



# Parish School of Religion Handbook

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SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

*“Through Christ all education, within the family and outside of it, becomes part of God's own saving pedagogy, which is addressed to individuals and families and culminates in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's Death and Resurrection. The "heart" of our redemption is the starting-point of every process of Christian education, which is likewise always an education to a full humanity. Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children, and they also possess a fundamental competence in this area: they are educators because they are parents.*

*In the sphere of education the Church has a specific role to play...it can be said that it is not only a matter of entrusting the Church with the person's religious and moral education, but of promoting the entire process of the person's education "together with" the Church. The family is called to carry out its task of education in the Church, thus sharing in her life and mission.”*

*- From Letter to Families Pope John Paul II, n.16*

*February 22, 1994*

As members of the Lord's Body here on earth, all of us play an important role in the faith formation of our children. While the primary responsibility is in the hands of the parents, St. Joseph Parish School of Religion program is here to assist you in every way possible to ensure that your children have every opportunity to grow to a mature faith in God, and an understanding of our Catholic faith.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Saint Joseph Parish School of Religion works to assist parents in their role as the primary educators of faith for their children. As we catechize the children of our Parish in the Gospel Message and the truths our Catholic faith, we offer opportunities for full, active participation through prayer, Word, Sacrament and service to help them grow in faith in and in their relationship with God.

## **PSR Prayer**

Saint Joseph as you watched over Jesus so tenderly ,  
I ask that you do the same for me as my protector and guide.  
Like you, I want to learn with order, patience, kindness and love.  
Pray for me that the work of my hands, mind, and heart  
are open to the Holy Spirit.  
Help me focus on my lessons today and every day so I can  
follow the path of Christ.  
Amen.

**Due to Covid-19, this handbook is for the first half of the PSR School Year (September 2020 - December 2020), for at home learning/virtual catechesis. Another policy handbook will be issued if Saint Joseph PSR returns to onsite, in-person instruction. If at home learning/virtual catechesis continues through May 2021, these policies will remain in effect.**

## **1) Class Dates and Times**

The PSR school year begins September and ends in May. ***Saint Joseph PSR will begin with at home instruction, with monthly ZOOM meetings for students and families.*** This option allows catechists to present students information so they can complete lessons outside of an online learning platform. At home lessons will include faith formation packets (virtual or paper-based) and appropriate hands on activities.

There will be scheduled "PSR Packet pick up" events where families can get materials, with a small, family friendly activity that they can do on premise (with sanitation and social distancing) or can be taken home. We will be using the Pflaum Gospel weeklies, which is lectionary based. Families can do these worksheets together when possible and they will still be hearing and exploring the Sunday readings.

Should Saint Joseph PSR return to in-person instruction in the second half of the year, classes for children in grades kindergarten through eight meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:15-7:45 PM. There will also be dates and times where parents and families will have sessions together. Parents can still choose at home learning for their child for the second half of the year. PSR Packet pick up dates will still be scheduled. Please see Page 2 for Dates and Calendar.

## **2) Registration, Tuition and Fees**

1. New and Returning Family Information Packets, containing forms, Handbooks, and payment information will be available for pick up starting August 20th in the Parish Office, as well as being online at [www.saintjoe/PSR](http://www.saintjoe/PSR).
2. Registration will not be accepted at the door on the first day of PSR or any Wednesday - online or in person - during the year. This is especially true this year due to COVID-19 as we have to properly plan for the number of students in a room. Please register before sending your child(ren) to class.
3. Tuition for PSR is \$50.00 per child. Every child is entitled to a religious education. If these fees impose a hardship please contact the Parish Catechetical Leader
4. Parents can still choose at home learning for their child for the second half of the year, even if we return to in-person, onsite instruction. PSR Packet pick up dates will still be scheduled.
- 5. Please note Sacramental Preparation for Reconciliation/Eucharist and Confirmation is separate from PSR. These registration forms and fees are also processed separately from PSR.**

## **3) Communication**

This handbook contains the basic policies and procedures of our PSR program. Other important communications and updates will need to get to you throughout the year. Communication will be sent via email as well as the St. Joseph website. Please make sure you list an email address that you check regularly on your registration. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions about any information in this handbook, or any information that you receive during the year, please contact the Parish Catechetical Leader.

#### **4) Virtual Catechetical Gathering**

We will hold Virtual Catechetical Gatherings over ZOOM once month, on a Wednesday Evening from 6:15-7:45 PM. Please page 2 for the Calendar for dates and topics. Parents are always invited and encouraged to participate in these gatherings, as there will be items covered to help you with Faith Formation at home.

Please note the following polices for Virtual Catechetical Gatherings:

- There will always be 2 adults (over the age of 21) in a live session that are in diocesan safe-environment compliance (attended Protecting God's Children, Virtus and fingerprinted) and registered as such at the parish.
- Children under 13 cannot log into virtual catechetical gathering without adult supervision (per the Children's Internet Protection Act).
- Links for signing in will be sent to directly to a Parent's email. We cannot send links to student emails nor post links on a public forum such as web site or social media page.
- Catechists nor any of the students or parents participating may use Facebook (or other social media) to log into ZOOM.
- All students must have a Parent/Guardian Consent form from the Diocese of Cleveland (see PSR Registration) on file.

#### **5) Role of Parents, Involvement and Support of PSR Program**

Our PSR program is designed to supplement what is being taught in the home, not to take its place. This is especially true during this time of distance learning. Parents are vital for nurturing the faith of their children. They are the first and primary educators of their children. As cooperative participants in the program, parents should:

- Be registered members of Saint Joseph Parish or a nearby parish
- Attend Mass with their child on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- Teach their children the traditional prayers of the church
- Bring their child to or log into class on time
- Maintain an open line of communication with their child's teachers and PSR Office

#### **6) Permission to Photograph**

By granting permission to photograph your child(ren), please note that photographs could be used in future displays and/or parish publications. You may indicate your choice on the registration form.

#### **7) VIRTUS**

VIRTUS training/fingerprinting/volunteer registration form and standards of conduct form are mandatory for volunteers 18 and older. here will always be 2 adults (over the age of 21) in a live session that are in diocesan safe-environment compliance. Every catechist at Saint Joseph Parish complies with the Virtus requirements set forth by the Diocese of Cleveland. These requirements include a Virtus Training program, both FBI and BCI Background checks, reading required bulletins, and signing both the Conduct of Ministry Form Rev. 2016 and Policy for the Safety of Children in Matters of Sexual Abuse: Rev. 2016. Please go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) and register for a training session at a convenient place and time.

## **8) Called To Protect™**

Praesidium's Called to Protect™ is a multi-media training program focused on matters of personal safety, abuse prevention and creation of safe environments for children based on the latest child development research on how children and youth can best protect themselves. It does not replace the VIRTUS training for employees and volunteers but is supplementary to that. Lessons will be woven into classes during regular class times.

There will be parent meeting will be offered, please see calendar for dates. Called To Protect™ for Parents and Families, teaches parents what they must know to protect their own children. Parents new to our program and those parents who did not previously attend "Called to Protect" are expected to attend.

Called To Protect™ for Young Children teaches age-appropriate information to children in elementary school. They learn rules about protecting their bodies and what to do if someone tries to break the rules.

Called To Protect™ for Youth teaches middle and high-school aged kids about boundaries, how to respond if someone tries to violate their boundaries, and how to tell their parents if they or their friend have been abused.

As a parent, you have the option of requesting that your child not participate in the above program. Please contact the PSR Office for an "Opt-Out" form if you do not want your child to participate in the Called To Protect™ for Youth program or if you have any questions.

## **9) Expectations**

These expectations can be used in person or during lessons at home! Expectations are established to provide for the safety of each individual and to teach appropriate behavior. These will be explained to you students at the beginning of the PSR year. As parents and primary educators of your child, we ask that you review and re-enforce these expectations at home.

### **EXPECTATION #1 - Prepared**

Be prepared for class - physically and mentally. If you needed to bring anything, make sure you have it!

### **EXPECTATION #2 - Respect**

Be polite, courteous, and respectful at all times. Inappropriate behavior, inappropriate displays of affection, offensive language, bullying and disrespect of any kind will not be tolerated.

### **EXPECTATION #3 - Focus**

Follow directions. Stay on task. Cooperate with your classmates. Remember why we are here - to learn together, pray together and "be Christ" to one another.

### **EXPECTATION #4 - Safety**

We speak at a medium level (no yelling), we yield to each other in classrooms and halls (no pushing or shoving), and we honor the space and rights of others.

### **EXPECTATION #5 - What Would Jesus Do?**

Jesus teaches us to be loving, caring, and forgiving. Our daily actions, in and outside the classroom, should be a reflection of seeing Christ in other people and respecting their dignity.

## **10) Weapons Policy**

While we are not having in person classes currently, these policies are still in place. At no time should a student possess, use, transmit, display, handle, or conceal an object that can be classified as a weapon or dangerous instrument. Also, no student shall possess, use, transmit, dispel, handle, or conceal an object that can be considered a look-a-like weapon or dangerous instrument that may be disruptive to education. Violation of this policy will result in the notification of law enforcement and an immediate congruence with the parents.

## **11) Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol Policy**

While we are not having in person classes currently, these policies are still in place. The use, concealment, transfer, sale, possession, or buying of any controlled substance, tobacco, drug or alcohol will result in an immediate conference with the catechist or student's parents. If a child is to use a prescribed drug for the treatment of asthma, allergies or medical condition, the drug is to be kept in the PSR Office, and a note from the child's doctor must be provided describing its use and dosage. If a child carries an EpiPen, a note from the child's doctor must be on file in the PSR Office explaining why and under what condition constitutes the carrying and use of the EpiPen. With the exception of a life or death emergency, no child should self medicate themselves while at PSR. Failure to follow this policy will result in an immediate conference with parents and some cases a call to law enforcement.