



Caloundra OLR Catholic Parish Family Sacramental Preparation

The purpose of the Sacraments is to make people holy, to build up the Body of Christ, and to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it; that is why they are called 'SACRAMENTS OF FAITH' (Vatican II, SC 59).

Welcome to the 'Family Sacramental Preparation' section on the parish website. The pastoral tone of all our parish sacramental preparation is one of welcome. For inquiries please phone Caloundra Our Lady of the Rosary (OLR) Catholic Parish on (07) 5491 2011 or email calndra@bne.catholic.net.au

Parish-based, family-centred, school-supported

Sacramental preparation is a collaborative process: parish-based, family-centred and school-supported.

- ❖ *The PARISH is responsible for establishing (preparing, offering, and facilitating a process for) sacramental preparation and for the celebration of the Sacraments.*¹

Members of the SPT have extensive ministry, administrative and/or teaching experience. Several have completed tertiary studies in Theology, Ministry, Religion, and/or Education. The team establishes and resources the parish sacramental preparation process and attends to the pastoral care of the families. The family sacramental preparation (FSP) which is offered is "sensitive to the busyness of family life and the reality of blended families, single parents, children in shared custody arrangements, and so on"².

"Like the catechumenate for adults, the process of sacramental preparation (for children) is marked by prayer and ritual, catechesis and learning, by conversion of life and a developing sense of mission."³

- ❖ *The FAMILY is where the faith is learned and lived. Parents, the first educators of their children, share with them the Catholic faith and the experience of belonging to the Church. Parents are best placed to discern readiness for the Sacraments and make the formal request of the parish for their child's admission to sacramental preparation.*⁴

Families are provided with sacrament-specific "My Sacramental Journey" books produced by Evangelisation Brisbane (EB), a Children's Mass Book, and a Mass journey booklet for their child/children. EB has also prepared a set of on-line resources for families and teams.

The FSP journey involves:

- participation in celebrations of prayer, rituals, Mass and the Sacraments
- information and formation evenings for the parents
- preparation and practice evenings for the families

¹ Cf. Brisbane Catholic Archdiocese, *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane: Christian Initiation for Children*, 3rd Edition (Brisbane, Queensland: Liturgy Brisbane, 2015), 8.

² *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 15.

³ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 8.

⁴ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 8.

- activities that each family is encouraged to be involved in at home
- and a retreat experience for the children

In the Caloundra Parish, coastal and country communities gather in a number of churches and Mass centres. SP families are encouraged to celebrate Mass regularly.

There is flexibility in our FSP for those children who have particular intellectual, emotional or physical needs. Parish SPT members are happy to discuss and explain possible options and adaptations. “The Archdiocese has a separate policy for including those children with an intellectual disability in the celebration of the Sacraments.”⁵

Discernment Meetings

Parents of children who are preparing for the sacraments are invited to make an appointment to attend a discernment meeting with a PST member to enable the team to:

1. Thank and encourage parents as primary mentors and educators of faith for their child/children
2. Discern whether the child/children is/are engaging positively and actively in the journey and is/are ready for celebrating the Sacraments
3. Gain feedback about what is working and/or not working in their family preparation
4. Be open to suggestions which may benefit FSP in the future
5. Discuss how the family Mass journey and home activities are progressing
6. Provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions they may not be confident to ask in a large group context

“The faith and practice of some families (may) need further development, occasionally requiring a delay in the celebration of the Sacraments; a decision to delay will always be accompanied by an offer to assist the family towards a fuller faith and practice.”⁶

- ❖ *The Catholic School provides both education about the sacraments through the classroom teaching of (Christian) religion and also experience of the faith through its own religious (liturgical and sacramental) life. These occur at each year level, before, during and after the periods of sacramental preparation.*⁷

OLR Catholic Primary School and Unity P-12 Ecumenical College are Archdiocesan Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) schools situated within the Caloundra Parish. Collaboration between the parish and these two schools ensures “the sacramental material in the RE curriculum complements sacramental preparation in the parish”⁸.

Sacraments

“The Sacraments are before all else the action of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead and alive in his Body the Church. They are celebrated communally with the active participation of the parish under the oversight of the Bishop whose responsibility it is to

⁵ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 16.

⁶ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 17.

*control, promote and protect the entire liturgical life of the Church entrusted to [him] (Vatican II, CD 15)...Christian Initiation incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people."*⁹

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are known as the Sacraments of Initiation. Therefore, our parish celebrates initiation into the community of the Christian faithful in three sacramental moments: Baptism, Confirmation, and the first reception of Eucharist. "Celebrations of the Sacraments are not isolated events. They take their place within a process of growth in faith from birth to adolescence."¹⁰

In the Brisbane Archdiocese, family preparation for the sacraments is extended over a number of years, provides opportunities for "prayer and reflection, activities and discussion"¹¹, and is preceded by formation, support, and resourcing of parents.

Additional preparation and catechetical resources can be provided for families whose children are not at OLR Primary School or Unity College. Examples include:

Kathy Horan. *Becoming Catholic: A parent's guide to Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist & Reconciliation*. Mulgrave, Victoria: Garratt Publishing, 2014.

Kathy Horan. *Becoming Catholic - Confirmation: A practical guide for families*. Mulgrave, Victoria: Garrett Publishing, 2014.

Kathy Horan. *Becoming Catholic - Eucharist: A practical guide for families*. Mulgrave, Victoria: Garrett Publishing, 2014.

Family sacramental preparation for each of the Sacraments "may, for example, take place over a four-week period within the family (and) in parish groups though the time could be longer"¹².

Baptism for children under eight (8) years of age

"In Baptism, God adopts us as children and makes us a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit."¹³



The most significant people in nourishing a child's faith are her/his parents. Parents are the first educators of their child/children in the faith. Much of this faith formation takes place in the home - the 'domestic church' - and in the wider family and Catholic faith community.

"Infants are baptised at the request of their parents...in their home parish. A least one parent (and one godparent) should be Catholic".¹⁴

The Caloundra Parish invites parents of children of up to eight (8) years of age to prepare for and celebrate the Baptism of their child/children in a five step journey:

1. Initial Inquiry
2. Baptism Preparation Evening

⁹ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, Introduction.

¹⁰ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 7.

¹¹ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 14.

¹² *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 14.

¹³ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, Introduction.

¹⁴ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 1.

3. Meeting with the priest, deacon, or pastoral associate
4. Welcome Mass
5. Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism

“In the sacramental preparation for the Baptism of infants, the parish focuses on the gift of God’s grace and the Church’s welcome of the child into the life of the Spirit. It responds to the parents’ request for Baptism and offers them support in raising their child within the family of the Church.”¹⁵

Sacraments of Initiation for non-baptised children of eight (8) years or older

“Once children have turned eight (Year Three), they are no longer candidates for infant Baptism. If they have not been baptised, they are enrolled in a modified catechumenate leading to the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion at Easter. (See *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Christian Initiation of Children who have reached Catechetical Age.)

However, because of the importance of the peer group in the catechumenate (journey) for children, the celebration of their Christian initiation may also be aligned with the parish celebration of Confirmation and first Holy Communion.”¹⁶

Sacramental Preparation for baptised children of eight years or older

The progressive introduction of children to the sacraments is not simply a matter of age.

“Discernment of a child’s readiness for the Sacraments by parents and pastor is more important than the child’s age or year level and might mean that the Sacraments are celebrated earlier or later than the norm.”¹⁷

Confirmation

“As we are signed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, God brings us to the full stature of the Lord Jesus to continue his mission in the world.”¹⁸

In the Archdiocese of Brisbane in accordance with Catholic theological and liturgical tradition, Confirmation is celebrated prior to the first reception of Eucharist. “In the year when children turn eight (Year Three), they are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation administered by the bishop or his delegate.”¹⁹



In mid-November, families are invited to enrol in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation to be celebrated in the Easter season of the following year if possible. This depends on the

¹⁵ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 10.

¹⁶ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 4.

¹⁷ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 7.

¹⁸ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, Introduction.

¹⁹ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 2.

availability of the Bishop or his delegate. The Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated in the Caloundra OLR Catholic Church.

Preparation for Confirmation formally begins with a Rite of Enrolment. After the rite, further preparation “involves prayer, discussion and activity in the home, supported by parish events and rituals”²⁰.

Eucharist

“In the year when the children turn nine (Year Four), they are welcomed to the Lord’s Table and receive Holy Communion for the first time. This is the climax of their Christian initiation.”



The celebration of First Holy Communion takes place during a Parish Sunday Mass. Children of families in the country areas may celebrate at a Sunday Mass in their country community.

“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’” (CCC 1324 cf. Vatican II, *LG* 11). The word “Eucharist” comes from the Greek *eucharistia*, meaning thanksgiving, or praise for the wonderful works of God.

The celebration of Eucharist is commonly known as Mass. As Catholics, we gather for Mass to give thanks and praise to God. We celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection and Christ’s continued presence among us.

“At the table of the Eucharist, we are fed on the Sacrament of Christ’s body and blood, and, with the whole Church, take part in the saving offering of Christ on the cross. In the Sunday Mass, those who have been initiated are continually formed by the word of God and affirmed in their belonging to the Church, the Body of Christ.”²¹

If possible, preparation for First Communion is scheduled in the Easter liturgical season (between Easter Sunday and Pentecost Sunday).

“Preparation formally begins with a rite of enrolment and involves prayer, discussion, and activity in the home, supported by parish events and rituals (including the second rite of the Sacrament of Penance).”²²

Penance

²⁰ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 11.

²¹ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, Introduction.

²² *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 12.

The Sacrament of Penance is not a sacrament of initiation. The Catholic Church celebrates two sacraments of healing, the *Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick* and the *Sacrament of Penance*. The purpose of the sacraments of healing is to enable the Church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to continue Jesus Christ's work of healing and salvation ... among the faithful.²³

Along with the other six sacraments, the Sacrament of Penance underwent significant changes after the Second Vatican Council. Prior to this, popular understanding had focused on the confessing of sins. The term *confession* was the well-known name used for the Sacrament of Penance. After Vatican II, in the renewal of the Sacrament of Penance, the truth of God's love and forgiveness for the times when we make poor choices and need forgiveness and reconciliation was affirmed.



Reconciliation is a term that captures the community nature of the Sacrament of Penance - the reconciling of the individual with the people of God, the Church. The Rites of Reconciliation provide us with the opportunity to undergo *conversion* of heart, mind and spirit, and to seek *forgiveness* which brings about pardon and peace. This enables the healing of our broken relationships, and brings about the restoration of love and peace with ourselves, God, others in God's family, and the whole of creation.

The Sacrament of Penance incorporates the three Rites of Reconciliation:²⁴

The first rite is celebrated alone with a priest with *Reception of the Penitent*, including greeting; *Reading of the Word of God*; *Confession of Sins* (personal); *Prayer of the Penitent and Absolution*; and *Proclamation of Praise of God and Dismissal*. It is celebrated with a person who is conscious of serious sin.

The second rite is celebrated communally with *Introductory Rites*, including song, greeting, prayer; *Celebration of the Word of God*, including readings from the scriptures, an examination of conscience; *Rite of Reconciliation*, including general confession of sins, a litany or song, Lord's Prayer, individual confession and absolution, proclamation of praise for God's mercy, prayer; *Concluding Rite*. It is celebrated with families preparing for the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist and with parish communities during Lent and Advent. This rite shows more clearly the community nature of penance.

The third rite is celebrated communally with *Introductory Rites*, *Celebration of the Word of God* (including Instruction), *General Confession*, *General Absolution*, and *Proclamation of Praise and Conclusion*. It is celebrated with a large number of people when a serious need is present, for example, in a time of war, or if not enough priests are available to hear individual confessions.

"Introducing children to the greatness of God's mercy in the Sacrament of Penance is a two-step process. A simple celebration of the second rite of the Sacrament of Penance is included as part of the preparation for First Communion"²⁵

"After First Communion, the parish will offer a fuller preparation for the Sacrament of Penance to bring the children to a better understanding of God's (love and) mercy. So that they may confess their sins and receive forgiveness in the first rite of reconciliation."²⁶

²³ See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 1421.

²⁴ *The Rites of the Catholic Church*. Volume One. Study Edition (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 519-520.

²⁵ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 5.

²⁶ *Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane*, 13.

In the year the children turn ten (Year 5), they are prepared to celebrate more fully the Sacrament of Penance with individual confession and absolution (the first rite). This builds on the (preparation) of the previous year as they take the second step and learn in greater detail what it means to examine their conscience.
