***Introduction***

Welcome to our parish programme. This programme offers you as a parish, a way of acknowledging and supporting children and their families as they journey throughout this special year towards the celebration of Holy Communion. The child’s faith journey is developed through cultivating a sense of their participation and belonging in the parish Mass.

As a parish community, we gather as God’s family of families to pray together and to live the joy of the gospel by reaching out in loving service in our communities. By welcoming children and their families who are preparing for the first of many communions, and integrating this journey in the Sunday Mass, the parish community actively expresses the reality of being companions on the journey.

Family is the primary locus of growing in love and in faith. In the love of a parent’s gaze, we are opened to discover the love of God and others. Robert Frost recognised that “We begin in infancy by establishing correspondence of eyes with eyes”. In prayer, we are encouraged to look at God looking at us, loving us. In this tender regard, a personal relationship with God is nurtured. Of its nature, it cannot remain private. It finds its expression in loving action and concern for others.

The religious education programme *Grow in Love* also serves as a link in the home - school – parish partnership and is also a significant component in this special time of preparation towards the celebration of Holy Communion.

***Enrolment Ceremony***

The journey towards Holy Communion begins with the Enrolment Ceremony in October. This is preferably during Sunday Mass, highlighting the parish context of the faith journey. However, a parish might decide to have a separate service due to the size of the group involved where several schools come together.

***Practicalities: Enrolment Ceremony at Sunday Mass***

* The enrolment ceremony takes place after the Gospel.
* If you are giving a candle to each family whose child is preparing for Holy Communion, confirm numbers beforehand. Place these candles on a table in the sanctuary or in the sacred space ready for distribution at the end of Mass.
* According to the size of the group preparing for Holy Communion, if feasible, have a photocopy of the commitment and responses for each person. This can be taken home and kept in their sacred space / stuck on the fridge as a reminder of the promises involved in this special year of preparation.
* Where individual photocopies are impractical, simplify the response of the parents and guardians / parish community to “I do”.
* Before the Concluding Rite the candles are brought from the sacred space / table by the Altar Servers and distributed with the help of a member from the Parish Pastoral Council. Children are asked to stay for a moment and to hold out their candle for a blessing.

 ***Enrolment Ceremony***

* Where possible this would take place in the local church rather than the school, inviting members of the parish community to participate by their presence and prayer in this enrolment ceremony. Invite parishioners via announcement at Mass and the parish newsletter.
* Ensure you have enough candles beforehand for every child who is preparing for Holy Communion. Place these candles on a table in the sanctuary or in the sacred space ready for distribution at the end of the ceremony.

**Enrolment Ceremony**

**October 2017**

**Called and Chosen**

**at Sunday Mass**

***Gathering Rite***

***Reader 1*** Today we gather for our Sunday Eucharist and extend a warm welcome to the children who are preparing for their Holy Communion. We all began our faith journey when our parents chose for us to be baptised. We recall that initial moment now with the lighting of our Paschal Candle and with a gesture of blessing ourselves with Holy Water.

***Lighting the Paschal candle***

***Reader*** ***1*** As we bring light to this Paschal candle, may we be reminded of God’s love aflame in our lives.

***Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Water***

*Altar server holds bowl of water in front of priest*

***Priest*** Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly beseech the Lord our God to bless this water God has created, which will be sprinkled on us as a memorial of our baptism. May God’s grace help us to remain faithful to the spirit we have received.

 *Brief pause of silence…*

 Almighty ever living God, who willed that through water, the fountain of life and the source of purification, every soul should be cleansed and receive the gift of eternal life; be pleased, we pray, to + bless this water, by which we seek protection on this your day, O Lord. Renew the living springs of your grace within us and grant that by this water we may be defended from all ills of spirit and body, and so approach you with hearts made clean and worthy to receive your salvation. Through Christ our Lord.

***All* Amen.**

 *Priest sprinkles himself, ministers and congregation*

***Priest*** May almighty God cleanse us from our sins, and through the celebration of this Eucharist make us worthy to share at the table of his kingdom.

***All*** **Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Word***

Readings of Sunday liturgy are proclaimed by Ministers of the Word

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| ***Enrolment Ceremony***  |
| ***Reader 2*** | Now we will have a short ceremony of enrolment for the children who are preparing for the first of many communions throughout their lives. In the Grow in Love programme, the children have been learning that through our Baptism each person has been called and chosen by God. Every time we gather as a circle of friends, as family, as a parish faith community, we do so in the company of our friend Jesus.I invite the children who are engaging in this time of preparation for Holy Communion to stand. The response to each promise is We Do. After the priest’s blessing, say Amen.  |
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| ***Priest*** | Children, you have been preparing to receive the gift of Jesus through Holy Communion since you were small. Next year you will celebrate the first of many times you will receive communion, to nourish and strengthen you in life. As you prepare in a special way in the coming months, do you promise to listen carefully to all the people who will help you learn about God’s love for us?  |
| ***Children***  | **We do.**  |
| ***Priest***  | Do you promise to try to get to know God better by praying at home with your family, by being a friend to Jesus and by coming to Mass?  |
| ***Children***  | **We do.**  |
| ***Priest***  | +May you know God’s enormous love for you. May you experience much joy growing in love with Jesus. May this joyful love flow out to your families, friends and wider community. |
| ***All***  | **Amen.** |
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| ***Reader 2*** | Girls and boys thank you, you can now sit down. I invite all adults to stand. In this way, our parish community stands in solidarity with you, parents and guardians. The next set of promises is for parents and guardians. Then the parish community will also commit to sharing this time of preparation. |
| ***Priest***  | God has called and chosen you to be parents. You have asked that your children continue the faith journey that they began at their Baptism. Do you promise to help your child grow in love with Jesus by praying together at home and by committing to engage in the Grow in Love homework with your child?  |
| ***Parents***  | **I promise to pray with and encourage my child’s faith learning in this year of preparation for Holy Communion.** |
| ***Priest***  | Do you promise to love, support and pray with your children as members of this parish community through regular celebration of Sunday Mass?  |
| ***Parents******Priest*** ***All*** | **I promise to pray with my child and I commit to accompanying my child to Sunday Mass.**+May God bless you abundantly with wisdom, patience, joy and laughter. May you discover on this faith journey more than you could ever imagine as your family grows in love.**Amen.**  |
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| ***Priest******All******Priest******All******Priest******All*** | As members of the family of God it is our responsibility to be a welcoming, compassionate faith community. Do you, parishioners, promise to welcome and enable these families to deepen their faith and together as a faith community be a compassionate presence in our world?**We do.** As your priest, I commit to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus joyfully that together we may be a community gathered in love.**Amen.** In conclusion, let us all stand and profess our faith:**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth…** |

***Prayer of the Faithful***

***Priest*** Filled with trust that you call us your friends, we come to you loving God with our prayers. The response is Lord graciously hear us.

***Reader 3*** For the Church throughout the world and in this diocese, that we as the Body of Christ may be a welcoming and compassionate presence, let us pray to the Lord. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

***Reader 3*** For all civil leaders… at international, national and local levels… that they may be peacemakers and promote the greater good for all peoples, let us pray to the Lord. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

***Reader 3*** For all parents, whether delighted or daunted, struggling or thriving, may they know God’s strength and our support in this parish, let us pray to the Lord. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

***Reader 3*** For those who are sick in our parish, and those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord. Lord. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

***Priest***  For the deceased members of our families and community....

 Gracious God, you know the prayers in our hearts. Continue to deepen our faith and help us to discover you in our daily encounters. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

***All* Amen.**

***Liturgy of the Eucharist***

***Communion Reflection***

***Reader 4*** We are called and chosen to grow in love. Strengthened by Jesus’ words and presence, we can be his love to those we meet. In the words of Nan Merrill, a grandmother and spiritual writer:

 “Blessed are you who help others, those who are in need. For as you offer your presence, you come to know the Divine Guest in your heart.

 Even when your friends are unkind to you, do not become mean or spiteful. Rather, send them love and imagine light around them.

 Kindness comes from love, and those who practice love will be blessed.”

***Before the Concluding Rite\****

***Priest*** I invite the children who are preparing for Holy Communion to come up to the sanctuary to receive a candle. This candle can be lit when you pray at home as a family or when you are discussing the Grow in Love homework or at other special moments shared together at home.

*When each child has received their candle:*

***Priest*** Receive this candle. May lighting it at home remind you that this faith ***to families*** community joins with you as a circle of faith friends to welcome, encourage and support you. May Christ’s light always shine brightly in your hearts, your homes, in our parish and in the world.

***All* Amen.**

**Concluding Rite as usual**

***Enrolment Ceremony***

**October 2017**

**Called and Chosen**

***Gathering Rite***

***Reader 1*** Today we gather for our Enrolment ceremony and extend a warm welcome to the children who are preparing for their Holy Communion. We all began our faith journey when our parents chose for us to be baptised. We recall that initial moment now with the lighting of our Paschal Candle and with a gesture of blessing ourselves with Holy Water.

***Lighting the Paschal candle***

***Reader 1*** As we bring light to this Paschal candle, may we be reminded of God’s love aflame in our lives.

***Priest*** **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

***All*** Amen.

***Priest*** **May God, who through water and the Holy Spirit has given us a new birth in Christ, be with you all.**

***All*** And also with you.

***Priest* The blessing of this water reminds us of Christ, the living water, and of the sacrament of Baptism, in which we were born of water and the Holy Spirit. Whenever, therefore, we are sprinkled with this holy water or use it in blessing ourselves upon entering the church or at home, we thank God for his priceless gift to us and we ask for his help to keep us faithful to the sacrament we have received in faith.**

***All*** Amen.

**Opening Hymn**: **BAPTISM SONG**

1. Water holy water. Over our heads. x 2

2. Candle, burning candle. God is with us. x 2

3. Garment, white garment. Sign of love. x 2

**We are baptised in God’s name**

**We are the children of God.**

***Priest***  Loving God you have chosen each one of us to be here tonight. During this special time of preparation for Holy Communion, open all our hearts and continue to draw us closer to your friendship. Help us become faith- filled followers of Jesus by loving and serving one another in our homes, school/s and parish community. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

***All*** **Amen.**

***Reader 2***  We stand to listen to God’s word.

 Alleluia, alleluia! I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. Alleluia!

***Priest***  A reading from the Gospel of John John 15:18-21
 Jesus said to his disciples:

 ‘This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.
 A person can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you.
 I shall not call you servants anymore, because a servant does not know his master’s business;
 I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me, no, I chose you;
 and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last;

 and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.
 What I command you is to love one another.’

 The Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

***Homily notes***

For a moment, I invite you to close your eyes and picture this man Jesus. In your imagination what does he look like? How does he speak? Can you picture yourself among the people listening to him? What are the expressions on other people’s faces as they listen? How does it feel to hear Jesus say to you “I call you friends”? What else does he say to you? What is your response?

Opening your eyes now, take a moment to notice how that brief encounter was for you – were you pleased? surprised? asleep? Would anyone like to share that now? Or maybe as a family, you might like to share how you see Jesus on the way home. He’s always there …accepting…loving us. In this special time of preparation for Holy Communion, we are each called and chosen to be followers of Jesus. For the boys and girls, you are being invited to grow in love, getting to know and learn more about God. For parents and guardians, you are being called to grow in love through caring for your family and encouraging faith development. As members of the faith community we are called to grow in love through our active welcome and compassionate support of one another.

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| ***Priest*** | Children, you have been preparing to receive the gift of Jesus through Holy Communion since you were small. Next year you will celebrate the first of many times you will receive communion, to nourish and strengthen you in life. As you prepare in a special way in the coming months, do you promise to listen carefully to all the people who will help you learn about God’s love for us?  |
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| ***Priest***  | +May you know God’s enormous love for you. May you experience much joy growing in love with Jesus. May this joyful love flow out to your families, friends and wider community. |
| ***All***  | **Amen.** |
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| ***Reader 3*** | Thank you, children, you can now sit down. I invite all adults to stand. The next set of promises is for parents and guardians. Then the parish community will also commit to supporting you during this time. |
| ***Priest***  | God has called and chosen you to be parents. You have asked that your children continue the faith journey that they began at their Baptism. Do you promise to help your child grow in love with Jesus by praying together at home and by committing to engage in the Grow in Love homework with your child?  |
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***Prayer of the Faithful***

***Priest***  Filled with trust that you call us your friends, we come to you loving God with our prayers. The response is Lord graciously hear us.

***Reader 4*** Jesus calls us by name and chooses us to be his friends. Help us to follow you. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

***Reader 5*** We ask you Lord to bless all in leadership… Pope Francis, Bishop Ray, priests, all parents and teachers; that they may walk the talk, nurturing honesty, respect and kindness in daily encounters. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

***Reader*** **6** We ask you to Lord to heal all who are suffering at this time… whose lives are torn apart by war or famine, and our those nearby who experience depression, homelessness or stress; may our practical concern offer hope in action. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

***Priest*** Grant eternal rest to those who have died…. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

 Loving God who call us by name, look with kindness on your friends gathered here tonight. Throughout this time of preparation for Holy Communion, may we continue to grow in love with you and with one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Priest*** We pray the prayer that Jesus taught us **Our Father**… As friends of Jesus, let us reach out and offer one another a sign of peace.

 Receive this candle. May lighting it at home remind you that this faith community joins with you as a circle of faith friends to welcome, encourage and support you. +May Christ’s light always shine brightly in your hearts, your homes, in our parish and in the world. **.**

***All* Amen.**

**Circle of friends all around you.**

**Circle of friends, strong and true**

**Circle of friends, always there for you.**

**Closing Song**