

**CELEBRATIONS AND MEETINGS IN PREPARATION
FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF FIRST RECONCILIATION AND HOLY COMMUNION
2018-2019**

A Time to Deepen and Renew

This is a precious time in your child's young faith life and we wish you all of God's blessings as you prepare for these sacraments as a family. If you are not already an active member of our parish: this time of Holy Communion will often be a natural "comeback" moment for families, as children have reached the age where they can have a deeper understanding of spiritual things.

As a parish family, we view these parish based activities **as essential opportunities** to support your child in their faith journey, providing not an opportunity for a memory, but to build a lifelong relationship with Christ and His Church.

PARENT INFORMATION MEETING

Thursday, September 27, 2018 - 7:00 p.m. at St Mary of the Visitation Church

This meeting is for Parents only and will be a sharing on information upon the Sacramental Preparation for this coming year including family activities and participation in Lord's Day Mass.

PREPARATION PROGRAM

While the celebration of Sacraments are a ritual, living them out is about a relationship. An essential aspect of preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and Holy Communion is participation in the Lord's Day celebrations of Mass for it is here that the relationship is nourished. Young people preparing for these Sacraments are encouraged to be a part of **Visitation Kids** a program exclusively for them held during the 9:30a.m and 11:30am. Mass each Lord's Day. **Participation in this weekly activity is an essential element of your child's preparation for First Holy Communion**

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS AT SUNDAY MASS

The family of each child preparing for the reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion is given an opportunity to present the offertory gifts at a Saturday evening or Sunday Mass. The rite of carrying up the gifts (bread, wine and offerings) continues the spiritual value and meaning of the ancient custom when the people brought the bread and wine for the liturgy from their homes. Each child will be given the opportunity during the year; a schedule will be developed and shared.

PARENT AND CHILD GATHERING

**Thursday, January 17, 2019 -
7:00 p.m. at St Mary of the Visitation Church**

The aim of this meeting is for BOTH parent(s) and children. It will be to inform parents of the immediate preparation being undertaken on behalf of their children for First Reconciliation, and will provide activity stations which both children and parents can participate in. *Sign in will take place at the start.*

CELEBRATION OF RECONCILIATION

Parents and children are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on **Saturday, March 23, 2019 at 11:00 am OR at 1:30 pm.** *Please register on our website and select one celebration no later than November 1, 2018.*

PARENT AND CHILD GATHERING

Thursday, April 4, 2019

7:00 p.m. at St Mary of the Visitation Church

The aim of this meeting is for BOTH parents and children. It will be to inform parents of the immediate preparation being undertaken on behalf of their children for First Holy Communion, and will provide activity stations which both children and parents can participate in. *Sign in will take place at the start.*

FIRST COMMUNION RETREAT

All young people who will be receiving their Holy Communion will gather together for a half day retreat in our Parish Centre **on Saturday, April 27, 2019 from 9:00am-Noon**. Parents are not required to remain during the retreat.

FIRST COMMUNION PHOTOS

Individual and Group Photos will be taken by a professional photographer. *These will take place at St Mary's Church in the evening.* Individual photos will be in the Parish Centre beginning at 6:00p.m. and the Group Photo will take place in the Church at 6:30p.m. A group photo will be taken of all *receiving their Holy Communion* within our parish school groups:

Thursday, May 2, 2019 - Children attending St Elizabeth School

Thursday, May 23, 2019 - Children attending Our Lady of Fatima School

Thursday, May 30, 2019 - Children attending St Gabriel School

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

The children are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of First Holy Communion with their families on one of the following dates. **Participation in these celebrations is based on *successful completion of parish based preparation activities and not based on school registration.***

Saturday, May 4, 2019 - 5:00pm - Children attending St Elizabeth School

Saturday, May 25, 2019 - 5:00pm - Children attending Our Lady of Fatima School

Saturday, June 1, 2019 - 5:00pm - Children attending St Gabriel School

Why do this? Does it not all happen at School?

At St Mary of the Visitation Parish we are dedicated to having something for everyone. This includes ensuring something for our young people. Our Catholic Schools are special places too. *The Sacraments, however, are about a faith relationship found within the community of the Church, not membership in a school.* At some point in their life, students graduate from their school; they may visit, but their school will not be the place they go back to for healing in a moment of crisis, for sacramental care in a time of joy, or for direction on occasion when they are called to grow and mature in life. When they graduate school - they leave to return as a visitor. A Parish, a faith community, is a place you never graduate from.

We are doing this because we love your child, and we want to help you to let them see - they never graduate from Church, they never graduate from God - but rather they grow here and become who God wants them to be!