

Saint Joseph Catholic Church

Religious Education Program



Parent-Student Handbook

2016 – 2017

Saint Joseph Catholic Church
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Herndon, Virginia 20170

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Dear Parents,

On behalf of Saint Joseph Catholic Church and our catechism teachers, we welcome you and your child to this year's Religious Education program. It gives us great pleasure to share our Catholic faith with your children. With heartfelt enthusiasm and a commitment to excellence, we strive for your children to be holy. Therefore, we have created this Religious Education Handbook to better serve you - the parents.

It is our sincere hope that as you read through this handbook you will become better acquainted with our Religious Education programs and made more aware of how you, as parents, can become more involved in your child's religious upbringing.

As always we are happy to hear your input or to answer any questions you may have.

Reyes Ruiz

Reyes Ruiz

Director of Religious Education

PARENTAL AND PARISH COLLABORATION

To raise a child in the Catholic faith requires a collaborative effort of both the parents and the parish. When both work together students receive the most out of their religious education. Therefore, we need your help and support in the following significant areas:

1. MASS ATTENDANCE

Both parents and religious education need to encourage faithful Mass attendance each Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

2. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

Both parents and religious education need to encourage those children under their care to go to the Sacrament of Penance which brings pardon, peace, and strength.

3. FAMILY PRAYER

Both parents and religious education need to foster family prayer in the home and learning basic Catholic prayers.

4. PARENTAL FORMATION

Parents who have children preparing to receive a sacrament this year need to attend the "Parent Meetings." This will enable them to better understand their Catholic faith so to teach in the home.

5. CLASS ATTENDANCE

Students need to attend religious education classes faithfully and on-time in order to nurture effective learning.

6. STUDENT TEXTBOOK

Students need to bring their textbook with them to class each week to be used during class time.

7. COMMUNICATION FOLDER

Parents need to check each week the contents of their child's green communication folder for reminders and any other pertinent information.

SACRAMENT CLASSES

1. BAPTISM

Anyone who has not yet been baptized may receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

- a) Newborn to 6 years old, parents would need to contact the Parish Office at 703-880-4300 for details.
- b) 7 years old (typically 2nd grade) to age 16 (typically 11th grade) would enter into the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC). RCIC is a two-year process offered on Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

2. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Baptized Christians who have not yet received the Eucharist may prepare for First Holy Communion.

- a) 7 year olds (typically 2nd grade) attend First Holy Communion classes on Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (English). All children's First Holy Communion classes are for one school-year.
- b) 8 year olds to age 16 (typically 3rd grade to 11th grade) would attend First Holy Communion classes on Tuesday's Special Sacraments Class 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. All children's First Holy Communion classes are for one school-year (September – May).
- c) Unbaptized children (7 through 16 years old) or those validly baptized in another non-Catholic Christian community would enroll into the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC). RCIC is a two-year process offered on Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

3. **CONFIRMATION**

Baptized Christians who have not yet been confirmed can and should receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

- a) Baptized Catholic children from 12 years old to age 16 (typically 7th to 11th grade), who have already received First Holy Communion, are eligible to enter the parish's two-year Confirmation program. These Confirmation classes are offered on Mondays and Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- b) Unbaptized children (7 years and older) or those validly baptized in another non-Catholic Christian community would enroll into the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC). RCIC is a two-year process offered on Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

1. ATTENDANCE

Effective religious education requires faithful attendance:

- a. Assistant Catechists will record attendance weekly and return the Attendance Sheet in their respective folders for review.
- b. When a student “misses class,” that is they are absent, parents are NOT required to notify the Parish or Religious Education Office. There will not be made any distinction between an “excused” or “unexcused” absent. Since missing a class is time lost learning regardless of any reason, all absences are simply marked as absent.
- c. In the event of four (4) cumulative absences in a school year, the Office of Religious Education will contact the parents of the student in question. School activities, sports practice, vacations, etc. are not legitimate reasons to miss class. More than five (5) cumulative absences in a school year may seriously jeopardize the student continuing in religious education class for the year, and in the case of sacramental preparation, may jeopardize their receiving of the sacraments until the following year.
- d. Being late to class (TARDY) is a disruption to the catechist and the class itself. Any student fifteen (15) minutes late or later for the beginning of class will be counted as tardy. In the event of five (5) cumulative tardies, the Office of Religious Education will contact the parents of the student in question. Every sixth (6th) tardy will count as an absence.

2. CANCELLATIONS

Event cancellation in extraordinary circumstances, such as inclement weather or other emergencies, will be tied to the decisions of the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS):



If Fairfax County Public Schools close for the day, have early dismissal, or cancel after-school activities, there will be NO Religious Education classes or special events. Please check their website at www.fcps.edu for verification.

- a. If Fairfax County Public Schools delay opening, Religious Education and special events still will be held as scheduled.
- b. Verification of class cancellations can be made by contacting the Religious Education Office voicemail at 703-880-4307.
- c. In the event of an emergency during an activity in progress, parents will be notified of a time and place to pick up their children with a message recorded on the Religious Education Office answering machine (Tel. 703-880-4307).
- d. Parents of course are ultimately responsible for the safety of their children and make decisions regarding the safety of attending Religious Education activities as they see fit.



3. TRANSPORTATION, DROP-OFF, AND PICK-UP

To ensure children's safety and their whereabouts:

- a. Students are expected to be taken to and from classrooms by their parents or by another authorized adult to leave them with their catechist or Religious Education Office volunteer; **no children are to be left unsupervised by an adult at any time.** If any person other than a student's parents are to drop off or pick up a student they must provide a signed explanatory note by the parent to that effect to the Office of Religious Education; no children will be released without one.
- b. The front entrance doors will automatically be locked 15 minutes after class start-time and reopen 15 minutes before dismissal. If you arrive when doors are locked, please wait for the office staff to admit you. All early dismissals must check-out with the Religious Education Office. A staff member will then bring your child from their classroom to the front office.



4. RESPECT FOR PARISH AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

As guests of Saint Joseph Parish and School, all persons involved in Religious Education activities are asked to respect the communal (Parish and School) and the private property (catechists, volunteers, school teachers, school students, etc.) of others: vandalizing or stealing the property of others and will not be tolerated.

5. BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

a. Christian learning takes place in a loving Christian environment. For this reason the following behavior, which includes but is not limited to those listed below, will not be tolerated by anyone involved in Religious Education activities:

- Blasphemies and other foul language
- Disrespect and disobedience
- Verbal threats and physical violence
- Abuse of age-inappropriate or illegal substances
- Impure language or acts
- Littering, vandalizing or stealing
- Using cell phones or electronic devices during class time

b. Parents are primarily responsible for the discipline of their children. Thus, in the event of a child misbehavior described above, the Director of Religious Education, staff, catechists, and volunteers who are responsible for discipline in the absence of parents will take these steps:

- Misbehaving children will be given a first warning to cease misbehaving, with an explanation of what the child had done.
- If a child continues to misbehave after one warning, a second warning to cease misbehaving with an explanation of what the child has done wrong and that further misbehavior will result in the child's parents being called.
- If a child continues to misbehave after the second warning, the child will be given an explanation of what the

child has done wrong and will be accompanied to the Religious Education Office. The child's parents will be called and asked to immediately come to pick up the child so they may administer discipline as they see fit.

➤ If the child's parents cannot immediately be reached, at least two adults, including the Director of Religious Education, staff members, catechists or volunteers, will supervise the child in the R.E. Center until the parents arrive at the end of class.

➤ When necessary, the Director of Religious Education, staff, catechists, or volunteers will initiate disciplinary action:

1. Disciplinary action is corrective rather than punitive and is tailored to the offense.
2. Discipline never consists of repetitive busy work or corporal, humiliating, unsupervised or indiscriminate punishment.
3. Any disciplinary action taken will be communicated to the parents by the Director of Religious Education.

➤ If a child's parent is called to pick up their child due to disciplinary problems for a 2nd time, the family must meet with the Director of Religious Education within one week of the second offense.

➤ Should a third incident occur where parents must be called, the parents will be required to attend the child's Religious Education class with the child until the class year is over or the child will be removed from classes for the remainder of the school year.

➤ The **dress code** for all religious education is as follows:

- a) no clothing with reference to profanity, alcohol or any other abused substances as well as sexual innuendos;
- b) no short-shorts, halter tops, spaghetti straps, tank tops, or provocative tops of any kind;
- c) no bare midriffs, pants worn below the waist, torn or ripped clothing;
- d) no skintight or transparent clothing

Class Times

During the 10:00 a.m. Sunday Mass until it ends

Preschool (3 and 4 year olds)

Sunday 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Sacramental Preparation in Spanish (2th – 12th grade)

Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Kindergarten through 4th grade
(2nd grade is First Penance and First Holy Communion)

Monday 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

5th through 8th grade
(7th and 8th grades are Confirmation Years I & II)

Tuesday 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

5th through 8th grade
(7th and 8th grades are Confirmation Years I & II)

Tuesday 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Special Sacraments in English (4th -11th grade)
R.C.I.C. (unbaptized children 2nd – 11th grade)

Martes 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Rito de Iniciación Cristiano para Adultos (R.I.C.A.).

Wednesday 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A.).

Wednesday 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

(Beginning the 1st Wednesday after Easter to Pentecost)
Adult Confirmation Class

Weekend Mass Times

Saturday 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 7:00 a.m.
8:30 a.m.
10:00 a.m.
11:30 a.m.
1:00 p.m.
3:30 p.m. (Spanish)
5:00 p.m.

Confession Schedule

Saturday 3:30 p.m.
Eve of First Fridays 6:30 -7:00 p.m.
or call a Friar to set up an appointment.

REMINDER: Your child may be receiving their First Penance and First Holy Communion this year, but please don't let it be their last time to receive these beautiful sacraments.

