

Dates of Sessions:

Saturday, 6th September	New beginnings, we belong.
Saturday, 4th October	Saints in the making. Living our lives together and becoming disciples.
Saturday, 15th November	Remembering loved ones
Saturday, 6th December	Advent, the GIFT of Christmas
Saturday, 7th February	Lent - Little acts of kindness in action: Prayer, fasting and giving
Saturday, 7th March	Easter – Jesus, risen with joy! Celebrating as a family of faith
Saturday, 9th May	Mary, our loving mother, Finding God in everyday life
Saturday, 6th June	Walking with Jesus, fruits of the Holy Spirit
Saturday, 4th July	Big questions, little voices

If you would like to know more about GIFT please email the parish office at billericay@brcdt.org or email Kristin DeFreitas, our Parish Family Co-ordinator, at kristindefreitas@brcdt.org

Further information can also be found on the GIFT page on our parish website: www.mostholyredeemer.org.uk



At the Most Holy Redeemer our desire is to be able to support all of our families so that they are able to deepen their faith and come to an appreciation of the love that Jesus has for each one of us.

One of the main ways in which our children learn about their Catholic faith is through sacramental preparation but we are aware that the way we have traditionally undertaken this preparation hasn't always produced long lasting fruit. This is often because once the preparation has come to an end there is little that is currently offered to help families continue in their faith journey.

GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) is a new initiative which is intended to provide encouragement to families both before a child has celebrated the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion and afterwards

What is GIFT?

GIFT is for families with children who are baptised Catholics in school years 3-6, whether you are already engaged with your faith and the Church or whether you are seeking the sacraments for your child but not as engaged as you would like to be.

The aim of GIFT is to provide a space for families to come together to learn what engaging with your faith actually looks like and then to walk alongside you in this process. You and your children will be attending the sessions together as well as having separate input aimed at parents and children.

From September 2025 onwards we will be offering monthly faith formation sessions – on Saturdays – to which you will be invited. We will gather to pray, share and learn about our faith together. During the sessions we will engage in activities and conversations that will help all of us to reflect on our faith and on how we can become Jesus' disciples.

How can I take part in GIFT?

You can choose to join GIFT at any time in the year. All you need to do is to complete the registration form which is available in the church or from the Parish Office.

The session dates for 2025/2026 are listed at the end of this leaflet.

Please note that you do need to have completed and returned the GIFT registration form to the Parish Office before you attend a GIFT session.

When will my child make their First Holy Communion?

If your child has not already made their First Holy Communion, then a conversation will take place between yourselves and the parish when you and we feel that your child is ready to receive the sacraments.

The key difference between GIFT and the traditional way of preparing children for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion is that GIFT recognises that not every child will be ready to make their Holy Communion at the same time. Instead, reception of the sacraments will be based upon recognising your child's and your family's understanding of what it is to be part of the Church family.



This means that celebrating the reception of the sacraments will take place in the parish Masses at different times throughout the year rather than on a specific month over set weekends.

Once it has been discerned that your child is ready to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion you will be offered specific resources designed to help you prepare your children for the celebration of these sacraments.

What if I can't make all of the Saturday sessions?

Our hope is that families will attend all of the GIFT sessions but we recognise that sometimes this isn't always possible.

If you know that you are not going to be able to come to a session you will need to let us know in advance by emailing the Parish Office.

When discerning readiness for reception of the sacraments we will be looking at how engaged you are not only in the GIFT sessions but in parish life as well.

If I go to Mass on Saturday do I still need to come to Mass on Sunday?

Each GIFT session includes a short, family-friendly Mass as part of the session however this is not Sunday Mass. We want to celebrate our children's faith journey by inviting them to share songs, readings and other things they've learnt during their GIFT session the following day at Mass.