0 – Introduction

Aim: Introduce the course and bring the parents on board

# WELCOME [4 minutes]

8.30 pm

**Welcome** to the first FHC parent evening. Thank you for being here, because it can be one the hardest things to give up your time coming to something like this, especially as parents who are already overloaded and just trying to keep things together. You’ve probably made many sacrifices to be here. So, well done and thank you.

**We only want the best for our children**. That is why we are all here. These sacraments will strengthen and nourish you, your children, and your family. It will root us all more deeply as God’s sons and daughters. It will give us all access to God’s love in such a special way that, if sustained, can transform our lives. Preparing to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion for the first time can be one of the most memorable experiences parents share with their children and children with their parents.

**To be a parent is to be the first teacher to your child in the faith.** You are the first Catholic your child has ever known, and your example has formed their vision of being a Catholic.

It says in the YouCat for Kids (page 8): “We are convinced that the crucial place for the transmission of faith is not the classroom, it is not even in church. It might be the corner of the children’s room, a deckchair by the sea, a bench in the garden or the edge of the bed. Nothing can replace conversation between people who like and trust each other. It is only in a space of loving closeness that one can share, disclose or discover the treasure of faith. We can openly ask questions, and learn with and from each other.”

**You may feel unqualified.** It might have been a long time since you attended Mass, been to Reconciliation, prayed or considered your or your child’s relationship with God. Perhaps you do not feel informed enough about God and the Church or how to teach your child in the faith.

The great news is you don’t have to be “qualified**”. All our children need is our time, patience, and openness to exploring the faith together.** God has called you to be your child's first teacher in the faith. **The Church’s job is to support you in this extraordinary calling, not take your place**.

As your child grows up, they may be surrounded by noise and a culture that is sometimes hostile to faith. Our job as parents is to be the voices that cut through that noise and speak directly to our children’s hearts in a language they’ll understand.

Wherever you may be with your faith, **these Parent Sessions will help you** with your conversations of faith at home and allow you to ask questions and get answers, too.

Speaking on behalf of the parish team, volunteer team and parishioners praying for you and your family, we are honoured to take this faith journey with you and your child.

# OPENING PRAYER & OUTLINE OF SESSION [1 MINUTE]

8.34 pm

# INTRODUCE TEAM [5 MINUTE]

8.35 pm

# INTRODUCE COURSE AND CONCEPTS [30 MINUTES]

8.40 pm

## The FHC programme aims to:

Support and enable parents to live out their calling as the first teachers of the faith for their children by:

* Encourage you to lead your children, supported through **parent sessions**.
* Provide **easy handouts** to work through with your children independently.
* Offer **family days** that are fun and prayerful ways to dig deeper into what you’ve been learning at home with your children.
* Running a unique **youth group** for your child to have fun, meet other young people in the parish and grow in faith.
* Encouraging weekly Mass attendance and helping you make faith a part of your daily life at home.

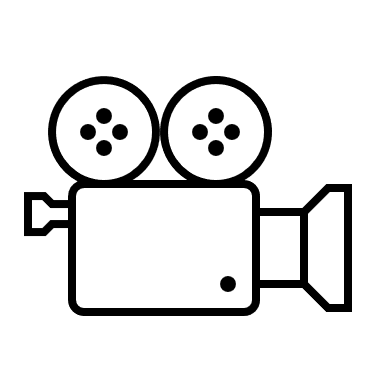
## There are a few strands to this programme.

Please see this as an opportunity for you to evangelise (share the good news) and prepare your child to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion:

### Parent Meetings

These evenings are **just for parents**. This evening is the first of 7 parents’ meetings. These sessions are just for parents and will be an opportunity to explore and rediscover our Catholic faith.

During these sessions, **we will share a story with you that we would like you to share with your children at home**. In our parent meetings, we will regularly refer to the Family Handouts, specially designed to help you structure your conversation at home so you can share this story of our faith with your children.

**You will get a Parent Journal booklet**. It summarises what we cover in the Parent Sessions; it gives you space to make notes and is useful as a reference point at home.

SHOW VIDEO OF TESTIMONIES ([vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/fhc-parent-testimony](https://vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/fhc-parent-testimony)) (0:00 – 02:35)

### Family Handouts and YouCat for Kids

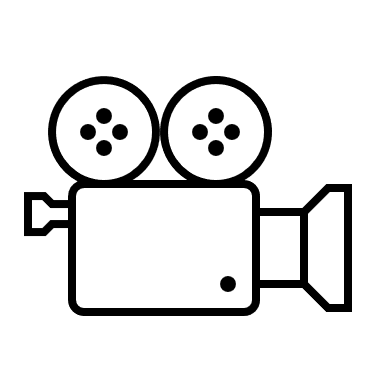
The content of the parent session will **help you with your conversations of faith at home**.

Please **do not see these handouts as homework**. These are meant to be a guide for you. We’ve changed the programme so that it can fit in with your own family life and is not restricted by what we dictate.

You know better than anyone how to talk to your child. Sometimes, we can even speak to our children without words, with a look. You know your child best. What will work for them? If they don’t enjoy filling in handouts, what other opportunities can you create to discuss faith? All we are asking you to do is, every month, to have a faith conversation with your child with a particular focus.

We don’t expect you or them to be theologians and have all the answers. This is about being open to an encounter with God in this special way. **It’s not about preparing our heads but rather about preparing our hearts.**

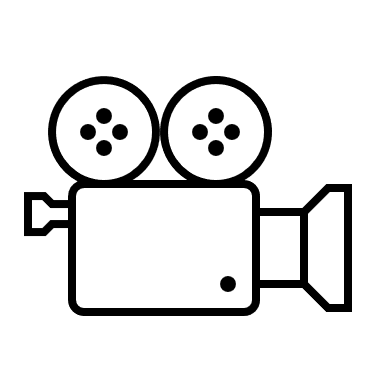
In the handout, **we have also incorporated a resource called YouCat for Kids**. It is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the teachings of the Church, specifically designed for parents and children to read through together at home. Throughout the Family Handouts, yellow boxes point you to a question and a page number that you can find in the YouCat for Kids. It will help to reinforce what you are sharing at home.

****This is how they recommended reading this book. First, read the question and look at the illustrations before looking at the answer. Ask your children to give the little characters names and ask them what they think they are doing. Your children have amazing imaginations and can see faith in amazingly creative ways. Jesus asks us to become like little children. Imagine with your child. We recommend that you approach the handouts in this way, too. Take time to look at the pictures we’ve put in there also.

CONTINUE VIDEO OF TESTIMONIES ([vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/fhc-parent-testimony](https://vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/fhc-parent-testimony)) (02:35-05:09)

### Family Days

**We run themed Family Days.** These are fun ways to dig a bit deeper into our faith and the teachings of the Church. We decorate the hall beautifully with engaging activity stations. You can bring your whole family to explore the different stations together in your own time. The activities run all day, so you can book a time that suits them and stay for as long or as little as they like. We even have a café offering great coffee, tea, milkshakes, and homemade cakes.

****CONTINUE VIDEO OF TESTIMONIES ([vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/fhc-parent-testimony](https://vimeo.com/catholicparishguildford/fhc-parent-testimony)) (05:09-end)

### Fearless

Fearless is a popular and fun youth group, especially for your children**. Children in year three and above are encouraged to join it.** We provide a safe space for children of a similar age to make friends, explore, and grow in faith together. The youth groups are a real blessing in this parish. If you can’t fit in Fearless this year, that’s fine. Life is so busy already with all the after-school activities on offer. Consider it next term or next year.

## The timetable

Other important admin information.

# SMALL GROUPS – GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER [30 minutes]

9.10 pm

## Name Game.

* The first participant says, “My name is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I am \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” (attribute/quality/characteristic that begins with the same as their initial. E.g., My name is Amy, and I am amazing.)
* Then, the second person points to the first person, reminds the group of their name and attribute, and then says their name and quality.
* The third person points to the 2nd and 1st person, reminding the group of their name and quality, then says their name and quality. And so on…

## Getting to know our children exercise.

Ask participants to “bring their child into the room” to share with their group their children(s) name(s) and something about them.

## Hopes and fears exercise.

* What main hope do you have about the FHC course?

Ask participants to write one hope on the same coloured Post-it note and stick it onto the top half of the large sheet of paper. Chat together about what you’ve put down.

* What main fear do you have regarding the FHC course?

Ask participants to write one fear on the same coloured Post-it note and stick it at the bottom of the large sheet of paper. Chat together about what you’ve put down.

# FINAL PRAYER [5 MINUTES]

9.40 pm

\*We look forward to seeing you and your children at the Welcome Liturgy.

Monday group – 7th October | Thursday group – 14th October