



St Francis of Assisi, Ascot Information for 2022 First Holy Communion Programme

Welcome to our First Holy Communion Programme 2022! This is very much a collaborative programme between the Parish and you as parents, and we are here to support you.

Covid-19 Restrictions

The last two years have been fairly disrupted, and although we are hopeful that there will be no need for any restrictions by the time we start the course in January, please bear with us if we have to make any adjustments. Class times mentioned below may be subject to change, in line with Mass times, so for clarity we will confirm this nearer the time. The number of children joining the course may also be significantly higher and we are likely to need your support more than ever to ensure the sessions can run safely. If you have any concerns or queries related to this please email us directly.

Members of Parish Form & Certificate of Baptism

If your child was not baptised in St Francis Church, we will need to see a copy of the Certificate of Baptism. If you don't already have this, it can be obtained by contacting the church where your child was baptised. Please show this certificate to one of the catechists at the first scheduled session. 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 £30 per child to cover the costs involved in running the programme. This money covers the cost of the books, certificates, flowers for the church for the FHC celebrations, etc. We will collect your contribution, in cash or as a cheque made payable to 'PRCDTR ASCOT ST.FRANCIS', at the first scheduled session.

If you have any difficulty or concerns with this, please speak to Father Kevin or Liz McPhee.

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

We are very lucky to have fantastic catechists to work with the children, but it is a very small team! 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 please consider putting your name forward.

We are likely to need your support with enough adults per session to ensure the course can run, so a rota will be available at the first session for you to sign up.

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 8.30am and sign your child in, letting us know who is collecting them if it is not you. We will often walk the children over to the school hall (safely through the Friary garden) where we have more space to work as a large group.

Parents/Carers must be ready to collect their children from the narthex promptly in time for the 9.45am Mass. Please note Sunday Mass times may change in the New Year depending on the Covid situation. 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 arrangements please notify Liz on 07956 579385. 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. We have an expectation that the children will attend all classes.

Mass during the programme

On the days that the children have a class with the catechists we expect them to stay with the congregation. This will be an opportunity for them to hear Mass in its entirety and understand it more fully. Please draw your child's attention to the different parts of the Mass encouraging them 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 as part of the course.

Working at Home and in Church

The programme we will be following is 'I Want To Make My Home In You' - the chapters are succinct and child friendly! Each child will be given a 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 the chapters will be completed in our sessions at Church, and others will be introduced by the Catechists and should be completed at home with your guidance.

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!! The children may stick photos or draw pictures in their book where relevant, writing may be done in pen or pencil, it is their book to dip in and out of as they wish.

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.

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

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation - First Confession

During some of the lessons at Church 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 confessions on a Saturday in March - TBC once we have confirmed numbers. Children will be allocated a time slot to minimise waiting.

First Communion Masses & Celebrating with the Parish

First Holy Communion Masses will be celebrated on Saturdays & Sundays in May once we have finalised numbers. More details will follow regarding this, and short rehearsals for the children, nearer the time. All the candidates are encouraged to celebrate their First Holy Communion with the Parish community at the Sunday Mass on 19th June, which is the Feast of Corpus Christi.

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. Liz McPhee - 07956 579385 or email - FirstHolyCommunion@hotmail.com