



MARY, QUEEN OF THE FAMILY PARISH, BLACKTOWN

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From Our Parish Priest

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 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 may 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.

Fr Peter Confeggi

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 at a different space in your life than last time. The workshops are developed anew 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 2016?

There are usually a total of approximately 6 sessions per Sacrament in the time of preparation. 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. Like we prepare for a team sport or practice to get better at a musical instrument, our faith journey is one of 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 an information session and the opportunity to receive Reconciliation.

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 which they were baptised will be notified that the 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?

The letter from Fr Peter at the beginning of these questions explains that preparation is spread over a 3 year period. In 2016, Eucharist will be in Term 2, Confirmation in Term 3 and Reconciliation in Term 4.

Can I register my children even they have not been baptized 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

If I have been through the process before do I have to attend the information session?

Yes. The information session also includes the recommitment ceremony during the Mass where your child and your family commit to the sacramental process. If you cannot be there to commit to the process, then you might consider deferring the sacrament until a time when you are able to commit.

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

Attending the information sessions, family and parent meetings are all integral parts of the sacramental process. If you cannot attend all the meetings then you might consider deferring the sacrament until a time when you are able to commit. If you personally cannot attend the meetings consider asking another family member, grandparents, godparents or sponsors to support you in the preparation.

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 this amount of meetings?

Growing in faith and sharing faith is a life-time of learning. We will never know everything there is to know about our faith and at different 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 previous years feedback, diocesan recommendations and what we believe is key information for faith sharing and growing.

Why is Mass part of the family sessions?

If you are engaging in the sacramental process 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.



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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.

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 being with you on this journey.