

## **WHY DO I HAVE TO PREPARE MY CHILD FOR THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST?**

**When you presented** your child to the Church for Baptism, you were reminded that you have the responsibility of "raising them in the practice of the faith" (*The Rite of Baptism for Children*, #109). This obligation and privilege extends to sacramental preparation. You also know your child better than anyone else, which places you in the best position to help your child uncover the mystery of the Eucharist with words and experiences he or she will understand. No matter what else is done in the parish or school to prepare your child, it is only as effective as the support received in the home. Think of this as an opportunity to deepen your own faith and understanding as well as your child's.

### **What do I have to do to prepare my child?**

Your parish will have certain expectations that will be explained to you when you begin the process. **Our Family Formation "First Communion" program** provides you with ideas and suggestions in the *Preparing Your Child for First Communion section* and throughout the *Child's Book*.

### **What if I do not go to Mass?**

As you probably already know, what you do or do not do speaks volumes. If this is the case, now may be a good time for you to look at why you have made the choice not to participate in the worship life of the community. Examine your reasons. Is it because you have serious questions about the Church? Have you just let other things take priority on the weekend? Are you alienated for a specific reason? Are you willing to speak to a priest or someone on the parish staff about it? Whatever your reasons are, it is important for you to know that if your child is going to celebrate First Communion, you have a responsibility to make sure he or she is able to get to Mass every Sunday during the preparation and after, even if it means finding someone else to take him or her there.

### **What are the Church's rules about Holy Communion?**

Church law requires that we fast from food and beverages, except for medicine and water, for one hour before going to Communion.

Catholics must go to confession once a year. They must also go to confession before receiving Holy Communion if they have committed a mortal sin.

### **How can I tell if my child is ready for First Communion?**

Here are some indicators that your child is ready to celebrate the sacrament:

- Does your child have sufficient knowledge to understand the mystery of Christ according to his or her capacity and can he or she receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion?

- Does your child and some other family members regularly attend Sunday Mass?
- Is prayer a part of your child's daily life?
- Does he or she show a reverence for God?
- Does your child have a relationship with Jesus?
- Does he or she know the difference between ordinary bread and wine and the Body and Blood of Jesus?

**How can we as a family continue to participate in the Sacrament of Eucharist?**

- Continue the conversations and reflections you will begin in this process.
- As a family, plan to participate in the Eucharist on a **weekly basis**. Make participation a familiar and serious commitment.