



A CENTACARE CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICES POST BAPTISM SUPPORT PROGRAM
DESIGNED TO HELP PARENTS WITH THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CHILD'S FAITH

Why GodStart is so important...

Baptism is an important event in an infant's life signifying the parents' commitment to raise their child within the Catholic community. It marks the beginning of a partnership between the parish and parents, whose joint responsibility it is to nurture the child's relationship with God.

Understanding this relationship is an essential part of a child's early development. Teaching a child to know God's love instills confidence, promotes wellbeing, and develops resilience that in turn allows them to grow in love and compassion for others. This love is expressed and reflected through the mutual and positive connection that their parents have with the parish from the beginning when their child is baptised.

The GodStart kit acts as an early learning tool, encouraging faith development, bridging the gap between baptism and formal schooling. The materials provide parents with the means to impart values to their child, founded in the moral and ethical beliefs expressed in Catholic teaching. Using the cards helps parents to have a reason to take time out of their busy schedule and focus on doing activities with their children that are not only fun, but also rewarding.

The GodStart program can strengthen the ties the parish has with families, and assist in the development of the parish community. As parents enjoy the cards and activities with their children, it provides them with the opportunity to invigorate their own faith, encouraging them towards an active and regular participation in parish life.

Centacare's GodStart program is available to assist parishes in their efforts to keep in touch with families in the early years before their child enters school. The program enables parishes to take an active role in helping parents teach their child about the love of God, remembering them through the GodStart Kit, which includes a series of beautifully illustrated cards and prayer book.



How GodStart Works...

The GodStart program is just what its name implies – getting children off to a good start in their relationship with God. Making God important in their lives beginning with their first birthday, right through to their fourth and beyond.

The program is divided into three stages, each stage centred on the parish remembering their youngest members' birthdays. To mark this special occasion, Centacare provides a series of birthday cards, activity cards and a small prayer book for distribution to each baptised child in the parish – from their first birthday, through to their fourth.

Accompanying each birthday and activity card is an instructional leaflet that provides information about how the cards can be used to maximum benefit. Each leaflet is designed to support the various themes of the cards, helping parents to develop their child's understanding of God's love and the wonderful gifts of creation.

The GodStart program is set out in three stages.

Stage One

The first stage of the program focuses on the child's first and second birthdays. Accompanying the first birthday card, the instructional leaflet invites parents and other family members to begin the custom of blessing the child, as an initial stage in developing simple prayer rituals. The leaflet, accompanying the second birthday card, encourages the lighting of the baptismal candle as a way of symbolising God's presence in their home.

Stage Two

The second stage is designed around the child's third birthday when their parents are invited to join a small family group. The main aim of the family group, besides offering support to one another, is for families to share ideas about ways children can respond to God in their lives.

The four activity cards (illustrated) are aimed at encouraging conversations about how to recognise God in our lives through various activities that parents can undertake with their children.

Stage Three

The final stage is intended to encourage regular prayer in the family. To assist with this, a small prayer book is distributed to children on their fourth birthday.

This also presents itself as an ideal time for the parish school to introduce itself to the family as potential partners in the continuing faith education of their child.

Your Parish and GodStart

GodStart is very much a parish initiated program, and can be altered or varied to suit the needs of each parish community. No two parishes are identical and the program may need to be adjusted accordingly. Centacare's Family Resource Project Office can offer advice and assistance to tailor the program to your parish's individual needs, including those parishes in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



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Ordering GodStart Resources

Centacare wants to make it as easy as possible for your parish to offer GodStart resources to families. A sample kit is available without charge. If you would like to place an order, the cost of the first kit will be added to your first order. If you decide you do not want the kit simply return it and you will not be charged. There are discounts for large orders and resource items can be ordered separately.

If you would like more information or would like to order a program kit, please complete this form and return it to Centacare Catholic Family Services.

Name _____

Title _____

Organisation _____

Address _____ State _____ Postcode _____

Tel _____ Email _____

Complete GodStart Kit: \$12 per kit and includes one copy of all items listed below.

- First Birthday Card
- Second Birthday Card
- God Knows My Name
- The Whole World is Full of God's Glory
- Hands
- Me and My Shadow
- Child's Prayer Book

(All cards/activities complete with parent inserts)

Enclosed is my cheque/money order for \$ _____

Please debit my credit card \$ _____

Mastercard / Visa

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Expiry Date: ____ / ____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Signature: _____



GST is only charged if your are not a member of a religious grouping and please note that a 20% discount applies for orders of 30 kits or more. Items can be ordered separately, please contact the Family Resource Project Office for a more comprehensive order form.



For further information or orders please contact:

Family Resource Project Office, Centacare Catholic Family Services, PO Box 196, East Melbourne VIC 8002
Phone: (03) 9926 5654 Fax: (03) 9287 5599 Email: godstart@centacaremelbourne.org.au



Centacare seeks to serve the community in all its diversity.

See our web site at www.centacaremelbourne.org to read our Mission Statement and learn more about our wide range of professionally delivered programs/services and locations in metropolitan Melbourne and Geelong.