

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion 2011

Summer 2010

Dear Parents

Just as you decided to become parents very seriously, and following the birth of your children you brought them to the Church for Baptism, you are now at another stage in the development of your children. You have seen them grow from babe in arms to intelligent, questioning individuals. They are at an age when the Sacrament of the Eucharist is usually offered to them, they are ready to become active members of the Church, fully incorporated in the Body of Christ. You are here because of the promise you made at their Baptism to bring them up in the faith and to help them develop a relationship with Christ.

You are already very aware of your role of parents – principle carers, first teachers. You feed, clothe and care for your children by instinct – it is not something that is alien to you. So too should taking this next important step with your children be something natural. Your role at this stage of your children's spiritual growth should be to help them build a relationship with Christ, by the example you set. If your child sees that you have your own relationship with the Lord, it will become second nature for him/her, rather like the relationship they have with members of your family. They would not be so open to these relationships if they did not sense the security and love you feel for these people.

Sacramental preparation may have seemed like a spectator event in years past. There did not seem to be much involvement from the parish community in preparing children for the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it was something that was outside of the parish and most often a school event. In recent years this idea has changed. These children who are preparing to receive the sacraments are members of our parish community. They are members of the Body of Christ through virtue of their baptism. This next step for them to join in full communion with our parish family is important for all of us, especially parents. You are the first teachers of your children, and by your example they will grow and develop. Similarly you will be able to stimulate their love of and relationship with God if they can see the depth of relationship you have with Him in the first place.

The style of preparation we run is one that involves the whole family not just the children. There will be lessons for the children, but we do also expect participation from you the parents in the 4 Parent sessions, which have been designed for you! These sessions follow the CaFE format and are especially for parents with children preparing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, and are designed to enrich your own relationship with Christ. They are there for you to seek counsel from the clergy and catechists should you wish to, if there is a particular aspect of your faith that might be troubling you. We also have monthly Eucharistic celebrations, which are based on the material the children are following, to which we will encourage full and active participation from each family. This is not meant to sound as though we would expect you to do anything especially; just being present as a family to celebrate the Mass as a family is participation in itself.

It is an incredibly rewarding and humbling experience to introduce your children to the idea of a loving friendship with Jesus, through this preparation. As catechists we are constantly learning about our faith too, through the questions and ideas children have about their faith. The Eucharist is the HEART AND CENTER OF CATHOLIC LIFE. It's the best way to express our faith and share in the saving grace of Christ. The more we understand the meaning of the Eucharist, the more perfectly we'll be able to receive this sacrament.

We are going to need to prepare for this journey by praying together often, for each and every person involved. You are not expected to be burdened by this journey; hopefully you will find that your load is light and the company pleasant, the conversation interesting and the food life changing. The Eucharist is the sign of God's free gift of salvation. When we receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we share more deeply in our redemption and join with all members of the faith community in thanksgiving, sacrifice and remembrance.

So if your child/children are entering Year 3 in September 2010 and will be 8 years old by August 2011, we would like to invite you to complete the attached application to secure a place for the 2011 course.

With every blessing

The First Holy Communion Team

APPLICATION FORM AND UNDERTAKING

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

(Your child must have celebrated his/her 8th Birthday by 31 August 2011 to qualify)

Parents Names: Mother:

Catholic: Yes No

Father:

Catholic: Yes No

Address:

e-mail:

Telephone No:

Mobile:

Child's School:

Please notify us here of any particular medical or educational needs your child may have:

Where was your child baptised?

*If anywhere other than in the Parish of Christ the Prince of Peace, a copy (NOT original) of your child's certificate of baptism **MUST** accompany this application*

Mass: Please confirm that your family regularly attend Mass at Christ the Prince of Peace: Yes No

If you are prepared to make this commitment, please complete below:

I/We accept that the Eucharist, and indeed the whole of our faith will only make sense to my/our child in the context of my/our community.

I/We have read and understood our commitment and I/We am/are prepared to support and become involved in the Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Programme 2010.

Signed:

Mother

Father