

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – SACRAMENTAL JOURNEY 2026

Dear friends, thank you for taking the time to read through these questions and answers. We look forward with joy to the children continuing their faith journey through these Sacraments of Confirmation, Eucharist and Penance.

Of all the gifts that we share with our children, faith has to be our first and most precious. It requires priority in our family life. I look forward to welcoming you and your child as we share the journey of initiation through Confirmation, Eucharist and Penance.

Yours in Christ
Father Emmanuel

1.	Who is running the Sacramental Program this year?
	The program is parish based and during this year, will be run with the assistance of volunteers, parish and school staff. Please contact Father Emmanuel or email the Parish Office gatton@bne.catholic.net.au if you would like to be a volunteer.
2.	Is the program in accordance with the Archdiocesan guidelines?
	<i>An Extract from Third Edition, September 2016 - Sacramental Policy of the Archdiocese of Brisbane</i> The Sacraments are before all else the action of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead and alive in his Body of the Church. They are celebrated communally with the active participation of the parish under the oversight of the Bishop whose responsibility it is to control, promote and protect the entire liturgical life of the Church entrusted to [him] (Vatican 11, CD 15) Our Lady of the Valley Parish uses the resources and guidelines provided by the Archdiocese.
3.	Do I have to enrol my child just because other parents of children the same age are?
	No, enrolment may be deferred with good reason. The initiation of children into the sacramental life is ordinarily the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. However, as part of that responsibility in forming and gradually increasing a spirit of faith in children, the decision to defer beyond the appropriate time should be made in consultation with the Parish Priest. It should not be deferred indefinitely. Priests have a responsibility to see that all the baptised reach the completion of Christian initiation and therefore that they are carefully prepared.
4.	What will the program be like?
	It is an interactive, age-appropriate program that is positive for children and encourages them to grow in their faith. Parents can also enjoy spending quality time preparing their child to celebrate the sacraments of Penance (Reconciliation), Confirmation and First Communion.
5.	Can my child receive all three Sacraments this year?
	The preparation for each Sacrament is very important, and each is an important part of the faith journey. It is essential to take sufficient time for both the families and the child to savour and appreciate each sacrament, and the particular way in which God is working in the life of the child. Children who are in year 5 or older may be considered depending on the individual circumstances. Please make a time to meet with Father Emmanuel to discuss your situation.
6.	How much time is going to be involved?
	The foundational formation for these sacraments is nurtured through the family's regular participation in the parish Masses each weekend. There is an expectation that parents will regularly take their children to Mass most weekends and join our community in worship. The Sacramental Program runs throughout the year. Parents are expected to attend a small number of Group sessions and workshops and meetings in the lead-up to each Sacrament. We understand that family time is special, and every effort has been made to avoid school holidays, and to cater to families. CONFIRMATION —The main sessions will be held during June and July EUCCHARIST —The main sessions will be held during May and June PENANCE —This preparation will be held in Term 4

7.	<p>What if my child misses a session/ several sessions?</p> <p>It is essential for you and your child to fully participate in the program; if you are unable to commit fully to the program, please consider postponing until next year. Late enrolments will not be accepted as each step of the program is very important.</p> <p>If you or your child is unable to attend any of the sessions and workshops, please contact the Parish Office 5465 3131 prior to the event. Attendance records are updated at each session.</p> <p>The Information Night is critically important for you and your child to attend. It may be necessary to meet individually with Father or one of the parish team, to receive the information.</p> <p>The Group Sessions and Workshops are very important for children to developing an understanding of the Sacrament and also to experience personal growth in their love of Jesus. An individual session may also be required if the child is unable to attend.</p>						
8.	<p>Why doesn't the school run the program?</p> <p>In Our Lady of the Valley Parish, we have children who attend the two parish schools as well as the many State Schools and also children who are home schooled.</p> <p>A strong emphasis is placed on family involvement in our Parish Sacramental Program. The Church emphasizes that parents and guardians are the main educators in the faith of their children, and the program has been parish based and family-focused for many years.</p> <p>The Church emphasizes and wants to assist parents as the first educators of their children in the practice of the faith.</p>						
9.	<p>When will the Sacraments be celebrated?</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="233 972 933 1122"> <tr> <td>CONFIRMATION</td> <td>6:00pm</td> <td>Friday, 24th July St Mary's Church Gatton</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EUCCHARIST</td> <td>6:00pm</td> <td>Saturday, 6th June St Patrick's Church Laidley</td> </tr> </table>	CONFIRMATION	6:00pm	Friday, 24 th July St Mary's Church Gatton	EUCCHARIST	6:00pm	Saturday, 6 th June St Patrick's Church Laidley
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10.	<p>What are the enrolment requirements?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Your child must have been baptised into the Catholic Church (2) You will need a copy of the child's Baptism Certificate from the parish of Baptism and also a copy of Birth Certificate (3) Your child is in year 3, 4 or 5 in 2026 (or above) (4) One of the parents must be a confirmed Catholic for their child to proceed with Confirmation, Eucharist or Penance (5) It is essential for you and your child to fully participate in the program; if you are unable to commit fully to the program, please consider postponing until next year. Late enrolments will not be accepted as each step of the program is very important. 						
11.	<p>Why do you call this a sacramental journey?</p> <p>It is not just a short program to "get it done" but a step in the lifetime faith journey.</p> <p>Your role as parent or carer is to journey with them as you do for all other things. Parents being the first educators of their children share with them the faith in Christ Jesus and the positive feelings of belonging to the Catholic Church.</p> <p>Our faith journey begins with baptism. Baptism is the new birth in water and the Holy Spirit. For a valid baptism it has to be administered by a church minister in the Trinitarian formula - <i>I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.</i></p> <p>In Confirmation, the children who first received the Holy Spirit in their baptism receive a fuller release of the Spirit which is poured out up on them '<i>just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost</i>'.</p>						

12.	<p>What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?</p> <p>Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion/Eucharist together constitute the 'sacraments of Christian initiation'.</p> <p>The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation ratifies Baptism and completes the grace of being initiated into God's family. It more perfectly binds the Baptised to the Church and enriches them with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. As Christian adults they are called to be true witnesses to Christ, who spread and defend the Faith in what they say and do.</p>
13.	<p>Where did Confirmation come from?</p> <p>After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the apostles shared that same Spirit with the newly Baptised 'by the laying on of hands'. In early times anointing with perfumed oil called 'chrism' was added to the laying on of hands so as better to signify this gift.</p> <p>Confirmation is recognized by the Catholic Church as one of 'the seven sacraments instituted by Christ.</p>
14.	<p>Why is oil used?</p> <p>Oil is a rich symbol of cleansing, limbering, healing, strengthening and beautifying, and all these meanings carry over to our sacraments. Specially consecrated oils were used in ancient times to anoint priests, prophets and kings.</p> <p>Still today they are used in preparing catechumens, in Baptism, in the ordination of priests and bishops, in the coronation of kings and queens, for the consecration of altars, when anointing the sick, and of course in Confirmation.</p>
15.	<p>What are the "effects" of Confirmation?</p> <p>The effect of the sacrament of confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit, just as the apostles received at Pentecost. It makes us more completely children of the God we call 'Our Father'; it unites us more firmly to Christ his Son; it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us; it makes us more perfectly members of the Church; and gives us a special strength to be proud of and stand up for Christ and his Church.</p>
16.	<p>What are the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit received at Confirmation?</p> <p>At Confirmation the Holy Spirit brings the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear (wonder and awe) in God's presence. The fruits of the Holy Spirit active in our lives are: patience, kindness and goodness; trustfulness, gentleness and self - control; love, peace and joy.</p>
17.	<p>What should happen during my period of preparation (catechesis) before Confirmation?</p> <p>You, your parish and your parents have special responsibility for the preparation of Confirmation. Your school teachers and catechists may also help. Preparation for Confirmation aims not only at explaining the symbols and meaning of the sacrament of Confirmation but also leads you towards intimate union with Christ and a livelier familiarity with the Holy Spirit. Our hope is that this will help you to assume your new 'apostolic' responsibilities once you have been confirmed.</p>
18.	<p>Who confers the Sacrament of Confirmation?</p> <p>The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the Bishop as a successor of the apostles. He may however confer this responsibility to the Parish Priest.</p>
19.	<p>What can I do as a parent to help my child prepare for Confirmation?</p> <p>The most important thing you do as a parent to help your child prepare for Confirmation is passing on your faith to them and giving a living witness to that faith in your everyday life. You should spend time with your child exploring and complementing the parish Confirmation program and any questions raised.</p> <p>There are many books and resources which you can read together. You will be given a Parent Guide that complements the workbook your child will be using. You should pray with your child to help them prepare for Confirmation. It is a great support for them as they mature in faith if you are with them at Mass each Sunday.</p> <p>You will also help with the practicalities such as providing Baptism, and other certificates to the parish, ensuring that your child takes an active part in the program, and support your child on the Confirmation day by getting him/her there on time!</p>

20.	<p>Who should I chose as a sponsor?</p> <p>The sponsor should be chosen by the candidate and his or her parents or guardian. They must be a Catholic over 17 years of age, have themselves received Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation and be living a life of faith in keeping with the function of a sponsor of a sacrament.</p> <p>They must be willing not only to present and support the candidate on the day of Confirmation, but also to support him or her in fulfilling the baptismal promises faithfully. A sponsor can be one of the candidate's godparents, in fact this is to be preferred; but a sponsor may not be the candidate's parent.</p> <p>A sponsor should be physically present except in extreme circumstances.</p>
21.	<p>Can parents be the sponsor?</p> <p>No, the Church presumes that the candidate's parents are already supporting him or her in faith by presenting him or her for Confirmation and asks that an additional person act as sponsor of the candidate on the day.</p>
22.	<p>What does the sponsor do at the ceremony?</p> <p>The sponsor shares this special time with the candidate by staying with the candidate through-out the Ceremony. The sponsor brings the candidate forward at the time of anointing and places his or her right hand on the candidate's shoulder.</p>
23.	<p>What happens when my sponsor and I go up to the Bishop to be anointed with the chrism?</p> <p>Sponsor: Stands behind the Candidate with right hand lightly on candidate's right shoulder. Hands the card with the name of the candidate to the assistant or priest, to display for the bishop to read.</p> <p>Candidate: Stands in front of the bishop/priest</p> <p>Bishop: Makes the sign of the cross on Candidate's forehead with chrism saying, "(Name), be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit"</p> <p>Candidate: "Amen"</p> <p>Bishop: Touches the cheek of the newly confirmed as a sign of peace and says, "Peace be with you".</p> <p>Candidate: "And with your Spirit".</p> <p>Sponsor and Candidate return to their seats</p> <p>Please note there will be a mandatory rehearsal for candidates and sponsors</p>
24.	<p>What should my child wear for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation?</p> <p>Children are not required to buy special outfits for the Sacrament of Confirmation, however they are required to dress appropriately. A general guide is how they would dress to attend a family wedding. Boys should be in long trousers (not jeans), dark shoes (not runners), collared shirt. A tie is appropriate but not essential. Girls should be in a knee or ankle length dress or slacks (not jeans), with hair neatly arranged. No runners please.</p>
25.	<p>Do I need to buy any books or materials?</p> <p>Your child will be given a Sacramental Journey book and it is also recommended that you have a Bible and rosary beads for your child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holy Bible – versions suggested Jerusalem Bible, St Paul's Community Bible, New RSV • Rosary – available through Piety Stall at St Patrick's Laidley, also from Rosary group in Gatton, and Vinnies shop in Gatton
26.	<p>What is the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist or First Holy Communion?</p> <p>Eating and drinking with the rest of the community at the Table of the Lord is a sign of belonging fully to that community.</p> <p>First Holy Communion, that is, sharing in the body and blood of the Lord at Mass (Eucharist) for the first time, is the climax of the initiation process. Eating and drinking with the rest of the community at the Table of the Lord is a sign of belonging fully to that community.</p> <p>Confirmation is always celebrated prior to first reception of Eucharist. <i>From 2018 Archdiocese of Brisbane website</i></p>

27.	<p>Why is it important to attend the sessions and workshops?</p> <p>It is the duty of parents and the parish to offer children prayerful and practical help to celebrate the sacraments with proper devotion and to coach them in the rituals of receiving the sacraments. Parishes conduct sacramental preparation programs that involve at least child and parents and assist parents to do their part in preparing their children.</p>
28.	<p>What should my child wear for First Eucharist?</p> <p>In the past, the white dress and veil has been the standard dress for girls celebrating First Communion. Our way of celebrating the sacraments has changed over the years, as has the accepted style of dress for important occasions. What is appropriate will be influenced by the varying situations, traditions and wishes of the families involved. Matters such as dress will be confirmed at parish preparation sessions.</p>
29.	<p>What if my child has allergies or is gluten free?</p> <p>If your child suffers from allergies, speak to the priest or sacramental coordinator. Gluten free and low gluten hosts are available.</p> <p><i>From 2018 Archdiocese of Brisbane website</i></p>
30.	<p>What can I do as a parent to help my child prepare for First Eucharist?</p> <p>The most important thing you do as a parent to help your child prepare for First Eucharist is passing on your faith to them and giving a living witness to that faith in your everyday life. You should spend time with your child exploring and complementing the parish program and any questions raised. There are many books and resources which you can read together. You should pray with your child to help them prepare for Eucharist. It is a great support for them as they mature in faith if you are with them at Mass each Sunday.</p> <p>Help them to learn the prayers – use the book Our Family Prays as it is presented in a family friendly way to engage the whole family. You will receive a Parent Guide that complements the child's workbook. Children's Mass books are also available.</p> <p>They want to know that you see receiving the Eucharist each Sunday at Mass as something important in your life – your example is important.</p> <p>You will also help with the practicalities such as providing Baptism, and other certificates to the parish, ensuring that your child takes an active part in the program, and support your child on the Confirmation day by getting him/her there on time!</p>
31.	<p>Is the Sacrament of Penance the same as Confession?</p> <p>The names emphasise different aspects of the sacrament.</p> <p>Penance refers to our remorse, sorrow and resolution to amend our life with God's help. Confession refers to the act by which we tell our sins to the priest.</p> <p>Reconciliation refers to the goal of the celebration which is that sinners are reconciled to God and the Church. The ritual is called the Sacrament of Penance, but is appropriate to refer to it with any of these titles. <i>From 2018 Archdiocese of Brisbane website</i></p>
32.	<p>What are the different ways that Reconciliation can occur?</p> <p>There are three different forms that the Sacrament of Penance can take.</p> <p>First form or Rite of Reconciliation is when we individually confess our sins to the priest.</p> <p>Second form or Rite of Reconciliation is a celebration that occurs within the Church with the whole community and involves individual confession and absolution.</p> <p>Third form or Rite of Reconciliation is also centred on the gathering of the community but is designed for situations where there is a grave necessity.</p> <p>In the Archdiocese of Brisbane children will celebrate a simple Second Rite of Reconciliation as part of their preparation for First Holy Communion. They will be formally prepared for the Sacrament when they are a little older and have a greater understanding, at about ten years old. <i>From 2018 Archdiocese of Brisbane website</i></p>
33.	<p>Can a priest tell someone else about what they have heard in Confession?</p> <p>When a person confesses their sins to a priest in the Sacrament of Penance, a very sacred trust is formed.</p> <p>The priest must maintain absolute secrecy about anything that a person confesses. This secrecy is called "the seal of confession". Under no circumstances is the priest allowed to break this sacred seal. <i>From 2018 Archdiocese of Brisbane website</i></p>