

***ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK***



***ANA G. PONCE
DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
260-432-5113 EXT. 319
aponce@saintjosephfw.org***

PARENTAL ROLE IN FAITH FORMATION

Parents are the primary educators of their children. It is the parents' responsibility to teach their child how to pray and grow in the gift of faith they received at Baptism.

As stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church #2226:

"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."

Our parish staff and volunteers for the Religious Education Program acknowledge this responsibility and are ready to support you in your role as primary catechists of your children. We encourage you to take advantage of the different ministries in our parish to be involved in parish life, grow in your faith, and lead your children by example. Your commitment to your faith, and the example you set, will leave a great impression on your children as they participate in our faith formation program!

MASS ATTENDANCE

As Catholics, we have an obligation to attend Mass each weekend and teach our children about the Mass by word and example. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend Mass weekly. **Religious Education class does not take the place of Mass, nor does it fulfill the obligation of Mass participation.**

STEWARDSHIP

It is expected that all families who are enrolled in the Religious Education program participate in parish stewardship of time, talent, and treasure. It is expected they will:

- Volunteer time and talent to the parish and/or Religious Education program.
- Contribute to our weekly offering according to that family's economic possibilities.

PROGRAM FEES

- 1 student: \$60
- 2 students: \$100
- 3 or more students: \$150
- Fees must be paid in full at the time of registration
- Payments can be made in cash, check or debit/credit card
 - Card payments are processed through our website
- If one of the parents volunteers in the program throughout the year, the registration fee will be waived
- If the family is registered at another parish and attending our Rel. Ed. program as non-parishioners, a \$25 fee will be added per student.

PROGRAM COMMUNICATION

All families must provide a cellphone number and email address to which we can send Rel. Ed. notifications. The phone number and email address must belong to a parent/legal guardian, it cannot be the student's.

- Please inform us promptly if you change your phone number so you can continue receiving program communications

Program communication also includes parent newsletters which will be sent home with students at the end of class.

If a parent/legal guardian needs to communicate with our director, they can do so by:

- Email: aponce@saintjosephfw.org
- Office phone: 260-432-5113 ext. 319
- Text: by responding to one of the text messages received from the program through flocknote (1-800 number). Flocknote only allows for text messages, if you are looking to send a picture of a certificate, etc., please do so by email/messenger
- Messenger: by sending a private message to our Parish Facebook page “St. Joseph Catholic Church FW”

If a student needs to communicate with our director, they can do so via the same methods, ONLY if they CC a parent in the email/text, etc. (I.e. a confirmation candidate wanting to ask a question regarding a service project or other requirements).

CLASS TIMES / LOCATION

Classes are held on Sunday mornings, from **10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.** in the school and church buildings.

SAFE ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Your child's safety is our primary concern; thus, we ask that all parents follow our arrival and dismissal procedures.

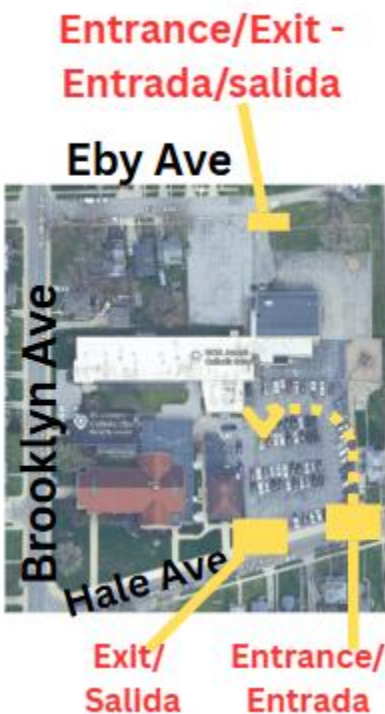
Arrival

Doors open at 10:20 a.m. All cars must enter the school parking lot through Hale Ave. Drive around and drop kids off at the black gate between the school and church buildings. **Please wait until you are in front of the gate and one of our volunteers is there to let your student out of the car.**

****The gate and building doors close at 10:35 a.m. and remain closed during class time for student safety. Any students that arrive after this time will not be allowed into class.**

Dismissal

All students will be dismissed from the school cafeteria at 11:45 a.m.



If you are staying for Spanish Mass: Please park wherever you normally park for Mass and go into the cafeteria to pick up your students through the courtyard.

If you are leaving after classes: Please park in the school staff parking lot **on Eby Ave.** and enter the cafeteria through the back door to pick up your student.

****The parking lot off of Eby is only to be used by parents who are not staying for Mass.**

Please DO NOT block any entrances, driving lanes, or any cars. No students will be able to leave the cafeteria without an adult.

****If your student is picked up late (after 11:50 am) more than 3 times, a meeting will be scheduled to determine a plan of action to avoid this issue.**

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and events.

- **If a student cannot attend class, the parent must message the director stating the student's name and reason for being absent**
 - Confirmation candidates must complete missed work online before their next class meeting
 - Communion candidates must take their books home after the following class and complete any missed work at home
- Students who arrive once the gate is closed will not be allowed to enter class
- If a student has more than 3 absences in a year, it could result in him/her having to repeat the year

WEATHER AND OTHER CANCELLATIONS

In the event of an emergency, such as a blizzard, or other weather conditions, our classes will be cancelled. Cancellation notifications will be posted in our Parish Facebook page and a text will be sent to parents through Flocknote. In the event of class cancellations due to parish events, a notice will be sent home with students a week in advance.

DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING FOR STUDENTS

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South created a Safe Environment educational program for all children enrolled in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. The diocese established this important program to fulfill part of the mandate of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young. Article 12 of the Charter reads, "Dioceses... are to maintain "safe environment" programs... to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people." Children receive this educational program every year within our Religious Education program.

DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

In order to provide the safest possible environment for our students, and in keeping with the mandate of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young, all volunteers in our program are required to complete the Safe Environment Training

established by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. This training includes a background check for those over 18 and watching a series of videos on how to provide a safe environment for everyone in our parish/program.

PROGRAM BEHAVIOR CODE

- Respect and courtesy toward catechists and classmates is always expected
- No foul language allowed; clothing must be appropriate for class/church
- Student is not to enter the classroom until a catechist is present
- Use of cell phones and other electronic devices is not allowed during class, including any type of headphones/earbuds
- Damage done to the building or materials will be paid for by:
Time put into cleaning the building, or actual payment for the damage
- WE WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY TYPE OF PHYSICAL OR VERBAL VIOLENCE OR BRINGING ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES OR WEAPONS OF ANY KIND TO OUR PREMISES. ANY OF THIS INSTANCES WILL RESULT IN THE STUDENT BEING IMMEDIATELY EXPELLED FROM THE PROGRAM.

PROCESS FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

- The catechist speaks to a student privately concerning his/her behavior.
- If disruptive behavior continues, the student is sent to the DRE to speak about it.
- If the behavior still continues, parents will be called.