



St Bernadette's

Parish Castle Hill

Sacramental Program

Communion 2024

Parent Information Booklet



St Bernadette's Parish Mission Statement

St Bernadette's Parish Castle Hill
of the Diocese of Parramatta
is a welcoming missionary Catholic community,
nurturing its people in faith and service
and seeking to reflect and share
the compassion of Jesus Christ
with our local community and beyond.

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Dear Parish family,

Thank you for your interest in our Parish Sacramental program. Our Parish is dedicated to helping families grow together in their love for God, to go deeper into their understanding of the Catholic faith, and how to live this Christian life more authentically. We hope to assist and support you, the parents, in your role as the 'first teachers of your children in the ways of their faith.' We are particularly excited at this time to be part of such a special and important time for your child and your family.

Sacraments are integral in our lives as Catholics, and their celebrations are profound spiritual events. As they grow in their relationship with Jesus, it is important that they are properly prepared for and aware of what being Christian is.

As such, it is vital that families participate actively in all aspects of the preparation process, both with the church and in the home. The most important of these is to participate each week at our Parish celebrations of Sunday Mass. As "the source and summit of the Christian Life" (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1324), the Sacrament of Eucharist is essential for living a faithful, Christian life. Families must model this importance to their children by making Sunday mass a priority, embracing the opportunity to encounter Christ through God's Word and the Sacraments, and to come to worship God, every week.

It is important that all involved, especially parents, continue to develop in their own understanding and practice of the faith. We especially need to continually reflect on our own faith to ensure that we hand on to our children an authentic and lived Catholic faith.

The Parish has designed this preparation process for the Sacrament of Eucharist (First Holy Communion) for children who will be in year 4 in 2024; however this is a minimum age, and the Sacraments should be received at a time when the child is deemed ready and when the family is in a position to effectively support, be actively involved in, and commit to, the entire preparation process. Please take the time to carefully consider what will be involved, and your family's ability to fully and effectively prepare, prior to enrolling.

This booklet contains important information regarding the preparation program for 2024. This includes the scheduled dates and information about what is expected of participating families. Please read this information carefully so as not to miss any important details.

We look forward to continuing the journey with you and your family. We will continue to pray for all our Parish families during this time as we all seek to grow closer to our Lord.

DRAFT Schedule of Dates First Holy Communion 2024

Please note this is a DRAFT schedule of the dates. We aim to stick to this schedule, but unforeseen circumstances sometimes mean we have to change some of the dates. The number of sessions per week is also dependant on the number of enrolments, and a third session may be added later if required, most likely Tuesday 7pm.

Date	Event	Location	attendees
Wed 6th March 7:00pm	Parent Information Night	Church	Parents only
Wed 27 th March	Enrolments close	online	
Tues 2 nd April 7:30pm	Parent meeting with Fr Fernando	church	Parents only
Sat 27 th OR Sunday 28 th April 5pm Vigil, 7:30am, 9am, 10:30am, 6pm Mass	Presentation Masses	Church	All welcome
Mon 29 th April 7pm Or Sat 4 th May 3pm	Lesson 1 The Introductory Rite	hall	Parent and child
Mon 6 th May 7pm Or Sat 11 th May 3pm	Lesson 2 Liturgy of the Word	hall	Parent and child
Mon 13 th May 7pm Or Sat 18 th May <u>2pm</u>	Lesson 3- Church Tours	CHURCH	Parent and child
Mon 20 th May 7pm Or Sat 25 th May 3pm	Lesson 4 Liturgy of the Eucharist-Part 1	hall	Parent and child
Mon 27 th May 7pm Or Sat 1 st Jun 3pm	Lesson 5 Liturgy of the Eucharist- Part 2	hall	Parent and child
Sat 15 th June 10am, 11am, 12am, 1pm, 2pm	Rehearsals	church	Parent and child
Sat 22 nd Jun 5pm Sun 23 rd Jun 9am, 10:30am, 6pm Sat 29 th Jun 5pm	First Holy Communion masses	church	All welcome

Sacramental Preparation 2024

Detailed information

Following is a more detailed explanation of what has been outlined in the Schedule of Dates. We ask you to please read the information with your family so they all understand the level of commitment that this Sacramental program requires

Registration

The registration process is simple. If you wish to present your child as a candidate to receive the Sacrament, please fill out the online registration form at <https://forms.gle/uz7bQ8Kb2D6bm7du6> or us the QR code:



You will need a copy of your child's Baptism certificate to register.

Commitment mass

Life of the Parish is nurtured with the celebration of the Sacraments, they are a reflection of the acts of the Holy Spirit in Parish life. At the beginning of the Sacramental program, we would ask you to attend the Commitment Mass **Saturday 27th or Sunday 28th April** where the candidates will be introduced to the Parish and parents will declare their commitment to share their faith with their child in this Sacramental Program.

Parent meeting with Father Fernando

At the beginning of the Sacramental Program, there is a meeting where parents will be guided lesson by lesson by the Priests in the Parish. This is a meeting for Parents only, if you are unable to find someone to help you look after your child on the night, you can bring him/her but please remember that the parents are attending a lesson and the information on the night makes the program run smoothly.

Sacramental Preparation Sessions

This year the Sacramental Preparation program is structured into four lessons. The number of candidates for the Sacrament of Eucharist are organised into small groups of four, where each parent will be asked to lead one of the sessions for the rest of the group. The Sacramental team will organise the groups and inform you of the other families in your group. According to the number of candidates, each session will be run at least twice a week in the same week, so families can choose beforehand which night they will enrol their child. Please remember that it is important you remain as much as possible in that group so candidates can get to know each other and you have the chance to prepare your lesson. Each session is designed to last for about an hour.

Tours of the Church

This event continues to be part of our sacramental preparation process. It is a great opportunity for families to learn more about our church, where we gather to celebrate mass. Everyone will have the opportunity to go into all the different areas, find out more about the artwork and architecture, see where things are stored and more. The church tours are a mandatory part of the program.

Rehearsal

All families preparing for the Sacrament of Eucharist must attend the rehearsal prior to the celebration of this sacrament. The rehearsal ensures that each child knows what is going to happen at the celebration and helps to ease any nerves they may have. This helps them approach the sacrament with confidence and remember the experience well. At least one parent will need to accompany their child to the rehearsal as any further information regarding the ceremonies will also be given at these times.

Masses Celebrating First Eucharist

The celebration of the Eucharist- the mass- is the 'source and summit' of our faith. As such, children will receive the sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time during our usual weekend parish celebrations- the Saturday 5pm Vigil mass, Sunday 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am and 6pm masses. You will be asked to provide preferences of which mass your child receives their First Holy Communion, however places are limited, and no guarantees can be made. More information regarding allocations will be given during the preparation process. Friends and family are invited to attend these very important celebrations as the children are further initiated into God's family and the church.

Prior to receiving the sacrament of Eucharist, children should receive the sacrament of reconciliation in order to be well-prepared for such an important event in their Christian life. Those who received the sacrament of reconciliation for the first time earlier this year do not need to receive it again, unless the family feels it is necessary to do so. Those who have not received the sacrament of reconciliation for some time are encouraged to receive it again before receiving the eucharist. All family members are also encouraged to seek God's forgiveness in preparation for you child's reception of the sacrament too. Families are able to attend the usual reconciliation times offered by this parish or any other parish. Reconciliation is offered at St Bernadette's every Saturday from 8:30-9:00am and 4:00-4:30pm

Celebrating the Sacrament: A practical guide

What to wear

Receiving Sacraments for the first time is certainly a special and important occasion for your child. You can help them experience the importance in different ways, and the choice of clothing for the day is important. The only specifications made by the Parish in relation to this is that children should wear **“smart casual dress, appropriate for the occasion”**. Sometimes this is summarised by the expression “Sunday Best”. Help your child feel the importance of the occasion, but please don't let this distract you from the importance of the Sacrament itself.

The tradition of girls wearing white dresses is not necessary but very common. We ask you to keep the style of the dress and accompanying hair arrangements simple. Similarly, boys do not need to wear white shirts, suits and/or ties. Children should look and feel comfortable in what they are wearing, not feel as though they are on display, otherwise they are not relaxed enough to fully participate and appreciate the richness of the mass and the sacrament received.

Photography

Due to the nature of the celebration of the Sacrament, families are asked to refrain from taking photos during the mass. Families are more than welcome before and after the celebration to take pictures of their child in various areas of our beautiful church.

There will be a professional photographer who will take photos of the children receiving their sacrament, as well as a group photo of each mass. These will be available for purchase through the parish office. More information regarding the photography will be given during the preparation program.

Donations

To help the parish cover some of the costs of running sacramental preparation, we ask you to consider making a donation to the parish. The suggested donation is \$35 per child. This can be paid by cash, cheque (made payable to “St Bernadette’s Parish” or credit card at the Parent Meeting on Tuesday 2nd April

If you have any further questions regarding the registration process, please contact Mrs Christine Jenneke on 0433 183 322 or at sacraments@stbernadette.org.au

Parish Prayer

All praise and glory are yours, loving Father, maker and ruler of the universe; We praise you for calling us to be your people, your beloved sons and daughters.

Guide our community as we try to follow Jesus. Fill us with love for those in need of our help, and open our hearts to all. Let your spirit teach us to serve in love and to praise you through our works and worship.

Father of all, we praise you through Jesus Christ, our brother, in the love of your Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Mary, Mother of the church, pray for us

St Bernadette, pray for us