

# Receiving Communion

## Holy Communion

### Rules for Receiving Holy Communion

- Only baptized Catholics may receive Communion.
- To receive Holy Communion, we must be in the state of grace, free from mortal sin. If we have sinned mortally, we must first go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and receive absolution before receiving Holy Communion. When we are sorry for our venial sins, receiving Holy Communion frees us from them.
- To honor the Lord, we fast for one hour before the time we receive Communion. This means we go without food or drink, except water or medicine.
- Catholics are required to receive Holy Communion at least once a year during Easter time. But we are encouraged to receive Communion every time we participate in the Mass.



### How to Receive Communion

When we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we welcome him by showing reverence. These steps can help you.

- Fold your hands, and join in the singing as you wait in line.
- When it is your turn, you can receive the Body of Christ in your hand or on your tongue.
- When you are shown the Eucharist, bow in reverence.
- To receive the Body of Christ in your hand, hold your hands out with the palms up. Place one hand underneath the other, and cup your hands slightly.
- To receive the Host on your tongue, fold your hands, open your mouth, and put your tongue out.

- The person who offers you Communion will say, "The Body of Christ." You say, "Amen." The priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion places the Host in your hand or on your tongue. Step aside, and chew and swallow the Host.
- You may choose to drink from the cup. When the cup is offered to you, the person will say, "The Blood of Christ." You say, "Amen." Take a small sip.
- Return to your place in church. Pray quietly in your own words. Thank Jesus for being with you.



## Rules for Receiving Holy Communion

- ▶ Review these rules and regulations with children and encourage them to go over them with their parents.
- ▶ The rules for receiving Holy Communion are based on Canon Law, the official law of the Church. Be sure to point that the Church emphasizes the importance of receiving Holy Communion frequently.
- ▶ Explain to children that not all Christians share our belief in the real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. That is why only Roman Catholics may receive Holy Communion at Mass.
- ▶ Review the definitions of mortal and venial sin. Remind children that through reception of Holy Communion venial sins are forgiven.

## How to Receive Communion

- ▶ Review the directions for receiving Communion as the time for the celebration draws near. Role-play receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus so children are comfortable and at ease. If possible, invite parish extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to practice with children. If appropriate, use unconsecrated hosts and wine. Emphasize the importance of reverence in receiving Communion. Be sure to practice the bowing gesture.
- ▶ Provide any additional information about how Holy Communion is distributed in your parish, such as directions for coming forward and returning to one's place, standing and kneeling, and receiving Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue.