

**San Juan del Rio Catholic Church  
Children's Religious Education  
Program**

**Parent – Student  
Handbook**

**2018 – 2019**

**June 1, 2018**

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## Letter from the Director

May 31, 2018

Dear Parents or Guardians:

The 2018-2019 Religious Education program is now in session. Thank you for the love you have shown to your child and your commitment to their faith development. I know it is a commitment that you take seriously. It is also a commitment shared by myself and our volunteer catechists who provide religious education here at San Juan Del Rio Catholic Church. It is not often that a person can touch the eternity of another person, especially a person who you deeply love. By your decision to enroll your child in this program, you can impact their faith development and touch their eternity.

Our goal is to provide you and your family with a quality religious education program that will continue to nurture your child's development in the faith and increase their love of God Our Father in union with Jesus Christ His Son and the Holy Spirit. I know that you and I are about to enter into a "partnership" of education for your child. Once a week, you will allow us to teach them about Jesus, His immense love for them, His Church, its sacraments and the doctrines of the faith. Outside of class, it is your responsibility to help them apply and integrate our catechetical lessons into their everyday life experiences. Words may not be enough. Your actions in support of your child's faith development are essential. It is without hesitation that I can say that you have the more difficult job and a greater responsibility to nurture those you love in the faith of the Catholic Church. It is through your actions, words and examples that your child will learn and experience Jesus' love. The values you instill in them today will continue throughout their journey of faith.

Please take time to review this handbook. Parents are the primary religious educators of their children. Our role, as catechists, is one of assisting, not replacing, parents in teaching their children. The purpose of this handbook is to ensure that parents and students understand the goals, guidelines, rules and policies of the San Juan del Rio Church Religious Education Program. It is designed to answer many of your questions. If it does not, please do not hesitate to call the Religious Education Office at 904-287-2801 or email me at [dre@sjdrparish.org](mailto:dre@sjdrparish.org). When it comes to developing a loving and faith-filled child, no question or concern is too small.

As in the past, I look forward to an exciting year of faith development for our students. I hope you share in this excitement.

Blessings,

Deacon Stanley Boschert  
Director of Religious Education

## 1.00 Contact Information

### **San Juan del Rio Catholic Church:**

**Address:** 1718 State Road 13N  
St. Johns, FL 32259

**Parish Website:** [www.sjdrparish.org](http://www.sjdrparish.org)

### **Religious Education Office:**

**Phone:** (904) 287-2801

**Email:** DRE at [dre@sjdrparish.org](mailto:dre@sjdrparish.org) or Darla Cook at [darla@sjdrparish.org](mailto:darla@sjdrparish.org)

**Church Secretary:** **Kathy Vinski**

**Phone:** (904) 287-0519

## 2.00 Summary of Important Points

This document contains a summary of beneficial information found in the *Parent-Student Handbook*. Valuable information goes beyond this summary. Reading this *Handbook* will ensure your knowledge of the CCD Program and its expectations, some of which may not appear in this summary. Also included with this summary are the “section numbers” (in parentheses) where additional information can be found in the *Handbook*. If you have questions on these points or other sections of the *Parent-Student Handbook*, please call the Religious Education Office at (904) 287-2801.

### **Abbreviations and Terms**

Throughout the *Parent-Student Handbook*, you will find abbreviations. One is “SJDR” which stands for San Juan del Rio parish. Another is “DRE” which is the abbreviation for “Director of Religious Education.” “CCD” is the “Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.” It was commonly used in the past to identify programs for catechizing Catholic youth in the Roman Catholic Church. It is still used at SJDR parish because, quite frankly, it is more user-friendly and easier to say than the “children’s faith formation and development program.”

You will also find reference to “parent” in this handbook. Although not mentioned in each instance, the intent is to include “legal guardian” whenever referring to “parent.”

### **Important phone numbers and websites related to the CCD Program**

The parish website is [www.sjdrparish.org](http://www.sjdrparish.org). The phone number for the Religious Education Office is (904) 287-2801. Email messages can be sent to the DRE at [dre@sjdrparish.org](mailto:dre@sjdrparish.org) or Darla Cook at [darla@sjdrparish.org](mailto:darla@sjdrparish.org) (Section 1.00).

**Importance of parents:** “The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute. The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable.” - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2221ff (Please read the entire Section 4.00)

**Religious education curriculum:** San Juan Del Rio Church’s Religious Education program must conform to the curriculum requirements of the Office of Christian Formation of the Diocese of St. Augustine and its published guidelines for diocesan religious education programs and catechists (Section 4.00).

**“Paid” fees:** Tuition and sacramental fees are considered “paid” on the date they are received in the Religious Education Office. If payment is made by check, the fees are not considered “paid” as of the date recorded on the check or the postal mark on the mailing envelope. (Section 5.00)

**“Required” documentation:** You must provide a copy of your child’s baptism, such as the Baptismal Certificate and, if applicable, First Communion Certificate, at the time of registration. You should request sacramental documentation from the parish where your child was baptized. Procuring proof of the child’s Baptism/First Communion is not the responsibility of the San Juan del Rio Religious Education Office. It is the parent’s responsibility. Documentation must be filed within 14 days of the filing of registration form, unless the registration is supported with written proof that a request has been made for the required documentation. This would include the date the document were requested, the name and telephone number of the parish contacted, the name of the

contact person to whom the document request was made, and the date the required document can be expected at the San Juan del Rio Religious Education Office. Once the baptismal and First Holy Eucharist documentation is on file with the Religious Education Office, further proof will not be required for subsequent years' registration (Sections 5e and 5f).

**Class change requests:** Once the registration is processed and the child is fully enrolled in the program, parents can request a change of schedule. Specific conditions are explained (Section 5.01).

**Student pickup authorization:** If applicable, your completed and signed *Student Pick-up Authorization* form authorizes a person to pick up your children from class. Parents should report changes to this form to the Religious Education Office (Section 5d).

**Sacramental preparation:** The Diocese of St. Augustine requires a two-year preparation period for both the sacrament of Holy Eucharist and the sacrament of Confirmation (Section 6.00).

**Confirmation Service Hours:**

- Confirmation students are expected to complete **20** hours of service at San Juan del Rio parish.
- Our pastor has approved up to five service hours for eighth-grade Confirmation candidates who attend and help out at Youth Group meetings. This is a great way to have fun and, at the same time, build up service hours. Contact the Youth Director for more information.
- Other service hour opportunities will be announced throughout the year. The service hour period will run from June 1 and be completed at least one month before Confirmation.
- Parents are expected to submit required documentation by the due dates indicated on the form. This is especially important for students receiving the sacrament of Confirmation since timely compliance with canon law and diocesan policies is expected (Section 6.02).

**Attendance Policy:**

	<b>Total Allowable Absences</b>
<b>Student who will receive a sacrament this year (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade and Bridges Year 2 Students)</b>	3
<b>Student who will <u>not</u> receive a sacrament this year</b>	5

Any days' absences beyond the allowable number reported above may delay your child's reception of a sacrament or jeopardize the student's continuation in the Religious Education Program. Absences from Religious Education classes due to attending a

sporting event or practice will count towards the total allowable absences for the year (Section 7.01).

**Late arrivals and/or early departures:**

Late arrivals or early departures will also affect the campus security policy. Parents must come to the Religious Education Office to obtain a “Admit Slip” or an “Early Release on Slip.” The student should accompany the parent to get this form. These slips will be necessary for the student to gain entrance to the campus and to enter the class late or for the student to leave class early and exit the campus (Section 7.01).

**Regular Mass Attendance:**

An important behavior parents can model for their child is regular Mass attendance. To help in the child’s Catholic faith development, Mass attendance is expected. If a parent does not attend Mass, it sets in motion a two-fold effect for the child that 1) attendance at Mass is not important to their parent and 2) the spiritual nourishment from receiving the Body and Blood of Our Lord offered in the Eucharist is not important to their faith journey. (Section 7.02).

**Required prayers:**

Although the catechist will help the students with learning and understanding prayers at various points in their faith journey, it is expected that parents will make a major contribution to this effort.

Students in the Religious Education Program are required to learn specific prayers in the grade levels they attend. If your child does not know the required prayers for their grade level, you are responsible to help them learn these prayers. In the process, you may yourself learn these prayers.

A complete list of prayers is available from the publisher of our religious education textbooks, Loyola Press, the publisher of our student manuals. It is available at <http://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers>.

At the end of their K - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade journey, the student should know 25 common Catholic prayers plus parts of the mass and responses at mass that will enable them to appreciate and more fully participate in the basic beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church, the Mass, Reconciliation, Confirmation, the Rosary and in thanksgiving for the many blessings God gives to us.

The list of prayers taught in Grade K through Grade 8 is found in Chart 2 of the Handbook (Section 7.03).

**Student behavior:**

Students are expected to act in a manner that demonstrates respect and courtesy toward catechists, volunteers and classmates at all times. Their behavior should not disrupt to the classroom learning environment or damage parish property (Section 7.05).

**Safety:**

Parents of students enrolled in the program and other adults are expected to comply with the directives of law enforcement and security personnel while on church property. St. Johns Sheriff’s Office deputies direct traffic on State Road 13 at the main road into the parish campus before and after CCD classes. At other times during CCD classes, they will be stationed at the main gate entrance to the school or involved in roving perimeter patrols of the entire campus.

Due to child safety concerns, especially after dark, parents should not park their vehicles on State Road 13 to drop off or pick up their student (Section 9.01). Each year, there have been reports from our St. Johns Sheriff Deputies directing traffic that drivers on SR13 have come close to running them over despite their flashing lights and reflective clothing. Please be advised that SR13 can be a dangerous place for our students. Please do not put them at risk.

Security monitors are stationed at the main gate to the school campus. They provide access control and periodically rove throughout the school campus and its buildings conducting security checks.

The campus will be locked down and off-limits to anyone who is not a registered student. Security monitors will close the main gate and deny access to the campus once CCD classes start. Extended daycare parents may be challenged during the times religious education classes are in session. After classes begin, security monitors will “clear” the school campus of any adults and children who are not in CCD classes. This includes walkways outside of classrooms, interior hallways and restrooms, basketball courts and play areas (Section 9.05).

**Student “Sign-in” and “Sign-Out”:**

For Grades K through Grade 3, a parent or an authorized persons over 18 years old MUST sign their child “in” before class and “out” after class. Sign-in sheets will be available in the classroom. The sign-in sheet will support your child’s attendance record. Parents should plan accordingly to expect a slight delay to accommodate the sign-in and sign-out process. Children MAY NOT sign themselves in or out (Section 9.021).

**Late student pickup:**

Please be considerate of our volunteer catechists’ family obligations and pick up your student promptly after class. Catechists may remain in the classroom after dismissal waiting for a student pick-up. After 10 minutes, the catechist will escort the child to the Religious Education Office for pickup. If you are running late, please call the Religious Education Office (287-2801) and advise our staff so we can transmit that information to your student’s catechist. (Section 9.023).

**Student arrival, dismissal and release procedure:**

Students and adults, except catechists, will not be admitted to the school campus earlier than ten (10) minutes before CCD classes begin.

At class dismissal, catechists can only release their students to an adult (18 years or older). This policy applies to all children enrolled in the CCD program.

If the adult is someone other than a parent, a signed *Student Pick-up Authorization* form should be on file with the Religious Education Office before the start of class on the day of the pick-up. (Section 9.023).

**Emergency notifications:**

It is very important that you notify the Office of Religious Education of any changes in your home, work and/or cell phone numbers or email address so that we can promptly notify you in the event of an emergency (Section 9.11).

**Communication with catechists and their limited authority:**

We encourage parents to speak with their child’s catechist about their progress or any other concerns that may arise. Although regular communication between parents and catechists is beneficial, there is a downside. Catechists and other volunteer staff cannot be expected to have full knowledge of existing Canon Law requirements and diocesan policies that guide the operations of the religious education program. Consequently, any catechist representations regarding diocesan policies or those of the parish religious

education program are subject to the approval of the pastor and/or the Director of Religious Education. Rather than risk misinformation, parents are encouraged to seek the guidance of the Director of Religious Education in these matters (Section 10.02 and Section 10.03).

**Review of class learning materials**

Textbook publishers have invested heavily into developing online learning resources for today's students.

The Loyola Press Faith Formation Program, *Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts* is the textbook used in CCD this year. It is based on a curriculum that integrates the fundamental themes of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with Scripture and Catholic Social Teachings. As children are introduced to and revisit concepts and vocabulary from one year to the next, their knowledge and experience both broaden and deepen as they grow in faith as committed disciples of Jesus.

*Finding God* offers parents the family materials specifically designed for use at home. From letters on what your child is learning, to interactive study guides, to the exciting online game *Fishers of Faith*, the activities listed within each grade will refresh your own faith while helping you become an active partner in your child's faith formation. It is found at <http://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2013/parents-and-students> .

Students in Grades 1-8, especially those preparing to receive the sacraments of Holy Eucharist (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade) and/or the sacrament of Confirmation (8<sup>th</sup> Grade and HS), should regularly bring home their student manuals. Parents are encouraged to review these materials with their student(s). Our catechists have been instructed to release these materials to students so their parents can review these materials with their student and participate in the spiritual formation process (Section 10.05).

**Vacation Bible School (VBS)**

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a fun, Bible-based week-long summer program for young children. It is also an opportunity for our Confirmation candidates to earn service hours (Section 11.00).

**Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure**

Student stewardship, the sharing of one's time, talent and treasure, is encouraged and promoted in the religious education program. As parents, you can play a key role in developing the stewardship spirit in your child. (Section 12.00).

## 2.01 New This Year

Section 5.00 e. Registration Process	Non-traditional track students who has not received Holy Eucharist in Grade 2, must complete the diocesan two year preparation requirements however the child <b>and</b> parent(s) will be required to take our <b>Bridges Year 1</b> class the first year, and the child <b>and</b> parent(s) must also attend our <b>Bridges Year 2</b> class in the second year in order to be eligible to received the sacrament of Holy Eucharist during the second year.
Section 5.00 h. Registration Process	We will be assessing any student at the time of registration ( <b>grades 3-8 only</b> ) who has <b>NOT</b> attended a Religious Education program or Catholic school the previous year.
Section 6.00 Sacramental Preparation	<u>Parents</u> with students in our sacramental preparation years (grades 1-2, 7-8, and Bridges Years 1-2) are expected to provide <b>10 hours of service</b> to the SJDR parish community.
Section 7.02 Regular Mass Attendance	In order to make regular mass attendance fun for our students, we are implementing a reward system where any class that submits the most CCD Mass Attendance Cards will receive a free pizza party prior to the Christmas Break and also at the end of the year.
Section 8.00 Home Schooling	Added additional language: “Families who home school are obligated to use the same religious education text as the parish religious education program during the sacramental years.” Sacramental years are defined in our Diocese as Grades 1 & 2 for Holy Eucharist, and Grades 7 & 8 for Confirmation. “It is recommended that only religious texts found to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the USCCB be used by home school families in all other years.” (No. 913)

### 3.00 Our Mission

The parish community of San Juan del Rio Catholic Church does not exist in isolation. We share in the larger Church of the Diocese of St. Augustine as well as the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world. As part of the universal Church, San Juan del Rio Parish operates under the direction of the Diocese of St. Augustine, which, in turn, operates under the authority of the Pope and the teachings of the Magisterium. Although our parish has its own mission statement, we share in something larger than ourselves. Below are found the mission and vision statements by which we operate:

#### Diocese of St. Augustine Mission Statement

*We, the Body of Christ of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saint Augustine, strive to know, love and serve God in our world through the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.”*

#### San Juan del Rio Parish Mission Statement

*We the catholic family of San Juan Del Rio, recognize and accept God’s blessings. United in faith and fellowship, we willingly commit our time, talent and treasure in answer to His call to ‘Build My Church.’*

#### San Juan del Rio Parish Vision Statement

*In keeping with the Mission Statement of our parish, our vision for our children is to integrate them into the life of the parish, encouraging participation and interaction in the Mass and parish events. We support parents in fostering their children’s faith development by providing adult education experiences to deepen their understanding of the Word of God and the traditions of the Catholic Church. We provide quality religious educational experiences designed to serve as a life-long foundation of their faith journey. We provide sacramental preparation that will encourage children and families to fully participate in the Church’s sacraments. In doing these things we hope to create a Catholic-Christian atmosphere in which our youth can enjoy fellowship, faith growth, and a love of Jesus Christ which will inspire them to share their time, talent and treasure in Jesus’ name.*

## 4.00 Parents Role, the Catholic Faith and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

San Juan Del Rio Church's Religious Education program must conform to the curriculum requirements of the Office of Christian Formation of the Diocese of St. Augustine and its published guidelines for diocesan religious education programs and catechists. To review the Religion Curriculum for the Diocese of St. Augustine, go to the tab *Curriculum K-8* found at <http://www.dosaformation.org/ocf-childandyouth.php>.

Our program ensures a clear and uniform presentation of the faith in concepts appropriate to each grade level for all the children enrolled in our parish Religious Education Program. As noted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Nos. 2221 – 2231), our program is designed to assist parents in their sacred responsibility to educate their children in the faith. The program compliments, but it can never replace parents in carrying out their catechetical responsibilities. Parents are the first and foremost educators of their children.

Parents play an important part in their child's faith formation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Nos. 2221-2226), speaks to the duties of parents in not only the child's physical well-being, but also their moral education and their spiritual development.

*The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute. The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable (No. 2221).*

*Parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law (No. 2222).*

*Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule... Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children (No. 2223).*

*Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children. Parents should initiate their children at an early age ... A wholesome family life can foster interior dispositions that are a genuine preparation for a living faith and remain a support for it throughout one's life (No. 2225).*

*Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the*

*heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents (No. 2226).*

As noted above, parents are the child's primary teachers of the Catholic faith. Within their family, all parents share in the teaching ministry of the Church. They can accomplish this through their support, guidance witness and role modeling by minimally going to Mass weekly, through their behavior by setting good moral examples and by their own active participation in the parish community.

Parents, through their lifestyle and example, place Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of their child's life through liturgical worship, frequent prayers and communication of Christian values and attitude. In this way, they make meaningful their professions of belief and nurture faith in their child by showing them the richness and beauty of a lived faith.

As part of the program's registration process, parents or guardians must certify that they have read the current version of the *Parent-Student Handbook*, discussed, when appropriate, its contents with their child and agree to adhere to the policies contained within this *Handbook*.

## 5.00 Registration Process

To participate in the San Juan del Rio Church Religious Education Program, a child must be enrolled in the program. Class assignments will not be made prior to a completed enrollment. Before enrollment can be completed, you must submit:

*a. A fully completed, current Registration form and other required support documentation.*

The registration form is available online on the San Juan del Rio Church Religious Education webpage [www.sjdrparish.org](http://www.sjdrparish.org), or in the Religious Education Office.

It is important to provide accurate information when completing the *Registration* form. This is especially important for information regarding the student's baptismal parish since the Religious Education Office is required to send notice of the celebration of your child's sacraments to their baptismal parish. Also, it is important that the maiden name of the child's mother is accurately reported since it will be entered into the registry of the baptizing parish as well as the San Juan del Rio parish registry (a back-up source of information should there be any questions from the baptizing parish about the sacraments your son or daughter has received at our parish, i.e. Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion or Confirmation).

*b. The registration fee and related sacramental or program fees*

In the way of definition and the assessment of late fees, fees are considered "paid" on the date they are received in the Religious Education Office. For payments by check, fees are not considered "paid" as of the date recorded on the check or the postal mark on the mailing envelope. The fee is not paid if the check is returned for insufficient funds.

No child will be prevented from attending religious education classes because of family financial hardship issues. To apply for financial assistance, parents should complete a *Financial Hardship Fee Waiver* form and file it with the Director of Religious Education.

*c. Proof of the child's Baptism/First Communion*

You must provide a copy of your child's baptism, such as the Baptismal Certificate and, if applicable, First Communion Certificate, at the time of registration. Procuring proof of the child's Baptism/First Communion is not the responsibility of the San Juan del Rio Religious Education Office. It is the parent's responsibility. If you do not have the sacramental documentation, you should request it from the parish where your child was baptized. Documentation must be filed within 14 days of the filing of registration form, unless the registration is supported with written proof that a request has been

made for the required documentation. This would include the date the document were requested, the name and telephone number of the parish contacted, the name of the contact person to whom the document request was made, and the date the required document can be expected at the San Juan del Rio Religious Education Office. Once the baptismal and First Holy Eucharist documentation is on file with the Religious Education Office, further proof will not be required for subsequent years' CCD registration (Sections 5e and 5f).

*d. Student Pick-up Authorization*

If applicable, a completed and signed *Student Pick-up Authorization* form authorizes a person(s) to pick up your student(s) from class. Parents should report changes to this form to the Religious Education Office.

*e. For First Communion Registrants*

Preparation for First Holy Eucharist (First Holy Communion) is a two-year diocesan requirement. Children normally receive this sacrament in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the second year of the two-year requirement. Sometimes due to unforeseen circumstances a child does not receive the sacrament of Holy Eucharist during 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. These non-traditional track students must still complete the two year preparation diocesan requirements as our traditional track children, however the child **and** parent(s) will be required to take our **Bridges Year 1** class the first year, and the child **and** parent(s) must also attend our **Bridges Year 2** class in the second year in order to be eligible to received the sacrament of Holy Eucharist during the second year. **Please see Section 6.00 for additional parental requirements.**

Children, who will receive this sacrament, must furnish proof of baptism, such as the child's baptismal certificate, at the time of registration (unless it is already on file with the SJDR Religious Education Office). Documentation must be filed within 14 days of the filing of registration form, unless the registration is supported with written proof that a request has been made for the required documentation. This would include the date the document were requested, the name and telephone number of the parish contacted, the name of the contact person to whom the document request was made, and the date the required document can be expected at the San Juan del Rio Religious Education Office.

This requirement applies to all registrants, including children of parishioners of San Juan del Rio Church. Once the baptismal documentation is on file with the Religious Education Office, further proof of baptism will not be required for subsequent years' CCD registration. You can call the Religious Education Office to verify if your child's proof of baptism is on file.

*f. For Confirmation Registrants:*

Preparation for Confirmation is a two-year diocesan requirement. Children normally receive this sacrament in the eighth grade, the second year of the two-year requirement. **Please see Section 6.00 for additional parental requirements.** Children who will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation must furnish proof of Baptism (unless it is already on file) **and** First Holy Eucharist (First Holy Communion) at the time of registration. Documentation must be filed within 14 days of the filing of registration form, unless the registration is supported with written proof that a request has been made for the required documentation. This would include the date the document were requested, the name and telephone number of the parish contacted, the name of the contact person to whom the document request was made, and the date the required document can be expected at the San Juan del Rio Religious Education Office.

This requirement applies to all registrants, including children of parishioners of San Juan del Rio Church. Once the Baptismal and First Communion documentation is on file with the Religious Education Office, further sacramental documentation will not be required for subsequent years' CCD registration. If you have questions about this documentation, you can call the Religious Education Office to verify if your child's proof of baptism and First Holy Eucharist is on file.

- g. Proof of Baptism should be requested from the parish where the child was baptized. Proof of First Holy Communion may be requested from either the baptizing church or the parish at which the sacrament is received depending on the practices of the parish in which the sacrament was received.
- h. The Diocese of St. Augustine allows us to assess any student at any time. New this year, we will be assessing any student at the time of registration (**grades 3-8 only**) who has **NOT** attended a Religious Education program or Catholic school the previous year. This assessment is a measure of knowledge and not a measure of faith or spirituality, which is impossible to assess. This assessment will show the Religious Education Office and the parents, who are the primary educators of each child, any areas where the parent may need to bring the student up to the level of the other students in their grade. In addition, the student **and** parents will be required to attend our one time **Bridges Year 1** class to renew their understanding of the four pillars of the Catholic Church.

### ***5.01 Change of Schedule Requests (CSR)***

Once the registration is processed and the child is fully enrolled in the program, parents can request a change of schedule. The following conditions apply for the (CSR) to be processed:

- a. Change requests will not be processed if the requested class is filled, i.e. the classroom capacity limit has been reached. The later in the school year the change request is made, the more likely the seating capacity has been reached.
- b. The parent agrees to discuss the class change with the catechist in the receiving class catechist to determine if there is any “catch up” work that needs to be done for the child to join that class. This will occur in those instances where the losing class is behind the instructional progress of the receiving class. The parent further agrees to tutor the child to the level acceptable to join the class.
- c. For class assignments made by the Religious Education Office, there will be no change fee assessed for a one-month period after classes begin. After this period, a \$25.00/child change fee will be assessed for any change request whenever the specific day/time and session listed as the “first choice” on the Registration Form is changed, as long as classroom space is available.

## 6.00 Sacramental Preparation

The Diocese of St. Augustine requires a two-year preparation period for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist and the sacrament of Confirmation. Traditionally, this preparation begins in the first grade and First Holy Communion is received in the second grade. For Confirmation, the preparation begins in the seventh grade and the sacrament is received in the eighth grade. Occasionally, the traditional preparation tracks are not available to students in the grades mentioned above and alternative arrangements must be made to comply with the diocesan two-year requirement. Please contact the DRE for questions.

For a child to receive each of these sacraments, they must be:

- a. Properly prepared,
- b. Actively involved in the parish preparation process, and
- c. For Confirmation, freely chosen by the child receiving the sacrament.

Sacraments are celebrations of the faith community. Therefore, immediate preparation and celebration are done in the parish setting. Parents should be intimately involved in the sacramental preparation of their children. Parents are required to attend special meetings regarding sacramental preparation as well as provide the example of service to the faith community by sharing their time, talent and treasure. **To that end, parents with students in our sacramental preparation years (grades 1-2, 7-8, and Bridges Years 1-2) are expected to provide 10 hours of service to the SJDR parish community.** These hours of service can be done by teaching in our CCD Religious Education program, CCD gate security, sacramental preparation volunteer (assisting with our retreats and receptions throughout the year), SJDR Fall Festival volunteer, Eucharistic Minister, mass Choir member, lector, usher or soundboard operator and

various other opportunities throughout the year. All volunteers are required to be fingerprinted through the Diocese of St. Augustine, complete volunteer paperwork and attend a one-time Protecting God's Children class. Please see the Religious Education office for information regarding volunteer clearance. Documentation of service hours may be made on the Sacramental Preparation Parent Volunteer Service Hours Sheet located on the parish website and submitted to the Religious Education office no later than April 1, 2019. Those families who do not volunteer a minimum of ten (1) hours per year may opt-out by paying \$10 per hour (or \$100 total for the 10 hours) and is due no later than April 1, 2019.

The Catholic Church keeps records of a person's celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage and Holy Orders in the parish where the person was baptized. If that parish no longer exists, the diocese in which the church existed has set up a records depository to preserve this information.

If you do not provide accurate information on the *Registration Form*, including the baptismal parish information and the maiden name of the child's mother, the sacramental information may not be accurately recorded in the registry of the baptizing parish or the San Juan del Rio parish registry (a back-up source of information should there be any questions from the baptizing parish about the sacraments your son or daughter received at our parish, i.e. Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion or Confirmation.

Older students seeking the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion or Confirmation and their parent(s) beyond the traditional track should meet with a priest, deacon and/or the Director of Religious Education to determine a preparation plan. Please call the DRE for information.

No grade or age is set for persons who are developmentally delayed to receive sacraments. Judgment of readiness should balance reverence for the sacrament with each person's need and right to the benefits of the sacrament. In cases of doubt about readiness, the presumption of readiness should be made in favor of the person celebrating the sacrament through conversation with the pastor or DRE, parents and catechist.

### ***6.01 Two-Year Preparation Period for First Reconciliation and First Communion***

Students in our religious education program traditionally receive these sacraments in the second grade. Attendance in the first grade of the Religious Education program is considered the first year of preparation for the two-year sacramental preparation for First Holy Eucharist.

Basic requirements for students (and when required, their parents) include:

- Attendance at a parish religious education program, or RCIA, or a Catholic school for the first year and currently attending our parish religious education for the second year
- A basic understanding of course content

- The parents' presence, when requested, to discuss their student's First Communion
- Per the Diocese of St. Augustine Sacramental guidelines, attendance is **mandatory** at a First Eucharist retreat. If the student is unable to attend the First Communion retreat at our parish, the parent must make arrangements at another Catholic church to attend their First Communion retreat. Documentation of attendance at a non-parish retreat is required
- Attendance at First Communion rehearsal
- Completion of class homework assignments. Students will receive their sacrament preparation workbook, materials and calendar shortly after the start of the new term.

At the First Communion Mass, low-gluten hosts will be available for children with celiac disease (gluten intolerance). Report this need to the Religious Education Office. Unless other considerations exist, our pastor requires that First Communicants receive their First Communion under both species: the Sacred Body and the Precious Blood of our Lord.

## **6.02 Two-Year Preparation Period for Confirmation**

Students in our religious education program traditionally receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the eighth grade. Attendance in the seventh grade of the Religious Education program is considered the first year of preparation for the two-year sacramental preparation for Confirmation. **Please see Section 6.00 for additional parental requirements.**

Basic requirements for students (and where noted, their parents) include:

- Attendance at a parish religious education program, RCIA, or a Catholic school for the seventh grade and currently attending our parish religious education for the eighth grade
- The parents' presence, when requested, to discuss their student's Confirmation.
- The San Juan del Rio Parish Confirmation retreat is **mandatory**. If the student is unable to attend the Confirmation retreat at our parish, you must make arrangements at another Catholic church to attend their Confirmation retreat. Documentation of attendance at a non-parish retreat is required.
- If necessary, an interview with a priest, deacon and/or the Director of Religious Education.
- A well-written to the Bishop following the preparation guidelines for this letter
- Attendance at the Confirmation rehearsal.
- Completing and submitting all required forms and other documentation in a timely manner, i.e. on or before the date due.
- Completion of class homework assignments. Students will receive their sacrament preparation workbook, materials and calendar shortly after the start of the new term.
- A minimum of 20 hours of student service hours will be performed by each candidate and reported on the *Confirmation Service Project* form. Fifteen of the

20 hours must be in service to San Juan del Rio parish or with SJDR parish related organizations or ministries. In addition, your student's catechist may do a class service project to be counted toward the required service hours. Contact the Religious Education office if you are unsure whether your child's planned 5-hours of activity outside of the parish satisfies the parish service requirement.

- Candidates will have the opportunity to participate in a group service project at a local nursing home with their class. Although the project is not mandatory, candidates are strongly encouraged to attend. This group service project will be scheduled by class on weekends and will count towards the 20-hour requirement. If your student cannot attend his or her assigned date/time, the student may be able to join another class on another date. Call the Religious Education Office to check if availabilities exist.

The pastor has approved up to five service hours for eighth-grade Confirmation candidates who attend and help out at SJDR Youth Group meetings. This is a great way to have fun and, at the same time, build up service hours. Contact the Youth Director listed in the parish bulletin for more information.

Other service hour opportunities will be announced throughout the year. The service hour period will run from May 1 and be completed at least one month before Confirmation. It is advisable to act early to attend these opportunities to avoid missing later opportunities where service availabilities may be limited or already filled.

For required documentation, parents are expected to submit documentation by the due dates indicated on the forms, especially for students receiving the sacrament of Confirmation since timely compliance with canon law and diocesan policies is expected.

## 7.00 Program Expectations

### **7.01 Attendance**

The goal of the SJDR CCD Program is to provide a quality children's faith development and sacramental preparation experience in the Catholic faith. Parents can assist with this goal by placing a high priority on their child's attendance at class. Although the textbook material can be read and assignments completed for missed classes, other elements of class time cannot. For example, the class time includes many activities such as "community" learning experiences and exchanges, prayer services, videos and their subsequent class discussion in which an absent student cannot participate or makeup.

The class days and times appear on the *Class Schedule*. Classes are 90-minute sessions.

If special circumstances warrant long absences, contact the Director of Religious Education for guidance. To report an absence, the parent should call the Religious Education Office (287-2801) or email Darla Cook at [Darla@sjdrparish.org](mailto:Darla@sjdrparish.org) prior to the class or no later than 24 hours after the class. **NOTE: Absences from Religious Education classes due to attending a sporting event or practice will count towards the total allowable absences for the year.**

The attendance policy considers the allowable number of absences for students enrolled in the grades in which a sacrament is received and those in other grades. An “absence” is reported when a student does not attend a 90-minute class session, or part thereof as in the case of late arrivals or early departures. The absentee policy appears in the chart below:

**Chart 1 – Allowable Student Absences Per School Year**

	<b>Total Allowable Absences</b>
<b>Student who will receive a sacrament this year</b> <i>(2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade and Bridges Year 2 students)</i>	3
<b>Student who will <u>not</u> receive a sacrament this year</b>	5

Any absences beyond the allowable number reported above may delay your child’s reception of a sacrament or jeopardize the student’s continuation in the Religious Education Program. Again, absences from CCD classes due to attending a sporting event or practice will count towards the total allowable absences for the year.

Arriving late for class or departing early from class will affect the number of allowable absences. For any 4 incidents of Late Arrival (LA) or early departure (ED) or combination of both greater than 15 minutes will be counted as 1 absence. Any single (1) instance of late arrival (LA) or early departure (ED) beyond a 30-minute period will be charged as one absence. Late arrivals or early departures will also affect the campus security policy. Parents must first come to the Religious Education Office to obtain a “Late Admit Slip” or an “Early Release Slip.” These slips are necessary for the student to gain entrance to the campus and to enter the class late or leave class early.

“Excessive absences” would be those that have exceeded the *Total Allowable Absences* found in Chart 1- Allowable Absences. Each student’s attendance is reported on their permanent class attendance record kept by the Religious Education Office.

## **7.02 Regular Mass Attendance**

As found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,

*The first precept (‘You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.’) requires the faithful to participate in the Eucharistic celebration when the Christian community gathers together on the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord. (No. 2042).*

*It was above all on "the first day of the week," Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection that the Christians met "to break bread." From that time on*

*down to our own day the celebration of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the center of the Church's life (No. 1343).*

Parents, through their lifestyle and example should place Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of their child's life through liturgical worship, frequent prayers and communication of Christian values and attitude. A parent's behavior provides a powerful learning experiences for children. The behaviors children come to trust and live by are those of their parents. An important behavior parents can model for their child is regular Mass attendance. To help in the child's Catholic faith development, attendance is expected. If a parent does not attend Mass, it sets in motion the child's understanding that 1) their attendance at Mass is not important for themselves or their parent and 2) the spiritual nourishment they receive from the Body and Blood of Our Lord offered in the Eucharist is not important to their faith development. This runs counter to what our catechists teach students in their religious education classes. Without parents' active support in both words and actions, it becomes very difficult to help our children understand the importance of a core doctrine of the Catholic Church: the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist at Mass.

In order to make regular mass attendance fun for our students, we are implementing a reward system where any class that submits the most CCD Mass Attendance Cards will receive a free pizza party prior to the Christmas Break and also at the end of the year. CCD Mass Attendance Cards will be available in the church Narthex and may be completed and turned in to the student's catechist at their regularly scheduled class or in the Religious Education office. The CCD Mass Attendance Cards may also be completed if the family is out of town and attends a different parish's mass.

### **7.03 Required Prayers**

Although the catechist will help students with learning and understanding prayers at various points in their faith journey, it is expected that parents will make a major contribution to this effort.

Students in the Religious Education Program are required to learn specific prayers in the grade levels they attend.

A complete list of prayers is available from The Loyola Press, the publisher of our student manuals. It is available at <http://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/prayer/traditional-catholic-prayers>.

Select a prayer from the list. To view it, left click on your mouse. The text of the prayer will appear. Try it. It's a wonderful resource to help you teach (as well as learn) prayers which are part of our Roman Catholic tradition.

By the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, the student should know 13 common Catholic prayers that will enable them to appreciate and more fully participate in the basic beliefs of the Roman Catholic

Church, the Mass, Reconciliation, Confirmation, the Rosary, and in thanksgiving for the many blessings God gives to us.

The list of prayers taught in Grade K through Grade 8 is found below in *Chart 2*. The list identifies the new prayers (*in italics*) which have been added since the previous CCD year. If your student does not know the prayers from the previous year, as the primary catechist of your student, you are expected to teach them the prayer(s).

Please support your child in learning these prayers. In the process, you may find yourself learning or refreshing yourself on their content.

***Chart 2 – Required Prayers by Grade***

<p><b><u>Grade K</u></b>  <b>Four Prayers</b>  <i>(4)</i></p>	<p><i>Sign of the Cross</i>  <i>Angel of God</i>  <i>Grace before meals</i>  <i>Our Father</i></p>	<p><b><u>Grade 1</u></b>  <b>Six Prayers</b>  <i>(2 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross            Angel of God            Grace before meals            Our Father  <i>Hail Mary</i>  <i>Responses at Mass</i></p>
<p><b><u>Grade 2</u></b>  <b>Eight Prayers</b>  <i>(2 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross            Angel of God            Grace before meals            Our Father            Hail Mary            Responses at Mass  <i>Act of Contrition</i>  <i>Morning Offering</i></p>	<p><b><u>Grade 3</u></b>  <b>Twelve Prayers</b>  <i>(4 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross            Angel of God            Grace before meals            Our Father            Hail Mary            Responses at Mass            Act of Contrition            Morning Offering  <i>Apostles Creed</i>  <i>Gloria</i>  <i>Prayer for the Deceased</i></p>
<p><b><u>Grade 4</u></b>  <b>Fourteen Prayers</b>  <i>(2 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross            Angel of God            Grace before meals            Our Father            Hail Mary            Responses at Mass            Act of Contrition            Morning Offering            Apostles Creed            Gloria            Prayer for the Deceased  <i>Act of Faith</i>  <i>Rosary and Mysteries</i></p>	<p><b><u>Grade 5</u></b>  <b>Seventeen Prayers</b>  <i>(3 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross            Angel of God            Grace before meals            Our Father            Hail Mary            Responses at Mass            Act of Contrition            Morning Offering            Apostles Creed            Gloria            Prayer for the Deceased            Act of Faith            Rosary and Mysteries  <i>Nicene Creed</i>  <i>Way of the Cross</i>  <i>All Parts of the Mass</i></p>

**Chart 2 – Required Prayers by Grade (Continued)**

<p><b><u>Grade 6</u></b>  <b>Twenty Prayers</b>  <i>(3 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross          Angel of God          Grace before meals          Our Father          Hail Mary          Responses at Mass          Act of Contrition          Morning Offering          Apostles Creed          Gloria          Prayer for the Deceased          Act of Faith          Rosary and Mysteries          Nicene Creed          Way of the Cross          All Parts of the Mass  <i>Memorare</i>  <i>Prayer for the Departed</i>  <i>Hail Holy Queen</i></p>	<p><b><u>Grade 7</u></b>  <b>Twenty-two Prayers</b>  <i>(2 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross          Angel of God          Grace before meals          Our Father          Hail Mary          Responses at Mass          Act of Contrition          Morning Offering          Apostles Creed          Gloria          Prayer for the Deceased          Act of Faith          Rosary and Mysteries          Nicene Creed          Way of the Cross          All Parts of the Mass          Memorare          Prayer for the Departed          Hail Holy Queen  <i>Prayer of St. Michael</i>  <i>Liturgy of the Hours</i></p>
<p><b><u>Grade 8</u></b>  <b>Twenty-five Prayers</b>  <i>(2 New)</i></p>	<p>Sign of the Cross          Angel of God          Grace before meals          Our Father          Hail Mary          Responses at Mass          Act of Contrition          Morning Offering          Apostles Creed          Gloria          Prayer for the Deceased          Act of Faith          Rosary and Mysteries          Nicene Creed          Way of the Cross          All Parts of the Mass          Memorare          Prayer for the Departed          Hail Holy Queen          Prayer of St. Michael          Liturgy of the Hours  <i>The Divine Praises</i>  <i>Patron Prayer of St. Augustine</i></p>		

**7.05 Student Behavior**

Students and their parents are expected to act in a manner that demonstrates respect and courtesy toward catechists, volunteers and classmates at all times. Their behavior should not disrupt the classroom learning environment or damage parish property. Behavioral incidents, as noted below, but not limited to the incidents cited, will be directed to the Director of Religious Education for follow-up action.

1. Any reports of “bullying” will be taken seriously. Offenders will be identified and subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.
2. No eating, drinking, or chewing gum is allowed in classrooms unless it is medically necessary. In the event of a class party (i.e. Christmas or at year end) the parent will be notified in advance and a *Food Notice and Parent Permission* form must be signed by the parent. The parent permission form is intended for a **specific** event and should not be considered a blanket permission form for the entire school year. All trash items should be disposed of properly.
3. Students are expected to respect the property of others. Students should not damage church property or use supplies and facilities improperly. Damaging school property will not be tolerated.
4. Students should cooperate with catechists in their class participation and the completion of assignments in and out of class.
5. The use of cellphones, tablets, electronic notebooks or other electronic devices during class is not allowed.
6. Weapons of any kind are not permitted on the school campus. Violators will be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

### **7.06 Dress Code**

There is a dress code for students in the religious education program. All students are expected to wear modest and appropriate clothing to class and all program functions. The following should not be worn:

- Low-cut tops, see-through tops or other garments, halter tops, tube tops, muscle shirts, bare midriff outfits, or shirts or blouses that are tied and rise above the waist.
- Mini-skirts and short-shorts; pants worn below the waist revealing a person’s undergarments.
- Emblems, insignias, jewelry, badges, slogans or tattoos that disrupt class sessions or incite disruptive behavior. This would include anything related to drugs, racism, gangs, sex, or any other inappropriate topics.

Remember: If in doubt, wear something else! Students will be reminded of the rules once. Any catechist or staff person can refer violations of the dress code to the student’s class catechist or the DRE. If further reminders are necessary, the DRE will follow-up with the parent.

## **7.07 Student Progress**

At the catechist's discretion, periodic progress reports can be issued to students and their parents. If the child does not satisfy the requirements for the grade level in which he or she is enrolled, the child will not automatically be promoted to the next grade.

## **8.00 Home Schooling**

Pursuant to the *Diocese of St. Augustine Parish Religious Education Policies*:

Families who choose to home school their children must register with the Religious Education Office using the current *Registration Form* and be in communication with the Religious Education Director. Canons 773, 774, #1-2 stipulate that the religious education of children and youth is the responsibility of parents, pastors and the local community (No. 910).

“Home school families are defined as those families who provide education, including religious faith formation, in their homes following a standardized curriculum. Families who seek to use the parish program for religious education only when it is convenient with the scheduling of secular activities are not covered in this definition of home school family” (No. 911).

San Juan del Rio Church will ‘make every effort to provide catechetical training or materials that home school families need when requests are reasonable.’ (No. 912).

“Families who home school are obligated to use the same religious education text as the parish religious education program during the sacramental years.” Sacramental years are defined in our Diocese as Grades 1 & 2 for Holy Eucharist, and Grades 7 & 8 for Confirmation. “It is recommended that only religious texts found to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the USCCB be used by home school families in all other years.” (No. 913)

## 9.00 Campus Security

The purpose of our campus' security program is the safety of your child. We understand that increased security measures come at the cost of additional inconvenience to the student and their family while on the school campus. Nonetheless, these measures are well worth the effort in preventing someone from doing harm to our children. For this, we ask your cooperation and patience.

Your compliance with campus security and safety measures is expected. Non-compliance may result in administrative actions, including disenrollment of your child from the religious education program. The following measures will be implemented:

### **9.01 Traffic and Speed Limits on Campus**

Traffic is an ever-present danger to our children. While driving in traffic lanes on the school campus, drivers should not exceed 10 mph. They should maintain vigilance and a situational awareness for the possibility of a child running from behind a parked car or into a lane of moving traffic. Being late for class is no excuse for speeding and endangering our children or their families.

Uniformed St. John's Sheriff's Office deputies will be on campus for traffic control and security patrols. In addition, the Knights of Columbus will provide a security presence at the entrance gate and roving patrols throughout the campus.

Drivers entering or exiting the church property are expected to obey the instructions of sheriff's deputies and campus security personnel.

**Due to child safety concerns, especially after dark, parents are strongly urged not to park their vehicles on State Road 13 to drop off or pick up their student.**

### **9.02 Student Arrivals and Dismissals**

Please help us protect your children. Under the provisions of our *Safe Environment Program*, other than a parent or guardian, we will only release your child to an adult (18 years and older). The *Student Pick-up Authorization* form is found on the parish website or available in the Religious Education office.

#### **9.021 Student Sign-in and Sign-Out Requirement**

For Grades K through Grade 3, a parent or an authorized persons over 18 years old MUST sign their child "in" before class and "out" after class. Sign-in sheets will be available in the classroom. The sign-in sheet will support your child's attendance record. Parents should plan accordingly to expect a slight delay to accommodate the sign-in and sign-out process. Children MAY NOT sign themselves in or out.

### **9.022 Student Dismissal and Release**

At dismissal, catechists will only release their students to an adult (18 years or older). **This policy applies to all children enrolled in the CCD program.**

If the adult is someone other than a parent, a signed *Student Pick-up Authorization* form should be on file with the Religious Education Office before the start of class on the day of the pick-up.

### **9.023 Late Student Pickup**

Please be considerate of our volunteer catechists' family obligations and pick up your student promptly after class. Catechists may remain in the classroom after dismissal waiting for a student pick-up. After ten (10) minutes, the catechist will escort the child to the Religious Education Office for pickup. If the pick-up person is running late, please call the Religious Education Office (287-2801) and advise our staff so we can transmit that information to your student's catechist.

### **9.03 Prior to the Start of Classes**

Students will not be admitted to the school campus earlier than ten (10) minutes before the start of class. To avoid placing children in harms way, it is recommended that parents also accompany their children to their classrooms. As noted above, at dismissal, catechists will only release their students to an adult (18 years or older).

### **9.04 Entrance Gate**

Before CCD classes begin, the only entrance to the school campus is through the main school gate outside the Principal's Office in the No. 200 Building. Although there are four other gates on campus, none of them should be used as "entrance" gates. Anyone leaving the campus before the regular dismissal time should also exit the campus through the main gate to prevent "follow-through" by unauthorized persons.

Adult gate monitors will be assigned at the main gate or other gates on campus for access control purposes.

### **9.05 Security Procedures After Classes Begin**

The campus will be locked down and off-limits to anyone who is not a registered student. Security monitors will close the main gate and deny access to the campus once classes start. Extended day parents may be challenged during the times religious education classes are in session. After classes begin, security monitors will "clear" the school campus of any adults and children who are not in CCD classes. This includes walkways outside of classrooms, interior hallways and restrooms, basketball courts and play areas.

### **9.06 Late Arrivals**

Students who arrive late for class must first obtain an “Admit” slip from the Religious Education Office. An adult must accompany the student to obtain this form. The form will be necessary to gain entrance to the campus once the gates are closed. The student should show the Late Admission form to the gate security personnel and give it to the catechist when he or she enters the classroom.

On another note, please help us with this request: Encourage your student to use a bathroom at home before coming to class to avoid being late for class because they needed to make a restroom stop before coming into class. On the other hand, if needed, the school restrooms are always open to our students.

### **9.07 Early Departures**

Adults who pick-up a student before the regular class dismissal time should advise the Religious Education Office and the catechist of their intention before the class begins.

Prior to picking up the child, the adult must first obtain a completed “Early Release” slip from the Religious Education Office. This form will allow entry to the campus after the main gate is closed. The adult should show the “Early Release” slip to gate security personnel for entry unto the campus. The form should be given to the child’s catechist when the student is picked up in the classroom. The adult and student should exit the campus through the main gate.

### **9.08 Class Dismissal**

The main gate will be closed until the classes are dismissed. Once the gate is opened, parents and other adults may proceed to their child’s classroom to pick-up their student.

### **9.09 Buildings and Playground Equipment**

Once classes begin, the campus buildings, walkways, hallways and playground equipment, including the basketball court, will be off-limits to unauthorized adults and children.

### **9.10 Suspicious Activity**

Campus security is everyone’s business. Please report suspicious activity on the church property to security personnel or staff in the Religious Education Office.

### **9.11 Emergency Notification**

Parents are requested to provide emergency contact information at registration. This information will be used to notify parents in the event of an emergency involving their children. Contact information for an additional adult is also requested in case the parent

is not available. **NOTE:** You must have authorized SMS text messaging with your cell phone carrier. Your cell phone carrier may charge you for the text messages you receive.

Any time a child is injured on parish property, the parent will be notified of the incident, and an *Accident Report* will be completed.

It is very important that you notify the Office of Religious Education of any changes in your home, work and/or cellphone numbers or email address so that we can promptly notify you in the event of an emergency.

### **9.12 Substance Abuse Policies**

Substance abuse is defined as the possession of, use of, selling or distributing any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance, which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, or injection. Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance on parish property or at parish-sponsored events will be immediately suspended from the program. A conference with the pastor, director of religious education, student and parent is mandatory for readmission. Any student selling or distributing illegal substances will be referred to local authorities.

No child may carry prescription or non-prescription drugs on their person while on the school campus. If a student needs to be medicated during class, the parent or guardian should discuss this need with the Director of Religious Education.

### **9.13 Student Pick-up Authorization**

Please help us protect your children. Under the provisions of the Diocesan *Safe Environment Program*, we will only release a child to a parent, guardian or authorized person as documented on the *Student Pick-up Authorization* form on file in the Religious Education Office. The *Student Pick-up Authorization* form must be filed with the Religious Education Office at least one hour prior to the pick-up.

If the person authorized to pick-up the child is not known to the catechist, the catechist will require a picture ID to check against the information found on the *Student Pick-up Authorization*. We apologize for the inconvenience, but these precautionary steps are necessary to ensure that only authorized persons have access to your child.

## 10.00 Matters Related to Parents

### ***10.01 Communication***

In past years, San Juan del Rio parish has been recognized as the largest Religious Education Program in the Diocese of St. Augustine. Although the staff of the Religious Education Office strive to provide timely responses to questions or communications, email or telephone, from time-to-time we may miss the mark. With over 600 children and a very limited staff, we may sometimes disappoint people in our timeliness. Please accept our apologies for administrative oversights or communication delays during the school year.

**All communications from the Religious Education Office are primarily done through email.** Please check your email regularly. As noted in Section 9.11, parents are expected to notify the Religious Education Office of changes in their contact information. This information is critical to the notification of parents in case of emergency, illness of their child, or for any updates or changes to the class schedules and other important information.

### ***10.02 Communication with Catechists***

We encourage parents to speak with their child's catechist about their progress or any other concerns that may arise. Catechists enjoy hearing from parents because it helps engage parents in the learning process. It also provides additional information about the child, their needs and other helpful insight into aspects of the child's life outside of class. In addition, the DRE is available to discuss matters with parents.

### ***10.03 Limited Authority of Catechists and Staff Volunteers***

Any catechist representations regarding diocesan policies or those of the parish religious education program are subject to the approval of the pastor and/or the Director of Religious Education. Catechists and other volunteer staff cannot be expected to have full knowledge of existing canonical requirements and diocesan policies that guide the operations of the religious education program. **Rather than risk misinformation, parents are encouraged to seek the guidance of the Director of Religious Education in these matters.**

### ***10.04 Parent Meetings***

All parent meetings should be considered as "mandatory." There are no make-up sessions, so please plan accordingly.

There is usually one "general" parent meeting for all grades at the beginning of the school term. Children should not attend this general meeting. In addition, there are two special parent meetings for those students receiving the sacraments of First Holy Eucharist and/or Confirmation. These meetings are also considered **mandatory**.

### **10.05 Class Textbooks or Workbooks**

There is more to education today than in years past. Textbook publishers have invested heavily into developing online learning resources for today's students and their parents. You are invited to go to The Loyola Press website at <http://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2013/parents-and-students> .

Catechists are required to send manuals and workbooks home with the students. Assignments may be given by the catechist and are expected to be completed by the student. This is an important role of the parent or guardian. They can assist the religious education effort by discussing the content of weekly sessions and reviewing class materials with their child.

Students in Grades 1-8, especially those preparing to receive the sacraments of Holy Eucharist (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade) and/or the sacrament of Confirmation (8<sup>th</sup> Grade and HS), should regularly bring home their student manuals. Catechists have been instructed to release these materials to students so parents can discuss and review these materials with their student. If this is not occurring, please call the Religious Education Office and report the problem. Likewise, parents should make sure that students bring their class materials back to class for their next week's lesson.

### **10.06 Events Off School Property**

Prior to a child being taken off church property for a CCD event, parents will receive notice requesting their written consent for this action. The appropriate permission form and medical release form will be kept on file at the parish. Permission forms and medical releases are for one-time use only. Each new event results in a new written consent form.

### **10.07 Volunteers – Catechists and Others**

Volunteers are the core and life of the religious education program. If you would like to volunteer as a catechist, assistant catechist, or volunteer in other areas of the Religious Education Office, please indicate your willingness on the *Student Registration* form or call the Religious Education Office for additional information. If you can help in any way, we would be most grateful for your stewardship of time and talent in service to our children's religious education.

### **10.51 Service Animals on Campus**

To prevent accidental animal incidents, only service dogs and other service animals are allowed on campus.

## 11.00 Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a fun, Bible-based week-long summer program for children entering Grade PK4 to Grade 4. VBS registration will be announced in the church bulletin and on the parish website. The days and times are Monday through

Friday from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. In the past, the VBS program is normally held mid-June after the end of the St. Johns School District’s school year. Again, check the parish website for current VBS dates and times information.

Vacation Bible School offers service hours for its student volunteers and is a fine source of service hours for our Confirmation candidates.

## 12.00 Stewardship

### ***12.01 Stewardship of Time and Talent for Students***

Student stewardship, the sharing of one’s time, talent and treasure, is encouraged and promoted in the religious education program. Developing stewardship among our youth is a valued component of our students’ spiritual journey. As parents, you can play a key role in developing the stewardship spirit in your child. This development in a life-long regard for stewardship will contribute to the welfare of the individual and the society in which they share.

#### ***12.011 Student Envelopes and Activities***

As part of their formation experience, we encourage stewardship experiences. For financial donations, students will be provided donation envelopes for the weekend offertory at Mass. Stewardship envelopes will be provided to the students at the beginning of the school term.

The envelopes provide space for the student to describe how they used their time and talent to serve God during the previous week. Some examples are:

- Time spent praying and learning prayers
- Time spent reading the Bible and Bible stories
- Time spent reading about saints
- Time spent helping members of the family, neighbors or others
- Time spent being an alter server
- Time singing or playing an instrument in the choir
- Time spent helping their teachers for school projects
- Time spent in free babysitting or pet sitting
- Time spent helping other less fortunate children
- Time spent cleaning up the neighborhood
- Other generous actions not listed

#### ***12.012 Sharing Your Talents***

We encourage our students to recognize and appreciate their many gifts. These are all gifts from God for the good of others. Some examples are spirituality,

intelligence, friendliness, kindness, athletic ability, artistic or musical ability, sense of humor, leadership ability, quick wit, etc.

The following are examples of using your talents in positive ways:

- Telling someone about God's love
- Tutoring a peer or younger child with academic talents
- Singing in the choir and using your musical talents
- Setting a good example with leadership talents
- Encouraging others to be a good sport and playing fairly
- Reaching out to someone who is lonely
- Cheering someone up when they are sad

### ***12.02 Stewardship of Time and Talent for Parents***

Stewardship is a tradition in our Catholic faith. We are asked to share our “time, talent and treasure” for the benefit of others, but also for our own benefit as disciples of Jesus Christ. There are a variety of stewardship opportunities for the parents (or guardians) of families with children enrolled in our religious education program:

Some of the direct and indirect benefits available to parents and other adults are:

1. Serving as models of “volunteerism at work” for their children, especially for Confirmation candidates earning service hours.
2. Helping the parish to successfully run its Religious Education Programs and reduce operating costs through their generous sharing of time and talents.
3. Participating as catechists and/or administrative volunteers will provide them a better understanding of the needs of the Religious Education Program, help develop a sense of community and better serve the incredible array of needs of our children through involvement in advisory groups, as catechists or in working groups serving as coordinators and participants.
4. Volunteering as “facilitators” for a variety of Adult Faith Formation programs in the parish enables a better understanding of Catholic doctrines, the Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and to assist other parents in fulfilling their role as primary educators of their children.
5. Following the Lord in loving and caring for the poor deepens their capacity to love others.

There are so many ways that our parish religious education programs for children and adults could benefit from your stewardship of time, talent and treasure. It all starts with listening for and answering “yes” to Jesus’ call to “Follow Me” and to serve others. If you are interested in stewardship opportunities, please contact the DRE.

### **13.00 Nondiscriminatory Policy**

The catechetical program represents the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and endeavors to bring the Gospel message to all its students. Therefore,

it is completely antithetical to its mission to discriminate because of age, race, color, national origin, sex, marital status (except as it affects one's status as a practicing Catholic), or disability of any individual. The program does reserve the right to act on the basis of its religious principles at all times, including the admission to service volunteers and other like activities relating to their supervision.

#### 14.00 Parent-Student Handbook Changes

Revisions to this *Handbook* during the year are expected. When changes, other than those for clerical or minor content revisions are made, they will be communicated to parents by email.