**Parish of St Thomas More Church, Dulwich**

**First Holy Communion 2021/22 Application Form**

Where there is more than one child joining, please fill out a form for **each** child.

Please email your form back to dulwichfhc@rcaos.org.uk or hand it into the Parish Office by **26th September** – by handing in your form on time you will help the classes get up and running on time!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Child’s name  |  |
| School and year group  |  |
|  Parents’ / Guardians’ names  |  |
|  Parent’s Mobile number  |  |
|  Email address to be used for all communication from FHC team  |  |
|  Child’s date and place of Baptism (Please supply copy of baptismal certificate if this was not in St Thomas More Parish)  |  |
| Please state if you can act as a catechist helper (or with another aspect e.g. music)  |  |
| Any additional information we should know about (e.g. allergies etc)  |  |

**Timetable: Please indicate first, second and third preference**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Saturday: 9:30 – 10:45 |  |
| Saturday: 11:15 – 12:30 |  |
| Saturday: 13:30 – 14:45 |  |
| Saturday: 15:15 – 16:30 |  |

GDPR NOTE: We will keep your details on file for as long as you consider yourself to be a member of the parish. If you move away, please let us know and we will remove your data.

**Parish of St Thomas More Church, Dulwich – First Holy Communion Q&A Sheet**

**What programme of preparation are you following?**

The programme we have chosen to follow this year is called “With You Always”. It is fun, interactive, easy to follow and will allow you to work closely with your child as he/she takes this very important next step in his/her faith journey. There are **seven sessions** in total to follow for this programme.

**How often will we be expected to attend? How long will the sessions be?**

We are doing things slightly differently this year because children from two year groups (Y3 + Y4) will be celebrating their First Holy Communion together. We’ll teach the children in groups, staggered across the day on a Saturday. You and your child will be expected to attend **one class per month** and you will be allocated a time slot which cannot be changed, although you’ll be able to express a preference and we will do everything we can to accommodate you. You’ll get the relevant dates as soon as we have them. Each class will last **1 hour 15 minutes**.

**When and where will the classes take place?**

Classes will take place in the John Paul Centre (the hall) at St Thomas More on one Saturday a month during **term time.**

**My child struggles with reading/writing, will there be a lot of reading/writing?**

We have chosen this programme because it is laid out in a fun and accessible way and isn’t too overwhelming. The catechists have been trained to help each child as much as possible and we will be on hand to support anyone that needs it. Please don’t worry, but if you do have a particular concern, please share it on the application form and with whoever is leading your child’s group so that they know how best to be of help.

**Where do the parents go when they have dropped off their child?**

In order for this to work well, we hope that a few parents from each group will be able to stay with the children to support the catechists and to help make sure that things run smoothly. If you feel you might be able to help with that, there is more information coming up below. Those parents who don’t stay with the group will go to the church to spend time with a member of the clergy for a relaxed chat about the session and to find out how best to support their children.

**How will you decide which group my child will go into?**

You’ll find the time slots on the application form, and we would like everyone to give us three preferences, so that we can allocate the groups as fairly as possible.

**I have two children joining, will they be in the same group?**

Yes. Unless for some reason you would prefer that they weren’t.

**Can I make sure that my child is in a group with his / her closest friends?**

We are going to have to juggle a lot of names and class preferences and keep in line with Covid safety procedures**, so we won’t be able to accommodate requests for particular children to be together for the classes**. We will try to be as fair as possible when allocating the time slots, so please bear with us. Once you have been given a day / time, please don’t ask to change it as it just won’t be possible this year.

**Can I bring siblings to the class?**

We ask that you don’t bring siblings to the class because we have to keep numbers down for Covid safety reasons.

**When will the sacrament of reconciliation take place?**

Our plan is for this to happen on a Saturday during Advent, before school breaks up for Christmas. We will give you the date as soon as we have it.

**When will the celebration of First Holy Communion take place?**

Our plan is that the children will receive Holy Communion for the first time in the summer term of 2022, mainly in the second half of term, again in small groups. We know that you will be keen to find out exact dates, and as soon as we have them, we’ll let you know.

**What will happen if there is a future lockdown, how will classes run then?**

In the event of a future lockdown, we will do our best to continue helping your child prepare for their First Holy Communion. We expect this will involve a combination of Zoom and some pre-recorded materials for the children to work through with their parents at home. We are very mindful that the situation may change and we’re hoping for the best but preparing for the worst.

**Will the catechists have DBS clearance?**

Yes.

**Will catechists be First Aid trained?**

Yes.

**I’m not sure about being a parent helper, what does it involve?**

It mainly involves supporting your catechist by handing out materials and helping to keep group discussions going in a productive manner. You won’t be expected to lead any classes - that’s the catechist’s job - but it would be great to have your support! Once we know who is definitely going to help, they’ll need to have a DBS check, which will be paid for by the parish.