

# Religious Education Handbook



St. Joseph Catholic Church  
1401 South Mickley  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46241

**CLASS TIME: 10:00-11:20 A.M.**

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Pastor:

Father Rob Hausladen

Religious Education Coordinator:

Judy Meyers

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## 1 Letter to Parents

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Religious Education. This is shaping up to be a great year in not just the Religious Education program but the parish as a whole! As the parish grows so will our Religious Education program.

We will again this year have a Youth Choir and I encourage all students to participate in this program! They will meet each Sunday the last 20 minutes of class.

Another program that we will be implementing this year is Circle of Grace, which is an age appropriate way to help your children clearly identify boundaries within their own personal space. The effort of this program is to engage the children and educate them on how to better explain and give information should someone make them feel uncomfortable or violate their personal space.

I realize the struggles that parents encounter with competition between church, school, clubs, and sports. However we find time to fit in their extra-curricular activities, so we must find time to fit in God. The great thing is that God can help you find that balance. The top three activities you can do to help the faith development of your child are: pray together at home, attend Mass together on a weekly basis, and make attending religious education classes.

I look forward to this year and am excited about the promise that it holds. I consider it a blessing to be working with you and each of your children.

God bless each of you,

Judy Meyers

Religious Education Coordinator

317-502-3020

[judy.meyers@pdswireless.com](mailto:judy.meyers@pdswireless.com)

## 2 Child Abuse Policy

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis requires that all persons who work with children in a parish undergo a criminal background check, read the Archdiocesan sexual abuse policy “Protecting God’s Children” and sign a form stating they will abide by the policy requirements. They are also required to undergo training through the *Safe and Sacred* program. If you would like more information on this program, please check out their website: [www.safeandsacred-archindy.org](http://www.safeandsacred-archindy.org). Anyone may go through this program. It is great for parents! The entire thing start to finish takes only 45 minutes.

## 3 Discipline Policy

The best learning takes place in an orderly, respectful, and safe environment. Catechists are given directions to contact the Religious Education Coordinator when a child has become a discipline problem. If you are contacted by the Coordinator about a discipline problem involving your child, we ask for your cooperation. Catechists volunteer their time to teach children about our faith and the importance of God in our lives. We ask that you emphasize to your children the importance of being cooperative with their catechist and participate respectfully in class.

All catechists have been asked to follow the procedures outlined here: If a discipline problem develops, the first thing the catechist will do is try to handle the problem one-on-one with your child. The Coordinator will be informed about the situation if it happens a second time, and may choose to write or call the parents to discuss the situation with them. If the problem occurs again, you will be called and asked to take your child home for the day. As a final alternative, in order to ensure an effective teaching and learning environment, unresolved discipline problems on the part of uncooperative students may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

## 4 Weather Related Closings

In case of bad weather and any school cancellation will be posted on the [Religious Education page](#) of the St. Joseph website and the St. Joseph Facebook page.

## 5 Cell Phone Policy

It is extremely common for youth to have their own personal cell phones. Students are permitted to have them in class. However, the following rules are in place. If a student takes his/her cell phone out of their purse or pocket during class time even if it is just to check the time or if it rings during class time, the catechist has the option to do one of two things: ask the student to put the phone away immediately or confiscate the phone until the end of class. If you need to be in contact with your child during Religious Education classes, we ask that you come to church and remove them from class. There should be no reason at all that they need to have their cell phones readily accessible for the 75 minutes they are in class. Phones will always be returned at the end of class. If a problem continuously occurs with the same student, the parent will be asked to keep the phone during class time.

## 6 Photograph Policy

On the religious education form you will be asked to sign a permission statement giving your permission to use photographs of your children. Please take a moment to read this permission statement prior to signing the statement.

Recognition of students and adults through photographic images and personal information used in school, parish or agency publications, on the internet or released to the news media can be motivating for students, educators and adult leaders and a good opportunity to display their skills and accomplishments. However, caution is essential in this area. Parents and some adults may have serious concerns about the release of images and information. Some students and adults could be placed at risk if they are identified in the public domain, especially on the internet with its worldwide reach.

In general, passive consent is needed from parents for the parish/school to use student images without personal identification in school or parish publications or on websites. That is, parents should have an opportunity to object to the general release of their child's image and other "directory information" by the school or parish at the beginning of the program year. This cannot apply to "crowd shots" of large groups of people in public situations where it would be virtually impossible to find and remove individual images (i.e., a news photograph or TV image at a football game or youth rally where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy). Nor can it apply to random images taken by other persons in such settings that may eventually become public. In all cases when a student's image is to be identified by name and/or more specific information about the student is to be used in school/parish publications, on a website or released to the media, specific permission (active consent) for such use is to be obtained from the parents.

## 7 Emergency Medical Procedures

On the religious education registration form you will be asked to supply the name of an emergency contact person with their phone number. Likewise, you will be asked to sign the permission statement giving your permission for emergency medical personnel to treat your child in the event of a medical emergency.

The Religious Education office is supplied with a first aid kit for minor medical treatment (small cuts, scrapes, etc.). If a child is unable to complete a class session because of illness or minor injury, your child's catechist will call you (the parents) first, then the emergency contact person listed on the registration form.

In the event of a serious illness or injury, a catechist will call 911 to request emergency assistance. Parents will be contacted second. The emergency contact person listed on your registration form will be notified third and informed of what has happened. Next, the catechist will notify the Religious Education Coordinator who will, if necessary, contact Father Rob. A copy of your child's contact information is kept in their classroom.

## 8 Visitors

There are times when your child may wish to bring a relative or friend to one of our classes and that there are times when parents may wish to sit in on their child's class. Guests are always welcome! Please inform your child's catechist prior to the beginning of class if your child is bringing a guest, or if you will be sitting in on their class. As a parent, your role will be limited to that of an observer, although you are welcome to discuss your visit with the coordinator of religious education and/or catechist in an arranged appointment. We also welcome parent volunteers in our classrooms if you would like to become more involved. Please do not hesitate to be involved in your child's faith formation during class time and at home.

## 9 Harassment and Violence Policy

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis is committed to providing and maintaining a working and learning environment that is free from physical, psychological, and verbal harassment. This includes racial, ethnic, religious or sexual harassment and violence. This commitment continues our longstanding policy of fair and equal treatment of every person, regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, age; or marital, socioeconomic, veteran, and handicap status. The Archdiocese has an obligation to provide an environment that is free from intimidation and harassment based on any of these factors.

## 10 Sacramental Preparation

The second graders will be preparing for Reconciliation and Eucharist. A substantial part of the second grade curriculum is based on preparation for these two sacraments. Students will receive their first reconciliation prior to First Communion and first Eucharist in April.

Prior to enrolling your student in First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, we ask that students should be familiar with Mass, and beginner prayers, as well as know the different liturgical times of the year. If your child needs some help catching up, I can help you obtain the necessary materials to work with you child at home. Thank you for your cooperation in this very important matter.

Confirmation is a one year program that held every other year and is open to all 9th-12th grade students. They will meet eight-ten times during the school year to be scheduled by the catechist. NOTE: Confirmation will not take place in 2015-2016 school year.

If you have a child in religious education that has not been baptized or a child in religious education that is beyond the second grade and has not received their first reconciliation or first communion, please contact the Religious Education Coordinator as soon as possible to make appropriate provisions. We offer Rite of Christian Initiation for Children classes held weekly in addition with their regular Sunday classes.

## 11 Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policy Preschool through Grade 2

At the recommendation of the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education, we have instituted a drop-off and pick-up policy for all children in preschool through second grade. A parent or guardian (not an older brother or sister) is required to drop off and pick up their child(ren) at the classroom door each Sunday. There are many reasons for this policy, the most important being the safety of your child(ren).

If extenuating circumstances (such as a restraining order), there is someone who is not permitted to pick up your child (regardless of grade), please notify the Religious Education Coordinator immediately. It would be prudent to inform your child(ren)'s catechist of the situation as well. We want to cooperate in keeping all children safe.

**Unless notified by your child(ren)'s catechist, please do not pick them up any earlier than 11:20 a.m.**

## 12 Emergency Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a tornado warning, a fire, or other critical situation the catechists will evacuate the children from the building according to the fire and emergency evacuation plan confirmed by the Wayne Township Fire Marshall. During the course of the school year, the children will be given periodic test drills to help them master the evacuation procedure in lieu of an actual event.

## 13 Mass Policy

A good religious education can only build upon the moral, spiritual, and religious formation that the children are receiving at home by you, the parent. As Catholics, celebrating Mass and the Eucharist is central to our faith. One of the simplest ways to teach children about the importance of God in their lives is to bring them to mass with you. Please make every effort to attend a weekend Mass with your children. It is inconsistent to have children attend weekly religious education classes and not participate in the Mass.

## 14 Liturgical Service

Children will periodically be called to participate in special children's liturgies. As Catholics, participating in liturgical services is of vital importance and, as such, children should be highly encouraged by their parents to receive training as altar servers, lectors, ushers, greeters, and, in their teenage years, as Eucharistic ministers. Please be supportive in this matter.

## 15 Family Information Changes

If your phone number, address, or other important information changes, please remember to notify the coordinator of religious education so that your records may be updated accordingly.

## 16 Fees

### **Donations are appreciated!**

All donations that is collected from religious education registration fees is placed into the parish fund. This money is used for books, teaching manuals, classroom supplies, resource materials, videos, workbooks, paper and other necessary supplies. We do not make a profit off of religious education classes.

## 17 Questions and Comments

If you have any questions or concerns about the content of this handbook or if you would like more information about the St. Joseph religious education program please contact Judy Meyers, Coordinator of Religious Education, at [judy.meyers@pdswireless.com](mailto:judy.meyers@pdswireless.com) or 317-502-3020.