

Diocese of Leeds - Catechesis and Religious Education Service
Collation of questionnaire on Preparation and Catechesis for
First Sacraments: Eucharist and Reconciliation/Catechists

1. Number of replies: 26

Catechists: Who is involved?

2. For the catechists involved, please give the following details:

Number	What is their experience and training?	How many years have they been involved?
2	32/27 years' teaching experience/Head Teacher	3,9
3	Courses at Hinsley Hall, Eucharistic Minister, parish Eucharistic course	Several, 2
9	Teaching assistants/teachers in catholic schools, theology degree, evening at Hinsley, Christianne Brusselman talks.	17, 12, 3, 2, 14, 25, 4
3	Workshops & guidance from other catechists	17, 1
2	Teachers who have worked for 20/30 years in catholic schools	2 as lead catechist/several years supporting, 20 years
3	Teachers in Catholic schools, CCRS	15, 10, 14
2	Training days with RE Centre, PP, Children's Liturgy beforehand	10, 10
3	Catholic Teaching Cert., 15 years Sunday liturgy	11, 13, 5
2	Learned from experience, 2 intro sessions from Sr Mary B & input from Theresa Laverick	10, 8
4	All primary school teachers	10, 9, 5, 20
2	'On the job', diocesan courses	10, 10
8		8, 5, 2, 2, 2, new recruit
1		
2	Teacher/RE co-ordinator, diocesan meetings, on the job	18, 4
7	Various one day seminars, CCRS, Theology degree.	12, 10, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2
1	RE Co-ordinator in primary school, M.Ed, Diploma in RS, Catechetical courses	Endless!
1	Various courses at Hinsley H. and in parish	14
2	10 years running CLOW & helping with First	1,1

	Sacs, parents.	
2	Teacher, CLOW, Parent, Governor, diocesan training courses,	20, 18
1	Attended diocesan training in last 4 years when offered.	4
1	CCRS, various study days, children's liturgy	5
1 (plus 3 mums)	Teacher-B Ed, catholic teachers certificate x2, distinction in theology, 30+ years teaching RE- St. Michaels College- primary	25, 2
1	Catholic College, Teacher/Head in Catholic Schools,	12
7 Plus at least 5 parents	RE Co-ordinator, Assistant Head, SEN support, trainee teachers, teacher, brownie leader. Parents volunteer for the year their child is making FS. This changes every year	9, 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, over 10
1	Teacher in Catholic schools since 1973, CTC, Y3 teacher for 6/7 years when sac prep was part of school RE curriculum	14
1	Teaching cert, teacher in Catholic primary schools.	40

3. In what ways are catechists helped and supported?

- Advice and support from PP and Deacon as required. Practical input from PP and Deacon at specific times in the preparation. Assisted by a parishioner who contributes to discussions and activities and prepares many resources for the sessions.
- New catechists work with experienced catechists, purchase of leaders' guides, informal discussion, recruitment of parents as catechists.
- Meetings with parents, enrolment mass, new beginnings mass, family mass, first communion mass.

- Timetables altered, classes restructured for 1 session per week from Jan to end of June.
- We have all attended meetings/courses held at the former RE Centre. We are helped & supported throughout our programme by our PP & deacon. They are on hand at all times to give advice & support.
- With music for masses, production of prayer cards, booklet for FHC day. Help and advice from previous co-ordinator.
- Have attended seminars put on by diocese
- PP, school & parish. Special masses. School meetings/celebrations. CLOW and some parents.
- Prayers of parish. Finance to buy materials/attend training.
- Discussions within the groups and pass on any unforeseen problems to co-ordinators/PP/Head Teacher. Catechists also attend the preliminary meeting prior to a new programme.
- The PP is fully supportive.
- Supported by PP re organisation of preparation & financially. PP has 3 meetings for parents throughout the programme.
- Catechists have regular
- Catechist attends all co-ordinators' meetings and INSET days. Reads and keeps up-to-date. Discussion with all involved in process including other school staff. Linda Pennington (Parents' Programme)
- Mainly by PP or Hinsley H. if requested.
- Materials, active involvement of PP. Help, advice & support from parish school.
- Catechists work in collaboration with parish priests. Get full support from school eg giving out info to parents, providing channel of communication, resource. We try to involve parish in supporting us with prayers & they provide prayer sponsors for each child. Parish also provides facilities of parish hall. About a dozen parents each year volunteer to help with preparation sessions & provide support for the children but do no teaching.
- In past have felt able to ask school & other priests when more help needed.
- Catechists have regular meetings to discuss programme planning, training required, share ideas and progress of current group. All catechists in the parish are being encouraged to attend a CCRS course and we have a meeting set up for this month (May) to move this plan forward.
- Encouraged to attend various study days. They can discuss issues with parish priest. A working party to contain first holy communion catechist
- By priests and co-ordinator. We have devised our own scheme since preparation was removed from year 3 in school. It consists of stories and practical matters on Sunday morning after mass followed by homework from a workbook the children are given. Parents are supported by session given by priest and co-ordinator on reconciliation and eucharist.
- Parents are very helpful & supportive. PP is always there to help.
- All have catechist guide books. Discussion at end of every session about any problems arising.

- PPs have supported and organised the timings and venues of the meetings. They have organised parents meetings to run alongside the children's preparation.
- By parents of candidates

4. What further help and support for catechists and clergy is needed?

- None at the present time
- Future courses for catechists would be helpful
- Training - Expectations; Coverage of Topics; Clarification of Issues; To keep up to date with relevant & current church teaching
- Generally level of support OK
- Firm guidelines.
- Any training days to help improve sessions.
- Further seminars - updating
- More training resources perhaps eg videos
- Talks by well-informed people would be helpful
- Variety of ways of preparation/catechesis (Is this good or do we need to rationalise)
- None, from my point of view.
- We think we're doing OK but there may be needs we are not aware of!
- We feel the programme is running very successfully although we always appreciate more support.
- Deanery/diocesan approach & suggestions for FHC Mass would be helpful
- Dealing with children and parents in broken marriages/grandparents to be increasingly taking more responsibility. Sharing good practice with other parishes. Support for CCRS programme (currently in contact with Linda Pennington). Day of reflection/renewal for catechists.
- Some aspect of a longer supported study/certificate. An availability of a register or similar of connections from different parishes within an area to gain new ideas and advice.
- Perhaps a more comprehensive 'scheme' to use which gives notes for parents who are less well informed. We take the message from the baptismal ceremony that 'parents are the first + best teachers of their own children' - the parish is there to support them
- Possibly sessions for our own Church catechists and PPs or discuss with other groups for good practice.
- Not sure. I have attended courses which have been helpful and would like these to continue.
- Very difficult to suggest anything further in view of whole parish being involved in preparation for building of new church.

Preparation: What programmes are used?

5. What catechetical programme/s do you use?

- *God's Greatest Gift (GGG)* - 5
- *I Belong (IB)* - 10
- *We Celebrate the Eucharist/Reconciliation (WCE)* - 3
- Our own - based on Brusselman & others. Developed in school.
- *Called to His Supper (CHS)*, supplemented by *WCE* & *GGG*
- *Called to His Supper & Making Things Right* - 2
- *Called to His Supper*
- Catechist compiles own 'workbook' for use with children, based on essential elements of both sacraments. Draws on various programmes ie *WCE*, *HIA*, *Veritas - Come to the Table*, various pictures.
- The Brusselmans scheme (*Gold Book* only) supplemented with other ideas (see below)
- *Making Things Right: Called to His Supper* and *The table of the Lord*, and also *The Forgiveness of the Lord*
- *Loved & Forgiven* - Sr Joan Brown; *We Celebrate Reconciliation* - Brusselmans; *Meet Christ with Joy* - Sr Joan Brown; *GGG*

6. What are the benefits/good points & drawbacks/gaps of the programme?

Benefits/Good Points	Drawbacks/Gaps
<p>I BELONG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent Presentation • Children seem to like it • Child friendly - 2 • Easy to follow • Uses every day life as a starting point • At the right level • Appealing • Well structured • Well linked with Scripture • Topics reflect sequence of mass • Group discussions • Guidance for leaders (extension ideas) • An easy and well explained book for children, parents and catechists • Colourful • Starts from children's own experiences • Encourages a lot of discussion 	<p>I BELONG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm not so sure programme emphasizes enough that Jesus is really present under the appearance of bread & wine. Obviously this needs to be done in a way that children can grasp • Would like a greater range of activities suggested • Poor level of support for celebration masses • Rather repetitive in structure • Needs to address responses in mass in greater depth • Insufficient time • More ideas for parental involvement needed • Lack of support for non-catholic parents • Too much reference to Jewish

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on Old & New Testaments with stories familiar to the children • A variety of tasks included • Children's books easy to understand and suitable for 7/8 year olds • Simple for the parents to help children at home • Based on the Bible • Geared towards 7+ • Children enjoy word searches • Very wide reaching teacher's & parent's notes help adults to develop their own understanding • The book is colourful & busy, the children seem to like the various activities • This book is broken down into 10 sections and each one goes through a part of the mass. • I like the way each section is the same: Everyday life, OT, NT, Church, Everyday life. • It shows the children the same theme in the Bible, in Church (mass) and how they should act in their own life. • Beautifully presented, levelled well at this age of children. Plenty of reference to scripture, good structure, nicely concluded in each section. • Has good illustrations and activities eg children love doing the word searches & colouring pictures - we have competitions and give prizes. 	<p>Passover - only needed once.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of work covered in each session and children have to do a lot of 'finishing off' at home (which can be an issue for some) • Books not suitable for children over 8 years. A more advanced programme needed for 8+ • More demanding exercises needed - rather than colouring • More material on the sacrament of Reconciliation would be useful • Very full programme-recommended to be undertaken over 10 months. However parish/school often end up doing it in less time which makes it feel rushed. • There is a lot to get through in 45 mins but I do not feel myself or any of the other catechists can give any more time for extra sessions in our very busy lives. • Children have quite a bit of homework to do and some parents do not keep up to it. • A lot of content; we need to rely on parental input to do nearly all of the practical activities ie pictures, wordsearches. • Difficult for children of this age to understand so need other supplements
<p>GOD'S GREATEST GIFT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catechist & Parent based programme • Has a variety of activities • Is structured through 10 specific areas • Children enjoy the activities • Child centred - drawing upon individual experience • Children take photocopiable sheets home - linked with class to share with parents (eg P39 linked with 	<p>GOD'S GREATEST GIFT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chapter on forgiveness deals with forgiveness of others very well but could be further developed in relation to the actual sacrament of reconciliation - it is too vague • Too much photocopying if use full programme • Not enough about First Reconciliation preparation • Not an RE teaching programme as such

<p>Reconciliation Preparation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children & parents enjoy using the book • Focuses on introducing children to a personal relationship with Jesus, which is the basis of faith, at a level they can understand eg Jesus as a friend who loves them, and in a way which is relevant to their experience. • Strong emphasis on the role of family/parents in prep. • Encourages parents to spend time with children & share faith • Children enjoy format of meetings & we have an excellent record of attendance. • Can keep book as record of prep. • Well presented clear diagrams • Ideas given for further ideas • Nicely presented, biblical references good and structure easy to follow. 	<p>but one of personal experience which we consider an advantage rather than a drawback from the point of view of catechesis. School provides the background with HIA and there is a large overlap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority of parents do not spend as much time on prep as would be desirable but children have benefit of monthly sessions. • Lots of colouring-alright for girls, but not boys • Seems to be a gap between school and church-maybe because we use different books. Fresh ideas need to be constantly introduced on all sides of triangle to keep preparation of this sacrament alive and welcoming to encourage continuation of church attendance after eucharist. • Nowhere near enough biblical references. I think the level is too easy for the children, does not stretch their thoughts or knowledge. Too much emphasis in the children's book on colouring in and one word answers.
<p>WE CELEBRATE THE EUCHARIST/RECONCILIATION (GOLD/SILVER BOOKS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children usually enjoy the programme • All the catechists are very familiar with this programme • It appeals to the children • It is written not only in child friendly language but also in parent friendly language - especially for those parents who may not be 'of the faith' • Main programme is CHS but we use the themes here for our celebration masses (eg 3 - Eucharist is about listening, the children are presented with A Children's Catholic Bible at 	<p>WE CELEBRATE THE EUCHARIST/RECONCILIATION (GOLD/SILVER BOOKS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't really do much preparation for First reconciliation - need to use other resources for that • Booklets expensive • A bit too American • Silver book does not go into enough detail about the actual Reconciliation/Confession logistics - though I appreciate this is difficult as parishes may vary. • Lacks creative and imaginative projects for group work • Overall the book needs some updating in the following areas:

<p>celebration mass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illustrations/photos used in class • Lovely books that the children treat as very special • We can plan set dates & lessons using the chapters in the book • Structure • Good children's book to reinforce work at home • Parents and catechist guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandparent's contribution needs to be acknowledged • No reference to Home, School, Parish • Photos • Paper not good for drawing •
<p>OWN PROGRAMME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental programme runs alongside • Parish ceremonies - involves whole parish community • Gives more children the opportunity of joining the programme • Continuity/stability • Qualified teachers as catechists - hopefully respected by parents • Supports parents in their role as catechists 	<p>OWN PROGRAMME</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captive audience in school • Some children not well supported at home • Some parents 'opt out' • Seen as school responsibility & duty
<p>CALLED TO HIS SUPPER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves parents (eg story of My Baptism, Who would you like to pray for) • Children enjoy filling in missing letters & dot to dot - emphasises key words. • Coverage of the Last Supper • Excellent catechists' guide • Lots of supplementary activities • Simple lay out • Parent's notes • Very well presented • Easily understood & enjoyed by children • Divides into the time available • Children like it • Points for discussion • Good as a springboard • Simple stories, easy for all to relate • Links with different parts of the Mass we ask the children to identify each week • Workbooks have easy language and 	<p>CALLED TO HIS SUPPER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of colouring - but we don't push it • No catechists' guide for Reconciliation • None that I am aware of. I am extremely satisfied with the whole programme. • It's American so some spellings etc & festivals eg Thanksgiving • Would be good to find one single course which would combine everything we are looking for: eg lessons for catechists but work for children to do with parents at home (enclosed own scheme of work)

simple explanations

- Notes at the back for parent referral
- Things for the children to do
- Not too weighty!

7. Do you use any additional resources for First Eucharist and/or First Reconciliation?

- The programme requires a variety of practical resources, which often take a quite a while to assemble or prepare. A parishioner assists in preparing resources.
- No - 3
- Some of the games are home grown eg the Mass game (questions related to the Mass), name the things used for Mass ending in pass the parcel, making bread, listening game, role plays, making cards, sheep & chickens etc.
- *God's Gift* - worksheets etc for use at home & school. Video for parents: Baptism (CAFÉ resource) Helping your child get the most from life.
- We do tap into other resources particularly to help with First Rec prep eg *To God with Love & Sorrow*.
- *Here I Am - My Eucharist/Reconciliation Journey. Making Things Right. We Celebrate Reconciliation.*
- Bibles available, candle & drapes, prepared short booklet for First Rec.
- Catechists' previous experience through the years.
- We have some word searches, dot-to-dot sheets.
- For First Eucharist we occasionally use videos and music. At parent's session Marcellino D'Ambrosio. We have group sharing, explaining the liturgy and children's programme using prayer sheets.
- Yes, including the *Gold Book*.
- Own material for the logistics of confession & communion
- Anything I find that is helpful & supportive for me/children.
- Only the obvious for practices eg bread & wine.
- Yes we have a wide range of resources for CLOW and we can draw on them.
- Have evolved own First Rec celebration with support from school & parish
- Ideas from '*I Belong*' (Redemptorist Publication) and '*God's Greatest Gift*' (Bernadette Wilson). The catechists also provide a superb selection of songs, stories, drama and artwork from their own wealth of experience to complement the theme. These ideas are discussed in our planning meetings.
- Items I have prepared particularly items which allow the candidates to make things (craft) corresponding with given topic.
- For parents we have a mass with commentary, sometimes discussion groups
- All given '*Let's go to Mass*' book
- I have used many of my personal resources over the years and added many bible stories before I came across '*I Belong*'.
- '*My book about Forgiveness*' and extracts from other sources.

8. Is preparation based more in the parish or in the school?

- Entirely in the parish - 3
- School - meetings fortnightly after school; celebration mass after topics in church
- In the parish mainly
- School - 1
- Both, but school co-ordinates the entire programme so it is weighted more to being in school
- Parish - 9
- For the past 2 years more in school, planned by teachers
- In the school except for children attending non-catholic schools, which is based in the parish
- At the moment it is parish based but we use the school and most of the children are from school so we and the children tend to feel it is extra school work.
- School - with as many links with parish as possible.
- Parish but support from school
- Parish - Our school serves 2 parishes. Both follow same programme and co-ordinate prep as far as possible. At end of course we have joint session for all children.
- Parish - school serves 3 parishes & backs up I Belong programme
- Both
- It is now taught entirely in the parish. Having taught programmes in school and in the parish I am aware of a great deal more preparation carried out in school. Disadvantages are where there are children who do not go to parish school.
- Parish - I see & instruct the children for 30 mins before Mass on a Sun morning. None of the children attend a Catholic school.
- Most preparation in school

9. At what time of the year does the preparation begin and when are the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation celebrated?

Beginning of Prep	First Reconciliation	First Eucharist
September	Christmas	
Jan - May	A Sat am in Lent	Sun - end of May
September	December	May
F.R. Oct F.E. Jan	December	April/May
For parents - Nov For pupils - Jan	Lent	June
For parents - Oct For children - Nov	Tuesday of Holy Week	2nd Sat in May
Jan - May	Prior to Holy Week	May
Jan	June	June

Feb	Lent	Around Corpus Christi
Sept	Advent	May
Jan	May	June
Jan/Feb - May/June	When children are 10/11	June/July
For parents - Sept/Oct For children - Jan - June	March/April	June
Oct	Dec	May
In one sense prep is on-going throughout time in school but immediate prep starts in Jan	March	May - 2 Suns
Nov - Reconciliation Jan - Eucharist		
Nov	First Sun March	Sun nearest Corpus Christi
Sept	Lent	
Oct/Nov	Lent	June
After Christmas	Just before Easter	June or when parents are ready
January	Start of June	Start of June
Jan	March	May/June
Oct	June	June
Jan	March	June
Oct/Nov	Lent	Early June
Sept	During Lent and a second time nearer to FE	Pentecost

10. How are the preparation sessions organised? (how often/where/with whom/what is the format)

- Before the programme begins the parents are invited to a meeting to look at the materials we use, discuss the structure of the programme and their input and to raise any issues or concerns. The child protection procedures are also explained. This session is attended by catechists and parish priest. The two catechists plan & organise the programme together and inform each other of its progress.
- Every Tuesday, 3-4pm, in the sacristy using I Belong. Led by catechists.
- Approx. alternate Tues, 3.15 - 4.15pm, held in school. (This year an extra group, unable to join us, meet separately). Format - Juice & biscuits, intro to topic led by one catechist; small groups facilitated by catechists; gathering together at end if appropriate.
- Catechists and children meet every Friday 5-6pm, except holidays. We meet in a room in the church building. We begin with prayers, discuss & read the Gold/Silver Books. We have a break for juice/biscuits and then do various activities eg write cards to prayer partners to invite them to the different masses, rehearse

readings for Mass, play relevant games etc. There is also a retreat day in March:
10.30 am - 4.00 pm (Sat)

- Weekly in school, 1 hour session for children. 4 evening meetings for parents (without children) between Nov & June. Presentation - Jan; Penitential Rite Services in Mass - Sundays in Lent.
- Each chapter of *We Celebrate the Eucharist* is done as follows: 1st part done in school with teacher during school time. 2nd part done after weekend Mass with catechist. Parents are present for the 2nd part. This happens every 3-4 weeks from Nov to March/April.
- We have about 9 sessions of 1 hour 15 mins after 9:30 mass in church hall, with both catechists and any parents willing to help.
- Approx 1 per month depending on school hols. Usually 2 during Lent. (7-8 classes in all. Held in the church hall on Sat am. All 3 catechists.
- Sessions are once a week - 1 hour immediately after school (3-4pm) with a teacher & catechist(s).
- In consultation with PP. Meetings with parents 5 times or when requested. Meeting with neighbouring parish at school = twice. With children = 14 times. Special masses = 3. Meet at the parish centre or church.
- Once a week for half an hour before Mass. 2 sessions are used to cover each of the 9 lessons. Additional sessions are used to prepare for the Reconciliation & Eucharist services.
- Fortnightly - parents in the parish centre with 2 co-ordinators; children in small groups with 2 catechists to each group using the school classrooms. Sat evenings 5.15-6.15pm.
- Catechist takes the children for 1 hour every Sat am from Jan-June with the exception of half term & Easter.
- Preparation sessions are organised as 1 session per chapter of the Silver /Gold books and a couple of extra sessions. As we use the school preparations have been each week in term time. The last few years were after mass on a Sun, this year they have been on a Mon evening. Children are split into 3 groups. Sessions are with the children only. Parents have 3 meetings with PP in the church hall in the evenings.
- Parent Prep: Sometimes led by catechist, former HT, PP. RE Team (Nigel, Mary B. Theresa, Linda) at various times. In school/parish hall, 3-6 sessions.
- During school terms after 10 am mass on Sun in church. Lessons last approx 30 mins. Lessons are taken by catechist & supported by PP.
- We meet weekly before Mass (10.30), Mass starts at 11 am, we join the congregation at the Offertory. This year, for the first time we have asked a parent to stay with their child.
- 9 sessions, once a month in parish hall after 9am mass, which children are asked to attend with families. Children are taught by 2 catechists and about 10 parents help with supervision & activities. Sessions last from 10 am - 11.25. We have teaching time in 2 groups, activities in smaller groups and a singing/prayer/Bible time with full group to finish (35-40).

- Varies depending on number of children involved and time allowed. Currently 2 children, prepared approx weekly in Church coffee room on Fridays. Parents remain in room usually having conversation/coffee.
- Sessions take place weekly on Sunday and start $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before Mass. The children return to Mass along with the Children's Liturgy groups at the Offertory. We use the nursery school which is alongside the church. Because of numbers most catechists attend all sessions and 1 or 2 parent helpers. Other parents are welcome to stay. Catechists in turn take overall responsibility for preparation, leading and running each session. The other catechists help when we break into smaller groups. 1 person takes responsibility for materials and props and another for dealing with parents and admin. Each session starts with a song/prayer and the day's theme is introduced. The children split into small groups to discuss, work in Gold Books, produce some artwork. They then return to the main group for drama, story, visual display, summing up, prayer, song.
- Usually in Church Hall on a Mon eve 6-7pm; at about every third weekly interval. However because of small group sessions this year held in childrens home-more personal, involves family
- Prep each Sun after 9am mass, children in Hall with Catechists: Story, register, talk about story, homework given, ask children to watch out next time for different parts of mass.
- There are 10 sessions each 45 mins. We fit them in from Jan - June & avoid school holidays. Sessions take place in rooms underneath Church, on Sun, from 10.15 and children are then taken into Church at the start of 11.00 mass. Children work in small groups of no more than 7 with a catechist and a parent to support.
- Weekly in the presbytery with catechist. Present PP meets and sees the children at the end. Some parental meetings have gone on at the same time in a different room. Previously it has differed enormously depending on the PP.
- Day varies each year after first parent's meeting. Meet weekly (except school holidays). WE only have a portacabin to meet in. Opening prayers; lesson; closing prayers (sometimes rosary). Cards stamped for Mass attendance.

11. During the preparation period are there any celebrations for the children during the Sunday Eucharist? If so how many?

- Before the children begin the programme they are presented to the church community and the support and prayers of the church requested.
- No but we are looking to begin this
- Yes - 6
- Yes - 3 plus 2 on Fridays
- Presentation Ceremony, Penitential Rite.
- Chapter 1 is preceded by the Rite of Enrolment which takes place during Sun Mass. At all other sessions children attend the Sat evening or Sun Mass

beforehand & always write & read the bidding prayers & take part in the offertory procession.

- About 3 masses.
- Every class is followed by a Sun celebration (7-8)
- Yes, this last time just one - an enrolment mass, which encourages parents to bring their child forward for enrolment onto the programme. The children are encouraged to come each Sun to join in the CLOW
- Children join in with CLOW and have 3 special masses with the parish at 9 am Sun mass.
- Presentation of enrolment certificates.
- The children generally attend the 6.30 mass and the priest draws the theme of the session into the mass. 4 children present the offertory gifts. After 1st session children present their certificate of enrolment to the priest. After 3rd session the priest presents children with a cross on a red ribbon as a sign of insigation.
- The children attend 9.30 am Mass and the CLOW
- Children are enrolled and introduced at a Sun Eucharist before they begin the Silver books, then given the Gold books in a Sun Eucharist later in the year.
- Rite of enrolment at beginning of programme - at each Sun Mass on a chosen Sun.
- 2-3
- Usually 1
- Children attend 'normal' mass before their sessions. They take part in CLOW.
- 2
- The intention is that the children celebrate the Eucharist after each session with their parents and most of them do! We have one occasion where the children all sit together at the front of church to get a clear view of what is going on. At another Mass they are called out and presented to the parish.
- Enrolment of the children is usually held on a Sat. Vigil mass. Presentation of crucifixes, word of God/candles held on Sun 11am mass
- There is a gospel class which the children used to attend but when the numbers reached 85 this was too many for the class to manage! So First sacrament children stay at mass.
- No - 2
- We have celebration Masses during the 11.00 service after every 2nd session ie 5 celebrations.
- Presentation Mass at the beginning of the programme.

12. What preparation takes place for Reconciliation and how is this sacrament celebrated?

- When the chapter on forgiveness is completed, the priest inputs into the session enabling the children to discuss the form of the sacrament of reconciliation

- I Belong programme, several rehearsals. Format: penitential service with children going to open confession within the sanctuary with individual penance & absolution
- Children's Meeting/Parents' Meeting; rehearsal in school & church; short penitential service prior to individual reconciliation; trying to develop a celebration eg this year gave balloons 'Jesus Loves Me'; Peace Tree
- Same as First Eucharist but no retreat day
- Preparation: Jan/Feb weekly sessions - Zacchaeus & Prodigal Son stories; Veritas Scheme - notions of choice and showing/not showing love. Families escort children to Church on Sats during Lent when their child is ready. Usually groups of 4-6 children will be considered ready each week but they go with parents to the usual times for confession
- Most of reconciliation is done in school. The sacrament is celebrated in the evening of Tues of Holy Week with a Penitential service for children, parents & catechists & the opportunity for children to make an individual Reconciliation.
- A special mass is held one evening during the week only for the candidates and their families.
- Time is spent in the Sat class - the children are given a 'Let's go to Confession' leaflet from 'Alive with His Life' scheme. Parents are asked to look at it with their children. We have a penitential service for parents & children, followed by First Confession.
- The preparation is incorporated into the programme we use. Celebrated in church with parents & children with a simple liturgy.
- Prep from Oct half term to Advent. Special celebration at school.
- 'Making it Right' workbook completed at school. An evening service with music & prayers, open to parish.
- Takes place during the Sat am classes in Feb/March. Sacrament is celebrated with parents.
- Silver Book used. Children divided into 2 groups for Reconciliation which takes place in a special time in the early evening. The PP welcomes the children & says a prayer. While children are going into confession the catechists play music (usually Taize) and have appropriate readings. PP finishes with a prayer.
- Children are prepared by me during RE time at school. Reconciliation is celebrated at church within the context of a penitential service which catechist organises and which is led by PP. Children do readings & prayers & we sing appropriate hymns. Parents introduce their child to the priest. Reconciliation is in an open setting. Parents also avail of the sacrament.
- Preparation after Sun Mass. First confessions are celebrated separately on Sat am with families.
- Children work through Making Things Right. They receive an invitation to the sacrament and come at a special time. We do activities in the community room, have a feast, have a special service based on Zacchaeus. It's a lovely morning.
- There is a meeting where priests talk to parents about Reconciliation. Prep for Rec is included in the programme with chapters such as 'The gift of friendship' &

'The gift of forgiveness'. Rec takes place in the church in 2 sessions especially for the children accompanied by families (In Lent)

- 2/3 prep sessions around 'I Belong'. Informal discussion with parents. Short service one evening, followed by party for children. This year tried inviting 'youth' along as well, so more young people were there.
- We use the sessions in the Gold Book about Caring and Making Peace to introduce Reconciliation and then add in another session of our own. The children are very young and the parents are also expected to help prepare their children. Parents have a session on reconciliation in the Church today to help them prepare. There is a special Service of Reconciliation (just before Easter) for the children and their families/friends. We also open the invitation out to the whole school. This is a very powerful and moving service and all parents are invited to speak to a priest (receive a blessing if they are non-Catholic). For many parents it is their first experience of 'confession' for years. There is a celebratory meal afterwards.
- The children are talked through what is going to happen and given the prayer of contrition written down. This happens at a penitential service with the parish to allow the children to see all the members of the Church attending this sacrament. The children are given a lighted candle, which they place in front of the altar representing Christ's light, a new start. This allows the children to see the sacrament is not to worry about. They are then presented with their reconciliation certificates.
- 3 sessions of preparation in story form; 1 lesson of practical details, also showing children confessionals in church to accustomize children to place! Sacrament celebrated on church sanctuary, parents go first then children to priest (in a reconciliation service).
- We talk about forgiveness, care, love & thanksgiving. I give each child a card about the sacrament and a simple format including a simple act of sorrow. The children receive the sac of reconciliation the Sat before FHC.
- We have a meeting with the children to explain the sacrament. Each child is give a copy of the Act of Contrition. Celebration takes place at 2 special sessions when the families bring the children to Church & they go to the altar individually for Reconciliation.
- Prep is in the first part of the programme. At our final session before the celebration the PP & catechist take children into church to explain the service and what will happen. Reconciliation has always been on a Sat am with families.
- This year for the first time we had it during the parish service of Reconciliation in Holy Week.

The children: What age and support?

13. At what age do the children make their First Sacraments?

- From 7 years - when the parent/s and child feel they are ready
- Approx 8 but no set age as it is parish based and not based on a particular school year.

- Normally 7-8 years (Y3) - if children ready. Sometimes older children join us if they haven't had the opportunity to receive the sacraments previously.
- About 7 years old
- Yr 3 and above ie 7 years & above - 3
- 7-8 years. Yr 3 in school which means they will be 8 before 31st Aug of that school year.
- Usually in their 8th year (or older) equivalent to Yr 3 - 4 in school.
- 7+ Y3 children - 4
- Children should be 7 by Aug 31st in year of registration.
- Mainly Y3, 7-8 years. Usually have 1 or 2 older children either returning to church or requesting to be received.
- The normal age is 8 years but occasionally there are some who are older ie 9-12 years.
- Usually in Y3, age 7/8 though we have had a couple of older children.
- 8 years of age supported by family, school, parish.
- Age 8 and in Y3 - 2
- 7 years. Increasingly we have older children up to age of 11 who missed out the first time.
- 7yrs.
- 8 yrs old. Yr 3- occasionally some newcomers to the parish are older
- The year they are 8 yrs old.
- Y3 at school - 7 & 8 years old. We always have an older group, this year it ranges from age 9 - 12.
- 7/8 years

14. How do you support any children with special needs?

- We request information about children's individual needs before they begin the programme (GGG). The programme differentiates for all children as appropriate. Expected learning outcomes are matched to the ability of each child. Our support catechist is able to give help on a one to one basis for those with learning difficulties or concentration problems. If we have a child with physical special needs the centre is equipped with a chair lift to access the classrooms.
- Thus far the issue hasn't arisen
- Lots of catechists ensure small group support. Discovered I Belong for SEN. To purchase when needed.
- In accord with the need: we have children with learning difficulties - with behavioural problems. Next year one with hearing difficulties.
- Little is expected by way of written work. They are involved in sessions, services etc. Parents given extra support if necessary.
- They are encouraged to take as active a part as all others. Catechists are made aware of any special needs and give extra support if required eg extra individual lessons.
- We discuss with parents what is needed and we ask in some cases that a parent attends too.

- One catechist is an NNEB Nursery Nurse and another is an SEN assistant at the catholic primary school. They both work with children with special needs.
- Adult support 1-1 when possible. Talk to parents (about sitting down & helping them to do work). Not expecting them to do everything.
- Parents who have SEN children help catechists & sit in with sessions.
- Individual support if required. Difficult words written to copy. We have never had anyone with severe learning difficulties but if we did we could offer Makaton, Objects of Reference, sensory learning materials. Catechist is a teacher of pupils with SLD & PMLD.
- They would be supported by catechists/priests/parish. However we have not experienced any children with learning difficulties.
- Catechist gives them extra help.
- Catechists help children with special needs though we have not really had children with very special needs that may need other support.
- Catechist gives support according to the particular need with the essential support of parents and also school support staff.
- We haven't needed that yet, but it would be on a 1-1 basis.
- None this year.
- We provide them with a personal helper during sessions and work closely with families to adapt the programme to their needs.
- Small numbers of children would enable specific needs to be met.
- As best we can by giving them one-to-one support if possible.
- Talking with parents about child's needs, if necessary taking separate sessions, but involving them in presentation etc. so they feel part of group
- Great reliance on parents who understand their children better than we do- only a problem once with a deaf child- mother arranged for a priest who could sign to hear confession.
- Not had any children with special needs so far.
- We use the special needs I Belong books. In the past one catechist, who is an SEN school support, has worked with a small group of 3 children with this book. This year the children are split among the groups and a parent (not their own) supports them.
- This has never yet arisen
- Adult sits by their side.

Home/School/Parish Links

15. In what way is the parish priest/assistant priest/deacon/parish sister involved in the process?

- There is an ongoing dialogue with the priest with regard to the organisation of the Eucharistic programme. He makes available resources in terms of photocopier and resources to use with the children. He inputs directly to the preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Deacon organises and leads a "Passover

Celebration" held immediately before the weekend when the majority of the group make their FHC

- Parish deacon (also a religious) is involved full time but does not lead the groups.
- PP - Buys gifts for celebration masses and certificates; joins parents' meetings; supports the programme with help and advice when needed; leads celebration masses; organises priests for reconciliation; offers additional reconciliation prior to Eucharist; participates fully on FHC day; pays for training; trusts his catechists!
- The PP is involved with the children & parents throughout the programme
- PPs visit school regularly. PPs meet First Sac candidates at church when group arranges visits eg prior to the sacrament of Reconciliation to 'practise' and prior to the celebration mass for FHC for 'rehearsal'.
- The PP and assistant priest hear individual confessions during Sacrament of Reconciliation. PP attends initial meeting with parents & catechists, conducts rite of enrolment, attends meeting near end of programme to inform parents about the celebration, with support of Deacon, conducts the Mass.
- Before the sessions begin we have a meeting with PP and catechists to discuss dates, special needs and masses to be celebrated.
- PP visits most classes and takes part in the practices for celebration masses.
- PP attends some of the sessions with the children. Helps with prep for Rec. Is involved with planning the programme.
- PP very supportive in every way when consulted.
- Introductory talks with parents. Regularly calls into sessions/sees class at school. Provides admin support.
- Assistant priest visits each family involved with FHC programme.
- PP organises the initial meeting and 2 other meetings for 'all' parents on Reconciliation & Eucharist.
- PP & catechist meet to work out dates. PP very supportive of catechist's ideas. PP leads parent's meetings and the parish pay for the Gold & Silver books.
- Catechist is a parish sister. PP inaugurates programme, presides at the Rite of Enrolment, attends each meeting of the parents' programme & leads the first one, visits children in school.
- PP totally. Back up & support from school & parish
- Father joins us for the first 5-10 mins each week usually for prayer & welcome. He prepares the programme, letters to parents, orders books, puts heating on. Knows the children well & shows them the confessional. Takes the parents.
- PP is involved in the planning of the programme and in providing pre-session masses & sac of Rec. Also organising regular meetings with parents.
- In past 5 years different priests have been involved in different levels.
- The parish priest and co-ordinator are in constant contact over the progress of the children, parents and programme. The PP attends the initial meeting of parish catechists and shares the input at the 2 meetings we have for parents. He also visits as many families as possible in their homes (particularly if a need is identified) and makes time to chat with parents before/after Mass. He supports, finances and encourages any training.

- Discussions about First Holy Communion programmes and planning held with PP who attends first meeting with parents. Visits regularly the meeting encouraging children to tell him what they have learnt
- Very little! Priest, either PP or curate are involved with parent instruction.
- PP is always there to help, support & advise.
- PP runs the programme. He sends out initial letters to parents, collects addresses, and sends out all following letters. He regularly wanders around the groups to see what children are learning and to answer any questions. He also keeps a check on the register and sends letters on attendance if needed.
- The PPs have all supported and organised the programme but left the delivery to the catechist.
- PP conducts lessons with catechist to support him

16. In what way is the Parish Community involved in the process?

- Support the children with their prayers. Participate in the Penitential Service and FHC celebration.
- Basically not at all. We used to put up children's photos until this wasn't seen as acceptable under child protection laws.
- Prayer sponsors; support at celebration masses; music group; parish photographer; welcoming mass after First Eucharist.
- We ask for volunteer prayer partners for our FE children.
- They are invited to pray for all the candidates and are given prayer cards at the Presentation Mass. Photographs of the children are displayed in the entrance. Celebration breakfast or gift given by the Parish to all First Communicants on First Communion Day.
- Prayer sponsors to individual children. Asked to pray for children & families throughout the programme. Children are presented to the parish community both at rite of enrolment and at the FHC Mass.
- We have an artist who comes to do art work with the children.
- Asked to pray for the children (eg sponsors). Renew their baptismal vows with the children. Receive prayer cards.
- Display board in church hall with pictures, drawings etc. Asking for prayers from community. Enrolment mass takes place at a Sun mass.
- During masses, especially 9am Sun mass. Sponsors sometimes involved.
- Act as prayer sponsors. Send a card to each child.
- Prayer sponsors are contacted by letter from the child with a photograph enclosed and a request for prayers. Copies of all the candidates are displayed at the back of church and parishioners asked to pray for them.
- They are present at the Mass when the distribution of 'I Belong' books takes place. Parish supplies the books.
- The parish are asked to sponsor a child with prayer. I would like to have advice on how we could involve the parish a little more.
- Through prayer (bidding prayers for children), as prayer friends, parish community is also school community and vice versa.

- Prayers & attendance. The children involve everybody in their special masses.
- Children are introduced to the community at 11 am mass. Their photos are on the notice board. Good attendance at FHC. General help as needed.
- Parish community gets to know children at pre-session masses (once a month). Provides prayer sponsors for children, each sponsor gets a personal 'thank you' card from his/her child. After each session we display children's work on a special board in the narthex.
- Parishioners interested. Children have prayer sponsors from parish
- The parish are asked to pray for the children and their families during the time of preparation. They also sign up to become prayer sponsors for individual children.
- At the presentations held during the Sunday Masses. Many attend the First Holy Communion. Photos not displayed in Church due to child protection
- Each child has a prayer sponsor. Parishioners are asked to pray for the children in their period of prep. Children's pics are displayed on the sanctuary every week (without names, taken down after mass). Parents of Children who received their first sacraments last year prepare breakfast after mass.
- Before children make their FHC the parish are asked to pray for them. Mothers prepare a party and make a cake. Parish takes part and celebrates the day.
- The photos of all children are up in church (no names) and the parish are asked to pray for these children. The parish also take part in the celebration masses. The Ladies Guild provide a buffet on FHC day.
- We have had prayer sponsors in the past and we acknowledge and pray for the children throughout the prep.
- Prayer ie Bidding Prayers. Scout tent & refreshments after FHC

17. In what way is the school/s involved in the process?

- Schools are not involved as our first communicants are from non-catholic schools
- Excellent support from primary school. Although not involved in preparation, teachers will often attend significant liturgies.
- Provides catechists & facilities/resources for meetings; back up by class teacher; school choir; rehearsals in school time; staff attendance at celebrations
- The children's teachers/headteacher are invited to their FHC Mass and to FR and other liturgical events. A special mass is usually celebrated in school.
- The programme is school based in order to support parents as 'first catechists and educators'.
- Co-ordinates the entire programme from drawing up a list of dates, organising meetings, organising readers etc for each mass, to organising the final celebrations including breakfast for the first communicants and refreshments for families on the day itself.
- Children follow an equivalent programme through school. Some of our children do not attend a catholic school.
- Children are presented at the Mon assembly after each celebration mass and share what happened on Sun. Class teacher re-enforces act of contrition at

evening prayer. Practice singing the Our Father which the children sing with PP at the making peace celebration mass.

- Information about preparation shared on weekly newsletters. Families encouraged to pray for children & their families. Displays in school. Staff invited to Preparation masses. Celebration party in school after FHC Sun.
- Always supportive with help & school assemblies.
- Helps with preparation of hymns/prayers. Liaise re individual needs. Take main Reconciliation prep. Display in school hall. Individual bookmarks presented.
- Photos are displayed in school and the children are remembered in assembly. Headteacher attends all the session masses and when they receive the Eucharist for the first time.
- School prepares children who attend it.
- First Sacs co-ordinator is also RE co-ordinator in school and so it is easy to remind children of various things. Both catechists work in school. Other staff are very supportive & will come to the communion mass.
- Essentially it is a school process.
- Fully supportive to both catechist & children
- School is very aware of children's progress. They help by preparing the leaflets for the day. Children from the school form a choir & lead singing.
- School provides a channel of communication with the parents and practical resources (eg photocopying). They receive a timetable of programme and remind children when each session is due. They provide the RE background on which we build the programme.
- Initially co-ordinated use of same scheme by all feeder parishes - change of priests has altered this. Teachers attend service even if only one child from their class in the group.
- There is constant consultation and visits to the school and they put information in their newsletter and the older children are also prayer sponsors. The headteacher and other staff are involved on the FC Sundays in the parish, e.g. by giving each child a memento, etc.
- The school teaches the children from their feeder churches, drawing pictures, explaining the bible stories. Some of the pics. Are displayed in church.
- Very little now.
- Children not at Catholic schools
- School does the Bible part of each section in the 'I Belong' book. Children then produce pictures or collages of the story and these are displayed in church. It is very hard when school is connected with 3 churches.
- The children are spread into 2/3 schools. Staff from all schools have always attended the celebrations but have never been involved in the programme.
- Parish does not have school

18. What preparation, help and support is given to parents?

- A meeting is held to explain the programme and the parents' commitment and input. Written details of the programme are given. A contact number is available to them should they wish to speak to the catechists. The catechist is available at the beginning and end of sessions. Children are given a note for their parents at the end of each session; this explains what has been done and how it can be developed at home. Parents are encouraged to organise the FHC day amongst themselves to suit the needs of the group. Assistance is given with this as required.
- Monthly meetings to talk about what Reconciliation & Eucharist actually are. Many have very little idea of what is going on.
- 4 meetings during the year led by a parish catechist who is unable to work with the children due to time commitments: a) Intro to programme; b) First Reconciliation; c) First Eucharist; d) Going Forth; Parent's book; Communication; Evaluation of Programme; Y 4 parents prepare communion breakfast with school cook
- There are 2 meetings for parents during the FR programme and 4 meetings for parents during the FE programme
- 4 evening meetings each including videos/ discussions/ questions & answers, tea & chat, prayer service.
- 2 meetings for parents, one at the start and one towards the end of the programme. Parents attend 'chapter sessions' with children & catechists and are encouraged to ask if they are unsure of anything.
- Any that is needed.
- Series of meetings approx 2-5 depending on PP's commitments.
- 3 sessions for parents: 1) Informal meeting to explain the programme & answer any questions. Organise the format of FHC day. 2) Talks for parents with Theresa Laverick & PP prior to FR and FE. 3) Information about the practicalities (dress help, shirts/ties etc). 4) Parents/carers invited to join in with lessons.
- Parents' meetings. Catechists always available before or after sessions, at mass and with the clergy.
- Intro session - Why do you want your child to receive the sacraments? How can you support them? Session on Reconciliation. Lesson notes giving ideas for things to do as a family.
- We try to help them enjoy the sessions whilst also dealing with the more serious aspects of supporting and helping their children with their books. In this way parents learn & understand more about the mass, faith and Eucharist than they would without the sessions.
- Parent's meetings - 3
- Meetings with PP & catechists. Parents are given a Redemptorist booklet which is very informative. PP explains the meaning of each sacrament though the final meeting is usually more about what happens on FHC day. Parents are told to come and speak to the catechists after school if there is something they want to know.

- Parents' programme as outlined in 10. Parents have personal access for support from PP, Catechist, HT and each other (informally)
- By priest on Sun am when catechist is with children.
- 2/3 parents' meetings. Parents attend each week and are asked to encourage children with homework each week.
- Parents have regular meetings with priests & catechists. Catechists get to know parents, esp those who help in sessions and there is a chance to ask questions and talk to catechists at collection time. We try to make the parents feel part of the programme & encourage them to get involved. We have an excellent relationship with them.
- In past different depending on priest. Current parents (2) offered parent's book. They remain in room during preparation and questions answered as occur. Introductory session explains format to parents.
- There are parent meetings for Reconciliation and the Eucharist to help them see the importance of the sacraments in their own lives and as a family. They have a parents book to help them work with their children between the sessions. The parish co-ordinator is always available before and after the children's sessions to speak to parents and runs extra support sessions as required.
- Each session is explained to the parents telling them what the children have done and encouragement is given to them to talk about it at home. Telephone numbers of the priest and myself are given so any queries or problems can be answered. A full programme is also given to parents
- 3 sessions with PP/curate before prep begins. Referral point after mass if required.
- I see the parents each week & ask for their help & explain what the children have been taught & how the parents can help & encourage.
- We have 3 - 4 meetings with the parents to support them though the programme. At the start they are also given the opportunity to buy the parent's guide to 'I Belong'. Any parent who volunteers as a catechist is given a catechists guide. The PP has a hospitality mass during the programme and invites all parents to attend to explain all the parts of the mass.
- As much as we can by the PP & catechist.
- Meeting with PP - some attend classes

19. What further support for parents is needed?

- None that we are aware of but we hope that they would feel confident enough to make us aware of any further support they felt they needed.
- Maybe to meet them socially and see what their needs are as catholic parents, then try to facilitate needs in so far as is possible.
- Social evening/Away Day; spiritual development; training
- New ideas for Parents' Meetings.
- Sometimes family issues especially mixed beliefs.
- PP is using the new material sent from diocese.

- Possibly a short booklet about the importance of First Sacrs (including Baptism) rather than focussing (by some parents) on a party afterwards.
- Parent's course in Action In Parish ongoing. Parish aware of necessities.
- We feel we need a more detailed prep programme that we can hold even before we begin preparing the children, perhaps 6 months before.
- Perhaps inviting them to attend adult educational programmes eg ALPHA, RCIA. Some parents have taken part in the school gate ALPHA
- Perhaps talks from well-informed speakers would be welcomed.
- Catechist was thinking of sending out a questionnaire this year to get some feedback from parents.
- Evangelisation (adult), Many parents/families are non-practising. School (in some cases) has become the link with Church. Support in finding Jesus/ spirituality within busy, hectic lives.
- None, while ever they are attending church
- Not sure - we will be asking this year's parents how they found it.
- Ideally more home visits from the priests & encouragement to some families to spend more time sharing their faith with their children, but we are well aware of the limitations of the priests' time.
- Parent-friendly literature? How much of their own Eucharistic preparation did they take in?
- This is a BIG question! Ideally we need to give them just as much support, and probably more, than we give the children but in reality they all have very busy lives. Most of them have received no training since they left school, many have wandered away from the church or feel alienated through broken marriages. We need to support them in whatever way we can to return to the church and to recognize their own giftedness and their role as prime educators of their children. Much more effort, time and thought needs to go into supporting and preparing parents in a variety of different and imaginative ways. If we are saying they are the primary and best educators of their children then surely we should be aiming to spend more time supporting the parents than their children. Ideally we need to help the parents to be enthusiastic about their faith, and then they in turn, would enthuse their children.
- Some of the parents are not regular church-goers or not Catholic. Sessions for parents could be offered at key stages through preparation.
- None
- If we could afford it we could provide all parents with a parent's guide. Many of our parents need to be reminded of how to behave in church.
- In the past full parental programmes running alongside the children's programme have been in some years well attended and in others badly supported. This year's less demanding programme has been well attended on the whole.
- PP does his best to stress that parents should be regular mass attenders, unfortunately this is not always the case.

20. Is there any follow-up to First Sacraments preparation and celebration?

- The Final Chapter - Our Gift to God - is explored in a class session immediately before the Passover meal which takes place a few days before the majority of the group receive their FHC
- No we need to look at this.
- 'Go forth & serve' - Children's meeting; parents' meeting & topic evaluation
- There is a Going Forth Mass & party.
- Thanksgiving Mass in school for whole school community, parents & prayer sponsors - usually Corpus Christi or SS Peter & Paul.
- No. We used to run a post FHC group for parents but we had reasonable success the 1st year then no success for 2 further years and haven't tried it since.
- None after the last session 'to love and to serve'.
- No - 5
- The events are celebrated in school and announced in the weekly newsletter. Going Forth mass in school/church. Children encouraged to attend weekly mass plus May Procession, Mother's Day, Christmas & Easter masses.
- Follow up after FHC - celebration on Sun & following week. Catechists always available at all Sun masses through CLOW.
- One follow up session. Party in school. This year PP intends to go to school to offer an opportunity for Reconciliation - autumn term.
- Maybe a post-communion mass
- In the past catechist has organised a 'Going Forth' mass & small celebration after the FHC celebrations but has found it difficult to get the families all together on the same date. It is quite difficult to keep the enthusiasm going for some parents after the communion celebration. Maybe a special class mass for the children - they can invite parents and plan the mass together.
- No - because poor attendance expected
- Training for altar servers. We are always available if & when needed. School carries on with RE
- Children are welcomed back to the usual CLOW.
- Try to maintain contact with children - invite them to parish events for younger people. Would encourage them to become altar servers.
- Not formally but all encouragement is given to parents taking an active part in the parish. The previous year's group is given a card at the time of their 'anniversary' and invited to the sacrament of reconciliation. We need to do plenty of work in this area to make this a success.
- No. The children continue to attend children's liturgy a separate group could be continued. Children who have celebrated the sacrament of communion are encouraged to bring gifts to the altar at Sun. Mass.
- This year children will be involved in Corpus Christi celebration/procession. May/June celebrations too.
- If the parents need help in any way I am there each Sunday.

- About 2 weeks after the celebration children are invited back to church for the last 'I Belong' session. They also take part in the 11.00 service and receive their certificates for the 2 sacs.

21. Any further comments?

- Diocesan guidelines would be helpful. Issues - eg having FHC on a Sat am or a Sun Mass? Sample formats for First Confession Penitential Services. Suggested formats for parents' meetings. Working with parents who suddenly want children baptised so that they can have FHC the same year.
- Would be useful to spend time with other catechists. Non-teachers not always sure they are doing the right thing.
- We have had our 'ups and downs' but generally feel that a Catholic primary school should be offering sacramental preparation. Too many parish based programmes seem to have fallen by the wayside and have gone back into school. Parishes need the support of their school but must feel involved. PPs also should be able to rely on their schools being involved each supporting the other.
- Unfortunately due to our PP supporting 2 churches/masses he has very little time to get involved with sessions.
- The joint preparation programme has worked very well for the past 2 years because there is now a team of 3-4 dedicated catechists (parish & school staff) who work together to plan & deliver the programme. Also the programme is delivered in school and there are no behaviour issues to tackle. The children enjoy the programme and generally appreciate the catechists' help & time given.
- We would appreciate any help from any available resources as to 'follow-up' etc
- The numbers in the parish are 70 this year. 60 of these are from school (where they are prepared) and 10 from non-catholic schools come to Sat am classes.
- I feel First Sacs prep should be seen as parish but it is seen more as school. Children & parents are asked to get a form saying they want to prepare for FS, however school usually sends a letter as well. Yr 3 parents tend to think it is the done thing in Yr 3. I feel quite disheartened when we never see the children in church again.
- I would like to experience/experiment with 'school-gate' ALPHA. Great need for adult evangelisation - children within school setting are not a problem. Need to go out to where people are & not wait for them to fill places in Church! (School has an important role I think)
- While I appreciate that we have to give time to all religions I feel we should as catholic schools be able to give more time to our own religion. Also as our teachers and myself work extremely hard with our children we find that once they leave our school and go to the High School religion ceases to exist. Like many others I find myself asking why do we have catholic schools?
- We feel the programme is successful, with children & families as the attendance figures show. We draw in as helpers some parents who do not normally get involved

in the church. We feel the programme provides a way back into the church for some families. There is still a problem with the commitment of some families once FHC day is over, but we feel that over the years the response has improved and that getting to know the parish community is an important factor in families' further commitment.

- Clear & coherent diocesan guidelines on approach to families who turn up to get child 'done' would be helpful. When I went to training at TASC, Bishop David seemed to say open the door when knocked. More recent vibes from various areas seem to suggest a shift away with more onus on parents to prove commitment before allowing child to be prepared.
- Preparation of first sacraments is such an important time for families and it is also the time when many parents return to the church after a long gap and are struggling. It is a time of great healing and transformation for them (and us) and therefore we need to make every effort through careful preparation, thought and prayer to welcome **all** back into the fold. As a church we need to ask ourselves many questions, one very basic one being how do we deal with those parents who are excluded from communion - what example does this give their children? Children learn through seeing what their parents do. Here in the parish we pay much attention to this situation. Such moments are the occasion of much personal and community grace. The road is open for evangelization. The parents, just like the children, are open to receive. As one parent said today after attending a session with the children, "This has really opened my eyes". So many parents are ready to lap up what the church has to offer at this time of precious preparation - are we ready to harvest the catch? Has anyone thought of running a mini RCIA session for the parents of First Communion children. The Eucharist is 'source and summit' of Christian life and we need to do anything that gives a true sign that we really believe and live this.
- More training days including a selection of ideas and activities used by different Churches. A chance to discuss how other catechists compile programmes. New ideas, new preparation can only help in preparing the children in this important sacraments.
- We hear comments as to the Bishop's thoughts on whether prep should be in school or parish. We'd like more confirmation that by removing preparation to the parish we are in line with the mind of the hierarchy.
- I find it difficult to get through a full programme as I find I have to start with the basics such as making the sign of the cross, simple prayers, how to behave in church, genuflection & why? Explaining why we go to church on Sun & why that is more important than football, brownies etc.
- Certificates are given on FHC day