

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION
Parish School of Religion (PSR)

1200 E. 10TH Street
STUART, FL 34996



PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

2017 – 2018

PRIESTS AND DEACONS

Reverend Noel McGrath, Pastor
Reverend Wesler Hilaire
Reverend Pierre-Michel Alabré
Deacon Lawrence Crary
Deacon Matthew Bartlett
Deacon Larry Condon

Sr. Jadwiga Drapala, CACH, Director of Faith Formation
287-2727 Ext. 107 or srjadwiga@sjcflorida.org
Franca Estes, Administrative Assistant
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MISSION STATEMENT

Christ is at the heart of the curriculum of our Saint Joseph Faith Formation Program. The program is designed in partnership with our priests, deacons, catechists, and parents or guardians in support of the spiritual and moral development of each child entrusted to our ministry.

Presentation of the program is based upon the knowledge of our faith and designed to be explicit and faithful to Catholic teachings. The Faith Formation Program is designed to inspire, educate, and teach the doctrines and heritage of the Catholic Church.

Through this journey, the program provides an age appropriate learning experience founded on the Word of God in Scripture and Tradition of the Catholic Church.

Parents are the primary educators of their children's faith journey. As a Catholic parent, you are called to be a witness of your faith, resulting in the spiritual growth and development of their children.

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FAITH FORMATION POLICIES and GUIDELINES

In order to provide a rich and nurturing learning experience for all participating in the St. Joseph Parish Faith Formation programs, policies and guidelines have been established to help meet this goal. Fr. Noel McGrath, our Pastor, has reviewed and approved all such policies as outlined. Our Faith Formation programs are held in accordance and compliance to the directives of the Diocese of Palm Beach. We ask that all catechists, parents/ guardians and students abide by these guidelines and policies.

REGISTRATION and PLACEMENT

Our Faith Formation Program is open to all families who are registered and active parishioners of St. Joseph Catholic Church. The Parish School of Religion is offered to students PreK- 9th grade.

New student registrations require a copy of your child's *Birth Certificate, Baptismal Certificate* and *First Holy Communion Certificate* accompanied by the registration form.

Students are placed in a class which corresponds to their public school academic placement when possible. Any special circumstances will be reviewed on a case to case basis.

All parents/guardians are requested to maintain their children's enrollment in their parish Faith Formation Program from PreK – 9th grade.

SUNDAY EUCHARIST

Saturday or Sunday Mass attendance is required. Weekend participation in the Holy Eucharist is vital in our spiritual growth. A family's presence at the weekend Eucharist with their children reinforces the faith journey as they develop understanding and love for the Holy Mass.

FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

The program is designed to teach and introduce the language of these Sacraments and practices to ensure preparedness of the Sacraments. The preparation for Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion lasts two years.

These Sacraments will be celebrated and received no sooner than the Second Grade. Our program also offers classes for older children seeking these Sacraments from grades 3 – 8. Once received, we ask that parents/guardians encourage their children to continue to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis (once a month).

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

In accordance with the diocese of Palm Beach the preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation lasts two years. It begins in Eighth Grade with the reception of the Sacrament in Ninth Grade.

Through this Faith Formation experience, our teens are then fully initiated into the Catholic Church. They become a witness of Christ and proclaim and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Faith Formation is an ongoing and lifelong process. At St. Joseph Parish we are blessed to accompany the parents, as the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith, in their child's faith journey through our programs.

THE ST. JOSEPH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We strongly encourage all families and students (age appropriate) to participate in the ministry life of our Parish. Please consider being an usher, greeter, lector, altar server or a member of the choir, but to name a few ministry opportunities. Please call our office tel. 287-2727, visit our website at <http://www.sjcflorida.org> or refer to the bulletin for further information.

FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM

Our Faith Formation program presents and teaches the six tasks of catechesis in accordance of the *Directory for Catechesis* #85-86. It is accomplished through the Diocese approved curriculum set forth in the Pflaum *Seeds*, the Our Sunday Visitor; *Allelu!*, *Alive in Christ*, *Faith Fusion* program and the Loyola Press; *Reconciliation and Eucharist*, *Confirmed in the Spirit*, and *Dynamic Catholic Decision Point*.

PreK	“Seeds”
Grade K	“Allelu!”
Grade 1	“Jesus Christ”
Grade 2	“Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist”
Grade 3	“The Church”
Grade 4	“The Moral Law”
Grade 5	“The Seven Sacraments”
Grade 6	“The Word of God in the Old Testament”
Grade 7	“Jesus Christ in the New Testament”
Grade 8	“Knowing, Loving and Serving Christ in the Catholic Church”
Grade 9	“Confirmed in the Spirit”/“Decision Point”

THE SIX TASKS OF CATECHESIS (Cf. *Directory for Catechesis* #85-86)

1. “*Catechesis promotes knowledge of the faith*”:

Students at every grade level learn about Jesus Christ, and our Catholic Faith through Scripture and Tradition.

2. “*Catechesis promotes knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and the Sacraments*”:

Students learn about the meaning of the liturgy and the Sacraments to be able to participate and live them fully.

3. “*Catechesis promotes moral formation in Jesus Christ*”:

Students learn how to follow Jesus by making choices pleasing to Him based on Christ’s moral teaching. This spiritual journey is ordered to mold their hearts in Christ like manner.

4. “*Catechesis teaches the Christian how to pray with Christ*”:

Students learn that a prayer is an essential part of our Christian life. They pray in various ways during each class to discover the mysterious action of God in their daily lives.

5. “*Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church*”:

Students learn how to live a community life in a spirit of simplicity, humility, expressing fraternal love, care and respect toward each person.

6. “*Catechesis promotes a missionary spirit that prepares the faithful to be present as Christians in society*”:

Students learn to serve and live their lives by giving witness to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ through their words, deeds and to be open to God’s call in their lives.

STUDENT DROP-OFF and PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Drop-off:

The gate will be open from 9:45-10:30AM. All students PreK through Grade 5 must either be brought to their assigned classroom on time by a parent or guardian or you may drop them off at the gate door next to the Family Center. This will be the entrance door used. We need to be respectful of Mass and other traffic at the Church. If you are bringing your child to class, you must be parked in a parking spot. Sibling drop-off is not allowed to avoid any confusion with this procedure. **The school entrance doors are closed and locked at the start of class (10:30AM).** Prayer will begin promptly at the start of class and we ask you to be respectful of this time.

Pick-up:

The gate will be open at 11:45AM. All students PreK through Grade 5 must be picked up at the end of class by a parent or guardian after presenting an ID. Sibling pick-up is allowed by a sibling at least 15 years old who presents a photo ID. Please be prompt and conscious of the time. All catechists are expected to remain with the students until they are picked-up. After 10 minutes, all children not picked-up will be brought to the Director and a call will be made to the parent or guardian. Please be respectful of the catechists who have volunteered freely and graciously of their time to share our faith with the children by being prompt.

We are required to contact the local police department in regards to any child not picked-up 45 minutes after the end of class. Please be prompt to avoid this situation.

BEHAVIOR

Our Catechists are faith filled volunteers who generously give their time and talent to the children and families of St. Joseph Parish. We expect them to be treated respectfully at all times and ask for full cooperation as they provide a nurturing classroom environment. Any behavior deemed to be disruptive or disrespectful will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behavior on the part of the child will result in the following actions:

- First, a private conversation will take place with the student by the catechist.
- Second, a conference with the Director of Formation and the parents/guardians if not resolved at the classroom level.
- Third, removal from the program.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

In the event of an extreme medical emergency which is deemed to be life-threatening to a child, the Office of Faith Formation will dial 911 to obtain immediate medical assistance and contact the parent or guardian.

Please be sure to inform us of any medical conditions of your child has to prevent such circumstances.

EMERGENCY CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

In the event of inclement weather or a local emergency, our Office of Faith Formation will abide by the decisions of the Martin County School District and local authorities. Please be sure to provide our office with your most updated communication information including; e-mail, home phone, cell phone and work phone numbers.

TIME COMMITMENT

Class sessions are held in the school building for 75 minutes on Sunday mornings from 10:30am – 11:45AM, September through May for most students. Students preparing for Confirmation will meet until the date of Confirmation. Dates, times and locations for special events will be announced for the appropriate students.

ATTENDANCE

Regular student attendance and continuity of instruction are essential to the spiritual development of each child and good preparation to the Sacraments.

- **Students preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.** During the two (2) year program of preparation each student can miss maximum one (1) class per year. All missed classes have to be made-up after consultation with the class catechists.
- **Other students.** A maximum of three (3) absences for the entire scheduled year will be allowed. All missed classes have to be made-up after consultation with the class catechist.

If there are special circumstances in regards to meeting this requirement, please contact the PSR office to discuss it privately. Class sessions are scheduled with consideration of the public school calendar.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate dress is a sign of reverence and respect for Jesus living in each of us as well as for the Faith Formation teachers. The manner in which a child dresses should reflect the virtues of modesty and self-respect.

CELL PHONE USAGE

Cell phones are permitted, but must be placed on OFF/SILENT mode for the entire class session. No text messaging, recording or photo taking is permitted under any circumstances. If a student will have trouble following this requirement, he/she will be asked to turn in the phone for the entire class and it will be given it back at the end of the class.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

Children should not bring to class: Toys, iPods, DVDs or Video games.
Food, gum or candy are not allowed.