

Supplement to Parent Handbook

First Holy Communion 2026



St. Raymond of Peñafort

Roman Catholic Church

Springfield, Virginia

Calendar of Events

A copy of the Certificate of Baptism and Birth Certificate is due in the Religious Education Office by December 15, 2025.

First Penance Sat. February 7, 2026 immediately following the 9 am Mass

First Holy Communion Mini-Retreat April 25, 2026 8:30 am – 12:45 pm

First Holy Communion May 3, 9, & 10, 2026



Sacrament of Penance - The children will make their first Confession in February. We encourage you to make sure your child has an opportunity to receive this Sacrament again before receiving their First Holy Communion in May. Check the parish bulletin for times for Confession.

First Holy Communion Retreat will take place on Saturday, April 25, 2026. All those preparing to receive their First Holy Communion are expected to attend. This mini-retreat is the final preparation for all who will receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion in May. Students should arrive in the Parish Hall no later than 8:30 am so we can prepare them to attend the 9 am Mass. Families are welcome and encouraged to join us for Mass.

Attire for the Mini-Retreat should be “Sunday best” because the children will be attending Mass. Modest dress is always expected. Students should not be wearing jeans, shorts, t-shirts, or sport uniforms of any kind. The students should wear appropriate footwear – no sneakers, flip flops, etc.

First Holy Communion: The children may receive Our Lord on **Sunday, May 3** or **10** at **9am** or **11am**, or on **Saturday, May 9** at **9am**. **A Sign-up will be emailed to all families by February.** The children should wear special clothing to highlight the special occasion.

Photos and videos are not permitted during Mass. If time permits, photos may be taken in the church AFTER the Mass at which your child received their First Holy Communion, but no one should enter the Sanctuary (inside the altar rails) for photos; your child and/or family members may stand at the foot of the steps in front of the Sanctuary for photos.

!! Mass Attendance: Students who are parishioners at St. Raymond's must document **Mass attendance for Sundays (or Saturday evenings) and Holy Days of Obligation from October 4 – April 26**, by placing Mass attendance cards in the collection basket at St. Raymond's. Before they come to Mass each week, please have your child write their name on the index card, along with the date of the Mass they are attending. During the Offertory, have your child place the card in the collection basket. It is expected that students in sacrament preparation classes meet a minimum 75% Mass attendance record.

If a student attends Mass at a Catholic parish other than St. Raymond's, the student should pick up that parish's bulletin after Mass and ask a priest or deacon to sign the bulletin. They should turn that bulletin in, **with their name written on it**, to the Religious Education office.

A note from Ms. Osella: Based on my experience from last year, I would like to remind you of the importance of notifying us of any issues impacting your child's Mass attendance, such as extended illness, transportation, or custody arrangements. I touch base with families during the year who are falling behind on Mass attendance, according to our records, and you can save us both an unpleasant call or email by proactive communication about any extenuating circumstances.

Class Attendance: Students must attend and participate in at least 75% of weekly scheduled Religious Education classes. Students who miss one quarter or more of the scheduled classes may be required to retake the course work for that year in the following year's Religious Education program.

The following forms may be picked up in the Religious Education office or you may email the Religious Education Office at religiouseducation@straymonds.org requesting the forms be sent to you electronically. Please complete and return the form(s), applicable to your particular circumstances, to the Religious Education office by the date indicated below.

a. First Holy Communion Registry Form (copy in blue folder)

Return the completed form, with a copy of the Certificate of Baptism and Birth Certificate, to the Religious Education office **no later than December 15, 2025**. If your child was baptized at St. Raymond of Peñafort, no need to attach a Baptism certificate.

If the Certificate of Baptism and/or Birth Certificate is printed in a language other than English, please attach an English translation to the copy of the certificate.

b. Family Priest / Deacon Attendance Form

If you have a family member who is a priest or deacon who would like to concelebrate or serve at the Mass during which your child will receive their First Holy Communion, please complete and return the form with supporting documentation (if required) to the Religious Education office **no later than March 13, 2026**.

Rite of Reconciliation / Confession

Walk in and close the door and either kneel or sit. If you prefer to make your Confession face to face, let the priest know and he will open the curtain (this is for those receiving the Sacrament at St. Raymond's).

Child:

- 1) Make and say the Sign of the Cross:
"In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
- 2) Say, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned, this is my first Confession, and these are my sins..."
(name your sins) starting with the mortal ones and saying how many times, then the venial sins
 - a. When you return for other Confessions in the future, you will say, "It has been _____ weeks, months, etc. since my last confession (3 weeks, 6 months, or however long it has been.)"
- 3) When you have finished telling the priest your sins, say, "For these and all my sins, I am truly sorry."

Priest:

- 1) May ask clarifying questions or give words of advice or suggestions.
- 2) Will give you a penance (often this will be prayers to be said in the church after Confession). To show the priest you will do the penance say "Yes Father" or "Thank you, Father."
- 3) Priest will ask you to say an Act of Contrition.

Child: *An Act of Contrition*

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments; but, most of all, because they have offended Thee, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love, I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

Priest:

- 1) Will give you absolution by saying, "...I absolve you..." (the prayer which forgives/removes your sins).
- 2) The priest will end the absolution prayer by saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." *

Child:

- * 1) When the priest is saying this, you should make the Sign of the Cross.
- 2) He will probably say, "Go in peace," and you respond, "Thanks be to God."
- 3) Before leaving say, "Thank you, Father."

Step out and leave the door open. Find a quiet place in the church to say the prayers the priest assigns as your penance.

A Children's Examination of Conscience

Did I miss Mass on purpose (through my own fault) on a Sunday or a Holy Day? (Do not confuse this with your parents not taking you to Mass. You only have the obligation to ask them to take you.)

Do I pay attention in Mass? Do I laugh or talk in church?

Was I late for Mass through my own fault?

Have I used the Lord's name in vain?

Do I use other bad language?

Have I been disrespectful of others?

Do I obey my parents or others who I should obey?

Do I complete my household chores?

Do I humbly accept correction from my parents?

Have I talked back to them?

Do I speak respectfully to those in authority over me?

Did I use angry words?

Do I fight or cause fights with my friends or brothers or sisters?

Have I called someone a name or said mean things about or to someone?

Was I unkind to others? Did I tease someone unkindly?

Did I try to get even with someone?

Have I stolen anything?

Did I hurt someone's property?

Have I looked at bad things on TV or the internet?

Have I cheated?

Have I caused another to commit sin?

Do I brag? Am I prideful?

Have I lied?

Taken from the Parish Catechist Manual from the Faith and Life Series Grade 2 Third Edition, p. 82 and from the *New Saint Joseph First Communion Catechism (Baltimore Catechism) p. 43*

