



MARY, QUEEN OF THE FAMILY PARISH, BLACKTOWN

Mail: 51-59 Allawah Street, Blacktown 2148

Tel: 9622 1125

Email: admin@mqofblacktown.org.au

Web: www.mqofblacktown.org.au

From Our Clergy Team

In recent years we have become accustomed to a sacramental process of preparation for Confirmation and First Eucharist that is somewhat different to the childhood experience for many of us. The Diocesan policy has been that the preparation and the celebration of sacraments is **parish-based, family-centered and school supported**.

Thus we have seen the more active participation of parents in the preparation of their children, which has also provided an opportunity for the renewal of faith in the lives of parents. At the same time the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are celebrated in the heart of parish life.

The Diocese has made some changes to its policy for the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments. One of the things that has changed is one Sacrament per year. **(if your child is in Year 3 it will be Reconciliation, Year 4 First Eucharist and Year 5 Confirmation), but should there be any special circumstances they will be considered.** However, we know that there are some things that are absolutely core beliefs as we prepare our children for the sacraments – they are encounters with Christ at the heart of his community, the Church.

Why isn't the program school based?

The Sacramental Process is Parish-Based, Family-Centred and School-Supported. This is because the primary role of passing on the faith to children belongs to the parents. The parish supports parents through information sessions for families. The school supports parents though the school curriculum in Catholic schools or in Special Religious Education classes in our State Schools. This is supported by the teaching of the Church.

"...The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute." The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable."

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2221

"Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents." Catechism of the Catholic Church 2226



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Sacramental Process - Frequently Asked Questions

I've been through the program once with another child.

Why do I have to go through it again?

Each child is different. You yourself are in a different space in your life than last time. The workshops are renewed each year to speak to what is relevant in people's lives and the world at that time. This time of preparation with your child is one that is to be treasured. Make the most of this time of faith sharing with your child so that they understand that this Sacramental preparation is something special.

How often do I have to go for meetings during the Sacramental Process?

There are usually 6 sessions for the preparation of each Sacrament. 3 of these are for families and 3 of these are for parents only. The parish takes the responsibility of supporting parents in the Sacramental Process very seriously. For example, we prepare for a team sport or practice to get better at a musical instrument, so too our faith journey is one of a life long learning and growing. To spend these few hours to grow deeper in our faith and in our relationship with God and to share this with our children is a small commitment in the span of our life of faith. In addition, there is the opportunity to receive Reconciliation, before First Holy Eucharist and Confirmation.

Why do you need my child's baptism certificate?

At the time of enrolment you will be asked to give a copy of your child's Baptism certificate. This is especially important if your child was baptised in a different parish to which they are now receiving their sacraments. The parish in which they were baptised will be notified that your child has completed their Sacraments of Initiation.

Some children are also baptised into a different faith tradition so the Baptism certificate will identify this and we can then welcome a young person into the Catholic Church.

The baptism certificate "will establish into which tradition the child was baptised, indicating what sacrament or sacraments they received at this time." (SOI - Pastoral Statement)

Are all the sacraments given in one year?

Preparation is spread over a 3 year period. Eucharist will be in Term 2, Confirmation in Term 3 and Reconciliation in Term 4.



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Sacramental Process - Frequently Asked Questions

I can't attend all the meetings that are on the schedule.

Attending the family and parent meetings and being on time, are all integral parts of the sacramental process. We request a commitment to the whole process. If you miss more than one session, then you will be asked to defer the sacrament until a time when you are able to commit. If you personally cannot attend a meeting due to an emergency or illness, please consider asking a family member, grandparent, godparent or sponsor to support you by attending in your place.

We have other commitments and are unable to make the sessions.

Like training for sport, the preparation for sacraments is important for your Catholic faith journey. At Baptism you made a commitment to bring your child up in the Catholic Faith so obviously that was a priority for you. If you are asking for your child to receive these next sacraments then it obviously remains a priority for you. If you cannot commit at this time you might consider deferring the sacrament until such a time when you are able to commit.

Why are there so many meetings?

Growing in faith and sharing faith is a life-time process of learning. We will never know everything there is to know about our faith. At various times in our life our faith experiences will be different. At Mary Queen of the Family parish we have developed our preparation for each sacrament based on diocesan policy, previous years feedback and parish goals of faith formation.

Why is Mass part of the family sessions?

If you are wanting Sacraments for your child, we would expect that you are already engaged in parish life via the Sunday Mass. So Mass is not something extra but something that we already do as part of our Catholic experience.

Can I register my children even if they have not been baptised yet?

Of course! However the journey for your children will start first with the preparation for the baptism.



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Sacramental Process - Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to register my children if I do not belong to this parish but send my children to the school here?

The process is parish-based, family-centered and school-supported. This is why we encourage you to contact the parish you belong to first. If you are still connected with our parish, even though you are not living within our area – there is a possibility of joining our parish group.

My Child has been baptised in another Christian Church but would like to complete the Sacraments in the Catholic Church. Is this possible?

Of course! Depending on where your child was baptised there may be a Rite of Welcome where your child will be welcomed into the Catholic Church. Remember that Baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit can only be received once. If your child was baptised in a church that does not use this formula for Baptism, then the Sacramental Process for your child will begin with Baptism. However, there is a requirement that an adult Catholic - parent, grandparent or sponsor - would be able to support the child in their Catholic faith.

Who can I ask for more details about registration, enrolment and the process of preparation?



Please call the parish office on 9622 1125

Visit our website www.mqofblacktown.org.au

Email: sacraments@mqofblacktown.org.au

**Visit us at the parish office at St Patrick's Church
51-59 Allawah St, Blacktown.**

Follow us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/blacktowncatholics

We look forward to walking this faith journey with you!