

Enrolment Ceremony Template for First Holy Communion



**Suggested format for celebration of an Enrolment Ceremony
within Mass and a Prayer Service outside of Mass.**

Rationale

Ideally the best preparation for First Eucharist/First Holy Communion is taking a child to Mass regularly and immersing them in the life and worship of the faith community. Parishes across the Diocese of Meath now facilitate a preparatory programme for children preparing for First Communion.

Many children now receive First Holy Communion at a regular Sunday Mass in their parish and preparation is parish rather than school based. Others are prepared both at school and in the parish. Where this is the case, it is important that what is being taught at school and at home are in harmony.

The purpose of the Enrolment Ceremony is fourfold:

- To encourage the children to make public their commitment to preparing for First Holy Communion within the parish community
- To highlight the importance of partnership in the preparation programme for First Holy Communion
- To make the connection with Baptism more tangible by renewing their Baptismal Promises
- To invite the children to make a commitment to personal prayer, to community prayer by attending Mass, to take seriously all the preparation for First Holy Communion, at school, in the parish and at home and finally to do their best to be kind of person that Jesus would want them to be. We also invite their parents and guardians to witness this commitment and to promise to help and encourage their child in their endeavours.

THE RITUAL

In the context the Enrolment Ceremony has five main elements.

1. Promises of Children.
2. Promises of Parents.
3. Promise of Priest.
4. Promise of the Community.
5. Renewal of Baptismal Promises

PREPARATION:

Within Sunday Mass

- The Paschal Candle should be lit on the sanctuary or at the Baptism Font. A bowl containing holy water should be prepared on the Sanctuary.
- Local needs and the capacity of Church will determine if the Enrolment Ceremony is celebrated at one Sunday Mass or all Masses on a given weekend.
- An invitation should be sent to all parents from the parish inviting them to enrol their child for the Sacrament of First holy Communion.
- Prepare a leaflet containing the questions and responses. Consider printing them in the parish newsletter.
- A parent should be invited to lead the Prayers of the Faithful.
- In some instances, parishes may wish to prepare an 'Enrolment Certificate' to be presented to the children after the conclusion of Mass.

Outside Sunday Mass

- Music organised in conjunction with teachers and children.
- Candles for each child to take home after Enrolment ceremony.
- An invitation should be sent to all parents from the parish inviting them to enrol their child for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion.
- The Paschal Candle should be lit on the sanctuary or at the Baptism Font.
- Prepare a leaflet containing the questions and responses.
- A number of parents should be invited to proclaim God's Word and lead the Prayers of the Faithful.
- In some instances, parishes may wish to prepare an 'Enrolment Certificate' to be presented to the children during the Service.

Enrolment Ceremony for First Holy Communion

(Within Sunday Mass)

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Priest:

Today we gather for Sunday Eucharist and extend a warm welcome to the children who are preparing for the celebration of their First Holy Communion and members of their families who will support them on the next step of their journey in faith. As members of this faith community, we too, will support and pray for them as they prepare to celebrate this sacrament. We pray that our time of preparation will afford all of us, children, parents, and our community the opportunity to grow in God's grace.

*To make more tangible the connection with Baptism, a **Sprinkling Rite** should take the place of the Confiteor in the **Penitential Act** this Sunday.*

Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Water

Altar server holds bowl of water in front of Priest:

Priest:

Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly beseech the Lord our God to bless this water God has created, which will be sprinkled on us as a memorial of our baptism. May God's grace help us to remain faithful to the spirit we have received.

Brief pause of silence...

Almighty ever living God, who willed that through water, the fountain of life and the source of purification, every soul should be cleansed and receive the gift of eternal life; be pleased, we pray, to ✠ bless this water, by which we seek protection on this your day, O Lord. Renew the living springs of your grace within us and grant that by this water we may be defended from all ills of spirit and body, and so approach you with hearts made clean and worthy to receive your salvation. Through Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Priest: sprinkles himself, ministers, and congregation

Priest:

May almighty God cleanse us from our sins, and through the celebration of this Eucharist make us worthy to share at the table of his kingdom.

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Readings of Sunday liturgy should be proclaimed by Ministers of the Word.

ENROLMENT CEREMONY

Priest:

Children, in the Grow in Love programme, you will learn that through our Baptism each of us has been called and chosen by God. Every time we gather as a circle of friends, as family, as a parish faith community, we do so in the company of our friend Jesus. As you prepare in a special way in the coming months for the celebration of your First Holy Communion, this community will support you in prayer. As you become more aware of the presence of Jesus among us in Holy Communion, I invite you to affirm your commitment to your preparation for the sacrament. And so I ask you:

PROMISES OF CHILDREN

Priest: Do you promise to take time to get ready to celebrate this important step on your journey of faith?

Children: We do

Priest: Do you promise to try to spend some time in prayer each day?

Children: We do

Priest: Do you promise to try and deepen your understanding of what it means to belong to God's family by coming to Mass every weekend?

Children: We do

Priest: Do you promise to try to be the kind of person that Jesus would want you to be; at home, in school and within the parish community?

Children: We do

Priest: May God continue to bless you and may you know God's love in your hearts and share it with others.

Children: Amen

PROMISES OF PARENTS

Priest: Now I invite your parents and all those who have accompanied you on your journey of faith this far to stand as they make promises which support you in prayer, helping you to recognise and know our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion.

Priest: Do you promise to help, support and encourage your child in their parish programme of preparation for First Holy Communion?

Parents: We do

Priest: Do you promise to be the best of teachers in the ways of faith by taking time to talk to them about their First Holy Communion, praying for them and with them, bringing them to Mass, and helping them to understand what Jesus meant when he commanded us to, "Do This in Memory of me".

Parents: We do

PROMISE OF PRIEST

Priest: As your Priest, I commit to proclaiming the Good News of Jesus joyfully that together we may be a community gathered in love.

PROMISE OF THE COMMUNITY

Priest: As members of the family of God it is our responsibility to support, help and pray for these children.

As our parish begins its preparation for these children's First Holy Communion, it is perhaps good to return to the promises we all made at baptism where we promised to always walk as a child of the light. I now invite everyone to stand and join with the children and their parent as together we give thanks to God for the gift of our faith in baptism and we renew our baptismal promises.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES:

Priest: Do you renounce Satan?

All: I do.

Priest: And all his works?

All: I do.

Priest: And all his empty show?

All: I do.

Priest: Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

All: I do.

Priest: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

All: I do.

Priest: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?

All: I do.

Priest: And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit
and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins,
keep us by his grace,
in Christ Jesus our Lord,
for eternal life.

All: Amen.

*The celebration of the Eucharist continues with the **Prayers of the Faithful***

Prayer of the Faithful

Priest:

Filled with trust that you call us your friends, we come to you loving God
with our prayers. The response is: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the Church throughout the world and in this diocese, that we as the Body
of Christ may be a welcoming and compassionate presence. Lord, hear us.

R./ Lord, graciously hear us.

For all civil leaders... at international, national and local levels... that they
may be peacemakers and promote the greater good for all peoples. Lord, hear
us. **R./ Lord, graciously hear us.**

For all parents, whether delighted or daunted, struggling or thriving, may
they know God's strength and our support in this parish. Lord, hear us. **R./
Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those who are sick in our parish, and those who care for them. Lord, hear
us. **R./ Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the children preparing for First Holy Communion, may they come to recognise the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread. Lord, hear us. **R./ Lord, graciously hear us.**

For all who support the children in their preparation for First Holy Communion: their parents, teachers, catechists, priests, and this community. May they be living witnesses to the presence of God among us. Lord, hear us. **R./ Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the deceased members of our families and community.... Lord, hear us. **R./ Lord, graciously hear us.**

Priest:

Gracious God, you know the prayers in our hearts. Continue to deepen our faith and help us to discover you in our daily encounters. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Enrolment Ceremony for First Holy Communion

(Outside of Sunday Mass)

OPENING HYMN

INTRODUCTORY RITE

Priest:

Good evening everyone and welcome as we gather to celebrate the enrolment ceremony for our children preparing for the celebration of their Holy Communion. We also welcome you their parents and members of their families who will support them on the next step of their journey in faith. We pray that our time of preparation will afford all of us, children parents, and our community the opportunity to grow in God's grace.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, you have chosen each one of us to be here tonight. During this special time of preparation for Holy Communion, open all our hearts and continue to draw us closer to your friendship. Help us become faith-filled followers of Jesus by loving and serving one another in our homes, school/s and parish community.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading

A reading from the book of Exodus

(12:21-27)

When the Lord sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, he will pass over the door. Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Go and choose animals from the flock on behalf of your families, and kill the Passover victim. Then take a spray of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and with the blood from the basin touch the lintel and the two doorposts. Let none of you venture out of the house till morning.

Then, when the Lord goes through Egypt to strike it, and sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, he will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to enter your homes and strike. You must keep these rules as an ordinance for all time for you and your children. When you enter the land that the Lord is giving you, as he promised, you must keep to this ritual.

And when your children ask you, "What does this ritual mean?" you will tell them, "It is the sacrifice of the Passover in honour of the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt, and struck Egypt but spared our houses". And the people bowed down and worshipped.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

The psalm should be sung. It is led by the psalmist, a cantor or the choir. See music suggestions from the Grow in Love programme.

Alleluia, alleluia!

I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Priest: A reading from the Gospel of John (John 15:18-21)

Jesus said to his disciples:

'This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.

A person can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends, if you do what I command you.

I shall not call you servants anymore, because a servant does not know his master's business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.

You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. What I command you is to love one another.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Homily

ENROLMENT CEREMONY

Priest:

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Priest: Do you promise to try and deepen your understanding of what it means to belong to God's family by coming to Mass every weekend?

Children: We do

Priest: Do you promise to try to be the kind of person that Jesus would want you to be; at home, in school and within the parish community?

Children: We do

Priest: May God continue to bless you and may you know God's love in your hearts and share it with others.

Children: Amen

PROMISES OF PARENTS

Priest: Now I invite your parents and all those who have accompanied you on your journey of faith this far to stand as they make promises which support you in prayer, helping you to recognise and know our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion.

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Priest: Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

All: I do.

Priest: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

All: I do.

Priest: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?

All: I do.

Priest: And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit
and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins,
keep us by his grace,
in Christ Jesus our Lord,
for eternal life.

All: Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

Priest:

Filled with trust that you call us your friends, we come to you loving God with our prayers. The response is: **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the Church throughout the world and in this diocese, that we as the Body of Christ may be a welcoming and compassionate presence. Lord, hear us.

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For all civil leaders... at international, national and local levels... that they may be peacemakers and promote the greater good for all peoples. Lord, hear us. **R./ Lord, graciously hear us.**

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Priest:

Gracious God, you know the prayers in our hearts. Continue to deepen our faith and help us to discover you in our daily encounters. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray; together let us pray in the words Jesus taught them:

Our Father.....

Before the Concluding Rite

Priest: I invite the children who are preparing for Holy Communion to come up to the sanctuary to receive a candle. This candle can be lit when you pray at home as a family or when you are discussing the Grow in Love homework or at other special moments shared together at home.

When each child has received their candle:

Priest: Children, receive this candle. May lighting it at home remind you that this faith community joins with you as a circle of faith friends to welcome, encourage and support you. May Christ's light always shine brightly in your hearts, your homes, in our parish and in the world.

All Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
we come before you with open hearts longing to receive your Son, Jesus
in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
Strengthen our resolve to know him more,
to prayer more earnestly,
and to commit ourselves wholeheartedly to our preparation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

CONCLUDING RITE

Priest: The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Priest: May the blessing of almighty God, Father, ✠ Son and Holy Spirit, come down upon you all and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Priest: Our Service of Enrolment is ended. Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CONCLUDING HYMN

See music suggestions from the Grow in Love programme.

First Holy Communion Enrolment Certificate

I, _____, understand that, in the Sacrament of First Confession and First Holy Communion, I will be called to commit myself, to the faith into which I was baptised.

To prepare myself for this sacrament, and as an expression of how seriously I take this commitment, I promise to do the following:

- I will take time to pray to God every day.
- I will try to join with my parish community for Mass every week.
- I will try to be a good follower of Jesus by doing my best to live as he asks, and to treat others and myself with respect, tolerance and compassion.

Signed: _____

Candidate for First Holy Communion

Signed: _____

Parent/Guardian

