

ST EDMUND'S PARISH, BURY ST EDMUNDS.

FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2024

We are delighted that you and your child/children wish to participate in the St Edmund's First Reconciliation (Confession) and First Holy Communion programme in 2024. We look forward to teaching and supporting them (and you) to develop a greater understanding of the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation and to celebrating with you as they receive these sacraments for the first time.

Registration

Please complete a registration form and show us your child's original certificate of baptism to register them with the programme. We ask for a contribution of £20 per child towards the cost of the course materials, which include a comprehensive children's workbook and parents' guide. If meeting this cost will be difficult for you, please talk confidentially to Catherine (in the parish office) or Father Sean.

Enrolment

Your child will be formally enrolled onto the programme on Sunday 21 January 2024 at 10.30am Mass, where you and your child will be invited to come to the altar together to answer a few simple questions. Your child will sign to say they are committed to the programme.

Supporting your child on the programme

In having them baptised, you expressed your desire to hand on your faith to your child. Since your child's baptism, you have given them knowledge by telling them stories about Jesus; you have helped them to develop a relationship with Jesus by teaching them how to pray; you have introduced them to God's family by bringing them to church; and you have shown them how to 'love one another' by the example of your daily life. In other words, you have been to them what Jesus was to His disciples: the one to show them the way to eternal life. We ask you now to continue the good work you have done so far.

The St Edmund's programme is a partnership between the catechists and parents/guardians. Our expectation is that you will provide a supportive environment at home and discuss with your child their growing understanding of Holy Communion and Reconciliation (Confession) as well as the importance of the Mass for Catholics. The following support at home will make a real difference to your child's learning and engagement on the programme:

- **Encourage your child to complete their workbook** and any other activities they are asked to complete as part of the programme. Ask them to read the workbook text and related bible passages to you and explain what they mean in relation to the topic they are working on.

- **Attend Mass each week with your child** so they can regularly experience the rich context within which Holy Communion is received, become more familiar with the prayers of the Mass, and make friends - so becoming truly a part of the community of the Church. By this weekly experience, your child will be able to make better sense of what they are learning on the programme.
- **Read a good children's Bible as you would a story book**, from beginning to end. Not only is it a good read, but it also gives your child a sense of God's work in history and His continuing work in the world today through the Holy Spirit. If you cannot read the whole Bible then at least read together the stories suggested in the workbook.
- **Pray with your child.** It does not have to be formal or complicated. Maybe at the end of each day you could light a candle and think back over the day. Thank the Lord for all the good things; say sorry for all the times you have let Him down. Look forward to tomorrow and ask for His blessing on all you do and on all the people you will meet. Tell Him how much you love Him. Alternatively, say the 'Our Father', pray the Rosary or use a children's prayer book for guidance.
- **Attend the parallel session for adults**, which runs alongside each of the children's sessions and in which similar themes are explored. At least one adult who is supporting a child at home is expected to stay for this session.

The workbook

The programme uses the Redemptorist workbook 'I Belong'. It is important that you complete with your child the relevant chapter of this workbook ***before*** each session. This is because your child will be able to engage better with the work we do in class if they already have some foundational knowledge. However, please stop your child from completing additional chapters from those they are asked to prepare as this may confuse them. The chapters to prepare for each session are clearly marked on the handout containing the programme dates. Please bring the workbook to each session, where one of the catechists will look at them. Children will be awarded a sticker for completing part of a chapter and two stickers for completing a whole chapter.

Attendance

It is essential for your child to attend every session in the programme to develop the knowledge and understanding required to make their First Holy Communion and First Confession. Please contact the parish office at st.edmunds@btinternet.com if your child will be absent from class so we can advise you how to make up the learning with them at home. Please use this email address to make contact for any other reason as well.