

## **Confirmation Beginnings session with Parents and Candidates**

Our programme is 12 sessions long. It is designed to help you establish a relationship with Jesus. This will be achieved in four ways:

1. Lead you to knowledge of the faith;
2. Teaching you to pray;
3. Celebrate the mystery of the mass;
4. Live in Christ and be introduced to community life.

### *1 Knowledge of the faith*

We are using select sessions from the Lifeteen confirmation programme called Purpose. Set out in an interactive and engaging manner – you will develop in your knowledge and be challenged. As you arrived tonight each candidate was given the Purpose Story guide. Every week you will be requested to read the week's session in advance and asked to answer in writing one to two questions. This reading is background to the main teaching for that week. To ensure the two hours you spend in the Sunday confirmation session will be efficiently and effectively spent, dedicate the 15 minutes required to do this, as then you will have a background understanding of the topic and have already started processing your understanding of it.

Parents, this Story guide is for you too. It will help you understand what we have covered each week and enable you to kick off a discussion with your child. Please do reserve the time each week to do this and if your child's sponsor is close, engage them to do it sometimes. The journey your child is on is a community journey and you and their sponsor are very much a core part of that community supporting them on this journey.

### *2 Teach to pray*

Relationships do not form without spending time with the other person – so similarly if we don't spend time with Jesus how can we know Him? However, as Jesus is not physically present, the development of this relationship can just seem like too much hard work and a one-way effort! So, with guidance and experimentation of what works for you, you will be supported to develop this relationship with Jesus.

Each week's session will contain a prayerful examination of the Sunday's readings so when you attend 6pm Sunday mass they will have already become a part of you through explanation and prayerful contemplation, putting you in the best position to listen to the homily.

The retreat for this programme has purposely been placed at the toward the end, so that confirmation candidates can experience a prayer filled day to reflect on their journey, decide on their commitment to their faith and receive the healing power of reconciliation.

To normalize what should feel totally natural, praying as a family is very important. Please say grace before meals, at least once a week, sit for 5-10 minutes as a family following the teenage examination of the week as a family that you can find on Pray as you Go, sometimes pray the rosary and pray together before important decisions, tests, exams etc

### *3 Celebrate the mystery of the mass*

The mass is where we meet Jesus – we meet him in the liturgy, in communion and in the community. Hence there is no greater form of growing in faith than attending mass and receiving its grace. To want to do this, you have to understand it, participate in it and most importantly open yourself to it. Therefore a critical element of this programme is the mass. We will spend time understanding it and involving you through youth masses every second week so this becomes a celebration, with your friends and community, you do not want to miss.

I recognize that currently not all of you attend the Sunday 6pm Mass. However, for the duration of this programme, please where possible look to reschedule your lives to make this every week or at least every second week, so your family can grow with your child, learn the songs that will be sung at the their confirmation mass and provide the support that the wider community contribute to this journey.

### *4 Life in Christ and Community life*

Journaling is an important reflective exercise that enables us observe where Jesus is working in our lives. Both in weekly preparation and during the session there will be opportunity to make confidential reflective notes.

Your involvement in the youth masses are an important contribution to the community of St Alban and St Stephen and the action you decide to take post the homily, is the mission we take into the world. As a family, discuss this what each member has taken from the readings and the homily and what their response is going to be.

As part of this life in Christ, we offer you the opportunity to attend Flame. This is a not to be missed opportunity to see what the church looks like when you are with 12000 other young people and experience Christian music worship at the quality and level of a pop star concert.

Flame 2023 is exactly 150 days before World Youth Day in Lisbon and it takes the WYD Scripture “Mary arose and went with haste” and crystallizes it into the theme “Rise Up!” Rise up after the pandemic, Rise up as young Catholics, Rise up – as Mary did – for the surprising and beautiful adventure that is our Catholic faith. To try and give you a taste of what it is like I will play the promotional video. [VIDEO]

We have booked 40 places and currently 28 of you have confirmed you will go. Based on your greater understanding of what it is and the amazing opportunity offered, can I suggest that you chat to each other, decide if you now wish to attend and please let me know via email. Please note, I will release these tickets back before year end if not taken up and then there will be no option if your child decides later. So please do give this due attention now!

Finally, fun. This is often an element that can get lost in trying to paint a picture of the key elements of programmes. However, fun is a critical element of the programme and a key success factor for me. We all need to enjoy the process and it is a the heart of the interactive design of the sessions.

Hopefully from this explanation you understand that missing sessions is really not an option. Dates have been well publicized, so please do everything to support your child to attend and be well equipped for this journey they are embarking on.