

*Bless me Father
for I have sinned*

PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET

First Reconciliation

*Sacrament of Peace
and Healing*



Our Lady of the Mission
Whitford Parish

"Where two or three meet in my name,
I am there among them." Matt 18:20

Our Lady of the Mission Parish Sacramental Programme

from our priests

Dear Parents,

We, as priests, would like to applaud you for the faith that you have passed on to your child and for your commitment to walk with them on their faith journey and to support them willingly. It is to you, that your child will look to for the guidance and encouragement they will need on their journey. It is your sharing of faith and your love that will inspire them, it is in your family that they will learn about the forgiveness and the unconditional love that God has for each of us.

In enrolling your child for the Sacrament of Penance, you are giving them the opportunity to experience one of the greatest gifts the Church has to offer.

Reconciliation, unlike Eucharist and Confirmation, is not one of the Sacraments of Initiation. It is one of the Sacraments of Healing which offers us the opportunity to affirm the truth that God loves us without fail and longs to forgive us before we even recognise our need to be forgiven. This experience of being reconciled with God is explained to us by Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal Son; the experience of a child being restored to the loving care of his or her parents. Reconciliation becomes therefore a celebration of God's love, of His boundless forgiveness and the joy of "coming home" to a happy and whole relationship with Him.

Many adults still have a difficulty with this sacrament - it has something of an "image problem". However, the contemporary approach to the sacrament focuses on the Gospels and the life and mission of Jesus. Jesus always went out of His way to speak to the broken, the lost and the suffering. He asked them to tell Him about themselves and then spoke openly to them in return. In the Gospel stories, these people always left Jesus feeling good about themselves and prepared to begin life anew. This is the experience the church today wants for all the faithful - come to Jesus and be healed.

The church today allows us to celebrate this sacrament as a community and this is the way your child will receive the Sacrament of Penance for the first time.

You are also invited to take this opportunity to receive this healing sacrament. It is a powerful witness for children when the important adults in their lives share their experiences. If you are not catholic, you are still welcome to come and speak freely to the Priest, so that you can be a part of this important occasion with your child. As you continue to share in your child's preparation for the sacrament, be assured of the support of the whole parish, both in prayer and practical ways.



The teachers, catechists, parish staff and all parishioners will work with you to ensure your child is well prepared. However, your role is crucial and the following points may be helpful to consider:

- Let your child see reconciliation happening between adults and family members. If your child experiences forgiveness, they will more readily understand what it means
- When someone in your family says “sorry” and is forgiven, celebrate in some small way to recognise the joy that comes with forgiveness
- Encourage your child to pray daily and to reflect before they go to sleep each night on things they could have done better and to give thanks for the things that went well
- Always present God to your child in the light of His great mercy and love
- Attend Reconciliation yourself in the weeks before your child’s first Reconciliation and let your child know that you, too, honour the Sacrament

If you do not feel confident in helping your child prepare, there are many excellent resources available for you. Please ask teachers, catechists, godparents and grandparents and other family members to share their wisdom, knowledge and faith with your child.

In this booklet you will find important information about the process of preparation and the actual Reconciliation Celebration. Parent / child workshops will be available over two evenings at 5.00 pm at WCPS and PCPS. Please check the calendar and mark it in your diary.

Please read all the information carefully.

We pray that this journey towards the wonderful gift of healing will bring each member of your family closer to Jesus, who holds His arms wide to all of us in an invitation of infinite love.

Yours in Christ,

Father Cyprian Shikokoti
Parish Priest

teaching your child about our faith

You would not raise your children without giving them language. Language is what helps our children to make sense of and participate in life. Listening to us talk helps them to understand the actions we perform every day. Why then, would we not talk to our children about their faith? If we never talk to them about God, about what Catholics believe and about how we ourselves feel about our faith, then our children will not see it as something we (or anybody else) cares about.

If you are not used to talking about these things, it might be good to introduce small rituals at home which will offer your children opportunities to ask questions. It doesn't matter if you don't know the answers - maybe you could find out the answers together!

Saying grace at meals is one very natural ritual which children will already be familiar with. Ask the children to make up their own prayers and to share them in turn at meals. Another is the bedtime prayer or praying in the car on the way to school. You might like to buy a crucifix and hang it over the cross and ask God's blessing on each of you. Light a candle at the dinner table and pray for peace - at both the dinner table and in the world!

There are many simple ways to bring God into your home so that your children become comfortable talking about matters of faith.

Our Church has a long history, full of beautiful symbols and rituals which are part of the language of our faith. Children will respond readily to these kinds of experiences - enjoy sharing with them the riches of our Catholic Church.





THE RITE

How to make your confession.

1. The ceremony will begin with prayers and a reading. Father will speak to everyone.
2. You will go to Father individually and begin by saying, "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned." Then simply tell the priest that it is your first confession and speak with him about all those things in your life that keep you from a full and loving relationship with God and with others. You should spend a little time reflecting on your life before you come to Reconciliation so that you have already identified these things.
3. Once Father has heard your confession he will ask you to make "An Act of Contrition". This is simply a short prayer of sorrow, such as

*"Loving God, I am very sorry,
that I have sinned against You,
because You are so good,
and with Your help I will not sin again."*

4. Once you have made this prayer, the priest will suggest ways you might make some kind of penance. This might be through some prayer or it might be a more practical act that helps right the wrong you have done and helps restore your spiritual health. He will then offer you absolution and a blessing before you go back out into the world with a lighter heart.

After your child's First Reconciliation, you are encouraged to bring them regularly to the parish at the usual reconciliation time - Saturday 5.00 pm - 6.00 pm, so that they will develop a love of this beautiful and life giving Sacrament.

Our Church's teaching is that all baptised Catholics should receive the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year if they have committed serious sin. However, the reality is that many Catholics do not attend the Sacrament for a variety of reasons. If you have not attended the Sacrament for a long time, or if you are unsure about the right way to participate, please do not hesitate to speak with Father Cyprian or Father Francis.

It is worth considering the great gift of peace which is being offered to you.

mass times

AT OUR LADY OF THE MISSION



WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday Vigil

6.30 pm

Sunday

8.00 am, 10.00 am & 5.45 pm

WEEKDAY MASSES

Tuesday – Friday

7.00 am & 9.00 am

Saturday

8.00 am

RECONCILIATION

Saturday

5.00 pm – 6.00 pm

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday – Friday

9.00 am – 4.00 pm



PRIEST

Parish Priest

Fr Cyprian M Shikokoti

PARISH SACRAMENTAL COORDINATOR

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