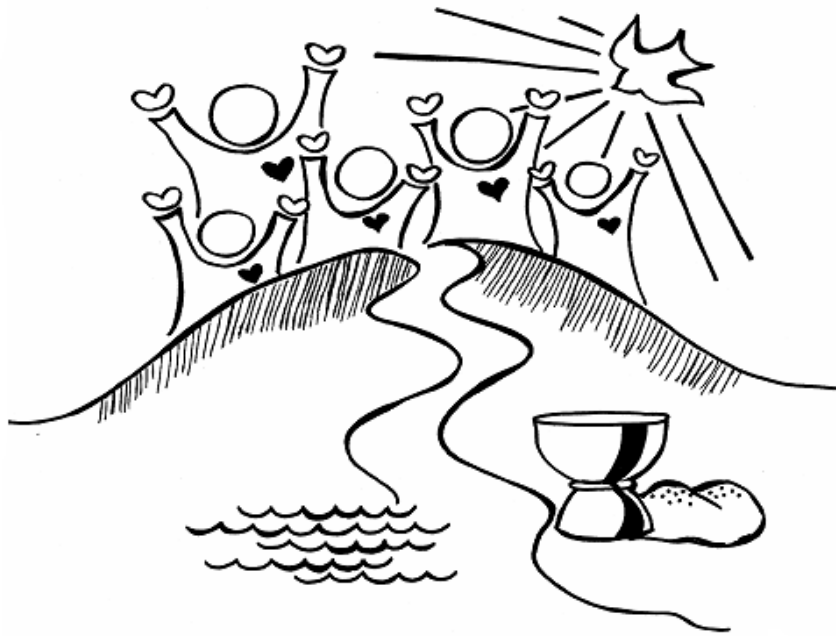




# *Steps In Faith*

*Celebrating*  
*Confirmation, First*  
*Eucharist & Reconciliation*  
*At St Mary's Echuca*

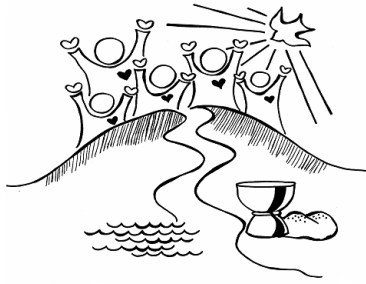


***Sacramental preparation in the Diocese of Sandhurst and so in the Parish of St. Mary's, is parish based, family centred and school supported.***

This approach to sacramental preparation is primarily spiritual, where the adults and children journey in faith together and grow in awareness of the sacraments in their lives. By its nature this preparation process contains teaching about the sacraments that is developmentally appropriate. It cannot contain all the teaching because faith education and learning about the sacraments is a life-long process.

Children learn much about life and faith from the ordinary, everyday happenings in families, but families often do not name these experiences as faith. The sacramental preparation process may be the first step towards this linking of faith and life. There is a very real need to affirm parents in their role and remind them that they are the first and primary educators in the faith development of their children.

*Steps In Faith: A Parish Approach to Sacramental Preparation* is the basis for sacramental preparation for families and parish. The Catholic School has responsibility to support this process with continuous systematic catechesis on the sacraments.



# Steps in Faith

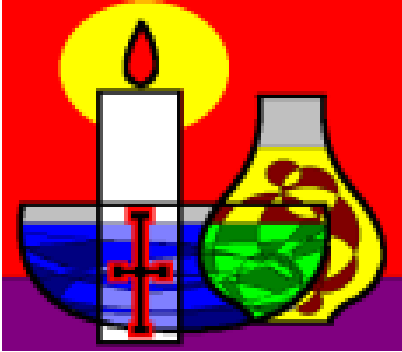
**A Parish Approach to Sacramental Preparation**  
is founded on the following belief statements:

## *We Believe . . .*

- ◆ That children belong within the parish community.
- ◆ That the parish community embraces the Sunday assembly, school community, families, parish pastoral groups and the wider Church community.
- ◆ That the parish community takes the responsibility to welcome, gather, affirm, empower, educate, support and challenge itself along with the families of the candidates for the sacraments.
- ◆ That Sacraments of Christian Initiation and Penance lead people into the mystery of faith, calling them into experiences of and relationships with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- ◆ That the mystery of Jesus Christ is manifest in the Tradition, stories and life experiences of our Church.
- ◆ That Tradition, stories and experiences are named, proclaimed and joyfully celebrated through scripture, prayer, ritual and symbols culminating in the Sunday Eucharist

## *So that . . .*

- ◆ All may become disciples of faith within a faith community.



## *How it works . . .*

The journey to the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation for children is based around families supporting their children on the journey.

To enable this families gather for Faith Formation Evenings, where the adults have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Sacraments, while children are involved in group work to develop their understanding.

At the initial Faith Formation Evenings families form neighborhood groups with 4-6 children in each group, these are known as Family Groups and subsequently meet weekly to work through the “Times Together” booklets which are distributed at the initial Faith Formation Evening.

So as to be aware of our need to turn to God, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the first to be celebrated, there are four Family Times Together before this celebration.

The Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist are celebrated together. There is a series of Faith Formation Evenings and Family Times Together prior to that date. (*see Sacramental Timeline*).

