

First Communion Prep with Pope Francis

Collin will be celebrating his First Eucharist on Sunday, April 30th, which is less than a week away! To prepare, he's been participating in activities with other members of his Faith Formation class and completing the "Encounter with Christ: Eucharist" workbook at home. Later this week, I will get out some of my memorabilia from May 12, 1991, the day I received my First Holy Communion. The most exciting addition to our preparations has been a copy of "Your First Communion: Meeting Jesus, Your True Joy" written by none other than Pope Francis and published by the wonderful people at Magnificat/Ignatius.

I mean, who better here on Earth to prepare you for your First Eucharist other than our Holy Father? We've been reading little bits of it just before bed. It's the perfect guide for young people who are beginning to show a deeper understanding of their world and who are becoming capable of and interested in exploring the depths of their faith as they are further initiated into the Catholic church. This isn't a "baby book," nor is it a copy of the Catechism. This is a book written to be read by elementary and middle school students, but anyone can enjoy it! Pope Francis' gentle, authoritative voice is comforting and engaging. He asks the readers questions, which Collin and I discuss, like, "Have you thought about the talents God has given you?" (Collin's answer: "I'm really good at watching YouTube videos" led to a conversation about how to fill our time on earth sharing the gifts God has given us...maybe that's what those YouTubers are up to...) Pope Francis makes abstract concepts, like the Holy Trinity, seem simple. At one point, he explains: "Our whole life is meetings with Jesus: in prayer, when we go to Mass, and when we do good works..." Pope Francis always has a way of making faith tangible.

I also like that Pope Francis is, like me, a fan of the exclamation point! There is so much joy to be found in these 40 beautifully illustrated pages. The exclamation points are a great cue to young readers that our faith is something worth celebrating. And in less than one week, we will be celebrating Collin's very important meeting with Jesus. We will leave Pope Francis' book out to share with

our friends and for them to write messages to Collin on the pages designated for that purpose at the end of the book.

If someone you know is celebrating their First Eucharist, "Your First Communion: Meeting Jesus, Your True Joy," can be found at Barnes and Noble and Amazon.com. (You may just want a copy for yourself, anyway!)