

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.

1) Class Dates and Times

The PSR school year begins September and ends in May. Classes for children in grades kindergarten through eight meet on Monday evenings from 6:30-7:45 PM. 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.
2. Registration will not be accepted at the door on the first day of PSR or any Monday during the year. Please register before sending your child(ren) to class.
3. Tuition for PSR is \$50.00 for the first child, \$45.00 for each additional child. Every child is entitled to a religious education. If these fees impose a hardship please contact the Parish Catechetical Leader
4. Please note Sacramental Preparation for Reconciliation/Eucharist and Confirmation is separate from PSR. Registration forms and fees are processed separately from PSR.

4) Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

1. The main doors to the building will be unlocked for arrival from 6:10-6:30 p.m. Any students or parents arriving after 6:30 p.m. will have to buzz in. The doorbell is located on the left side of the main entrance. The doors will again be unlocked for dismissal from 7:40 until the last student has left the building.
2. A tone will sound to signal the beginning and conclusion of each class. Students in first through third grade must be walked in and dropped off in their classrooms and picked up from their classrooms. Students fourth through eighth grade may be dropped off and picked up at the main entrance.
3. If there is a change in who will be picking up your child, please notify your child's teacher.
4. Saint Joseph Parish School is equipped with a security system that incorporates numerous cameras. These cameras monitor the main entrances, internal hallways and gather areas.

5) PSR Cancellation

In the event of inclement weather, an Email will be sent out to all parents. A decision will be made no later than 4:00 p.m. Monday evenings. Please also check WJW Fox 8 News for cancellation of PSR classes. The Parish office will be notified of the cancellation. Please call the parish offices at (330) 928-2173 or (216) 532-3437, if you are unsure of cancellation. The PSR office will also send out emails announcing PSR class cancellation.

6) Absences and Make Up Work

Consistent attendance at religion class is necessary for a student to achieve full growth in their Catholic Faith. Missing 1 PSR session is the equivalent of missing 5 days of school. After 6 absences for the year, in which a student does not complete their makeup work, they will not receive a "complete" at their end of the year evaluation. Contact your student's catechist for work in the case of an extended absence. Parents are to fill out the absence form online at www.saintjoe.org/PSR to inform us if your child will be absent from PSR or we will call to check on your child(ren)'s situation.

7) End of the Year Report

This report will be mailed home at the end of the year for all PSR Students. It will show attendance records and offers an evaluation of your child's completion of the requirements for the religious education curriculum for their grade level. The factors that contribute to this determination include attendance, tardiness, student participation, and the catechist's own evaluation. If your student did not fully complete the school year, this will not in any way affect your child's ability to participate in the next grade level of PSR. Your student will enroll in the next grade level in the fall. Failure to complete the requirements for a particular grade level will be taken into consideration at the when a child is preparing for certain Sacraments. Additional catechesis and formation may be necessary for children.

8) Expectations and Discipline

Expectations and regulations throughout the building and in the classroom are established to provide for the safety of each individual and to teach appropriate behavior. The classroom teacher will explain these expectations to the students at the beginning of the school 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. Follow the classroom expectations set forth by you catechist. Respect the personal space and property of your classmates, your catechist, and St. Joseph's. 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 walk (not run), 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. Students are to remain in the classroom unless given permission to leave. Students must stay on the school grounds until dismissed into the custody of a parent or guardian.

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.

Discipline is first handled by the catechist in the classroom. When a student's behavior disrupts the class on a continual basis, the catechist will send the student to the PSR Principal or the Parish Catechetical Leader.

1. The student will have a discussion with the PSR Principle or the Parish Catechetical Leader and returned to class or will remain in the office. Parent/Guardian will be contacted in case of extreme disruption.
2. The student's parents/guardian will be notified in writing of the student's disruptive behavior.
3. Continual disruptive behavior will result in a conference with the student, the student's parents/guardians, the catechist, PSR Principle, and the Parish Catechetical Leader.

10) PROHIBITED ITEMS

CD Players, radios, iPods or any other such item with or without a headset, cameras, laser pointers, electronic games and all toys are not permitted unless it is part of a class project, approved by the teacher. Cell phones are not permitted to be on or used during class time. Items that are being used during class will be confiscated by the catechist, turned into the office, and will be returned at the conclusion of PSR that day to a parent or guardian only.

11) Weapons Policy

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.

12) Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol Policy

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.

13) Communication

In this handbook, the basic policies and procedures of our PSR program are listed. Please note that 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, versus sending weekly notes home. 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, or stop by after PSR to speak with the catechist.

14) 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.

15) VIRTUS

VIRTUS training/fingerprinting/volunteer registration form and standards of conduct form are mandatory for volunteers 18 and older. 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 and register for a training session at a convenient place and time.

15) 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.

The annual parent meeting will be offered in October (see calendar). 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.

16) 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. 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 class on time every week
- Maintain an open line of communication with their child's teachers and PSR Office

Your continued involvement and support of our program is vital to its success. Listed below there are many ways in which you can be directly involved in the religious education of your child. Please pick one that would best suit your time and talents.

Classroom Aide

Be present in a classroom to assist with activities. GRADE _____

Catechist

Provide instruction in the classroom. Please indicate if you would prefer to "Team" teach with another Catechist

Substitute Teacher

Put on a list of possible contacts to fill in when a teacher is unavailable.

Hall Monitor

Monitor hallways, run messages to classrooms, answer phone in office, ect.

PSR Service Projects

Volunteer for PSR Service Projects.