

# St Anthony's Catholic Primary School



Sacramental Programme  
Information Booklet for Parents

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Dear Parent or Carer,

The year of the First Holy Communion of your child is a very significant year for them as they grow in their spiritual and Christian lives. At St. Anthony's we want them to be as prepared as well as they possibly can be for this special day.

It is also a special time for the whole family. I hope this booklet will be helpful to you as you seek to support your child.

Preparation for Holy Communion really starts with Baptism, so if you would like your child to make their First Holy Communion and they are **not** baptized (or *christened*: it's two words for the same thing) we should organise this now at the start of this academic year!

When you approached the church for baptism, you promised to bring your child up in the practice of the Catholic faith. In this year in particular this means making an effort to give them an experience of Sunday Mass. At the 10am Mass in term time every Sunday morning there is always something for the children (either they go out for their own reflection on the Gospel story with some activity or they stay in for a Mass pitched at the children). This booklet contains dates for the Enrolment Mass at the start of the programme and other key dates including their first celebration of the Sacrament of Forgiveness (also known as Confession).

Please make sure that at least one person attends the Parents' Meetings. Please also talk to your child about all they are learning and pray with your child.

The children are often very enthusiastic about their First Holy Communion. My experience is that the children can help us to think again about our own faith, so this isn't just a time of blessing for them but for the whole family.

Finally, if you or a partner is not Catholic and you would like to know more about the Catholic faith maybe with a view to becoming a Catholic, we can arrange an opportunity for you yourselves to learn more. You would be very welcome. It may be that you can receive Holy Communion at the same time as your child.

Keeping you & your family in my prayers at this time,

Fr.Nick

## Mass Times

Mass at St Anthony's

5pm, Saturday Evening

10am, Sunday Morning

### **Children's Liturgy**

On a Sunday during term time the children are invited to Children's Liturgy. This happens during Mass. The children are taken out of Mass, during this time they will hear the days Gospel in a child friendly way. This helps them to understand and explore the Word of God. The children pray together and often create crafts before joining the congregation and leading the offertory procession.

The children meet at the back of Church and process into the guild room.



## Introduction

Parents of baptised children entering Year 3 are invited by the School and Parish Family to present children to prepare for, and celebrate, the two Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. These Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist continue the process of Initiation, which began with at Baptism. They are called “Sacraments of Initiation” and they are the ways God has given us to become full members of his Catholic Family. The children will receive Confirmation when they are older.

On the day of a child’s Baptism, the Priest asked the parents: “You have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/ her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?” The answer “Yes, I do” to this question was the promise made by parents before God and his Church that they accepted this wider role as parents. As well as being the first teachers of children in many of the ordinary ways of human living, parents also accept that they are the first teachers of children in the ways of faith.

The programme starts by a formal enrollment during the Enrollment Mass on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October. Then, over the course of seven months, children are prepared to make their First Forgiveness, during Advent and to receive Jesus in Holy Communion for the first time in May. The Programme relies on a mature and collaborative partnership between Home, School and Parish to provide the best environment for children to grow in their understanding of the faith and how to live it. Each part of the programme is important, as it forms a part of the child's experience of God, which will remain with them for the rest of their lives. We hope this will be a very positive experience, and we trust that parents will support them at every step of the journey.

## What will my child learn in school?

In school the children are taught from a programme called 'The Way, the Truth and the Life.' This programme is stipulated by the Shrewsbury Diocese. The Way the Truth and the Life curriculum blend perfectly with the preparation for First Forgiveness and First Holy Communion.

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Christian Family	Mary Our Mother	Called to Change	Call of the Eucharist	Easter and Pentecost	Being a Christian

### Christian Family

During this this topic the children will develop their knowledge and understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism. Through the topic children explore what it means to belong to a family and the Christian family.

The children learn that a Sacrament is a special meeting with Jesus. In the Sacrament of Baptism, we enter into the life of Jesus and receive His spirit. We become members of the Church and Jesus helps us to live a good life. The children also learn about the promises made to them by their parents and Godparents during the Sacrament of Baptism.

### Mary Our Mother

This topic is designed to help the children reflect on the role of Mary. The children will develop their understanding of Advent as a time of preparation for the birth of Jesus and are encouraged to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

## **Called to Change**

This topic is designed to help the children to understand what it means to make a wrong choice and reflect on how wrong choices affect us and other people. Scripture is used to teach that Jesus calls us to turn away from sin and how special God's love for us is. We also learn what happens during the Sacrament of Reconciliation and reflect upon what the Sacrament does for us.

## **Call of the Eucharist**

We begin this topic learning what happened during the Last Supper. We then reflect upon how the Mass makes this real for us. We will learn about the order of the Mass, what happens during the Mass and why this is significant. Our children will learn that we receive Jesus in Holy Communion and reflect on this very special gift.

## **Celebrating Easter and Pentecost**

During this topic we will explore how the Church celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus and think about how we can celebrate Jesus' resurrection. We will listen to and discuss stories of Jesus after the resurrection including Jesus on the road to Emmaus and the story of Doubting Thomas.

## **Being a Christian**

This our final topic which is taught after the children have made their First Holy Communion. In this topic the children begin to understand what being a Christian involves and think about how they can be a better Christian.

## **First Forgiveness**

### **What happens when I go to confession?**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is much more than confessing sins. It is more about receiving God's great love and mercy. In confession, the priest is there to help us. He represents God and through him we receive God's forgiveness.

### **Before Confession**

1. I think about what I have done to hurt other people. Have I been unkind or selfish?
2. I pray for the grace to be truly sorry for my sins.
3. I tell God that I want to change and turn back to Him.

### **At Confession**

1. I tell the priest how long it has been since my last confession.
2. I tell him the things I have done wrong on purpose.
3. The priest will give me a penance.
4. I tell God I am really sorry by saying an 'Act of Contrition.'
5. God forgives me through the words of the priest.
6. I say 'thank you' to the priest.

### **After confession**

1. I say my penance and think about what the priest has asked me to do.  
I thank God for His forgiveness and love.

### **Act of Contrition**

O my God, because you are so good,  
I am very sorry that I have sinned against you,  
And with the help of your grace,  
I will try not to sin again.



## First Holy Communion

Before the special day arrives the children will be very familiar with the order of the Mass and the Mass responses. They would have spent time learning special hymns, prayers and responses in preparation for their First Holy Communion.

### Preparing to receive Jesus

Now, it is time to receive Jesus. When we see the priest hold up the host and listen carefully to him say, 'Behold the Lamb of God', we know that Jesus is now coming to us in Holy Communion. We can prepare to receive him by remembering how much he loves us and can tell him that we love him too.



### Receiving Holy Communion

When we receive Holy Communion, we know by faith, that it is Jesus we receive. We say, 'Amen' which is the same as saying, 'Yes, I do believe.' We welcome Jesus and thank him for coming to us and we talk to him as our very, very best friend.

Knowing that Jesus is present within us, we want to be close to him and receive his love. After communion is a special time for talking to Jesus in our heart. We can thank him for all the blessing he has given us. Jesus wants to help us and to know about anything that might be worrying us.

## Role of the School

As a school it is our responsibility to work alongside Parents and Parish to fully support the Sacramental Programme.

One afternoon a week is dedicated to the teaching of the Sacramental Programme. Class teachers follow 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' curriculum, set out by the Diocese. Alongside this the teachers and catechists follow a programme called 'God's Greatest Gift' which prepares the children and enables them to understand the gifts they are about to receive.

## Sacramental Programme Team

Fr Nick Kern	Parish Priest
Fr Michael Coughlan	Assistant Parish Priest
Fr Thaddeus Opara	Assistant Parish Priest
St Anthony's Religious Education Coordinator The Year 3 teachers.	

## Role of the Parish

**The Parish supports your family. Regrettably, however, if meetings are missed or key celebrations missed, then we will have to ask parents to defer for a year, as children would simply not be ready for the Sacraments. This is only fair to parents and children who support the whole Programme.**

**As a Church Family, we would be failing in our responsibilities if we merely force these great gifts of God upon children if they are not prepared, leaving them to go through life not knowing what it had all been about. Please make sure that you have all the dates in your diary and make it a priority to attend all the Meetings and Masses as planned.**

## **Prayers**

### **The Sign of the Cross**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

### **Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.  
Blessed are those among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

### **Glory Be to the Father**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.

## Dress Code.

Girls wear a white dress and their shoulders must be covered. Children should be modestly dressed and therefore **strictly** no make-up, no jewellery (except studded earrings), no nail varnish or high heels may be worn. Children cannot carry accessories including bags, rosary beads, parasols or gloves during the Mass.

Examples of appropriate dress code for girls:



Boys must wear grey school shorts or grey long trousers, a long sleeved white shirt, a red tie and red sash. They must also wear smart, sensible black shoes and plain grey socks. The sash and tie will be provided by the school on loan or you can purchase them from the office for £15. Sashes and ties that haven't been purchased must be returned on the following Monday.

All children will be given a medal to wear on the day which they can keep as a memento.

Any children who do not comply with this dress code will be unable to make their First Holy Communion that day.

## **Arrangements**

### **Guests**

To ensure close family and friends are able to sit together, we allocate each child a family bench. To help with the organisation of this we ask that you tell us how many guests (close family and friends only) you are expecting to attend the Mass.

There will be a member of staff from school on your bench to help guide you through the Mass. Letters will be sent in April to ensure a seating plan can be drawn up.

### **Timings**

Children need to arrive at 9:15am promptly. Guests should be seated by 9:50am. Members of staff will greet and direct children to their places. Mass will begin at 10am.

### **Photography**

We ask that you do not take any photographs or film during the Mass. Children will have their photograph taken on the Sanctuary before the Mass begins.

The school photographer will take photographs during the Mass, parents will receive these pictures on a disc to share with family and friends.

After the Mass an area will be beautifully dressed in school so that families can take photographs together.

## Parents Prayer

Loving God,  
You are the giver of all we possess,  
the source of all of our blessings.  
We thank and praise you.

Thank you for the gift of our children.

Help us to set boundaries for them,  
and yet encourage them to explore.  
Give us the strength and courage to treat  
each day as a fresh start.

May our children come to know you, the one true God,  
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

May your Holy Spirit help them to grow  
in faith, hope, and love,  
so they may know peace, truth, and goodness.

May their ears hear your voice.  
May their eyes see your presence in all things.  
May their lips proclaim your word.  
May their hearts be your dwelling place.  
May their hands do works of charity.  
May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ,  
your Son and our Lord.

Amen.