

Mt. Barker/Strathalbyn Catholic Parish



Our Lady of Mercy, Mt. Barker



Good Shepherd, Strathalbyn

20th July 2024

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We are sending this letter out to all families in the Parish Community of Mt Barker/Strathalbyn whose children may be among those who wish to continue their journey of faith in the Catholic Church.

Earlier this year on the June Long Weekend, eighteen children joined with us, their families, and friends in a Liturgy of the Word celebration to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, and they also received their First Holy Communion at a chosen Mass time celebrated during this weekend. The children had come to the end of their initiation process after working together for almost twelve months and as part of their preparation for Confirmation and First Holy Communion, they had celebrated their First Reconciliation in November 2023.

These children were prepared by their families with the help of a wonderful resource written by Mrs. Kathy Horan. We used one book for each of the Sacraments. It is a resource that invites families to read, to reflect, to work and to pray together. Families also met together as a whole group with the Sacrament Preparation Team, for four Family Sessions throughout the course of the three books, where we looked closer at a particular chapter together in each of these books. This time was a great chance to get to know each other and to ask any questions that may have arisen during the family time shared together at home. We also introduced a Family Session on the Rosary, and we invited members from the Parish Community to be Prayer Supports for the children.

At the heart of this process was the commitment parents made to allow their children to learn what it means to be part of the worshipping community that gathers each week to celebrate the Eucharist. During the school terms *Liturgy of the Word for Children* was offered at the Sunday morning Mass at Mount Barker and there were three rituals that were also celebrated during Mass, throughout this journey together.

The children who attended St. Francis de Sales College were also supported in their learning about the sacraments, as part of their Religious Education programme and extra support was offered to families whose children did not attend St. Francis de Sales College or any other Catholic school.

You are invited now to consider if you would like your child or children to begin their preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Holy Communion. The team that will help you through the process of the initiation of your children is made up of Parish volunteers and St. Francis de Sales College staff. Mrs Sandra Lloyd holds all this together for us as the Coordinator of Family Faith Formation, so please feel free to contact Mrs Sandra Lloyd, Fr. Philip Marshall or Mr Oreste Farrugia with any questions that you may have.

The process will begin with an Information Meeting in Our Lady of Mercy Church, Mt Barker on Thursday 8th August at 6.30pm. At this meeting, families will have a chance to look more closely at the process and to ask any questions. Enrolment forms will also be available if you would like your child/ren to participate. Enrolments will close Friday 16th August and from Monday 19th August until Friday 30th August, every family will be invited to meet personally with a member of the team, to clearly understand what the process involves and ask any further questions they may have.

We look forward to working closely with all who choose to enter this process.

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Family Faith Coordinator
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Mr. Oreste Farrugia
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