

Becoming Church Programme – St Michael's Parish

Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist (First Holy Communion)

Information Evening

An information evening about the Programme will be held in November. The course will be outlined and opportunities provided for questions to be answered. It is therefore encouraged that parents who have either enrolled or are planning to enrol their child for the following year, attend this session.

Enrolment

Children must be between 8-10 years of age as at 1st May 2019, (Year 4 and up) to participate in this programme. For children older than this, please discuss with Emma Houghton at stmichaelsbecomingchurch@gmail.com.

Please fill in the enrolment form and either return it to Fiona in the St Michael's Parish office or email to the co-ordinator, Emma Houghton at stmichaelsbecomingchurch@gmail.com. If the child has not been baptised at St Michael's Catholic Church, please provide a copy of the Baptismal Certificate with the enrolment. If the child has not yet been baptised as a Catholic, this can be arranged prior to commencing the programme. Please note this on the enrolment. For children baptised at St Michael's Catholic Church – you do not need to provide a copy of the baptismal certificate – just the date on which the child was baptised.

The cost of the programme is \$70 (covering course materials and the First Communion reception, which includes catered food etc for the child). This payment should be made prior to the programme commencing either by cash, cheque or online banking. Please see the enrolment form for online payment details.

The Programme

The preparatory programme, led by Deahna Barrington, consists of nine Sunday sessions from March through to late June. There is one introduction session, two Reconciliation sessions, and three each for Confirmation and Eucharist. Please see specific document for course dates. Sessions run 9am - 10:30am and each child must have an accompanying parent or family representative with them for each session. Parents are welcome to attend mass at 10am and children will be brought up to join mass at 10:30am. Children and their parent/caregiver should plan to be at the mass each Sunday whilst the course is running, as this will greatly enhance their understanding of topics covered.

Children (and their parents) will be placed into groups, and activities in these groups will be led by a catechist (parent helper). The information and activities in the programme are based on the Auckland Diocese's Becoming Church Toolkit and cover the necessary requirements for the preparation of these Sacraments. Children will be supplied with a scrapbook and an Auckland Diocese Belonging book. Small at-home tasks will be given out from time to time and will need to be completed prior to the next session.

There will be regular email correspondence so please add stmichaelsbecomingchurch@gmail.com to your contacts list.

Please note that for the Sacrament of Confirmation, a sponsor (preferably a godparent) and a candle eg baptism candle, are required.

Expectations

The Becoming Church programme takes your child on the spiritual journey towards becoming a fuller member of the Catholic church. It is therefore expected that each child, with the support of their families, participate fully in each session and complete at-home tasks. An adult needs to attend with the child and help with in-session activities.

Absences due to unforeseen circumstances need to be communicated to both the co-ordinator and Father Tony, in writing prior to the absence taking place. Whilst it is appreciated that other commitments may arise, this programme requires a great deal of commitment due to the special journey for your child and therefore scheduling holidays or other commitments during this time should be avoided. In case of illness, the co-ordinator should be contacted as soon as possible to arrange a catch up.

Children are encouraged to attend the rest of the mass after each session, and prior to Confirmation, they will be presented to the parishioners as Candidates preparing for the upcoming Sacraments.

There are three options for parents to help with the course – being a catechist (group parent helper), helping with set up and pack down, and helping organise the First Communion reception (you will not be required to help on the actual day). Please see the enrolment form for more information.

Parents from the previous year's programme help on the day of the First Holy Communion, setting up, serving food etc so in turn, you will be expected to help during the celebration in the following year.

Suggestions for clothing at Sacraments

Reconciliation and Confirmation: Smart church attire. Clothing with appropriate coverage and no jandals.

Eucharist: Girls – white dress (veil optional). Boys – White shirt, dark trousers, black shoes (ties, vests, jackets optional)