

ST. JOSEPH OF THE LAKES 2011~2012 FAITH FORMATION FAMILY HANDBOOK



ST. JOSEPH OF THE LAKES
CATHOLIC CHURCH

TOGETHER IN SPIRIT

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CALENDARS AND SCHEDULES FOR ALL PROGRAMS ARE FOUND IN THE PARISH BOOKLET WHICH IS MAILED TO ALL HOMES IN AUGUST.

Goals

At St. Joseph's we believe that faith formation is a lifelong journey. We will provide opportunities for all ages to grow in knowledge and faith. Our primary tasks are:

- ◆ To support parents as first and foremost guides in their children's faith journey.
- ◆ To provide a safe environment that nurtures and respects the individual.
- ◆ To challenge children and youth to recognize the need for spirituality and to embrace the responsibilities such as loving, forgiving, and serving others that accompany Baptism.
- ◆ To help our youth grow in becoming disciples of Christ and witnesses to their faith.
- ◆ To catechize children and youth about the meaning and practices of our liturgy while recognizing that they are the worshipping church.
- ◆ To form young people who recognize the invitation to live in relationship to Christ and Community.
- ◆ To offer adults opportunities to grow in their own faith.

General Policies for All Ages

- Registered parishioners are welcome to enroll children in grade-level faith formation small groups. The registration period is **May through August**. PLEASE NOTE FOR CONFIRMATION PROGRAM: We ask you to register each year – that way, we know you wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- We do our best to place new parishioners during the school year wherever there is space available.
- We cannot accommodate requests for placement with specific catechists.
- If your child has any problems, allergy or disability that might affect their or others group experience please let us know so that we may better serve them.
- Catechists are not allowed to drive your child home under any circumstances.
- Due to food allergies we ask you to check with your child's catechist or the office when bringing snacks or food to your child's group. Each catechist will be given a list of known allergens for their group.
- We welcome visitors and ask that you let us know of them coming in advance so we can greet them and so we know who is in our building. Please have visitors check in the office with the coordinator prior to going to your room.
- Children/youth should feel free to walk, dance, skip through the building at all times.
- We ask that Cell phones be turned off during programs out of courtesy for our catechists.
- We know that times are difficult. It is our policy that no child will be turned for monetary reasons. Please just let us know.
- ***For the safety of all children, we ask parents with Pre-school and Elementary children to drop off and pick up their child/children in their rooms. Because of the quick turnover in rooms, children whose parents are not here when the class is dismissed can be picked up in the Faith Formation Office.***

General Behavior Guidelines

- Catechists and assistants are all well-trained volunteers and part of our parish family. Respect for them is absolutely essential.
- Children and youth have a right to an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. All rooms will have posted guidelines for behavior. These guidelines include:
 - ◆ **Respect one another and property**
 - ◆ **Follow the guidance and directions given by the catechist and assistant**
 - ◆ **Listen as one person speaks at a time**
 - ◆ **Be respectful of personal boundaries of others; no touching or bothering others**
 - ◆ **Take a chance—participate!**

St. Joseph's Faith Formation Program Discipline Policy

1st Step---Student's behavior is redirected.

This could include: If a child is expressing inappropriate behavior, the following techniques will be used by the volunteers

Adult Presence---Getting down to their level, eye to eye and gently tell them what you expect (Praise the child if the behavior changes)

Problem-solve with the Child---Help the child solve the problem, think of alternative solutions; model the words to use instead of physical reaction, let child voice feelings and acknowledge those feelings.

Redirection---Ask the child to leave the situation, guide him/her to a new activity.

Logical Consequences---Call upon the child to assist in remedying the situation, (e.g., after a child throws a marker on the floor, that child is asked to pick them up).

Separation---If the above methods have not been successful, the child will be removed from the group or activity to an area where the child can be alone (on a chair or the floor a short distance away) to calm down and think.

After Redirection:

- A.) If the behavior needs to be redirected more than twice a session, the Child is taken into the hallway and given a final warning to change the specific behavior. The catechist fills in a behavior report form and gives it to the Coordinator.
(If the behavior becomes uncontrollable within a session, the Coordinator will be contacted to intervene immediately.)
- B.) With further behavior problems the child is taken to the Coordinator. The Coordinator then evaluates whether the child's parents are called to discuss the behavior and create a plan for behavior within the group. e.g. for the child to return the parent needs to be in the room with their child, etc.
- C.) If the interventions above do not work, the Director intervenes and discusses removal from program with parents.

Volunteers

Parish volunteers lead small groups for children and youth as catechists, assistants, art and music leaders, and office help. Volunteers are required to complete background checks (*if there has been 13 months or more since a person has volunteered, they must have a 're-check' background check done on them*), code of conduct and liability waiver forms; attend Volunteer and Virtus training; and observe procedures that create a safe environment. Volunteers receive a job description of their responsibilities; they are supervised by parish staff.

Cancellation of Sessions or Events

In the event that weather causes us to cancel any parish event, including faith formation sessions, we will post it on the front page of our website (www.saintjosephsparish.org), send an email blast, and post it on wcco.com.

Photos

There are times when photos are taken for use in the parish newsletter, website or for other promotional purposes. Anyone not wanting themselves or their child(ren) to be identified in photos must notify the parish office in writing.

Medical Policy

A child is to be kept home if she/he has any of the following symptoms:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------|
| *Fever within the last 24 hours | *Thick nasal discharge | *Diarrhea |
| *Enlarged glands | *Vomiting | *Sore Throat |
| *Earache | *Chills | *Harsh Cough |
| *Any undiagnosed rash | *A contagious stage of any communicable disease | |

If a child becomes sick, he/she will be isolated from the other children and the parent will be called immediately. The sick child will be supervised at all times.

Harassment***

- 1) Everyone at St. Joseph Parish has a right to feel respected and safe. Consequently, the Parish has a policy to prevent religious, racial or sexual harassment of any kind and violence.
- 2) Whether harassment is done by a paid personnel, volunteer, or student, it may include, but is not limited to:
 - ◆ Name calling, jokes or rumors
 - ◆ Pulling on clothing
 - ◆ Graffiti
 - ◆ Notes, text messaging or cartoons
 - ◆ Unwelcomed touching of a person or clothing
 - ◆ Inappropriate clothing
 - ◆ Offensive or graphic poster or book covers
- 3) If any words or actions cause discomfort or fear, a catechist, assistant or parish staff member must be notified as soon as possible.
- 4) All reports of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence will be taken seriously and all appropriate actions will be taken.
- 5) The Parish will take action if anyone tries to intimidate or harm the person who has done the reporting.

***This is a summary of the St. Joseph policy against religious, racial or sexual harassment and violence. Complete policies are available in the Parish Office upon request.

Child Abuse

As mandated by law, when an employee or volunteer knows or has reason to believe that a child is being physically or sexually abused or neglected, or has been physically abused or neglected by any person, he/she shall make an immediate report as soon as possible (but no longer than 24 hours) to the county social services. An oral report to the coordinator is also to be made.

Non-Custodial Parents

The Buckley Amendment grants non-custodial parents the right of access to child records. This program voluntarily complies with the provisions of this amendment. Non-custodial parents will be given access to unofficial copies of child records and catechists will be available to discuss the child's progress unless a court order providing otherwise is filed with the administrator. A non-custodial parent has no right to physical access to a child unless granted by court order.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUNDAY PROGRAM

Program Description

The St. Joseph Early Childhood Program is designed for children age 3 through Kindergarten. Sessions are offered during the 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 Masses. Registered parishioners are welcome to enroll their child(ren). Registration takes place each year during May through August. New parishioners are able to enroll during the school year where space is available.

Procedures

Parent(s) are to walk their child(ren) to the classroom. After signing the child in, the parent is to take his/her name card and return it before picking up him/her at the end of Mass. If a card is lost, we will request some form of identification. The procedure is for the safety of every child enrolled in the program. Parents need to check in their child no more than 10 minutes before the scheduled time; this will give volunteer catechists adequate time to prepare. Those who arrive early are requested to wait in the hallway with their child(ren) until the room is ready. Children will be ready for check-out at the conclusion of Mass. Because children are easily distracted by noise, parents are asked to wait at the end of the hallway until the end of Mass.

GRADES 1 – 6

Program Description

The Faith Formation Program for children in grades 1-6 exists to assist parents in the role of faith model for their children by providing curriculum designed to cover the basic tenets of our Catholic faith. The program is offered on Monday evenings from 6:15-7:15 and also on Wednesday evenings from 5:30-6:30. The lesson material assigned for the week is to be read prior to the scheduled session. The catechist will review and reinforce the key concepts and provide interactive enrichment activities to support the lesson. To facilitate that communication between parents and catechists and because of safety concerns in our busy parking lot, all parents in grades 1-6 are to come into the building to drop off and pick up their child(ren) from their small group(s).

Additional opportunities for elementary age children include:

- Children's Liturgy of the Word on Sunday mornings is open to all children in grades 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- Fun Fridays provide community-building opportunities for 6th – 8th graders.
- Vacation Bible School in June is geared for children from kindergarten through grade 5. Volunteer opportunities are available for 6th graders and older.
- Summer Stretch and a service experience are offered in the summer for 6th graders and older.
- Youth Choir is open to youth in grades 2-8.

FAMILY HOME PROGRAM (GRADES 1, 3 – 8)

Program Description

Families are given a choice of age-appropriate materials to use at home to work as a family on faith development. During the year, Intergenerational events are held at St. Joe's. They provide opportunities for the families Children, youth and adults enjoy activities together and help build the faith community.

ADOLESCENT FAITH FORMATION – GRADES 7-10

GRADES 7-8 “PASSAGES”

Program Description: The program for 7th and 8th grades consists of small group faith formation sessions, prayer, service, community building, large group events and parent-teen intergenerational nights. Their meeting time is on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:30 PM. 7th grade small group sessions are concentrated in the first half of the school year (Fall), and then follow with large groups events and service nights scheduled during the second part of the year (Winter/Spring). The 8th grade reverses that schedule: small group sessions are concentrated in the second part of the year (Winter/Spring) with large group and service activities in the first semester. Participation is required throughout the full year. ALL 7th and 8th grade parents come to the kickoff night in the Fall.

GRADES 9-10 “CONFIRMATION – FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY”

Program Description: Confirmation preparation begins for teens entering 9th grade and continues through 10th grade. teens meet on Wednesday nights from 7-8:30. Ninth grade small group sessions are concentrated in the first half of the year (Fall), with large group events, parent/ teen intergenerational nights and service opportunities scheduled during the second semester (Winter/Spring). The 10th grade reverses that schedule: small group sessions are concentrated in the second semester (Winter/Spring) with large group events, parent-teen intergenerational nights and service projects in the first semester (Fall). Participation is required throughout the full year. ALL 9th and 10th grade parents come to the kickoff night in the fall.

In addition to the group meetings, 9th grade youth attend a day-long retreat while 10th grade youth attend an overnight retreat provided by the parish Peer Ministry group.

Ninth grade confirmands need to begin thinking about choosing a sponsor. Their sponsor will be asked to be a mentor to them during their 10th grade year. A sponsor is an active, confirmed member of the Catholic Church, 16 years or older (not their parents).

GRADES 9-10 “CONFIRMATION – FOLLOWERS OF THE WAY” (continued)

Procedures

1. To promote group cohesion, strong attendance is absolutely essential. If your child misses more than two meetings in a year and we do not hear from you, we will assume your child is no longer interested in celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation and we will contact you by phone.
2. So that we may better serve them let us know if your child has any disability that would prohibit him/her or affect others from participating in small group discussions.
3. Youth are expected to participate in small group discussions. If youth are not participating in the group discussion and are not allowing others to participate, they will be sent out of the group. If the youth wishes to rejoin the group, he/she must be accompanied by a parent or sponsor.

Optional activities for 9th through 12th grade include a Summer Mission Trip, a Winter Ski Trip and a Spring Boundary Waters Trip. Registration for those activities is separate and information will be made available online or in the hanging file folder outside the parish office.

In Addition

Peer Ministry is an optional group for teens in grades 9th through 12. This is for those who want to take their faith to the next level, take on the challenge of letting their lights shine before others and explore their faith through witness, study and action. All teens are encouraged to join this program post confirmation as a continuation of our lifelong faith journey commitment. Contact Denise Walsh if interested.

BAPTISM, FIRST EUCHARIST AND FIRST RECONCILIATION

- ◆ Parents determine their child’s readiness for all sacraments.
- ◆ Sacramental preparation is done within families, supported by Faith Formation programs and family sessions at the Church.
- ◆ Catechesis for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation is geared toward the second grade level, but open to all parish children grade 2 and above. Age appropriate materials will be provided to the family. Families with older children, who wish to participate in the sacrament, may call the office to receive the registration mailing.
- ◆ Older children preparing for First Eucharist or First Reconciliation will be catechized with their peers and will also participate in additional preparation for celebration of the sacrament.
- ◆ There is \$50 per child fee for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation; however, no one is turned away because of inability to pay.
- ◆ ***Catechesis for both First Reconciliation and First Eucharist take place at the second grade level. All children are required to be enrolled in a 2nd Grade Faith Formation small group in order to participate in Sacrament preparation.***

BAPTISM Older children preparing for Baptism will be catechized with their peers and will also participate in a special family preparation program: Christian Initiation of Children.

- ◆ Older children, grade school and older, preparing for Baptism will be catechized with their peers and will also participate in a special family preparation program: Christian Initiation of Children.
- ◆ Older children preparing for First Eucharist or First Reconciliation will be catechized with their peers and will also participate in additional preparation for celebration of the sacrament.

*****Parents who need to use childcare for their younger children in order to attend the Parent/Child Sessions relating to sacraments MUST reserve a spot by calling the Childcare Room at 651.784.3015 x113 at least 3 days before the scheduled session. This will insure proper staffing for the room. Children who have not been registered will not be able to receive childcare.**



Look for “St. Joseph Parish” on Facebook and “like” us to keep up with current parish happenings and be the first to see photos from parish and faith formation events.