

Building a Bridge of Faith from Baptism to First Holy Communion & Confirmation



Your child has been set on the first step of the journey of faith on God who loves us!

The Sacrament of Baptism is the first Sacrament of initiation in faith as a member of Catholic Church. The next rites of initiation occur in the sacraments of the Eucharist (First Holy Communion) and Confirmation. There must be a union and a clear link between the three stages of initiation into faith with Baptism as the root and source.



It is your responsibility to immerse your child in relationship with God.

The word baptism means to be immersed. When baptism of infants takes place parents declare their owned responsibility to immerse their child in all aspects of faith within the family and parish community involvement. Initiation occurs in stages so that both the family and children may have the opportunity to grow to own their decision to make their own commitment to faith in Confirmation. This commitment must be made freely.



What gifts are offered in faith to your child from the day of Baptism?

1. Knowledge that:

- Each one is created uniquely by God with a unique bundle of gifts and an amazingly unique purpose in life
- God loves each one totally and unconditionally
- God lives in your child in the love within them

- God is shared with others through the love that we show
- God invites us to follow the path of Jesus (Jesus is God made human)
- God is shown to us through one another, the beauty of the world, Scripture (the Bible) & the Sacraments.
- God is with us and in us every moment of every day
- We have been given the power to communicate with God through prayer and the sacraments.
- They are part of a living parish community where they really matter and where their gifts and talents will always be welcome.
- We share in Jesus' life, death and resurrection – no matter how difficult an experience is, we believe that something good can grow from every good or difficult experience. We must walk with the light of God's hope before us. Reflection on how we live daily experience helps to build a resilience that is necessary on the journey of life.



2. Support of the local Parish community

At Baptism your child becomes a member of the parish community. A commitment is made by both parents and parish that there will be engagement between both parties from then onwards.

This support may be accessed through:

- Participation in the Sunday Eucharist (Mass)
- Growing to know other parishioners through attendance at Mass
- Participation in community celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance)
- Involving families/children in Sunday celebration of the Eucharist through singing, reading, altar serving, ...with the parish always open to any ideas that parents may consider valuable for family parish participation.
- Participating in Religious Education in the parish school(s)
- Courses, inputs, gatherings, etc as requested by parents and families.

Journeying with your child towards First Holy Communion

The family is the most important place in which each one grows to know God and to live in faith. Parents are the primary and most important educators of children as they grow in relationship with God together on the journey of initiation. **The preparation for First Holy Communion begins from the day of Baptism in the home and in the parish. This will be continued by the input from the parish school from the first day of Junior Infants.** It is about growing in relationship with God and one another. Growing in relationship is dependent of God relating to us and on us relating to God. The choice to enter into this relationship is invitational.



How parents may assist in child's growth in relationship with God?

- ❖ By loving one another
- ❖ Daily prayer with God
- ❖ Encouraging children to notice the beauty of God's created world
- ❖ Give gratitude to God and to one another for all that is received in daily life
- ❖ Accepting each one as lovable, loving, precious and unique
- ❖ Enabling children to acknowledge wrongs, to say sorry and to forgive
- ❖ Accepting failure as part of the human condition, using it as a stepping stone to growth
- ❖ Joining the parish community at Sunday Mass and other gatherings
- ❖ Becoming involved in the parish community
- ❖ Contribution of one's own gifts and ideas to the parish community
- ❖ Chatting about the lessons in the *Grow in Love* religious education programme in school
- ❖ Instilling a belief that God has provided us with all the gifts that are needed to deal with the experiences and challenges of life



Praying with your child/as family

There are as many ways of praying as there are people on the earth!

Experience of different ways of praying are necessary in order for us to find ways of relating with God that enable us to feel connected.

Some of the following suggestions may be helpful for your family:

- Saying common prayers together: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be..., Morning and Evening Prayer...
- Speaking prayers from the heart – perhaps giving thanks to God for each members of the family, thanking God for the gifts of the day, asking God for help, telling God what we will do tomorrow to make it a better day...
- Meditation/quiet reflection – closing eyes for a few minutes just to be in God's company
- Blessing your young baby by making the sign of the cross on their forehead
- Reading Bible stories as part of story time
- Saying a decade of the rosary together each night
- Singing hymns together
- Participating in Mass as a family
- Discussing pictures of Bible stories and colouring them in
- Writing a poem to God
- Lighting a candle on the table for Sunday dinner as a sign that we have shared the good news of God's love for us during the week
- Lighting a candle for a particular intention

The contents of this leaflet provides some information and ideas to assist on the journey through the stages of initiation in faith. The parish will remain faithful in support of families from the time at which children are presented for Baptism. If parents have other ideas to assist with mutual engagement of home and parish, you are welcome to make them known at any time.