



St Paul's Council Meeting, 11th March 2025 Minutes

Attendees: Father Antony, Judy Chen (Chair)

Baptism Group: Francisca Dunbar, Ngozi Adedeji (Parish Lead for Formation)

Children's liturgy: Monica Marneni

First Holy Communion: Edel Fallon, Chuz and Ibidun Maria bekee-Eberendu

Confirmation: Leon Jackson

RCIA: Judy, Ossie Folkes, Liam O'Sullivan

Accompaniers and those interested in catechesis: Antoine Kodjo, Carol Gonzalez, Neville Fernandez

Minutes

1. Feedback from groups

Baptism

Positives: They meet every 2 months. The parents have to watch a series of 7 videos before attending and answer questions, through Microsoft Form which is reviewed by Father. The program in this format works very well. The videos are very informative. The 2 in-person sessions provide space for reflection, prayer and for questions. Non-Catholics and those wanting to learn more are directed to RCIA.

Difficulties:

- Marian has stepped back, now Francisca and Ngozi left.
- It is noted that total annual baptisms have dropped from about 70-80 to about 20/year. Possible causes may be that young parents now choose not to have children or have smaller families. Also many move out of London when they want to start a family because of costs. This has ultimate impact on school attendance as many Catholic schools now have to open to non-Catholics as they do not have sufficient numbers. HC School still have a waiting list.

What might work better: The team want to develop some resources for parents to take home. Father also reminded us that the website has plenty of resources available.

What the team wants: An additional catechist to join them.

ACTION FOR ALL: All catechists who know of resources helpful to parents to pass to Father to upload to the website.

First Holy Communion

Main intake: There are now 2 catechists – Edel and Zdenka. Ann Mellish has stepped back after many years. They currently have 17 children who meet on Saturdays with their parents. 2 have moved away. They use a program called I Belong. 9 sessions before first Reconciliation and then one before first Holy Communion.

Positives:

- 2 young people helping, doing their Duke of Edinburgh awards. This is something which perhaps can be encouraged for other young people in the parish.
- Parents now asked to complete the chapter before the session and this has led to much better engagement from parents.
- They have given 5min time slots for parents to share/present testimonies and experiences based on the topic eg prayer, experience of Easter. This has challenged some parents but it has been a positive experience for the group.
- There is also time set aside for parents to work with their child on a topic.

What we need:

- Both catechists have Y3 children who will be in the program in the coming year, so there is a need for another catechist to join.
- Edel is keen for HC to be an inclusive parish for people with additional needs eg to have inclusive Masses so that people with additional needs can participate better, to have programs which allow for



St Paul's Council Meeting, 11th March 2025 Minutes

additional needs, to ensure people know and welcome those who have additional needs, to have a additional needs register, forms which ask about additional needs.

ACTIONS:

- Judy to give Edel the contact for the Deanery mentor for Additional Needs.
- All teams to incorporate a question about additional needs to their Inquirer form.

Older children FHC (Chuz and Ibidun)

Positives: The program runs when there is a need – Chuz and Ibidun are very flexible and able to run the program whenever there is need. This year some children came but then didn't engage, despite follow up. They also use the I Belong program.

Reflections: There is an observation that often children are not taught Catholic prayers and that they struggle with simple prayers. Families often do not pray together. They are often not familiar with the Bible.

ACTION FOR THE TEAM: To invite families from past years to return to form a community of support for prayer and further faith formation.

Confirmation

Positives :

- The program is going very well and now led by a team of 4: Leon (lead catechist), Rhonda(support), Elli(training catechist), Florence (Administrator). The emphasis is on their own willingness to be confirmed and their own responsibility to ensure they engage as they are treated as young adults making their own decision about Confirmation.
- Prayer is in every session, particularly through use of scripture. For young people, they are encouraged to pray as they can eg spontaneous prayer, conversing with God, use of scripture in prayer. Structured prayer may not help them so much at this stage.
- A session on the Creed was very useful. The young people are encouraged to express their views and ask questions, however controversial or challenging.
- They are actively encouraged to take part in Mass and to ask if they want to take up a ministry. How can we facilitate and encourage this? Challenging them often produces surprise positive results and gives them encouragement.

ACTION FOR THE TEAM:

- To incorporate a session where key leads for each Mass can be invited and candidates can be given the opportunity to sign up to ministries within Mass.
- Plan for adding 2 further sessions to the program.

3. St Paul's Parish Plan: Outcome 1.

Agreed: To deliver 3 sessions for parents to attend. For parents of FHC and Confirmation candidates, and possibly those from Baptism.

ACTION:

- Father to send Judy the dates when these can be delivered.
- Ngozi, Judy, Leon and Edel/Zdenka to meet to think about the program.

4. Formation for Catechists

ACTION FOR ALL:

- All to try to support the current offering of in-person and online Lectio sessions as a means during Lent and Easter to help all of our spiritual growth as catechists.
- To consider practical options, perhaps from Pentecost onwards, using the time slot now dedicated for Lectio divina. Any ideas for areas of formation would be appreciated eg on prayer, on discernment, on the Catechism, Bible study, etc, etc. A ongoing team of facilitators also would be useful.



St Paul's Council Meeting, 11th March 2025 Minutes

- Ngozi and Judy to meet to discuss further and support each other in our roles as PL in Formation and Catechesis respectively.

Action Log

Action	By whom	By When	Progress
Suggest that all catechists to read and re-read Pope Francis' Call to Holiness, Gaudete et Exultate.	All	October 2025	
All catechists who know of resources helpful to parents to pass to Father to upload to the website.	All	On going	
Judy to give Edel the contact for the Deanery mentor for Additional Needs.	Judy	ASAP	Complete
All teams to incorporate a question about additional needs to their Inquirer form.	By All	June 2025	
To invite families from past years to return to form a community of support for prayer and further faith formation.	Chuz and Ibidun	October 2025	
To incorporate a session where key leads for each Mass can be invited and candidates can be given the opportunity to sign up to ministries within Mass.	Confirmation team with St Mary's Council	July 2025	
Plan for adding 2 further sessions to the program.	Leon	July 2025	
Father to send Judy the dates when these can be delivered.	Father Antony	ASAP	
Ngozi, Judy, Leon and Edel/Zdenka to meet to think about the program.	As named	July 2025	
All to try to support the current offering of in-person and online Lectio sessions as a means during Lent and Easter to help all of our spiritual growth as catechists.	All		
To consider practical options, perhaps from Pentecost onwards, using the time slot now dedicated for Lectio divina. Any ideas for areas of formation would be appreciated eg on prayer, on discernment, on the Catechism, Bible study, etc, etc. A ongoing team of facilitators also would be useful.	All	Pentecost 2025	
Ngozi and Judy to meet to discuss further and support each other in our roles as PL in Formation and Catechesis respectively.	As named	May 2025	

Next Meeting: Tuesday 14th October at 7.15 for 7.30pm start
Venue: Upper Room, Hartley Hall.

For thus says the LORD, "By waiting and by calm you shall be saved, in quiet and in trust your strength lies."
 (Isaiah 30:15)