

Confirmation at St Mary's

Confirmation is often characterised as the "Sacrament of Farewell." Young people when they reach year nine have the opportunity to receive the last of the Sacraments of Initiation. They pledge themselves to grow in faith, to follow the Lord more closely and to work for a better society.

Through Confirmation they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and then many of them depart. There are many reasons for this including the almost unstoppable tide of secularism.

Our Confirmation programme is called "TRUTH" and it seeks to explore the question posed by Pontius Pilate, "Truth what is that?" Through the programme our young people are asked to think about what it means to be a Christian person and how we can live our Catholic Christian values in the world. Ultimately, we hope that the answer to Pilate's question will be written in the hearts and minds of our young people as we recall the words of Jesus. "I am the way the truth and the life" (John 14:6)

Our young people will be encouraged to keep a journal, to note their questions and to draw on inspiring material provided that will help them focus their thoughts.

They will also be encouraged to use the method of enquiry known as See, Judge, Act. This starts by asking what are the experiences that young people are going through. Then using the great resource of our Christian heritage, the questions of how these experiences affecting our young people are explored. Finally, we ask what can be done to use the knowledge that has been gained to live the Christian vocation. This is a practical catechesis which we hope will help our young people to become "missionary disciples" and live out more fully their baptismal vocation.

The programme is delivered over a six-month period, there is a certain amount of doctrinal content which focusses on the sacraments of Initiation, the question of faith and social responsibility.

We also encourage a service projects and these can be decided on by the group in the course of their meetings.

We are always indebted to those adults in our parish who give their time and energy to accompany our young people as catechists on their confirmation journey. Without their help it would be impossible to run this programme.

We would however remind parents that it is the young person who needs to decide whether the time is right for them to be confirmed and whilst we encourage your whole-hearted support of your children we would counsel against you insisting that your child has to be confirmed. This is not helpful at their stage of spiritual and human development. Having said that, we assure you that we will do our best to encourage even the most tentative enquirer.