# **St Francis of Assisi, Ascot - Information for 2018 First Holy Communion Programme**

# Members of Parish Form & Certificate of Baptism

If your child was not baptised in St Francis Church we need to see a copy of the Certificate of Baptism. This can be obtained by contacting the church where your child was baptised. Please show this certificate to one of the catechists.

This programme is for members of our parish and so we would ask that all families complete the ‘Welcome to the Parish’ form which can be found either on the website or in the narthex.

# Contributions

We ask each family for a voluntary contribution of £35 to cover the costs involved in running the programme. This money covers the cost of the books, certificates and gifts given to the children during the programme.

We will collect your contribution, in cash or as a cheque made payable to St Francis Church Ascot, before the start of the programme in January. If you have any difficulty with this please speak to Father Kevin or Clare Sherlock.

Catechists and Helpers – i.e. adults working with your children

We are very lucky to have a super team of catechists and helpers to work with the children - a mixture of experienced and new members. All are volunteers from the parish who give their time freely to lead the children through this Sacramental Programme. We are always looking for new volunteers to work as catechists or helpers so feel free to put your name forward.

All adults working with the children fulfil the requirements of the Parish’s Safeguarding Policy.

Catechist led Classes

The Classes are on Sunday mornings before Mass. Please ensure that your child is in the church in time to start lessons at 8.45 a.m. – but no earlier than 8.30. Please sign your child in and say who is collecting her/him if it is not you.

The children will work in groups in the St Clare and St Francis rooms and parts of the church.

Parents/Carers must be ready to collect their children from the narthex promptly at 9.45 a.m. in time for 10 o’clock Mass. Children are expected to remain with the catechists and say ‘goodbye’ to them when they see their parents/carers. If you make changes to the pick-up please notify Clare on 07807 334013.

These safeguards are in line with our Diocesan Safeguarding Policies.

There is access to drinking water and children may bring their own named bottle of drink if you feel they need it. There will be biscuits and refreshments at the end of Mass.

We have an expectation that the children will attend all these classes.

Celebrations during the programme

There are two ‘Celebrations’ which take place during Mass on January 7th & April 22nd. Please note that there are no lessons for the children on these days.

On the days that the children have a class with the catechists we would like them to stay with the congregation while the other children go out for Children’s Liturgy. These are opportunities for them to hear Mass in its entirety.

Please draw your child’s attention to the different parts of the Mass encouraging him/her to join in the responses and to recognise the different rituals that are taking place.

Every child will be given a user friendly Mass book in January.

Working in the ‘Gold Books ‘ at Home and in Church

The programme we will be following is ‘We celebrate the Eucharist’, often referred to as the ‘Gold Book’.

Each child will be given a Gold Book to work in and we hope that it will become a treasured possession to be kept as a reminder of this special time in his/her life. Some of you will have used this book when you made your First Holy Communion!! As Catechists we still find it clear and straight forward for children and adults which is why we still choose to use it.

There are 9 Chapters in the book which follows the sequence of the Mass. 5 of the chapters will be introduced by the Catechists and should be completed at home with your guidance. The other 4 chapters are to be introduced by you and completed at home. (See timetable)

You may like to work together as a small group with other families to complete the different chapters. Don’t worry – no one needs a degree in Theology to guide the children through this programme!! We are all on a learning journey.

The children may stick photos or pictures in their Gold Book where relevant. Drawings can be done straight onto the pages. Writing may be done in pen or pencil.

It is important that your child knows these prayers by heart:

Our Father, Hail Mary, the Glory Be to the Father and an Act of Contrition.

He/she should be familiar with the words of the I Confess, the Gloria and the Creed and the Mass responses.

We would like every child to ask a relative, Godparent or family friend to pray especially for him/her while he/she prepares for First Holy Communion.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – First Confession

During the lessons on Sunday 4th and 25thFebruary we will introduce the children to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and talk to them about going to Confession.

Father Kevin will hear the children’s individual confessions on either Saturday 3th or Saturday 10th March from 10.45 a.m. Children will be allocated a time slot to minimise waiting.

# First Communion Masses

The children will make their First Holy Communion (FHC) either on Saturday 12th May 2018 or Saturday 19th May 2018 at 11.30 a.m. More details will follow when we know the number of children taking part in the FHC programme.

Celebrating with the Parish

All the candidates are invited to celebrate their First Holy Communion with the Parish Community at the 10 a.m. Mass on Sunday 3rd June.

# Further Information

Communication between catechists and parents will mostly be by email, the weekly Sunday newsletters or on the Parish website.

This programme can only begin to make sense to the children if they attend Mass regularly and understand that doing so is important to you.

# If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask Father Kevin or any member of the FHC Team.

Clare Sherlock – 01344 628598 or 07807 334013 or Clare’s email – fhc@canopus.co.uk