

# First Communion and First Confession

This page will help you to understand how we try to help you and your family to prepare for your child's First Holy Communion and First Confession in St Michael's Parish.

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The celebration of First Holy Communion and First Confession is the second formal step that your child takes to becoming a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church. These two sacraments enable your child to deepen their faith and to meet Christ in the gift of forgiveness and in Holy Communion. These sacraments are not token steps of growing up, but serious steps of commitment to following the way of Jesus Christ and living the Gospel in daily life.

Jesus speaks many times about forgiveness and we all know that it is a difficult thing to learn. It is of course a joy when we are forgiven by people we love and by God, this we celebrate at Confession many times during our life. Jesus also calls on us to forgive others ourselves and we need his help to do this.

At the Last Supper Jesus took Bread and Wine and in these simple signs gave himself for us that we may receive his Body and Blood, that we may receive the Risen Christ to give us strength in our life and food for the journey. When we receive Holy Communion throughout our lives we are in Communion with Christ and with his Body, the Church; it is a sure sign that we wish to belong to the Body of Christ.

[When are young people normally prepared for First Communion?](#)

Children usually begin their preparation to receive the Sacraments for the first time when they are in Year 3 at school, although some families do wait until a little later, which is also acceptable. Our programme begins with a meeting for Parents so that there is a chance to outline the programme, give the full list of dates and times and get any details that may be necessary. We use a book called "I Belong", there is a children's book for your child and there is also a Parent's Guide to help you to help your child. Both books will be available, both books cost £8.00 each.

Our next parish programme begins with the meeting for parents on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at 19.30 in the Good Shepherd Room. This meeting is for parents and it is better if you can leave the children at home if possible.

If possible please bring your child's baptism certificate with you, unless they were baptised here in St Michael's. Fr Philip will need to see this certificate sometime during the programme, so if it is not in this country, please make arrangements to get it sent to you.

## What is your role in your child's preparation?

Your role as parents is primary in instructing your child in their faith. When your child was baptised you promised "bring your child up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us"; at the blessing the priest prayed of you that you would be the first teachers of your child in the way of faith and that you would be the best of teachers. This is your responsibility first and foremost. The Church and the parish are to help you, but not take over.

This may also be time for you to think about your own commitment to the Church and living the Christian life. If you have been away from Church for a while, this could be a new beginning, please be open to that and generous with your time for God. Starting your child on the journey of faith through First Communion and First Confession is very important, but if you stop that journey immediately after receiving the Sacraments, this is very destructive of their faith and will not bring them to any long term relationship with Jesus Christ. So please think about your own commitment as well.

We need you to make a real commitment to the Church during this time of preparation, to the classes and to attending Mass each Sunday, to praying with your child and spending some time each week with them to work on the book. We do not have time during a half hour lesson to do all the work in the book, you have to back that up, read through the chapter again with your child, set them time to do the work in the book. We also need your help in teaching your children right and wrong and how to say sorry as they begin to get near the time for First Confession.

Taking time to pray with your child is vital to this whole programme, please start as soon as possible, don't be shy, there is only you, your child and Jesus in the room. Once you make the time, your child will warm to it and soon be teaching you to pray with them. It does not need to be difficult, keep it simple, but do it often. When you put your child to bed is the best time, pray for your family, for what was good today say thank you, for what was not good, say sorry; maybe read one of the stories from the present chapter of I Belong.

The classes are on Sunday mornings at 10.15 at the Church for about half an hour, this time slot is between our two morning Masses to make it easy for you to attend one or other of the Masses. Dates for First Confession and First Communion and all the classes will be given at the first meeting. There will also be a few Sunday morning meetings for parents to offer you some support and encouragement.

We hope your whole family will enjoy your child's preparation and celebration of these wonderful Sacraments and that it will help to deepen your own faith.