

Diocese of Providence

Parish Religious Education and Faith Formation Program

Family Handbook

Grades K-9

**St. Joseph Church
North Scituate, RI**

Family Handbook

The following guidelines were forwarded to all Parish Directors of Religious Education (DRE's) from the Office of Religious Education for the Diocese of Providence. They were approved by Bishop Thomas Tobin on June 29, 2013 for all Parishes in the Diocese.

Religious Education Contact Information:

Mrs. Lisa Woodhead, DRE

Phone:

401-647-2650 FAX: 401-764-0877

Website:

saintjosephschurch.net

Mass Schedule:

Saturday: 5:00PM; Sunday: 8:00AM; 9:30AM; 11:00AM; 5:00PM

Religious Education Office Hours:

Sunday 7:00AM-9:00PM; Monday 9:00AM-9:00PM; Tuesday 8:00AM-1:30PM (Amos House Ministry) 5:00PM -8:30PM; Wednesday 9:00AM- 2:00PM;

Religious Education Session Hours:

Grades K,1&2: Sunday 8:15AM-9:15AM

Grades 3-5: Sunday 8:15AM-9:15AM or Monday 6:00PM-7:00PM

Grades 6&7: Sunday 6:00PM-7:15PM or Monday 6:00PM-7:15PM

Confirmation 1: Sunday 6:00PM-7:30PM

Confirmation 2: Sunday 10:30AM-12:00PM

Parish Rectory Office Hours: (across the street at 151 Danielson Pike)

Monday - Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM

401-647-2255

“We do not become Christians by ourselves. Faith is above all a gift from God which is given to us in and through the Church.”
Pope Francis 9/27/13 Twitter@pontifex

Parents and Parish Community: A Partnership of Faith and Grace

“You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training your child in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring your child up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and one's neighbor.”

Rite of Baptism

On the day of your child's baptism, the deacon or priest spoke on behalf of the Church, the important reminder of the responsibility and privilege entrusted to you by God. Thank you for your continued commitment to your child's faith development. Pope Benedict XVI recently shared the following teaching on baptism, faith, and parenting. He said, “You have come here so that your newborn babies may receive the gift of God's grace, the seed of eternal life. You, parents, have desired this. You thought of Baptism even before your child was born. Your duty as Christian parents made you think immediately of the sacrament that marks entry into divine life and into the community of the Church. We can say that this was your first educational decision as witnesses of the faith to your children: it is a fundamental decision!” Our parish family rejoiced with you then on that important day in your child's life. We rejoice with you now as you continue to form your child in the way of faith, hope and love. It is through the Word of God and the Sacraments that the seed of eternal life is watered.

This parish community wishes to support you in your role as primary educators in the way of faith, virtue and grace. As a parent you are the ones “who create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and neighbor in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered.” (Second Vatican Council, *Gravissimum Educationis*, §4) Children look to the adults in their life for guidance and they learn important lessons through your example. Because Jesus is the “way, the truth, and the life”, we encourage and expect that all parents/guardians will live the Catholic Christian life to the best of their ability, especially by attending Mass weekly and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. “The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the

liturgical life of Christian families; it is the privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §2226)



As partners in the process of faith formation, together we seek to awaken the faith and sense of belonging to the Catholic Church in children, so that they will be moved to share their time, talent and treasure in the life of the Church, now and throughout their lives. The aim of catechesis and faith formation is a personal relationship with God characterized by a sacramental life, a lifelong pattern of prayer, Christian service, and growth in understanding the Catholic faith. Committed to this active partnership between

clergy, parish staff, catechists and families, we entrust our efforts with confidence to God.

Parish Religious Education Curriculum

GRADES K-9

St. Joseph's Religious Education Program is a nine-year initiation into the truths of the Faith, the Sacraments and liturgical life of the Church, Christian living, and the way of prayer. Each year is a building block in the overall understanding and living of the four pillars of the Faith: ***Creed, Worship, Moral Life*** and ***Prayer***. It is our hope that after nine years of formal instruction, our students will be well-rounded, active Roman Catholics who are prepared to live the faith Christ has given us and bring it, through word and action, to all whom they meet. While our parish offers a well-structured curriculum to help your child advance in the way of Faith, the curriculum is not enough to fully form your child into a disciple of Jesus. Family prayer time is crucial to the development of your child and your family. It is our hope that you will pray the prayers which your child will be learning throughout his/her time with us in religious education. Never underestimate the power of your witness as you kneel with your family to pray to God. Prayers are found in the back of this booklet. Below is an overview of the areas explored in each year of the program:

Parish Religious Education Curriculum Grades 1-9

First Grade: Students will learn about the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), how God made all creation good, and that God knows us and loves us. The children will also learn that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and second person of the Holy Trinity and that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity, is our helper and was sent to the Church at Pentecost. They will review the *Sign of the Cross*, the *Lord's Prayer* (Our Father ...), *Hail Mary* and *Grace Before and After Meals* and the *Morning Offering*. Please pray these prayers with your child.

Second Grade: Students will focus on the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation. They will learn that Jesus forgives sins through the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and that the bread and wine substantially become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ at Mass. The children learn that as a Church we believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that each of us, in community, is called to service and the Sacraments. The children will learn the Act of Contrition and Glory Be. Parents will pray the *Act of Contrition*, the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary* and *Glory Be* with their children. Please review the *Glory to God in the Highest* prayer. Please also review the responses at Mass.

Third Grade: Students will focus on the Catholic Church and what it means to us. They learn that the mission of Jesus, who lived over 2,000 years ago and is alive today, included teaching and calling the Apostles to carry on His mission. The Bible is introduced and the four marks of the Church (One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic) are presented. The children will learn either the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed. Parents are asked to pray the *Apostles Creed* with their children. Pray the *Prayers of Faith, Hope and Love*.

Fourth Grade: Students will focus on the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), Virtues, Beatitudes and the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. The children begin an in-depth study of the Commandments and how they can be lived daily. The children learn the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. Help your child memorize the 10 Commandments and the Beatitudes. Please pray with your child the *Morning Offering*, the *Glory to God in the Highest*. Please help your child to review the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

Fifth Grade: Students will review the ministry of Jesus before beginning an in-depth study of the Sacraments. They will learn how these Sacraments inform and inspire our daily lives. The children will learn the Seven Sacraments as well as the Come, Holy Spirit prayer. Please pray the ***Come, Holy Spirit*** prayer and help your child memorize the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Rosary will also be taught to the students throughout the year and each student will receive a blessed Rosary in a special recitation during the final week of class.

Sixth Grade: Students will focus entirely on the Bible and how it is important for our lives today. They will be introduced to the Old Testament – the literary forms, creation stories, symbols and the covenants. Also, the stories of the Exodus, Ten Commandments, Israel’s Golden Age, the Prophets and the Exile are studied. Students will continue their study of the Bible by focusing on the New Testament. Students will learn about the significance of the New Testament, the authors of the New Testament, the cultures in the New Testament, and the life of Jesus within the New Testament.

Seventh Grade: Students will begin preparation for Confirmation by review who is the Person of Jesus and His mission through study of The Creed. Students will deepen their understanding of Divine Revelation, the Holy Trinity, the Church and discipleship. This class is required for entry into the Confirmation Program.

Eighth Grade: Students will begin their preparation for Confirmation. The Candidate will discern their call to be confirmed and be challenged to fully embrace a life in Christ. They will be called to a personal encounter with Jesus, and be inspired to a deep appreciation of the sacraments. They will learn from the examples of saints and see what sets the Catholic Church apart. Students will also practice decision making as a Catholic Christian and learn about putting faith into action through service.

Ninth Grade: Students will understand the Rite of Confirmation, the role of the Sacraments in their lives, the role of the Holy Spirit in their own lives and in the life of the Church, and prepare for the reception of the Sacrament.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES:

Registration is open to those families who are currently registered at St. Joseph's Church. Program registration is required in order for the child to attend religious education classes. All children in the family, not just sacramental aged children, should be registered for Religious Education classes. Program fees should accompany the registration form unless other arrangements have been made with the Director.

The parents/guardians of all children who have not been previously registered in St. Joseph's Parish Religious Education Program will need to meet with the Director to register for the program.

Sacramental Records:

Students new to the program who were not baptized at St. Joseph's Church must provide a record of baptism and if applicable, first holy communion.

Medical/Allergy Information:

Please be certain to list on the registration form all medical/allergy information about your child. It is important to inform the Director of any medical changes that occur during the year.

Special Accommodations:

Please make the catechetical leader aware of any special academic or environmental accommodations your child may require.

Communication:

It is important that we have the most up-to-date contact information. If during the year contact information should change such as home or cell phone, or the designated person to call should we not be able to reach you in an emergency, please notify the religious education office immediately. Pertinent information concerning child custody must be shared with the Director.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

To assist in the safe and orderly operation of our Religious Education Program, the following procedures are noted:

Weather Cancellations:

If Scituate public schools have been cancelled that day due to inclement weather or other extenuating circumstances, religious education classes are automatically cancelled. Additionally, announcements of cancellations will be posted through the RI Broadcasters association to all local radio and television stations, as well as, posted on the turnto10.com website under St. Joseph Religious Education N. Scituate.

Attendance:

Due to a limited number of teaching hours, it is important that a student be present for each class unless illness or other serious reasons prevent their attendance. If a child is ill and unable to attend class, the parent must call the Religious Education Office. Students are responsible for completing any missed work. Excessive absences in the sacramental grades (1,2,8,&9) may impede the student's advancement in the religious education program.

PARISH, FAMILY AND STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:

The expectations noted below are offered as a guide to our parish family as the means by which the goals set forth in the ***“Parent and Parish Community: A Partnership of Faith and Grace”*** section of this handbook are accomplished.

Mass Participation:

As your child's primary catechist, it is important that you are faithful and worship with your children at a weekend Mass. Class does not take the place of attendance at Mass. *“Remember to Keep Holy the Lord's Day.”* (Exodus 20:8) Attendance at weekly Mass is a divine commandment and a precept of the Church. We go to Mass to worship God with our parish family, in communion with Catholics throughout the world, and to receive His infinite grace, strength and wisdom in the Eucharist.

Parent Meeting Attendance:

St. Joseph's Church strives to fulfill its mission of partnership with you in the religious formation of your child. Parent meetings are necessary to facilitate ongoing and authentic communication. They are scheduled sparingly out of respect for your valuable and often limited time. Your participation is a vital and integral part of that formation.

Cell Phones:

Cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off and put away.

Dress Code:

Students are expected to dress respectfully for class and attendance at Mass.

Discipline:

Students are expected to be courteous and display a respectful Christian attitude toward catechists and peers. Additionally, students are expected to respect Church property. Parents will be responsible for damages incurred. If it becomes necessary to discipline a student, the following protocol will normally be followed:

- a) A warning will be issued to the student and an Incident Report will be sent home for the first incident.*
- b) A conference will be held between the student, parent, and director after an Incident Report is sent home for the second incident.*
- c) If a third incident occurs, the Pastor will be consulted and the student may be asked to withdraw from the program.*

Class Preparation & Homework:

All students are expected to come to class prepared with the necessary materials (bibles, assignments, etc.). Your child may be given activities that are extensions of that week's lesson to complete at home. Please look at these activities as good family experiences to be shared. We encourage you to pray with your child on a regular basis.

Safe Environment Training:

As mandated by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and in cooperation with the Office of Education & Compliance of the Diocese of Providence, all St. Joseph Church parish employees and volunteers receive Safe Environment Training to ensure that all young people in our parish come to know God and His Church in a safe and appropriate setting. The Diocese of Providence also requires mandatory background criminal investigations for those who work with children and young people. Only those who successfully pass a background check are permitted to serve as volunteers. The Office of Education & Compliance impartially investigates each and every complaint received. For further information, please contact Lt. Robert N. McCarthy, Director, Office of Education & Compliance, 80 St. Mary's Drive, Cranston, RI 02920, (401) 941-0760.

Circle of Grace:

In 2010 the Diocese of Providence mandated the *Circle of Grace* curriculum to be presented to all children enrolled in religious education programs throughout the Diocese. A letter regarding the *Circle of Grace* program is attached. The *Circle of Grace* curriculum teaches children and youth about relevant issues such as, all human persons are sacred and deserving of respect and dignity and the importance of establishing healthy and safe personal boundaries. It introduces important vocabulary so your child can effectively and confidently express their concerns or violations of their personal safety.

For further information, please contact the Diocesan Outreach and Prevention, 80 St. Mary's Drive, Cranston, RI 02920, (401)946-0728

Code of Ethical Conduct:

Our parish adopts, implements, and enforces the Diocesan Code of Ethical Conduct for the Protection of Children which includes but is not limited to:

- Maintaining an environment that is free from all forms of intimidation and harassment: physical, verbal, written, psychological, social and electronic.
- Employing disciplinary practices that respect the dignity of each child.

Right to Amend:

St. Joseph Church reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent home to parents with their child or through email communication.

Prayer Resources:

Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Grace before Meals: Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts which we are about to receive from your bounty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grace after Meals: We give you thanks for all your gifts, almighty God, living and reigning now and forever. Amen.

Morning Offering: O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world. I offer them for all the intentions of your Sacred Heart; the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, the reunion of all Christians. I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all apostles of prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month. Amen.

Prayer to the Guardian Angel: Angel sent by God to guide me, be my light and walk beside me; be my guardian and protect me; on the paths of life direct me.

Act of Contrition: O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishment, but most of all because they offend you, my God, Who are all Good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your Grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

Glory Be: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Glory to God in the Highest: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Apostles Creed: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Act of Faith: O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

Act of Hope: O my God, relying on your infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Act of Love: O my God, I love you above all things with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have injured me and I ask pardon of those whom I have injured. Amen.

Come, Holy Spirit:

Verse: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

Response: And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Verse: Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

Response: And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit

You have taught the hearts of your faithful.

In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right

And always rejoice in your consolation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

