

Luke's Story

Ann O'Brien

In June this year our son, Luke, made his Confirmation and First Eucharist. It was a day of celebration and joy as Luke received these sacraments. He, along with the other children, had attended preparation sessions in readiness for the day. Our extended family gathered together to celebrate this occasion with Luke.

It was a significant day for us and the parish community of St James, Coorparoo in Brisbane. Luke has cerebral palsy, is severely visually impaired and has epilepsy.

We have been members of the St James parish for about four years and during that time have been welcomed and included in many ways. As his parents, we lead by example and spend a lot of time talking with people about Luke, sharing stories that give others information about who Luke is. It is through us that the parish community is learning how to interact with Luke.



Luke is the eldest of our three children. We are very fortunate to have three wonderful boys who present us with many joys and challenges. We have the same dreams and aspirations for all our boys; Luke is no different. It is important that he is seen as a valued member of the community, who has much to offer.

There was no doubt in my mind that Luke would make his confirmation and first Eucharist. I was anxious about approaching Fr Brendan about Luke's inclusion in the programme and was very relieved after a short pause to hear Fr Brendan say Luke could participate in the sacramental programme.

During the preparation sessions, it was important to speak with both the parents and children about Luke. It is so easy to see Luke only in terms of his disabilities. The children were fascinated to hear that Luke loved to jump on the trampoline with our assistance and enjoyed eating chocolate.

It was heartening to see members of the parish community congratulate Luke on the day and in the weeks following his confirmation and first Eucharist.

Luke's participation in our parish community is very important. By his very presence he is helping to break down the ignorance and fear that exists around people with a disability. Luke is a courageous and good natured little boy, who has much to offer the parish community of St James.