

First Communion Retreat

BY [DEANNA BARTALINI](#)

This time of year often finds those of us who prepare children for First Holy Communion in our final weeks of preparation. In our program, children receive First Holy Communion on the first Sunday in May. We have a morning retreat for them a few weeks before. It's a chance to come together and do some activities together, take an up close tour of the church, practice the songs for Mass and practice how to receive.

Here is an outline with the resources we use:

9:00 am Welcome, distribute name tags

9:05: Opening Prayer

3 stations, each 20 minutes long;

9:20 – 9:40; 9:45 – 10:05; 10:10- 10:30

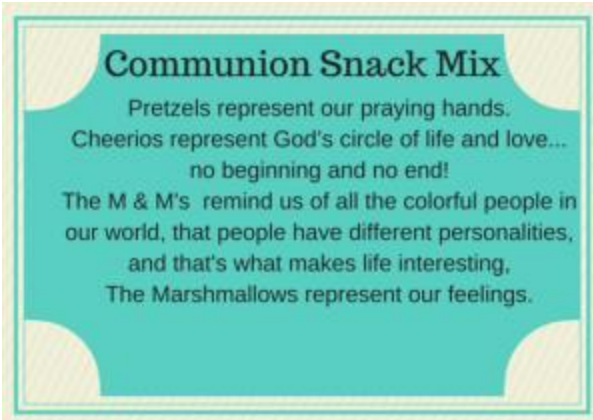
Station #1 **The Weight of a Mass: A Tale of Faith** by Josephine Nobisso; I use the book, but there is also a [Youtube video](#) available. We read the book and then ask questions about it. If you have not read it, do so. It is an amazing story with beautiful illustrations. At a certain point in the story, the children listening will start nodding and gasping as they understand what is happening and the meaning behind all the action.

Station #2 Chalice and Host craft; I found this on [The Catholic Toolbox](#).

Station #3 The Last Supper; I read the Last Supper and then do a short reenactment with unleavened bread and grape juice.

10:35: [The Making of Communion Bread](#); this is an awesome video that not only demonstrates how hosts are made, but explains what the Eucharist means to us. A Passionist nun of Erlanger, Kentucky is our guide for this brief ten minute video.

10:50: Snack and Bathroom break



Mix the following ingredients together in a large bowl, telling what each ingredient represents. We have some for snack and then the rest is bagged up with a tag on it for the children to take home.

11:00: Church Tour; I point out our various statues, holy water font, tabernacle, how to genuflect, Mass responses and postures. We also practice how to receive Holy Communion. Then our music director teaches us the songs we will use at the Mass. We close in prayer in the Church and then go back to the parish hall for parents to pick up the children at noon.

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