

Children's Liturgy

Children's Liturgy restarted in November 2023.

Currently, it is led by a group of ten parishioners. A rota is prepared by Jo Farrington for the upcoming school term and each week is allocated to a pair of volunteers. (It is term time only but during the summer holidays fortnightly sessions are continued.) The sessions are mostly taken from the Children's Liturgy Books but we are now also using CAFOD resources.

There is a small budget to buy essential resources for the children to use, eg card, felt tips, tissue paper, glue sticks.

At first numbers were quite small (3-4) but as time has progressed and word has spread we have more children participating: sometimes as many as 30 children per session.

Children are attending from lots of local schools: St Joseph's, St Anthony's, Briar Hill, St Patrick's, Coten End and Bishops Tachbrook. There are also preschool children attending with their parents.

The children's work is shown on a display board for the parish and parents to see in the hall.

Recently many of the team attended an evening for 'Leaders of Children's Liturgy' with Carol Ann Barnett. She advised on how a session should be led. From September, there will be a few changes such as: there will be a table with the liturgical colour displayed with a cross/candle, we will include a Penitential act and the artwork the children produce will be attached to a board and taken to Fr David during the offertory.

I think all of us who are involved are very proud of how far it has come and are excited about the future. If anyone is interested in joining us and would like to volunteer on Sunday mornings, please let us know.

Catechism

Reconciliation and the Eucharist

This is the second year of Catechism which has been offered to the children of the parish attending non-Catholic schools wanting to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Sarah Sims and Jo Farrington lead these sessions after 10.00 am Mass every Sunday (from January-June.) “I Want to Make My Home in You” is the resource used to support and guide the children. There were three children attending this year, one was a younger sibling who contributed to the sessions but was too young to receive the sacrament.

Two children received the Eucharist with the children of St Joseph’s school in June.

On a personal level, Sarah and I discussed how we felt leading these sessions. Our faith became stronger and it made us reflect more deeply. Seeing children respond to God with trust, wonder, and sincerity reignited our own devotion. Their questions often challenged us to grow and seek better answers.

Confirmation

This year we used the **Alpha Course** in the form of Youth Alpha to offer to all those preparing for Confirmation. Helen Green with assistance from Fr David, Nick Green and Claudia Pallister led the sessions. Although the young people from year 6 were invited, in person and with a letter to parents, none of those from our school attended, but four from our church were more regular at Mass and very much enjoyed the course. It has been followed by a few sessions and with the hope of soon establishing a regular monthly meeting for all those who have been Confirmed. We are planning the preparation for next year with a realistic understanding of how much the school is able to offer now that sacramental prep has been taken out of the RE curriculum and can only be given some very short sessions in school time.

Adult Formation

A fairly small adult Alpha had taken place last year and we have no fixed start date for the next although there are some possible participants now.

The Catholic Leamington “**Come and See**’ course was followed by those who were interested in becoming Catholic including two from St Jospeh’s who were received into the Church at Easter. It involved learning Catholic teachings, values, and morals in a relaxed setting, with opportunities to ask questions.

Baptism Preparation for families of babies and young children was led by Fr David, sometimes with assistance from Claudia and Tony. We don’t often have enough families at one time to get a group together for this.

Something Greater – was an initial 8 week course being offered to parishioners as we reported last autumn. It was aimed at those called to be a catechist, or discerning another area of ministry. Sessions were led by local clergy and other speakers, and after the first 8 weeks it was followed up by four weeks in spring and three (four we planned) in the summer on themes suggested by participants. Sessions were held at St Mary Immaculate, except for one in Kenilworth open to a wider audience on the subject of Childrens Liturgy with a speaker who addressed principles and practice. Six of our leaders were able to take part. We aim to provide four sessions each term in the deanery for ongoing formation and support. One session was on Synodality led online by the priest who is the national lead, and this is informing our continued use of its principles and specific parish session planned here soon.

Jo Farrington