delay. He does the sign of the cross, the greeting, and offers opening comments.¹⁰

Penitential Rite/Sprinkling Rite

The priest or deacon leads the penitential invocations. During the Easter Season, it is good to use the Sprinkling Rite as a reminder of baptism using water from the baptismal font. Provide a bowl for the priest to *draw water from the font* and a sprinkler. Taking water from the baptismal font creates a visual connection of baptism to first communion. The assembly would sing a refrain or hymn during the Sprinkling Rite which text would reflect the rite.¹¹

Glory to God

The Glory to God is sung or recited (preferably sung) on Sundays, solemnities, and feasts outside of Advent and Lent.

Opening Prayer

The Church has written an opening prayer (also called the *collect*) for each day of the year (called the Proper of the Seasons or Ritual Masses). Planners and presiders use this prayer, found in the Sacramentary-Roman Missal. The “Ordo” designates the prayers of the day listed under the date. Your pastor can help you with this or call the diocesan Office of Liturgy for help.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Scripture

1. Trained and experienced parish lectors who have practiced the scripture proclaim the Word of God at parish liturgies. Choose your best adult lectors for first communion. The proclamation of the Word evangelizes adults who may be lapsed Catholics or non-baptized persons.¹² It would not be appropriate for a child to take this responsibility at a First Communion liturgy.

¹⁰ General Instruction of the Roman Missal (hereafter, GIRM), no. 50

¹¹ GIRM, 51.

¹² Directory for Masses with Children. (Hereafter, DMC) Children may proclaim at “Masses with Children in Which Only a Few Adults Participate” no., 20-22. This does not necessarily include first communion liturgies in which a great number of adults are present.

2. The psalm of the day should be sung and led by a trained cantor or/and choir.¹³
3. The assembly sings the Gospel acclamation. If the acclamation is not sung, it may be omitted.¹⁴ If the priest or deacon does a Gospel procession or incensing, the musicians extend the acclamation with verses to accompany the procession to the ambo.¹⁵
4. The Gospel is proclaimed by the pastor (or deacon, if present) or concelebrating priest designated by the pastor. It will not be appropriate to have children or others act out the Gospel.
5. If a deacon proclaims the Gospel, he returns the Book of the Gospels to the priest or places it in another suitable place.¹⁶

Homily

The homilist addresses his teaching to all people in the assembly. It should break open the scriptures, should challenge all to deeper understanding and commitment in their Christian journey, and should move all to Christian action. After that, it is appropriate for the homily to focus on the children, their first communion, and the central role of the Eucharist in Catholic life.

Creed

During Easter season, planners may replace the Nicene Creed with the Apostle's Creed. This allows the children to speak for themselves, from memory, the first declaration of this text made for them by their parents and godparents at Baptism. An alternative would be to use the Baptism form of the Apostle's creed in dialogue form – see baptismal rite. This also reinforces the connection between Baptism and Eucharist as sacraments of initiation into the Catholic Church.

Prayers of the Faithful

1. When the “Amen” of the Creed is spoken by all, the lector (if leading the Prayers of the Faithful in the absence of a deacon) moves immediately to the ambo. The lector should be in place for the priest's introductory prayer to the Prayers of the Faithful.
2. The priest introduces and concludes the Prayers of the Faithful.
▶ HINT: The deacon or lector should get in place for the priest's introduction prayer, prayerfully listen to the introduction prayer, and then offer the Prayers of the Faithful. After the intercessions, the deacon or lector stays in place for the priest's concluding prayer before being seated again.
3. The deacon normally offers the intercessions. If there is no deacon, the lector offers them.
4. Planners may use intercessions from the ritual or compose new ones for the occasion. Maintain the universal nature of the prayer with the usual ritual conclusion (*we pray to the Lord*), which leads the assembly's memorized response (Lord, hear our prayer). Write the intercessions in the order outlined in the Roman Missal-Sacramentary: for the church, world, for those burdened by any difficulty, and for the local community.¹⁷

¹³ GIRM, 61

¹⁴ GIRM, 63

¹⁵ *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. (SLMDW) In the Gospel Acclamation, the assembled faithful welcome “the Lord who is about to speak to them.” The cantor may intone the Acclamation, which is repeated by the whole assembly. After the cantor or choir sings the verse, the entire assembly again sings the acclamation. If there is a Gospel procession, the acclamation may be repeated as often as necessary to accompany the Gospel procession. The verses are as a rule taken from the Lectionary for Mass. no. 161

¹⁶ GIRM, 131

¹⁷ GIRM, 70

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of the Gifts

1. A family may present the gifts:

▶ HINT: They carry the bread and wine to the altar area and present them to the deacon or priest. **Bread and wine are the only gifts in the Presentation of Gifts.** (No other articles should be carried up. The focus is on the bread and wine which becomes the Body and Blood of Christ.)¹⁸

▶ HINT: The people do not present water because the “gifts” are bread and wine. Water is placed on the credence table (servers’ table) at the beginning of Mass.

▶ HINT: If ushers take up a collection (e.g., Parish Sunday Liturgy), presenters may also present the collection

2. The sacristan should prepare a sufficient number of hosts for communion and enough wine so that the entire assembly can receive both the Body and Blood of Christ.

▶ HINT: Prepare two cups of the Blood of Christ for the each distributor of the Body of Christ.

3. The liturgical music at this point should fit the time it takes to prepare the table, present the gifts, and prepare the cup.

▶ HINT: A hymn or choral work usually takes 3 minutes to complete.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the center piece of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Since this liturgy is not a children’s liturgy but a community liturgy (enabling people of all ages to worship and participate in the liturgy) it is customary to use a Eucharistic Prayer normally used on Sunday.

¹⁸ When the Prayer of the Faithful is completed, all sit, and the Offertory chant begins (cf. above, no. 74). An acolyte or other lay minister arranges the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal upon the altar. It is appropriate for the faithful’s participation to be expressed by an offering, whether of the bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist or of other gifts for the relief of the needs of the Church and of the poor. The offerings of the faithful are received by the priest, assisted by the acolyte or other minister. The bread and wine for the Eucharist are carried to the celebrant, who places them upon the altar, while other gifts are put in another appropriate place (cf. GIRM, no. 73). GIRM, 139, 140. See also RS, 70.

It is appropriate that all listen prayerfully to the prayer the priest offers and unite prayerfully in one spirit with him. To begin the prayer, the priest might sing the preface responses (from the *Sacramentary/ Roman Missal*).

▶ HINT: The cantor/choir and candidates should have rehearsed their responses previously to be ready to lead the preface responses for the people.

Plan to use familiar Eucharistic Prayer acclamations (Holy, holy, memorial acclamation, and amen) which the entire assembly will comfortably sing without rehearsal. Keep in mind that the model for this liturgy is the usual Sunday liturgy.

THE COMMUNION RITE

1. Plan to have the assembly speak the Lord's Prayer together. (It is not appropriate in the Catholic liturgy to have a soloist sing the Lord's Prayer alone since the prayer is a prayer of the community).

2. The priest (or deacon, if he is present) invites the assembly to exchange the sign of peace.

▶ HINT: Plan no music during the sign of peace

3. The Fraction Rite: The *Lamb of God* **music should begin immediately when** the priest returns to the altar.

▶ HINT: The organist and cantor might limit their sign of peace greeting to each other this one time so they can turn immediately to watch the priest and start the "Lamb of God" when he returns to the altar to break the host.

4. The deacon (in his absence, a concelebrating priest) assists the priest in preparing the vessels for the distribution of communion.

5. Communion should be distributed under both forms. Children should receive the Body and Blood of Christ at First Communion.¹⁹

▶ HINT: Provide a maximum number of communion stations. Provide two cups for the distribution of the Blood of Christ per each minister distributing the Body of Christ.²⁰

6. The priest, pastor, concelebrants, deacon, and parish commissioned ministers of the Eucharist distribute communion.

▶ HINT: To avoid confusion, have the priest and liturgy coordinator discuss the placement of ministers with all who distribute communion **before** the liturgy begins.

¹⁹ *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America.* no. 47

²⁰ *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America.* no. 30

▶ HINT: The order for the distribution of communion is first, the priest and concelebrants, then the deacon, the extraordinary ministers of communion, the First Communicants and parents, and the people of God.

▶ HINT: When concelebrating priests are present, they distribute the Eucharist in place of lay extraordinary ministers of communion.²¹ When a deacon is present, he is a minister of the Blood of Christ. If there are communion stations still open, an extraordinary minister of communion should fill in.

7. During the communion procession, all the people, including the children, should sing an appropriate psalm, song, or hymn reflecting the theme of the Eucharist and Holy Communion in the text.²²

8. There can be silence after communion. Then, the priest offers the prayer after communion taken from the Sacramentary.

▶ HINT: The bishop has asked all parishes to follow the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* and either allow for silence after communion or plan a hymn that all the people sing.²³ Please do not plan a choral work, other music, or the recitation of written work.

CONCLUDING RITE

Announcements

Greeting and Dismissal

Blessing

▶ HINT: The priest will make the solemn blessing. Candidates should be ready to respond “Amen” to the blessing.

Hymn Plan a familiar hymn that the entire assembly can sing confidently.

Recessional The ministers will exit. The candidates stay in place after the liturgy.

PRESENTATION OF FIRST COMMUNION CERTIFICATES:

This presentation should take place after picture-taking, that is, after Mass.

²¹ GIRM no. 100.

²² GIRM no. 86

²³ GIRM no. 88

**HOW TO PREPARE A PARISH FOR
A PRAYERFUL,
NO CAMERA,
FIRST COMMUNION LITURGY**

Plan to start communicating this value a year in advance of First Communion.

1. At the first faith formation session for parents and children, pass out a flier to announce that the first communion liturgy will focus on prayer. Include the text found above in the discussion about “photography.”
2. Repeat a smaller version of the flier at each session. Include a reminder in all written correspondence to parents and guardians throughout the year.
3. Start publishing the text about cameras in the liturgy in the bulletin two months before the liturgy. Repeat every week.
4. Before the First Communion liturgy, announce a short reminder that the parish has worked hard to focus the children on Christ for their first communion. A parish leader may urge family members to refrain from using cameras during the liturgy at any time, especially during the reception of holy communion.

PLANNERS - For additional help with liturgical planning, contact:

Director of Faith Formation
Diocese of Winona Pastoral Center
55 West Sanborn Street
Winona, MN 55987

507-454-4643
mnuehring@dow.org

Director of Liturgy
Diocese of Winona Pastoral Center
55 West Sanborn Street
Winona, MN 55987

507-454-4643
<mailto:liturgy@dow.org>

Liturgy Planning Sheet (see below)

PLANNING THE FIRST COMMUNION LITURGY DIOCESE OF WINONA

Parish _____

Event _____

Date of Celebration _____ **Time** _____

Coordinator _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

LITURGICAL MINISTERS:

Presider _____

Deacon _____

Lector (s) _____

Servers (2) _____

Cross Bearer _____

Music Director _____

Organ/Piano _____

Gift Presenters _____

Intercessions Deacon OR Lector *(In the case there is no deacon)* _____

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Gathering Song _____

Penitential Rite **A** *(Sprinkling Rite- Easter time only)*

B *(Penitential Rite)* a. b. c.

Glory to God Sung Spoken

Opening Prayer

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING _____ *(Lectionary number)* _____

PSALM _____ *(All of psalm should be chanted or sung)*

SECOND READING _____ *(Lectionary number)* _____

Gospel Acclamation _____ *(Gs. Acclamation is sung)*

GOPEL _____ *(Lectionary number)* _____

- Homily Pastor Deacon
Profession of Faith Apostles Creed (Renewal of Baptismal Promise) Nicene Creed
Prayers of the Faithful Deacon Lector or Cantor

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- Collection yes no
Preparation of the Altar (Music) _____
Presentation of Gifts by (People) _____

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations:

- Holy, Holy, Holy (Should be sung) _____
Memorial Acclamation (Should be sung) _____
Amen (Should be sung) _____

THE COMMUNION RITE

- Our Father (Should be spoken)
Lamb of God (Should be sung) _____
Eucharist under both forms List number of Priests (Bread) _____ Deacon (Cup) _____
List number of lay ministers _____
Communion procession song: _____
Hymn of Thanksgiving or silence only _____
Prayer after Communion (Priest only - prayer is from the Roman Missal)

DISMISSAL RITE

- Announcements by _____
Blessing / Dismissal
Recessional music _____
(may be instrumental, choral, or assembly)

ORDER OF ENTRANCE PROCESSION FOR FIRST COMMUNION:

1. Incense Bearer
 2. Processional Cross
 3. Candle-Bearers\ servers
 4. First Communicants (optional)
 5. Lectors
 6. (Deacon – if present - with the Book of Gospels)
 7. Concelebrants
 8. Presider
- Please indicate adjustments in order on back.

If you should have any questions in planning this liturgy, you may contact the Office of Liturgy, Diocese of Winona, for assistance: 507-454-4643; liturgy@dow.org