

Parishes of Greystones & Kilquade

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Pastoral Area Policy

Version 4.0

Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Registration..... | 3 |
| Baptism | 3 |
| Ceremony of Commitment with Community | 3 |
| Meetings | 4 |
| Catechesis | 4 |
| Children attending Church of Ireland schools: | 4 |
| Children attending Educate Together schools:..... | 5 |
| Families living outside of Ireland | 5 |
| Participation..... | 5 |
| Masses | 5 |
| Resource Sheets..... | 6 |
| School Visits | 6 |
| Gospel link to Justice..... | 6 |
| Time for Reflection | 6 |
| Reconciliation Service | 7 |
| Child Safeguarding | 7 |
| Conclusion..... | 7 |
| References | 8 |
| Version control..... | 8 |

Confirmation

Introduction

The occasion of a young person's Confirmation is a wonderful opportunity for parents and guardians of children to deepen and reinvigorate their own faith. It can also be a graced moment of renewal for the broader parish community.

We, in the pastoral area of Greystones and Kilquade, are aware of many of the challenges facing parents, guardians and families at the different stages of a child's development. We see moments of engagement with the sacraments as a means of touching into the faith elements in this development and therefore we offer programmes of preparation for such sacramental engagements.

While an amount of the preparation work with your child is carried out through the school the home remains the primary place of nurture for Faith development. In the parish we recognise the role we have in supporting you especially at these times of preparation for the Sacraments. We put in place a preparation programme for parents as a means of achieving this.

The intent is not just to prepare the children for Confirmation but to engage with parents in exploring and articulating their own faith and in being confident enough to become involved in their child's faith formation, both in the year of preparation and in the years beyond that. It is a time for us to consider how we are part of the community that gathers at the weekend to celebrate our relationship with God. It is a time to develop further our own participation within that worshipping community, in the year of preparation and beyond that.

Only children of families whose parents have registered for and take part in the preparation programme will be enabled to receive this Sacrament.

This policy document is written to help you, the parent or guardian of a child presenting for the sacrament of Confirmation, to detail the steps involved and the supports on offer for preparation and participation in these sacraments.

Registration

All people, regardless of which school they attend, who are intending to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the parish, should be registered with the parish by the end of the September previous to the Confirmation. Typically this is the September the young person enters 6th class in primary school.

It is not compulsory to be Confirmed at this stage and, indeed, some parents do wait until the child is older before bringing them forward for Confirmation. We encourage you to take time to think about and discuss with your child whether you wish to go ahead or not.

The registration form can be filled in on-line, at www.greystonesparish.ie or www.kilquadeparish.ie or a copy can be obtained from either of the parish offices.

Baptism

Confirmation is the final step, after Baptism, for the full initiation¹ of children into the Roman Catholic Church. The sacrament of Confirmation is appropriate to children baptised in the Roman Catholic Rite. Evidence of Baptism is required, by the end of September, as part of the registration process, in order to include the child in the preparation programme for Confirmation in the following year. For any child baptised within the parishes of Greystones or Kilquade, the date of baptism and the name of the church in which they were baptised will be required, for those baptised outside of these parishes, a copy of their baptism certificate from the appropriate parish will be required.

Ceremony of Commitment with Community

During the month of November a ceremony of commitment for the young person, their family and the community takes place within the Mass on one weekend. The intention is to introduce the children and families who have registered for the sacraments to the wider community.

The parent(s) and young person will be invited to hand in a certificate of commitment within the Mass. In completing the certificate the young person is committing to:

- Spend some time in Prayer each day
- Come to mass as often as they can and use the Gospel resources

¹ The Sacraments of Initiation into the Roman Catholic Church are Baptism, Communion and Confirmation.

there.

- Try to be the kind of person Jesus would want me to be.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) are committing to:

- Help and support this young person with this commitment as they prepare for Confirmation:

(A copy of the certificate is available on the parish website and at the information meeting or through the parish office).

Meetings

We endeavour to keep the number of meetings to a minimum and to provide as much information and support within each meeting as possible.

In October there is an information meeting for all parents and guardians to help clarify the key role they play in preparing with their child for these sacraments and to explain how the community as a whole is engaged within the process.

At different times in the year, we offer a programme, open to all parents and guardians, over a number of evenings to engage with them in exploring and articulating their own faith. We see this as a means of building adults own confidence in their faith so as to enable them to become more fully involved in their child's faith formation both in the year of sacramental preparation and beyond that.

Catechesis

The religious education programme in Catholic schools is designed to support parents and guardians in helping their child to develop as Christians in line with the moral, religious and spiritual traditions of the Catholic Church. In situations where parents or guardians send their children to schools other than Catholic schools, they need to take responsibility for organising an ongoing catechetical programme for their children.

Children attending Church of Ireland schools:

The Church of Ireland schools follow a Christian based RE programme. The parish organises a program of catechesis, during the school year leading up to Confirmation, for children who attend any of the Church of Ireland schools and who have registered for the sacrament. It is designed to build on the education the children receive and help them to come to an understanding of the specifics of Confirmation in a Catholic tradition.

This takes place in the Carmelite Monastery, Delgany on Saturday mornings from the end of January through to the end of May. The fee for this is determined each year based on the cost of the programme and the number of children taking part. It is payable directly to the catechist. An attendance record is maintained by the catechist. Attendance at these classes is expected as part of the preparation of the child for their Confirmation.

Children attending Educate Together schools:

Parents in Greystones Educate Together School organise catechesis classes during the school year for each of the school class groups from first to sixth class. A minimum of two years of preparation is needed in order to prepare the child appropriately to receive any of the sacraments. An attendance record is maintained by the catechist. Attendance at these classes is expected as part of the preparation of the child for their Confirmation.

Families living outside of Ireland

Where a family from the parish is living outside of Ireland when the child is at an age to receive Confirmation, the family can register their child as normal. They will need to provide details to the parish of the catechetical formation that the child is receiving indicating how it is comparable to that of the formation of children living in the parish. The child may be Confirmed along with the children in one of the schools or within the Sunday Mass at a date agreed with the family.

Participation

We, as a parish, are acutely aware of the riches available through full participation by all peoples in the sacraments. We extend a warm welcome to all and encourage active participation within all elements of the preparation programme.

Masses

The Sunday Mass is the place where the parish community come to gather in community in order to celebrate their common understanding of what it is to be Christian, to share in Eucharist together.

We invite all families, especially during this preparation year, to Come, Gather and Celebrate as often as they can at our weekend Masses. We have a number of Masses in different styles in the various churches within our pastoral area.

Over the year we will provide resources at different times to help the entire family to prepare in advance and to engage more fully with the weekend Mass. We will, at specific times, have Masses aimed at the preparation. Families will be notified by eMail and Text well in advance of these.

Through the Mass we focus on different aspects of the faith journey that the families are engaged in in preparing for the sacraments. We afford opportunities to assist in the planning and preparation of the different Masses of the programme. We invite as many families as possible to engage within this as it is through such participation that all grow in understanding of the significance of what it is we are undertaking.

Resource Sheets

In each church in the pastoral area, we will have a dedicated space for resources for the support of families. We encourage all parents and guardians to use these resources as a way of exploring within the family what is taking place as part of the preparation for the sacraments.

School Visits

The priests and pastoral worker will visit the children in their classrooms regularly and especially in advance of the specific Masses so as to help them to see the significance of the journey they are undertaking over the school year.

Gospel link to Justice

At particular times during the school year, e.g. during Lent, the parish will particularly encourage the young people to reflect on the Gospel of the day and to react to it in some dynamic way. The purpose is to help them to establish a link between the Gospel and the way we live.

Time for Reflection

Before their Confirmation day, the parish will offer to the young people in the Catholic schools opportunities to reflect on the call to them through their Confirmation:

1. How each person is intimately related to God and to all of God's creation. – Called by name.
2. That God continues to create and to reveal who God is to me and who I am before God. – The uniqueness of gifts.
3. That God invites me to build a more just and gentle world. – My mission arising from my confirmation.
4. That the best way to praise God is to be who God made me to be and to honour the uniqueness of all creation.

Reconciliation Service

As a parish community, trusting in a loving and forgiving God, we invite all families to take part in the communal sacraments of Reconciliation that take place before Christmas and Easter. Taking part helps to affirm the pattern of participation for the young person, enables them to see the Sacrament as a community activity and allows the family to avail of this Sacrament as part of their preparation for Confirmation.

Child Safeguarding

All peoples working with children in the parish have been taken through the safeguarding process in line with the diocesan safeguarding policy which is available on the parish website.

Conclusion

Finally, the time of preparation for sacraments is an opportunity for all to be renewed and nourished in their own faith journey. The priests of the parish, the parish pastoral worker, the secretaries, the pastoral council and members of the various ministries in the parish are committed to supporting all peoples on this journey.

Support is available to all those who are preparing for the reception of sacraments and to their families, it is there for the asking.

References

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| Dublin diocesan policies | Provision of Religious Education for Catholic Pupils attending schools other than Catholic schools. Published: June 2008 |
| Child Safeguarding | Standards and Guidance Document for the Catholic Church in Ireland (2008) |
| Catechesis guidelines | Share The Good News Published: 2010 |

Version control

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| 2.0 | Added sections on Gospel link to justice, time for reflection and reconciliation services. |
| 3.0 | Removed explanation about Baptism Rite Changed reference to enrolment certificate to certificate of commitment |
| 3.1 | Checked for consistency of terminology and minor changes made to improve this. |
| 4 | Changes to reflect emphasis on participation in Sacraments being an engagement within the worshipping community and not an 'standalone' occasion. |