



# St. Joseph's Highgate Children's Sacramental Formation (CSF) Programme Family Handbook



“God always knocks at the door of hearts. He likes to do this. It comes from God’s heart. But, do you know what God likes best? To knock on the doors of families and find families that are united, to find families that love each other, to find the families that bring up their children and educate them and help them to keep going forward and that create a society of goodness, of truth, and of beauty..”

- **Pope Francis**

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## **WELCOME**

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Dear Parents and Children,

Thank you for choosing St. Joseph's to grow in faith together! The catechetical team and I hope this Family Handbook will provide you with valuable information about the St. Joseph's Children's Sacramental Formation (CSF) Programme.

It is important that you read it and discuss it with your family. We ask you to keep this Handbook in a convenient place and to refer to it as needed. We welcome any questions, and we look forward to journeying with you and your family.

### **Parish Office**

joseph.highgate@gmail.com

### **First Holy Communion Programme Coordinator**

communion.joseph@gmail.com

### **Confirmation Programme Coordinator**

confirmation.joseph@gmail.com

## **PHILOSOPHY**

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St. Joseph's believes that the catechetical ministry is a share in Jesus' own mission of proclaiming the Reign of God. Catechesis enables faith to become living, conscious and active through the light of instruction, especially by sharing God's Word in Scripture and sharing the tradition of the Catholic Church. Catechesis is a life-long process for each individual, as well as the work of the entire Catholic Christian community.

The Church teaches that the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth and development of children rests, first and foremost, with their parents. Parents may share this responsibility with others, but they do not relinquish it.

The Church assists the parents in passing on their faith through the ministry of catechesis. Catechists echo the Catholic faith in a way that

those catechized (children, youths and adults) can understand. Catechists must do more than merely teach about the faith. They help children/youth build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church by proclaiming the Word, building a sense of community, leading in prayer and worship, encouraging loving service to others and by living an exemplary life.

Our catechists are all volunteers, from various walks of life. They are people who have answered a call to minister to our children/youth and who have prepared themselves well to serve as catechists. Above all, they are people for whom faith is so significant that they dedicate themselves to sharing it.

In conclusion, the catechetical process seeks to open children and youth to the discovery of the goodness and beauty of God as reflected in themselves and their world and helps them to experience this world within the Catholic Christian community. It aims to help them grow further in their faith, hope and love; the understanding of and commitment to our Catholic tradition, and our personal relationship with Christ, nurtured by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

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## **OVERVIEW OF THE CHILDREN'S SACRAMENTAL FORMATION (CSF) PROGRAMME**

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The CSF Programme includes the **Children's Liturgy of The Word, First Holy Communion** and **Confirmation** Programmes.

A calendar of all programme session dates is given to parents at the Orientation Session at the start of the run of each programme.

**Please refer to the correspondences from the respective Programme Coordinators of each programme**

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## **GOALS**

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The goals of the Children's Sacramental Formation (CSF) Programme at St. Joseph's are:

- To cultivate a personal relationship with God and an ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ, the Centre of our Christian life.
- Full participation in the life and mission of the Catholic Community.

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## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

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- **CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD • FIRST RECONCILIATION**
- **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION • CONFIRMATION •**

The first step in the sacramental preparation process for new families is a meeting with the Programme Coordinator. All parents are expected to support the sacramental participation of their children and to attend the parent meetings for this purpose.

### **CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD:**

Celebrated year-round during the 10 am Mass for children.

- After the Opening Prayer, children who are attending Mass are invited to come forward and join the catechists to read the Scriptures of the day and talk about the readings in the Library. The children will re-join the community during the offertory collection, in time for the Eucharistic prayer and Communion.

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:**

The sacrament of First Holy Communion is the time where children first receive the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith. But first we prepare for Reconciliation where we learn more about growing close to Jesus, God's ever-present love and forgiveness. Our programme of preparation welcomes the whole family to become a part of the process. With the help of our catechists, parents are guided through a beautiful bonding experience with their child, learning about their Catholic Faith.

### **CONFIRMATION:**

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a crucial step in the faith journey of a young person. This programme blends religious education, faith sharing, community service and spiritual development in a way that is personal and fosters strong ties between the Confirmation candidates.

### **The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists five effects of Confirmation:**

1. It roots us more deeply in our Faith.
2. It unites us more firmly to Christ.
3. It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us.
4. It renders our bond with the Church more perfect.
5. It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ.

## **PARENTS'/ GUARDIANS' ROLE**

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Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children. Our catechetical team is eager to work in partnership with parents/guardians to help them fulfil this responsibility and asks of your cooperation in the following ways:

- Celebrate Sunday Mass regularly with your children.

The mass schedule:

- o Saturday – 7 pm
- o Sunday – 8 am, 10 am or/and 12noon with First Holy Communion Programme and Children’s Liturgy of the Word, and 7 pm with Confirmation Programme
- Participate actively in the sacramental and community life of the parish.
- Share your faith and what it means to you with your children.
- Pray with your children and help them learn and memorize the traditional prayers of the Church, such as the Our Father, the Creed etc.
- Attend all parent meetings. Meeting invitations will be sent to you by the programme coordinator via email.
- Be familiar with the scheduled catechetical sessions and events for your children.
- Read and respond promptly to all communication on the Children’s Sacramental Formation (CSF) Programme.
- Ensure your children’s punctuality and regular attendance of the sessions.
- Failure to attend two or more classes will mean that a child may be asked to leave the course.
- Become a CSF Programme teacher or volunteer!

The CSF Programme for children/youth with disabilities is provided through regular or specialized religious instruction, particularly in relation to the preparation for the Sacraments. Please contact our Programme Coordinators regarding the specific needs of your child.

## **CHILD’S ROLE**

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Children/Youth also have to cooperate in order to benefit from the catechetical sessions.

### **Responsibilities of children/youth:**

- Be respectful of the catechists and other children/youth.
- Listen carefully, follow directions and participate actively in the session activities.
- Complete homework, and share learnings and experiences with their families.
- Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures.

## REGISTRATION

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### **A. ENROLMENT**

Families currently registered with St. Joseph's Parish or attending St. Joseph's School are invited to register their children/youth for the Children's Sacramental Formation (CSF) Programme.

Newcomers to the parish are requested to contact the Parish Office so that we can warmly welcome your family to our community!

### **B. REGISTRATION FEES**

The fees help us to cover the costs of books, materials and refreshments for the year. Everyone is entitled to catechesis regardless of their ability to pay the registration fees (please approach the Programme Coordinator if you have any concerns).

- Children's Liturgy of The Word Programme: £20
- First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion: £20
- Confirmation: £30

### **C. BAPTISMAL INFORMATION**

A baptismal certificate is required for each child who is preparing to celebrate First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion or Confirmation.

### **D. CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please notify the Catechetical Office on any change of address or telephone number (Work or Home) immediately, so that the catechetical staff will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency involving your child/youth.

### **E. CONFIDENTIALITY**

When you register your child/youth in our Children's Sacramental Formation (CSF) programme, your family will be added to the catechetical database. The CSF Office will not release any information about you or your family to any individual or special interest group without your permission.

### **F. ALLERGIES AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS**

Please notify your child's/youth's Catechist in writing on any medical conditions, allergies, or special learning needs that the Catechetical Team should be aware of. If your child/youth has special learning needs, please share with the Catechist on how best to meet his/her learning needs e.g. ways in which he/she learns best.

## **CHILDREN'S SACRAMENTAL FORMATION (CSF)**

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### **PROGRAMME GUIDELINES**

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#### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Supervision is provided up to 10 minutes before the catechetical sessions. Children/youth should not arrive earlier than 10 minutes before the session.

At the end of the session, they should wait in their classrooms for their parents/guardians to pick them up. All children/youth should be picked up promptly after being dismissed.

### **ATTENDANCE**

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#### **A. ABSENCE**

Punctuality and attendance at every session is important to foster continued understanding, and for the faith development of our children/youth. If it is necessary that your child misses a session, please inform the Programme Coordinator or the Catechist in advance. If your child cannot attend the CSF Programme on a regular basis, please contact the Programme Coordinator to discuss the situation. Failure to attend two or more classes will mean that a child may be asked to leave the course.

#### **B. VISITORS**

Parents/guardians are welcomed to visit their child's catechetical session(s). Please inform the Programme Coordinator or Catechist of your visit in advance. If you are keen to assist the Catechist during your visit, do indicate your willingness to volunteer!

### **COMMUNICATION**

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Parents/guardians and CSF Programme staff work in partnership to support the children/ youth in the growth of their faith. Good communication is essential. If a parent/guardian wishes to speak to a Catechist, they may do so after a programme session or they may contact the Programme Coordinator to make an appointment with the Catechist.

Catechists and Programme Coordinators will communicate with parents/guardians by email, phone, postal mail and/or by sending a note via the child/youth.



## DISCIPLINE POLICIES

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One priority of the Catechist is to maintain an atmosphere in which the children/youth can form a community, share their faith, and enjoy an optimum-learning environment.

As part of a Catholic Christian learning environment, children and youth are expected to:

1. Behave respectfully and courteously toward all Catechists, adults and other children/ youth. Inappropriate behaviour includes disrespectful verbal and body language.
2. Participate positively and be attentive during the catechetical sessions.
3. Respect parish property and the property of others.
4. Follow the rules of the CSF Programme and the class.

Parents/guardians will be contacted if their child/youth repeatedly disrupts the sessions. The Programme Coordinator, in consultation with the parish priest, has the final say in all disciplinary situations.

## HARASSMENT/PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

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St. Joseph's Parish believes in the sanctity and integrity of all persons: that we are all created in God's image and are of inestimable value. Any form of harassment is completely contrary to this belief and St. Joseph's is committed to providing an environment free of harassment. As mandated by the Diocese of Westminster, teachers and any adults who work with children, voluntarily or paid, must abide by the Diocesan Policies and Procedures Regarding Child Abuse and Harassment guidelines in relation to Ministry with Minors.

## EMERGENCY/SAFETY PROCEDURES

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The safety of the children/youth and catechetical staff is of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and well-being of everyone.

### **A. EMERGENCY/NATURAL DISASTER**

During an emergency or a natural disaster, the Emergency Procedure Plan will be implemented. Catechists will remain with the children/youth until either a parent/guardian or designated person picks the child up. A checkout system will be provided for the parent/guardian/designated person to sign out their child.

## **B. MEDICAL EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT/SUDDEN SICKNESS**

In the case of an accident or sudden sickness, the Programme Coordinator or Catechist will provide appropriate care and notify the child's parent/guardian. No medication may be administered by the CSF Programme Coordinators and/or Catechists to the child.

## **C. CHILD PROTECTION**

St. Joseph's is committed to the protection and safety of all children entrusted to its care. During all scheduled parish activities/programmes, at least two adults are required to be present.

## **D. CHILD ABUSE**

As required by State law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect, or child abuse will be reported to the relevant authorities.

## **E. DANGEROUS MATERIALS**

The Programme Coordinators, Catechists and/or designated persons have the right and duty to protect the health and welfare of the CSF Programme participants. This includes the right to inspect the property of any individual suspected of possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons or other illegal materials. If alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons or other dangerous materials are found, parents/guardians, the parish priest and public safety officials will be notified as appropriate.

## **F. GANGS**

The CSF Programme must be carried out in a safe, gang-free environment. Gangs and/or gang-related activities will not be tolerated. Persons participating in any gang or gang-related activities while on the parish property or in conjunction with programme-related activities will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the programme.

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## **RIGHT TO AMEND**

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The Children's Sacramental Formation Programme Coordinators and the Parish Priest of St. Joseph's have the right to amend this Family Handbook for just cause. Parents/guardians will be given prompt notification on changes made.

**This Family Handbook has been approved by:**

**Fr. George Koloth, C.P.**

Parish Priest, St. Joseph's Highgate

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## St. Joseph's Highgate

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### Children's Sacramental Formation (CSF) Programme

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#### Parent's/Guardian's Acknowledgement

1. Child's Name:

CFS Programme:

2. Child's Name:

CFS Programme:

3. Child's Name:

CFS Programme:

I acknowledge that I have access to the St. Joseph's Children's Sacramental Formation (CSF) Family Handbook.

I have read and I understand the content stated in the CSF Family Handbook and my family agrees to follow the stipulated policies/guidelines of the Handbook.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Highgate (St. Joseph's) safeguards all personal data collected through any Church ministry, parish commission, or activity in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/279 (GDPR). In compliance with the GDPR, and by completing this form, I agree and consent to the collection, receipt, processing, disclosure, storage and use of all personal data and all such data submitted to St Joseph's for the purpose of processing and administration of the CSF Programme.

I, hereby, grant permission for St. Joseph's to record pictures or videos of my child at a CSF Programme session/event. I give permission to St. Joseph's CSF Programme to use these images or videos in church print and online publications, including St. Joseph's website, parish newsletter and other parish social networks and to be included in group photographs at the celebration Mass and further consent to the photographs being available for purchase, from a secure website, by families of the communicants for their own private use.

I understand that:

- This Family Handbook is subject to amendments, reflecting the needs of the CSF Programme, and the children and families served by St. Joseph's.
- Should there be any amendments to the Family Handbook, the CSF Programme children's families will be notified through email, and the changes made to the Handbook will be posted on the website of St. Joseph's.
- I have the right to ask questions regarding any aspect of the policies/guidelines stated in the Family Handbook.

Parent/ Guardian's Full Name:

Signature:

Date: