

# St. Joseph Catholic Church

## Parish School of Religion

### PSR handbook

2020-2021



We have multiple resources available to you. Please utilize the lighthouse Catholic media CD's and booklets available in the back of the church. Also, the following is a website with various bible studies, movies and other resources available for **FREE**.

1. Go to [www.stjosephflorence.formed.org](http://www.stjosephflorence.formed.org)
2. Create your own personal account with your user name/email and password.
3. Start enjoying the best Catholic Content all in one place!

**“Whoever wants the next generation of Catholics the most will get them.”** Matthew Kelley

If you ever have questions, concerns, or ideas, please do not hesitate to call or email me.

#### Director of Religious Education

*Kim Kroeger*: [dre@stjosephflorence.org](mailto:dre@stjosephflorence.org)

256-764-3303 (office)

**Class Days and Times:**  
**Sunday-9:45 am-10:45 am**  
**1st-12th grade**

**DRE– Kim Kroeger**  
**[dre@stjosephflorence.org](mailto:dre@stjosephflorence.org)**  
**256-764-3303**

My Dear Parents,

Congratulations to all of you who have been specially chosen by Almighty God to be partners and partakers with Him in the great act of creation and Divine Providence. What your children are is God's gift to you; and what your children would become is your gift to God. Your children are basically innocent and are created in the "image and likeness" of God.

But the forces of Satan and the evil spirits constantly try to destroy the divine image in them and lead them to darkness such as materialism, secularism, atheism, and immorality. It is in this context that the parents have to play a great role in transforming their children, always as God's children. The parents have to set their best examples as practicing Catholics in the lives of their children. It is their prayer life, value systems, and their examples that influence the life and mindset of their children. Parents are the first teachers in the lives of their children and they have to instill the spirit of faith and devotion in their young minds and hearts.

Similarly the teachers are the second parents in their lives of children. Our St. Joseph Catholic parish family has the best volunteer PSR teachers. They love your children, they love their faith and spend their precious time planning for lessons each week and preparing your children for the sacraments of the Catholic Church. They will train your children about the importance of the Holy Eucharist, Liturgy of the Eternal Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the importance of participating in Sunday Holy Mass very regularly.

We invite you to get to know your children's PSR teachers. You have to discuss with them about the progress of your children in religious education in the Catholic Church, which is the only Church instituted by Jesus Christ for the salvation of the entire humanity.

We thank you for your commitment and love towards the parish family of St. Joseph. Please remember that your children are the future of the church. It is through them that our dreams are realized for accomplishing the divine design in our lives.

God bless you all,

Fr. Joseph Kuzhichalil, CMI

Your priest of St. Joseph, Florence

### Parental Obligation during Confirmation II year:

- Attend parent meetings as scheduled.
- Actively support your child in his/her faith journey in every way possible and especially by insuring weekly participation in Sunday Mass, attendance at class, and attendance at Confirmation retreat.
- Ensure we have a copy of your child's baptismal certificate in the office by **September 30th**.
- Encourage your child to study the Bishop's questions and quiz them to ascertain their preparedness.
- We highly encourage the parents to sign up as classroom volunteers at least once throughout the year. You may bring a snack or help the teachers with a project. Your example of investing in your child's religious education will show the importance you place on their faith.



### **Dress Code for Confirmation**

Girls:

- Dress that reaches the tips of your fingers in length
- No strapless or spaghetti straps-wear a sweater/jacket to cover shoulders
- Dress shoes-no flip flops

Boys:

- Slacks/pants-no jeans
- Dress shoes-no tennis shoes
- Dress shirt
- tie
- Jacket (optional)
- belt

## Confirmation II Requirements

- Attendance at Sunday Mass
- Attendance and participation in classes held Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:45
- The church is a servant community and all accepting full membership are also accepting the responsibility to serve. ***Candidates for the reception of Confirmation are asked to perform 20 hours of Christian service from the fall of the Confirmations I year through the last class of the Confirmation II year.*** A completed Confirmation service sheet should be submitted for each project with an adult signature for each service project. A copy of the form is available on our website.
- Each student will complete a written report on the saint of his/her choice. The report will be on the saint that the student is choosing to use for his/her Confirmation name. Your choice of saint should be made carefully. You should have strong connection to this saint by either shared interests or beliefs. This report is due in the 2nd semester. ***These reports will be presented during PSR. See handout on St. report guidelines.***
- Attendance at Confirmation II retreat. **The date of this retreat will be shared as soon as we have it confirmed.**
- Reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation ***at least once*** during the Confirmation II preparation year.
- Be willing to have feet washed on Holy Thursday to represent the youth of St. Joseph.
- Be willing to serve at Sunday liturgy as server, lector, gift bearer, cantor, etc.
- The candidates will be given a list of questions or topic supplied by the diocese. These are general questions about our Catholic faith. The students should be able to answer these questions verbatim. The Bishop will talk to the students and ask them to answer these questions to ascertain the preparedness of our candidates.

## GOAL

The goal of St. Joseph's PSR is to support and assist parents in their guardianship of their children's faith. Parents, by word and example, are the primary teachers of their children. At Baptism, parents undertake the responsibility of providing for their child's religious formation. We offer the opportunity for faith to come alive for our children through knowledge, prayer and the sacraments. We hope to deepen their faith and a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church so that they will be moved to share their time, talent and treasure in the life of the Church, now and throughout their lives. We strive to assist our children to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is done by attending Mass, participating fully and frequently in the sacraments, developing an active prayer life, Christian service, and continuous learning about their Catholic faith. The PSR program is an ongoing process and is designed so that each year builds on the last to help in the understanding of our faith. This is achieved with the joint efforts of our parish staff, catechists, parents and students and with the confident faith in the love and guidance of the Holy Spirit.



## Religious Education Safety Procedures:

- Every adult working with children must be trained and certified in Youth Protection 1. This is done online through the diocese of Birmingham. You will find the online training on the following website: [www.catholicyouthbhm.net](http://www.catholicyouthbhm.net)
- All entrance doors to the building will be locked during Religious Education classes on Sunday morning. The doors at the front of the school building, near the breezeway, are the only doors to be used for entry and exit during PSR. This is to ensure your child's safety.
- All other doors will remain inaccessible except during an emergency exit. The staff and children have been instructed to never open those doors to allow entrance for anyone.
- The DRE and/or assistant will be in the front lobby to allow late arrivals inside. The DRE and/or assistant will monitor the halls. The DRE will also visit classrooms throughout the PSR time period
- All teachers and aides will wear nametags to make them easily visible.
- **Due to Covid-19, we are limiting access to the school building.** Parents will not be allowed to walk their child to class this year or go inside the school building to pick up their child. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please speak to the DRE, Kim Kroeger.
- We will follow the same cleaning requirements of the school. The desks, door knobs, etc. will be cleaned daily after PSR.
- All catechists will have their temperatures taken each morning before entering the building.
- Catechists will use hand sanitizer and will wear masks while in the school building if social distancing is not possible.
- If possible, we will use the Zoom platform for those students who wish to attend PSR virtually due to Covid. We encourage those students who chose the virtual option to "attend" class live so they can interact with the catechist and their peers. PSR class times also will be recorded and parents are encouraged to watch with their child.
- All media release forms must be turned into the DRE before a child

## Requirements of Sponsors:

- He or she must be 16 years of age or older.
- He or she must be fully initiated (received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and be a practicing Catholic.
- He or she may not be a parent.

## Role of Sponsor

- Models the commitment to personal prayer, community worship, and ministry expected of a mature Christian.
- Willingly shares his or her faith story with the candidate.
- Supports the candidate with his or her faith journey of preparation through ongoing dialogue, notes of encouragement, and a willingness to listen to the concerns and hopes of the candidate.
- Prays for and with the candidate.
- Presents the candidate to the bishop for anointing and with the help of the Holy Spirit will continue to guide the newly confirmed in the future.

## Parental Obligation during the Confirmation 1 year

- Attend the parent meeting to review all upcoming requirements.
- Actively support you child in his/her faith journey in every way possible especially by insuring weekly participation in Sunday Mass.
- Attend the Confirmation workshop with your child.
- Submit a copy of your child's baptismal certificate to the Parish office no later than **September 30<sup>th</sup>**.
- We encourage the parents to sign up as classroom volunteers at least once throughout the year. You may bring a snack or help the teachers with a project. Your example of investing in your child's religious education will show the importance you place on their faith journey. Parents need to attend the Youth Protection program to work with children in the PSR program.



## Confirmation

**Confirmation I** typically occurs during a student's ninth grade year. We will use the YOU. Life, Love and the Theology of the Body curriculum. Chastity education is mandated by the Diocese of Birmingham as a part of the Confirmation preparation process. **Confirmation II** typically occurs during the 10th grade year. During this year, the curriculum will be Send Out Your Spirit. Confirmation is usually scheduled in the spring of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. These dates will be communicated to you as soon as they are available.

### Confirmation I Requirements

- Attendance at Sunday Mass
- Attendance and participation in classes held on Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:45.
- The church is a servant community and all accepting full membership are also accepting the responsibility to serve. ***Candidates for the reception of Confirmation are asked to perform 20 hours of Christian service from the fall of the Confirmations I year through the last class of the Confirmation II year.***
- A completed Confirmation service sheet should be submitted for each project with an adult signature for each service project. A copy of the sheet is available on our website.
- Reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation **at least** once during the Confirmation I year.
- Be willing to have feet washed on Holy Thursday to represent the youth of St. Joseph.
- Be willing to serve at Sunday liturgy as server, lector, gift bearer, cantor, etc.
- Attend the Confirmation workshop with parents or sponsor.
- ***Sponsor certification forms must be submitted at the parent meeting*** for Confirmation students.

can attend a virtual class.

- We ask you to be patient as we continue to examine our procedures and make changes in the interest of protecting your children. Thank you.

### Drop off and dismissal policy:

- Parents will drive to the front of the school doors. We will take your child's temperature before they exit the car. Children with a temperature >100.0 will be sent home.
- Students who drive themselves will have their temperature taken before entering the school building.
- Students will use hand sanitizer before they enter the school building.
- Students must wear masks to PSR. They will wear the masks while in the hall or going to the bathroom. They may remove masks only if they are socially distancing and in their seats. This policy could change at any time, and masks could be mandated at all times.
- Parents may remain in their cars or gather under the awning in front of the school for pick up. Social distancing and mask need to be worn if you are standing outside of the school. We cannot dismiss the entire PSR at one time and maintain social distancing, so we will dismiss children as their parents arrive.

***Please don't be late because many catechists attend the 11:00am Mass***

### General Policies

1. In the Catholic Church, Religious Education is done either by attending Catholic school or attending a PSR program for grades 1-12. All families of prospective Religious Education students must be registered members of the parish and attend Mass regularly.
2. Children who attend public school must attend Religious Education classes corresponding with their age and religious understanding.

3. Parents of students preparing for sacraments are **required** to attend *scheduled workshops, retreats, and parent meetings*.
4. All participating children must attend class weekly.
5. The Diocese of Birmingham requires that all Parish School of Religion Programs offer to all participating students “Safe Environment Training” each year in PSR class grades 1-12. All material is age appropriate. Our intent is for 100% participation for our PSR students. However, parents have the right to “opt-out” their children from this training. If a parent chooses to opt-out, they must sign a form and give the signed form to the Director of Religious Education. All of the material covered is on the Birmingham Diocese website. Please review all material to make an informed decision before deciding to opt-out of the program.

5. Fees for PSR:

- 1 child-\$35
- 2 children- \$45
- 3 children- \$55

\* *These prices cover the cost of the books and a small amount to help cover additional supplies. If the cost of PSR is a concern for you, please talk to the DRE.*

***A child will never be turned away due to finances.***



The children will need to memorize and recite the following prayers before First Communion and Reconciliation:

- The Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be
- Act of Contrition



***The most effective way for a child to memorize a prayer is by repetition. We suggest you say these prayers nightly as a part of their bedtime prayers. These prayers are provided on the back page of the PSR handbook.***

## **Dress Code for 1st Holy Communion**

### **Girls:**

- White dress-spaghetti strapped dresses must have a cover up over the shoulders.
- Veil
- Gloves (optional)
- Closed toe white shoe

### **Boys:**

- Dark pants
- White shirt
- Dark tie
- Jacket (optional)
- Dark shoes



## **Sacramental Preparation Requirements:**

### **First Reconciliation and First Communion**

- Children preparing for these sacraments must actively participate in the religious education program or attend Catholic school. Both First Reconciliation and First Communion are celebrated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Families with children older than second grade who would like their children prepared for these sacraments should contact the Director of Religious Education.
- It is expected that all students and their families attend Mass as well as religious education each week. Attendance at Sunday Mass is expected for those enrolled in Catholic School. Parents of both SJS and PSR are required to attend the parent meetings scheduled for First Reconciliation and First Communion.
- Parents and children are required to participate in the Parent/Child Workshops scheduled before the reception of each sacrament.
- Parents of children in the PSR program as well as St. Joseph Regional Catholic School are required to attend the parent education sessions as part of the preparation for the Sacraments. Please see the PSR schedule for the meeting times.
- A copy of your child's baptismal certificate is due in the parish office no later than **September 25<sup>th</sup>**.
- The child and parent will create a "banner" that will be used as a pew marker during 1<sup>st</sup> Communion. The banner should be 12" wide x 18-24" tall. It should be decorated with reminders of Holy Communion and the child's name. We are able to order "kits" to make the banners. We will discuss this at the Parent meeting.

### **Banners are due at the 1st Communion Workshop.**

### ***Attendance Policy***

1. Children are expected to be **on time** for class. Late arrival is disruptive to the teachers and classes.
2. Children are expected to participate in each scheduled class session. *In the case of illness or family emergency, absences are to be phoned or emailed into your child's teacher. If you are unable to reach your teacher, you may email the DRE before class begins.* Voice messages and emails are both acceptable. Please follow up with your child's teacher to find out how your child can make up the missed session. *Parents are responsible to obtain the chapter and work missed and complete it at home.*

The completed work needs to be turned in to your teacher the following week. **Four unexcused** absences a year will result in a review of the student's understanding of the material for the year. If a child does not have a reasonable grasp of the material it may be necessary to repeat the year of study. This review will be conducted by Fr. Roy and the DRE.

### ***Sacramental Years Attendance Policy***

It is extremely important that your child attends each class in preparation for First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. Every week will consist of different lessons and activities. *If you miss a class, the lesson must be completed at home in order to receive the sacrament.* **2 unexcused** absences will result in Fr. Roy and the DRE reviewing the child's understanding of the material. They will determine if the child is ready for the Sacrament.

### **Cancellations**



***Cancellations due to weather will be communicated through email, text messages, and on the parish website. Please make sure we have your correct cell phone number for text messaging.***



## PSR Curriculum

- Due to the current ongoing pandemic, we have decided to make a few modifications to the PSR Curriculum. This year, the non-sacramental classes will use a program entitled, The Gospel Weeklies. Each child's lesson is based on the Gospel reading of the week. Lessons connect the Gospel to the children's lives and to the doctrine that springs from the Gospel message. The Activity Books and the Catechism handbooks correlate to those themes. This liturgical catechesis keeps students and their families closely connected to the liturgical cycles of the Church Year, while providing thorough instruction in the faith.
- This method works well in a classroom setting, but it will be easily modified if we must abandon face to face learning. Pflaum, the publishing company, has developed a parent check list/step by step guide, to teaching your child at home.
- Each lesson is connected to the Sunday liturgy. Therefore, it is important for families to attend Mass. If your family is not attending Mass in person, then we encourage you to watch Mass from home on your computer or television. St. Joseph records the weekly and daily Masses. You will find these on these two resources:  
  
[www.facebook.com/StJosephFlorence](http://www.facebook.com/StJosephFlorence) and  
  
YouTube-search for St. Joseph Catholic Church, Florence, Alabama
- **Each lesson has an online assessment/test. Each student is expected to complete the online assessment each week. The results will be emailed to the catechist and the DRE.**
- The catechist will try to continue teaching via Zoom if we must move to a completely virtual environment. However, in some situations the parents will be solely responsible for teaching their children.

## Prayers your children need to know:

### Our Father

Our Father,  
Who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily  
bread;  
and forgive us our tres-  
passes  
as we forgive those who  
trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temp-  
tation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

### Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace.  
The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou  
amongst women,  
and blessed is the fruit  
of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of  
God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of  
our death. Amen.

### Act of Contrition

My God,  
I am sorry for my sins with  
all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above  
all things.  
I firmly intend, with your  
help,  
to do penance, to sin no  
more, and to avoid whatev-  
er leads me to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus  
Christ suffered and died for  
us.  
In His Name, my God, have  
mercy.

### Glory Be

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen.