

Resources and practices that might be of help to parents

1. At Mass

Please make sure you and your child preparing for First Communion or Confirmation each pick up a copy of the newsletter/service sheet.

Encourage them to follow the Mass in the sheet, joining in the singing of the songs of the Mass, and making the responses. Encourage them by your own example – and by reminding them verbally, if necessary.

If you and they are not familiar with the responses and prayers of the Mass, you will find it helpful to have a copy of How we pray the Mass (see below) or a Sunday Missal.

Many people find having a Sunday Missal helpful. In addition to its usefulness at Mass, it is especially helpful as a resource for preparing for Sunday Mass, or returning to the readings and prayers following the Mass.

2. At Home

Family Prayer

Some may already have the practice of saying the Rosary together or having prayers before bedtime. Different things suit the circumstances of different families.

Do try to find a regular weekly time for family prayer together.

Alternatives include

- **Using the *Wednesday Word*** leaflet available through some schools.

If you do not have access to *Wednesday Word* then simply read together at the Gospel of the coming Sunday and talk about it. Help for parents in preparing to ‘talk about it’ is offered at <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Children-s-liturgy> But please note that the CAFOD sheet uses a different translation of the Gospel to that heard at Sunday Mass. You will find the translation used at Mass in a Sunday Missal, or on-line (free of charge) at <https://universalis.com/mass.htm>

- **Praying together at the end of a Sunday** – looking forward to the week to come, and re-reading the Gospel of the day (from the parish newsletter or Universalis or a Sunday Missal)
- **Keeping a regular day/time each week for a family Mercy meal** – and begin with a conversation between those present – each mentioning one thing they are thankful for, one thing they are sorry for, and one thing for which they need help and support. You might end the conversation by saying the Lord’s Prayer and then saying grace as you begin to share the family meal together – and let the conversation get underway again, this time less formally!

Your child’s private prayer

It would be good for them to have

- **A Bible** – probably the best versions are either the Jerusalem Bible (which is the version we presently hear at Mass – nb The Jerusalem Bible not the New Jerusalem Bible or the New Revised Jerusalem Bible, which are new translations) or the Good News Bible.

- **A prayer book.** For Confirmation age children two worth considering are the *YouCat Youth Prayer Book* and *Confirmation: A directory of Faith and Prayer* both available from the Catholic Truth Society and Amazon. For younger children, you might find it helpful to visit the St Paul's Book shop by St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham and see what they have to offer.
- **A rosary.** If you are not familiar with praying the rosary, there are many simple guides to praying the Rosary. One is *The Rosary for Young People*, by me, and available from the parish shop.

Your private prayer

- You may find it helpful to have a copy of the *YouCat Youth Prayer Book*. A classic reflection on how we can mature in our understanding what prayer is about is *The God of Surprises* by Gerard Hughes SJ. A more recent publication is *Learning to Pray: A Guide for Everyone* by James Martin SJ
- Many people find the *Universalis* App helpful. It gives the readings for Mass each day, and the texts for the Church's *Morning and Evening Prayer*. Check it out at <https://universalis.com/>

3. Additional resources

For adults wishing to refresh their understanding of their faith I would recommend these are four that I recommend to parents preparing for the baptism of their children.

- **YouCat** A good and general introduction to our Catholic Christian faith. Three further books I recommend to parents preparing for the baptism of their children
- **How we pray the Mass** (Explaining the Mass to young people of Confirmation Age). Authored by me (!)-available from the parish shop.
- Thomas Richstater: **The Mass a guided tour** is available via Amazon, (including a Kindle version)
- **DoCat: Catholic Social Teaching for Youth** is also available on Amazon. *This explores what are the implications of Christian faith for our daily lives. It is especially valuable for those seeking to better understand what Christian faith has to say to contemporary life.*

To help parents and children renew familiarity with the story of Jesus you might like to watch the film *The Miracle Maker*. It is an animated feature based on the life and ministry of Jesus, and has proved to be a powerful and popular resource with families. It is something you can helpfully refer back to in conversation with your children during the year – a sort of touchstone for the way in which Jesus touches people's lives. *The DVD is presently available to buy for £6.00 new from Amazon, or it can be rented on Amazon Prime for £1.99 or bought for repeated viewing on Amazon Prime for £2.99.*

- *Some of the books above are most easily obtained via the parish shop, others will be available through Amazon, as well as being available from St Paul's Bookshop next to St Chad's Cathedral on Queensway in the City Centre. As well as stocking lots of books for adults – including YouCat- they carry a wide range of books and resources for children which you might be interested to see.*

Fr Allen Morris
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