SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM AT ST. ANTHONY’S PARISH, NOBLE PARK

In 2015, the Parish moved over to a parish-based, family-focussed Sacramental Program. This Program enables parents to take a more active role in the faith development of their children.

Parents are the first teachers in all areas of their child’s lives. Parents teach their children how to walk, how to talk, how to eat, how to dress, how to relate to other people, etc. It is appropriate then, that parents also teach their children about faith. A parish-based, family-focussed Sacramental Program provides a wonderful opportunity for all members of the family to join the discussions, conversations and prayer as one of the children prepares to celebrate their Sacrament.

Family-Focussed

The Church teaches that the responsibility for preparing children for the sacraments belongs firstly with parents. Following their child’s initiation into the Catholic Church through Baptism, the role of parents in fostering their child’s life of faith is crucial and nothing else can replace it. It is within the family that faith is received and nurtured and so the family is the primary focus for sacramental preparation which are moments of grace for nurturing the faith of the whole family.

Parish Based

It is within the parish that children are welcomed. Through their initiation into the faith and their journey through a life of faith, they are encouraged and supported. It is within this community of faith that we find a sense of belonging, a place we can feel welcomed and loved for who we are. The parish is not just the place where we celebrate the Sacraments but also coordinates the preparation of children for the Sacraments. Members of the Parish community—the priests, pastoral associate, the school community, and others directly involved in supporting the family—ensure that support and encouragement are given to the Sacramental families.

Requirements of the Sacramental Program

During Primary School, children are invited to receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation (at or above Grade 3), First Eucharist (at or above Grade 4) and Confirmation (at or above Grade 6). The requirements for each Sacrament is similar, as described below:

Enrolment Masses: the child preparing for a Sacrament, along with their family, are required to attend one of the Masses on the Enrolment weekend to which they bring their Enrolment Form.

Parent only meeting: at the beginning of preparation for each Sacrament, parents are required to attend a meeting during which they will be taught how to teach their child about the Sacrament.

Parent and child meeting: at the end of preparation for each Sacrament, parents and the child are required to attend a meeting during which they will revise all they’ve learned about the Sacrament.

Workbook: Each child is given a workbook, which is distributed to parents at the ‘parent-only’ meeting. Parents and children work through the workbook, ensuring it is completed before the Sacrament is received.

Profile: Each child preparing for a Sacrament completes a poster about him/herself. The poster is
returned with the workbook and it is hung in the church prior to the Sacrament.

**Attendance at Children’s Liturgy:** Each child preparing for a Sacrament is required to attend a minimum of three Children’s Liturgy sessions. These sessions are held during Mass on the weekend, and are taught by parishioners.

**Celebration of the Sacrament:** Each child completes their preparation with the celebration of the Sacrament.

In addition to the above, the following are required:

**For the Sacrament of Confirmation:** all children preparing to celebrate their Confirmation must attend a Reflection Day. The children take a day off school in order to spend time reflecting on the true meaning of the Sacrament. The Reflection Day provides an opportunity for the children to meet the Bishop who will celebrate their Confirmation Mass, as well as an opportunity for a rehearsal.

**For the Sacrament of First Eucharist:** all children preparing to celebrate their First Eucharist must attend a rehearsal. At the rehearsal, the children and parents will be told about the various details of the Mass, i.e. where to sit, how to process in with the priest, etc.

Families who are unable to complete all the requirements for each Sacrament are encouraged to reconsider if it would be best to delay their child’s reception of the Sacrament until the following year.

Enquiries and questions regarding the Sacramental Program can be directed to Denise Lyons, Pastoral Associate, in the Parish Centre.