



ST JAMES
THE APOSTLE
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
*Learning with strength
and in gentleness*

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Sacramental Preparation Policy

Purpose

The Catholic Church's sacraments of initiation (first Reconciliation, first Eucharist and Confirmation) have been traditionally celebrated during a child's time at primary school in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

These celebrations are important parts of the Catholic school's identity.

Celebrations of liturgy and sacraments are part of the formal, public prayer and worship of the Church.

The liturgical life of the school enables students to encounter the Holy Spirit at work in their families, their parish community and in the life of the wider Church and the world.

Celebrations that invite active participation in the sacraments or ritualise the everyday form members as a religious school community and nourish faith. These celebrations mark the school community as ecclesial and as a sacramental people who actively seek out the sacred every day.

(Catholic Education Melbourne, 2017, p 8)

It is important to be specific about the preparation needed to properly celebrate these sacraments and their connection with the wider Church community.

Aims

- To provide clarity about the way in which students are prepared to celebrate the sacraments.
- To make clear links between St James the Apostle Primary School and St James the Apostle Parish.
- To build connections between the School community and wider Church community.

Sacraments in the Primary School

Students of the Roman Catholic faith celebrate three sacraments during their time at primary school: first Reconciliation (also known as Penance or Confession), first Eucharist (also known as Communion) and Confirmation.

In order to celebrate these sacraments, the Parish Priest, as shepherd of the Parish, delegates his responsibility to prepare students to the year level teachers. Teachers are required to teach the appropriate

content about the Catholic faith in order to prepare students. This content is taken from the Renewed Religious Education Curriculum Framework (Catholic Education Melbourne, 2018) and the Archdiocesan textbook series “To Know, Worship and Love”.

All sacraments are celebrated within the context of the parish community, with students gathering as groups within their year level.

Students’ first celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation takes place during the season of Lent in Year 4, with preparation taking place during Terms 3 and 4 of Year 3.

Students prepare for and celebrate the sacrament of Eucharist for the first time in Year 4.

Students prepare for and celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation in Year 6.

All students whose faith is in communion with the Roman Catholic Church are invited to celebrate the sacraments.

Implementation

- Year level teachers, along with the Religious Education Leader, devise a specific unit of work to prepare students for the sacrament. This unit of work is derived from the RE Curriculum Framework, “To Know, Worship and Love” and any other Catholic Education Melbourne or Archdiocesan resources. The unit of work is assessable according to the RE Curriculum Framework’s Achievement Standards.
- All students in the year level participate in sacramental formation during Religious Education lessons.
- Students and teachers engage in a sacramental immersion day prior to the celebration of the sacrament to provide students with an opportunity to further develop their knowledge of the sacrament and reflect on its importance in their lives. This day is prepared by the Religious Education Leaders of the St James the Apostle parish schools.
- All students celebrating either Eucharist or Confirmation, along with their families, are expected to attend a parish Mass during a specified period to present themselves to the Parish Priest and parish community and ask for their prayers.
- For non-Roman Catholic students, the following process will be followed as per Archdiocesan traditions and Canon Law:
 - Students of Armenian, Maronite, Chaldean, Syrian, Coptic, Melkite, Ukrainian and Russian (Eastern) Catholic rites celebrate the sacrament of **Reconciliation** as would a Roman Catholic student.
 - Students of an Orthodox faith are blessed during the rite of **Reconciliation**, however with the permission of their parents, can celebrate the sacrament as would a Roman Catholic student.
 - Students of any other faith or no faith are blessed during the rite of **Reconciliation**.
 - Students of Armenian, Maronite, Chaldean, Syrian, Melkite, Ukrainian and Russian (Eastern) Catholic rites celebrate the sacrament of **Eucharist** for the first time as would a Roman Catholic student.

- Students of Coptic Catholic rite do not celebrate the sacrament of **Eucharist** for the first time, but will receive Eucharist as normal.
- Students of an Orthodox faith are blessed during the celebration of **Eucharist**, however with the permission of their parents, can celebrate the sacrament as would a Roman Catholic student.
- Students of any other faith or no faith are blessed during the celebration of **Eucharist**.
- Students of Armenian, Maronite, Chaldean, Syrian, Coptic, Melkite, Ukrainian and Russian (Eastern) Catholic rites are blessed during the rite of **Confirmation**, as Chrismation takes place at the same time as Baptism.
- Students of any other faith or no faith are blessed during the celebration of **Confirmation**.
- If a student is absent or not enrolled at the time of their year level celebrating a sacrament, they will celebrate the sacrament in the following way:
 - **Reconciliation** will be celebrated in the same year during the parish’s timetabled weekly time for Reconciliation in consultation with the Parish Office.
 - **Eucharist** will be celebrated in the same year during a community Mass attended by the year level.
 - **Confirmation** will be celebrated the next time the local Ordinary attends the Parish to celebrate the sacrament, which will be organised through the Parish Office and Parish’s Sacramental Ministry.
- Following the celebration of the sacrament, all students are invited to celebrate during a reflection day, organised by the year level teachers and Religious Education Leader.
- The School records information about the date and parish of sacraments in its Student Administration System. Information will be provided to the Parish for their records on request.
- Certificates to recognise the celebration of a sacrament are provided by the School. Parents should contact the Parish Office for replacement certificates or letters of attestation.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years during the School Improvement Cycle or when necessary due to changes in Parish procedures, Archdiocesan policy or Canon Law.

References

Catholic Education Melbourne. (2017). *Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Religious Dimension of the Catholic School*. East Melbourne: Author.

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Coriden, J. A., Green, T. J., Heintschel, D. E., Canon Law Society of America, & Catholic Church. (1985). *The Code of Canon Law: A text and commentary*. New York: Paulist Press.

Parish of St James the Apostle. (2016). Sacramental programmes. Accessed at http://www.stjamesapostlehcnc.com.au/?page_id=283 on 1 August 2018.

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Date: October 2018

Version history:

1.0: Original publication