**Signs of life** are signs of hope, pointing to a future and to new experience.

The miracle of life is all around us. The touch of a hand, a fleeting glance, a certain smile between people in love, can speak more eloquently than any words. In the same way, a solitary tear can reveal unspeakable pain or sadness.

All these signs of love and commitment help us to sense the touch of the Creator in our world. But God was not content with just that. He sent us an even more eloquent sign: his Son, **Jesus Christ**. In his healing, forgiving and preaching, Christ showed us how close God is to each one of us.

As Christians, our unity with Christ is maintained and strengthened at special moments. **We call these special moments sacraments.**

When we celebrate a sacrament we draw close to Christ by recalling his life and actions. At these times we experience the love of our heavenly Father through ordinary human events; being born into a family, sharing a meal, being healed and forgiven.
There are 7 Sacrament in the Catholic tradition.

Three sacraments together form what we call the Sacraments of Initiation:

- Baptism is the sacrament that begins the process of initiation into the Christian community.
- Confirmation confirms membership in the Christian community.
- Eucharist, or Communion, completes the initiation of the child into the community.

There are two Sacraments of Healing:
- Reconciliation is the sacrament of forgiving.
- Anointing of the Sick is a sign that God is present and active in difficult times such as when we are challenged by sickness.

The final two Sacraments are concerned with Love and Service. They are:

- Marriage
- Holy Orders
St Gregory’s College - The Programme

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A note for Parents / Carers: Supporting your child’s sacramental journey

Parents love their children into life and create a family where they love their children and teach them how to love. They share their values, teach their children how to pray, how to treat others and how to live meaningful lives. The church talks about families as Domestic Church, the first experience of church for the child.

Parents share the life-long journey in faith with their children especially as they move from Infant Baptism to Confirmation and full initiation with the Eucharist.

- Let them know you are interested in what they are learning.
- Share with them something of your own experiences and learning.
- Plan together with your child how your family will celebrate this special time.
- Take a look at family photo albums for photos of important family celebrations, such as your marriage, the baptism of your child, special anniversaries, etc. Talk with your child about who was invited to take part in the celebrations and why.
- Take your children along to Sunday Mass so that they will be familiar with the church and what happens during Mass
- Talk to your children about the things they see in the Church, such as the altar, the crucifix, baptismal font, statues, holy water font, etc.
Baptism

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time. (Matthew 28: 18-20)

Baptism is a sacrament of belonging. It is the sacrament which begins the process of initiation into the Christian community. It is the way we join the Christian community. It is a decision of faith.

When we decide to be baptised, to follow Jesus and to be a part of the Church family, we are saying that Jesus makes a difference to the way we live.
Signs and Symbols of Baptism:

Sign of the Cross – This is the mark of Christians for Jesus Christ died on the cross. Parents and godparents (or sponsors), trace it on the candidate’s forehead to show that he now belongs to Christ. The gift of grace is now his to help him face and overcome the sufferings of life.

Water – This is a sign that our sins are washed away. Water is also necessary for life and so becomes a sign that the life of the risen Christ is ours. Candidates are ‘immersed’ in the story of the death and resurrection of Christ and into the Christian community to which they now belong (we call this immersion into the Paschal Mystery of Christ).

Oils – These are signs of strength and sealing with the gifts of the Spirit. Candidates are anointed with the perfumed oil of chrism that reminds of the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in them and being a constant in their lives.

White Garment – This is a sign of innocence and the new life of resurrection.

Candles – young adults are ‘enlightened’ as they are baptised, as they hear the stories of God’s saving grace from the time of Abraham through to the resurrection of Christ. The flame symbolises the flame of faith in their lives.

Baptismal register – Candidates will have their baptism recorded in the parish Baptismal Register (Mary Immaculate Parish, Eaglevale). Confirmation will also be noted alongside this entry in the register.
Baptismal Promises

Just before being sprinkled with the water by the priest, the candidate is asked a series of questions to which they respond. These are the Baptismal Promises.

- Do you reject Satan?
- And all his works?
- And all his empty promises?
- Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?
- Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Being a member of the Christian community means we are invited to join the mission of Jesus as his followers. This mission is to establish the Kingdom of God. There are many ways to live out your Baptism:

- Caring about the people who you come into contact with in your daily life
- Acting according to the values taught by Jesus in the Beatitudes
- Acting in the spirit of the Ten Commandments
- Connecting your faith with the everyday circumstances of your life
- Celebrating Sunday Eucharist

Parents, godparents and sponsors undertake to support the candidate in living in the community as a Christian

Questions for discussion

- What qualities would you look for in a sponsor?
- What does it mean to be a witness to the world?
- Who do you know who is a witness to the world?
- If Jesus were to pass your way today, what would he say to you?
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Confirmation

When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

Acts of the Apostles 4:31

To confirm means

- To establish more firmly
- To strengthen
- To make a commitment

To be confirmed is to make a personal commitment

- To give witness
- To let your light shine for others
- To develop a concern for others
- To be hardworking and honest
- To follow the way of Jesus

Being confirmed is about deciding to be a particular kind of person. It is then meant to be ongoing in our life – to keep happening for us.

When you receive the Holy Spirit, your life can be as dramatically changes as it was for the disciples on the first day of Pentecost. Just like your baptism, Confirmation is a once in a lifetime experience. God’s seal, placed on you at Confirmation, will never go away.
If you choose to accept the Holy Spirit into your life, it can:

- Bring you close to God and Jesus
- Fill your life with meaning and purpose
- Guide you through life
- Help you to make decisions
- Give you special strengths and gifts

There are seven special gifts of the Spirit:

- Wisdom
- Understanding
- Counsel (giving good advice)
- Courage
- Knowledge
- Reverence
- Awe and Wonder

**The Rituals of Confirmation**

**Laying on of hands** – The Bishop / Priest places his hands on the head of the candidate for Confirmation. This is an ancient gesture used in a sending forth ceremony at the time of Jesus.

**Sign of the Cross** - This is a reminder that to live according to the values of Christ, we must expect also to share the hardships this will bring. Jesus lived for others even to death on the cross. With this sign, the candidate is reminded of his duty to be a witness to Christ, to live his Christian life visibly which will involve a ‘dying for others’ so that others will see and also come to know Christ.

**Anointing with oil** - This is a special sign of belonging, of being set apart to do a special task. The Celebrant will say “Be sealed with the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Father.” God places his seal on you as a sign that you belong to him. Because of this seal, we know God is there for us. Oil is a symbol of abundance and joy. Oil is a sign of healing.
If you forgive anyone their sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them they are not forgiven.

*John 20:23*

Also known as Confession and the Sacrament of Penance, Reconciliation was instigated by Jesus in his work of healing and forgiveness with the people of his time. Jesus passed his authority to his Apostles and their successors, the priests and Bishops of our Church.

The sacrament gives:

- Affirmation that we are forgiven
- Grace and power to change
- A new outpouring of the Holy Spirit

The Sacrament is one of the Sacraments of Healing. God loves us without fail and forgives us before we even recognize our need to be forgiven. God’s love for us is expressed in mercy, compassion and forgiveness.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a link with our Baptism and helps us to identify areas where we are not living our calling as members of the Christian community. It is where we need to express our sorrow and call on the Holy
Spirit to encourage and support us on our journey. Reconciliation restores our relationship with God, self and others.

The Gospels are full of incidents where Jesus reached out to the lost, the lonely, the suffering, the broken and the publicly acclaimed “sinners” of his time. In each instance, Jesus invited people to share something of their life story with him. He talked freely with the person, and in doing so, showed the compassion of God to each person.

Jesus crossed barriers to express his belief in all people, he forgave people and helped them to be restored to themselves, their families and their local community. There was always the opportunity for the individual to make restitution and thereby restore good relationships with those harmed in any way.

People, in accepting Jesus’ forgiveness, always went away with a lightness of heart. They were glad of the encounter with him that enabled them to unburden themselves of whatever it was that held them back from being truthful, honest people. This is the experience the Church is seeking to re-emphasise in the modern celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

**Read the story of the Lost Son. It teaches us what the Sacrament of Reconciliation is all about:**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation invites us to acknowledge that when we make poor choices that result in sinful behaviour, we damage our relationships with God, self and others.

Reconciliation is all about building bridges, naming the times we fail to honour others, and make some attempt to make things right. The name Reconciliation
helps us to focus on the social aspect of our wrong-doing and the need to make things right.

Sin is turning away from your relationship with your God.

**You should decide to:**

- Turn away from sin;
- Say sorry;
- Resist doing it again
- **Ask** for forgiveness. (God forgives; despite mixed motives; he meets us where we are; longs to forgive us)

- **Decide** to forgive others.
  
  Jesus taught in the Lord’s Prayer that we **MUST forgive others**

**We need to change our lives.**

- **Turn to prayer**

  **Prayer** – helps to

  - Transform our minds;
  - Change our values;
  - Change our hearts.
There are 3 Rites of Reconciliation.

The First Rite

- Informal
- No set words necessary
- Share sins, express sorrow
- Face to face or behind a screen

Penance is medicine to heal, not punishment.

The Second Rite – (the one we have at St Gregory’s)

- We listen to the Word of God from the scriptures
- We hear a reflection on the readings
- We are invited to reflect on our lives and acknowledge the times when our choices have damaged our relationships
- We are then invited, individually, to come forward to name to a priest one of those areas where we need forgiveness
- At the end of the service, the community receives the final prayers and blessing

Questions for discussion

- Why is making a decision so important in repentance and forgiveness?
- How could you help to avoid sin?
- How could the sacrament of reconciliation help you?
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**Eucharist**

*On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines.*

*(Isaiah)*

Meals, especially celebratory ones, are an important part of life. Conversations, stories and speeches over festive tables are central to our celebration of life with one another.

This human experience of meals, a gathering for word and meal, is similar to the Eucharistic meal.

In the Eucharist we celebrate:

- The saving story of Jesus who leads us out of sin;
- The Lamb of God whose blood is poured out for us;
- The God who is with us on the journey, nourishing us with food and drink;
- The Teacher who guides us on our way and who leads us to the promised land;
- Our fellowship with one another.
There are five written accounts of the Last Super of Jesus. Mark and Matthew, Paul and Luke provide us with the account of the meal itself, the bread and wine, the words and actions of Jesus. Matthew and Mark emphasise the meaning of Eucharist as sacrifice, the wine poured out for the forgiveness of sin. Luke and Paul emphasise the fellowship perspective, the breaking of bread.

Luke really brings these two traditions together (Lk. 22:14-27)

*When the hour came he took his place at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, “I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, because, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God”.*

*Then, taking a cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and share it among you, because from now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the kingdom of God comes”.*

*Then he took some bread, and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to them, saying “This is my body which will be given for you; do this as a memorial of me” He did the same with the cup after supper, and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood which will be poured out for you”.*
The Eucharistic Celebration, or the Mass, is the celebration of a sacrament in memory of the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus. It is also a call to the table where we share the friendship of Christ and each other. The Mass helps us to fulfil the command of love which challenges us in our actions every day.

We will have a greater understanding of the Mass if we know its structure:

- Gathering in faith;

- Listening and responding to the Word of God

- Being nourished in the Spirit as the Body of Christ;

- Being sent on mission as a community for the world.
Questions for discussion

- What is God like?
- What are the actions of the Eucharist?
  - The Sign of the Cross
  - Genuflecting
  - Bowing the head or body
  - Standing
  - Kneeling
  - Sign of Peace
  - Laying of hands
  - Elevating the host and chalice
  - Breaking the bread
- What are the main parts of the Mass?
- What is the correct way to receive Eucharist?
Some Prayers to share as a Christian community

The Our Father
Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

The Hail Mary
Hail Mary, Full of Grace,
The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now,
and at the hour of death. Amen.

The Glory Be
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Sub Tuum
This is a special prayer to Mary, the Blessed Mother of God.
Sub tuum praesidium confugimus,
Sancta Dei Genetrix.
Nostras deprecationes ne despicias
in necessitatibus,
sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper,
Virgo gloriosa et benedicta.
Amen.

We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God;
despise not our petitions in our necessities,
but deliver us always from all dangers,
O glorious and blessed Virgin.
Amen.
The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died and was buried;
his body was buried; where he was taken down from the cross
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he descended into hell;
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.
Rules Catholics live by

The Great Commandment

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; Love your neighbour as you love yourself.” (Luke 10:27)

Jesus’ Law of Love

“Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods.
2. Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Keep the Sabbath holy.
4. Honour your father and your mother.
5. Do not kill.
6. Do not commit adultery.
7. Do not steal.
8. Do not bear false witness against your neighbour.
9. Do not covet your neighbour’s wife.
10. Do not covet your neighbour’s goods.

The Beatitudes

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 5:3-10

Enrolment Form

Sacramental Programme Enrolment

Name:  

Year:  

Name of Primary School attended: 

Sacraments already received  Church where received

☐ Baptism

☐ Reconciliation (Confession)

☐ Eucharist

☐ Confirmation

Sacrament you wish to enrol in

☐ Baptism

☐ Reconciliation (Confession)

☐ Eucharist

☐ Confirmation

Parent’s Name:  

Parent’s Signature:  

Please return to Mrs Clarke, Director of Mission, by