

First Holy Communion

Experience has shown that for the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* process of preparation for First Holy Communion to be meaningful and effective for everyone it is important that certain guidelines be followed. These include:

For the preceding two calendar years the candidate being present:

- at the Eucharist each Sunday and each of the weekday Holy Days of Obligation (Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, All Saints) except for illness or physical inability, normally at a principal Mass at St Paul's
- all three days of the Triduum at St Paul's
- at the *Catechesis* program at St Paul's Atrium each Sunday of the school year except for illness or physical inability.

The candidate having achieved an appropriate level of both emotional and spiritual maturity, her-/himself being ready to be an integral, participating member of St Paul's parish community at an age-appropriate level and being ready for full liturgical participation at the level of a Communicant of the Church, as evidenced by attendance at the entire Mass on those days when there is no Catechesis program and by attentive and mature behavior while at the liturgy.

The candidate being at least 7 years of age at the time of receiving First Holy Communion. There is, however, now no "standard" or expected age in the Episcopal Church. The decision to begin First Holy Communion preparation must be initiated by the candidate him-/herself, who first talks with his/her parents. If the parents concur, the candidate and the parents then meet with the Director of Religious Education and the Rector by September of the year preceding First Holy Communion. The final decision as to the readiness of the candidate lies with the Director of Christian Education and the Rector.

The parishioner-parent(s) having completed the Canterbury Pilgrimage program and attending St Paul's with the candidate on a Sunday-by-Sunday basis

The candidate and the parishioner-parent(s) participating in the final preparation process which includes:

- an orientation meeting and a dinner in the home of one of the candidate-families which is prepared by the candidates and their parents and to which all family members are invited
- the weekly meditation sessions with the Rector and Director of Religious Education which are held between the Easter Day and Ascension Day before First Holy Communion
- the two day retreat which precedes the First Communion Mass on Ascension Day, the candidate attending the retreat and the parents participating in the potluck supper on Friday evening (to which other family members are also invited)