



St. Joseph Catholic Church K-8 Faith Formation Parent Handbook 2021-22

“Our generation will show that it can rise to the promise found in each young person when we know how to give them space. This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for their full development; to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be.”

- Pope Francis

MISSION STATEMENT

To empower the people of St. Joseph Parish through education, service and prayer opportunities to live their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ.

VISION

The St. Joseph Parish PK4-8 Faith Formation Program is designed to support and nurture the faith life of our children. Our programs are highly structured to ensure a quality program, but our philosophy of PEOPLE FIRST, PROGRAM SECOND sets the tone and direction of our ministry.

The goal is to create an atmosphere in which participants experience a community of faith: one that prays together, learns together, and comes to care about each other. It is this sense of community that we believe will transform a systematic study of the doctrine and tradition of our Catholic heritage into exuberant faith and selfless service that will be lived in daily life.

In this way, the St. Joseph Parish Community sees a living witness of what it means to be Catholic Christians.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission and Vision.....	1
Program Summary	3
PK-8 Classroom Sessions	
Sacramental Preparation Sessions	
Registration Information.....	4
Tuition and Fees.....	4
Curriculum.....	5
Communication.....	8
Parish Office	
Religious Ed. Staff	
Parent Involvement.....	9
Policies and Procedures.....	10
Attendance	
Absence	
Arrival and Dismissal	
Supervision	
Arriving on time	
Parking/Drop Off Regulations	
Emergency Closings	
Illness/Accident/Special Needs	
Medication	
Custody Issues	
Photograph Policy	
Search and Seizure	
Behavior	
Parish Property	
Family Faith Prayers.....	13



PROGRAM SUMMARY

PK-6 CLASSROOM SESSIONS:

Sessions take place at St. Joseph School. Classes run for one hour and 15 minutes on Sundays at 9:00A.M. and Tuesdays at 4:30 P.M. from September through April. Families register for the day and time that works best for their child(ren).

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION SESSIONS

Reconciliation and First Communion

Consistent with Archdiocesan guidelines, St. Joseph's program is two years in length beginning in first-grade CFF classroom sessions. These classes combine catechesis with preparation for the sacraments.

Children in grades 3 and above who need preparation for these sacraments should make an appointment with the Faith Formation office to discuss special arrangements.

Confirmation

Consistent with Archdiocesan guidelines, St. Joseph's program is two years, beginning in the seventh-grade CFF peer group sessions. This preparation combines catechesis, preparation for the sacrament and service activities.

The majority of preparation takes place in small group sessions and are taught by two adults; either a catechist and an adult assistant or two co-catechists in their own home, the home of a host family or St. Joseph meeting spaces. Classes meet Sunday mornings, evenings or on Tuesday nights for 1 hour and 30 minutes from September through April. We attempt to keep groups of students together during the two years of preparation.

Faithful attendance and no more than 2 absences each semester is required both years of sacramental preparation before receiving the sacraments.

See pages 5 and 6 of this handbook for more detailed information on sacramental preparation.

SPRED: Special Religious Education

The Religious Education Office will assist families in selecting appropriate agencies or resources if our program does not meet the special needs of a child. SPRED, designed by the Archdiocese of Chicago, seeks to welcome special needs children into the faith community through a process of symbolic catechesis. For more information, contact the Faith Formation Office.



REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration for families currently enrolled in the program takes place during the spring. New families who want to enroll also will have the opportunity during the spring, and will be notified when their registration period begins. **The registration deadline for re-enrollment early discounts is June 15.** In order to be best prepared for your child(ren) with adequate teachers and supplies, it is important to return the forms on or before the specified deadline. Because of space limitations, everyone may not receive his/her first choice for class placement.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition for the 2021-2022 school year includes book, supply and sacramental fees for each grade level. Tuition discounts are available for new families and currently enrolled families who complete their registration by the June 15 deadline.

The base tuition rates are as follows (per child):

June 15 Discount and New Families to the program:

Preschool: \$250
Kindergarten: \$250
Grade 1: \$250
Grade 2: \$300
Grade 3: \$250
Grade 4: \$250
Grade 5: \$250
Grade 6: \$275
Grade 7: \$275
Grade 8: \$350

Currently Enrolled Families after June 15:

Preschool: \$300
Kindergarten: \$300
Grade 1: \$300
Grade 2: \$350
Grade 3: \$300
Grade 4: \$300
Grade 5: \$300
Grade 6: \$325
Grade 7: \$325
Grade 8: \$400

Please contact the Children's Faith Formation office about discounts for families enrolling more than three children in the program or adults volunteering as catechists.

Charges for tuition and fees are grouped together and payments can be made in full at registration or in installments through the FACTS tuition management system, from the time the



family is registered through December 2021. **All families must register with the FACTS tuition management system at the time of registration.**

If you have financial need and cannot afford the tuition or fees, please contact the Faith Formation office. No child will be denied religious education because of financial hardship. Families expressing a need for financial assistance must fill out the financial aid form. The Financial Aid Application will be reviewed by the Director before tuition assistance from the Guardian Angel Fund is granted. Applications for financial assistance will be processed in a timely fashion; parents and guardians will be notified of Guardian Angel Funding as soon as possible.

CURRICULUM

The Faith Formation classes use the following Archdiocesan-approved programs in their sessions:

PK-8 Faith Formation sessions: Pflaum Publishing *Gospel Weeklies*

2nd Grade Communion Preparation: Loyola Press *God's Gift*

8th Grade Confirmation Preparation: Pflaum Publishing *Confirmed in the Spirit*

Pflaum Publishing *Gospel Weeklies*

Lessons are based on the Sunday Gospels and Liturgical Year. Children learn doctrine, sacraments, traditions, Catholic values, and prayer within the rhythm of the liturgical cycle.

Loyola Press *God's Gift*

Lessons help children and their parents understand, prepare for, and celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist through prayer and active learning.

Pflaum Publishing *Confirmed in the Spirit*

Lessons cover Confirmation concepts clearly with contemporary examples. Each session includes a Scripture feature and offers interactive activities.

PREPARATION TO RECEIVE FIRST COMMUNION IS A TWO-YEAR PROCESS REQUIRING FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE IN BOTH YEARS BEFORE THE SACRAMENT.

Second Grade: First Reconciliation and First Communion

In accordance with Archdiocesan guidelines, **children in second grade are prepared for the sacrament of Reconciliation.** This catechesis is usually completed by early January.



Archdiocesan guidelines recommend that a child's first experience celebrating the sacrament be in a communal setting. With this in mind, Reconciliation services with an invitation to individual confession are offered for families beginning in second grade. In addition, the parish offers special communal celebrations during Advent and Lent.

First reconciliation will be received before First Communion.

Children are prepared in the first and second grade to receive their **First Communion**. It is our belief that this preparation requires the combined efforts of parents/guardians, parish priests, the Coordinator of Religious Education, and the catechists. We believe this shared responsibility is crucial to the full sacramental formation and catechesis of each child. Periodic informational meetings and special family celebrations are scheduled throughout the year in order to coordinate weekly formation with home preparation. Attendance at meetings is expected.

THE FOUNDATION FOR CONFIRMATION IS BEGUN IN BAPTISM, NOURISHED BY COMMUNION, NURTURED BY FAMILY FAITH LIFE AT HOME AND COMPLEMENTED OVER THE YEARS BY SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SESSIONS.

Consistent with Archdiocesan guidelines, St. Joseph's Confirmation preparation is two years in length starting in seventh grade to help the confirmandi grow in knowledge and faith, before being fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

Preparation for this sacrament challenges them:

- To reflect on this sacrament as a call to use their God-given gifts for the good of the entire community
- To develop an awareness of social justice
- To witness by their lives to what they believe

Most students meet in Home Group Sessions and are taught by two adults, either a catechist and an adult assistant or two co-catechists in their own home or that of a host family. Classes meet Sunday evenings, or on a weeknight. In general, we attempt to keep groups of students together during the two years of preparation. Sessions meet for 1 hour and 30 minutes for a scheduled number of sessions. Families will receive the calendar for class dates, either from their child's catechist or the religious education office. Seventh- and eighth-graders enrolled in the Faith Weaving program also will have home group sessions scheduled on evenings that will not conflict with their family's Faith Weaving sessions.

Faithful class attendance and no more than 2 absences each semester is required both years prior to reception of the sacrament of Confirmation.



Each grade level curriculum adheres to the scope and sequence mandated by the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Archdiocesan Scope and Sequence Summary

“The rationale for the Religion Curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago is to assist the learner in understanding and responding to the fullness of the Christian life.” (p. 6)

The Archdiocese outlines ten goals for Religion curriculum. (p. 14)

- Creed: Understand, believe and proclaim the Triune God as revealed in the signs of creation, Sacred Scripture, Catholic Tradition and human experience.
- Sacraments: Understand and participate in the sacraments of the Church as efficacious signs of God’s grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church.
- Christian Living: Understand and live the moral teachings of the Church through a life of discipleship in Jesus Christ expressed in love for God, conversion, the dignity of the human person, positive self-image, personal integrity, social justice and love of neighbor.
- Sacred Scripture: Read, comprehend and articulate salvation history as conveyed in God’s revelation through the signs of scripture.
- Liturgy: Understand and celebrate the liturgical rites of the Church as expressed in the Church Year and epitomized in the Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian life.
- Christian Prayer and Spirituality: Understand and express the different forms of prayer consciously recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of self-surrender to God.
- Catholic Church: Understand and appreciate the mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ, the community of believers, as expressed in the Church’s origin, mission of evangelization, hierarchical structure, marks, charisms, members and the communion of saints.
- Parish Life: Understand and participate in the life of the Church as lived in the parish through its community, cultural aspects, worship, sacramental life, service, missionary endeavors and organization.
- Vocation: Understand and undertake discipleship in Christ responding in faith by participating in the mission of the Church through living a specific call in the life of the Church.
- Ecumenism and Dialogue: Understand and participate in the call of the Church to be a sign of unity in the world through knowledge of and collaboration with Christian churches, Jews, Muslims and all faith traditions.



COMMUNICATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

General Office Information

Address: 121 E. Maple Avenue
Libertyville, IL 60048

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

Office Hours in St. Joseph School front office during Sunday morning and Tuesday afternoon sessions.

Office Phone: 1-847-362-5797

FAITH FORMATION STAFF

On occasion, a Faith Formation Staff Member or a child's catechist may call home to share good news, to express concern about absences or behavior, or to convey timely information.

Ongoing communication throughout the year is fostered by means of:

- Family File Folders
- Letters mailed home
- Email announcements and letters
- Text reminders if enabled
- The Carpenter (Parish bulletin)
- Parish Website: www.stjoseph-libertyville.org
- Handouts sent home with the children

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The parish community as a whole helps to form the faith of our children and young people through prayer and example. Through the example that parents and guardians are on day-to-day basis, such as attending Mass on Sunday, you are the most significant religious educators of your family. By your words and witness of your life, you model for your children the importance of faith, knowledge, service, prayer and an ever-deepening love of the Lord.

At St. Joseph, we recognize parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. It is within the family that worship, values, stories, prayer and customs help make faith a lived experience. For this reason, we try to involve parents/guardians in the program whenever possible including opportunities to worship together.



During the year, you will occasionally be invited to visit or take part in an activity in your child's group. Taking time to attend shows your child that you care about his/her faith development. It may also help you feel more "in touch" with the goals of the program. Whether you help in the office during sessions, serve as a crossing guard or participate in classroom activities, we place a high priority on your involvement. **This is your parish faith formation program.**

A parent or guardian is encouraged to request an appointment with the Director of Faith Formation or Coordinator for Faith Building and Family programs if the need arises. Please call the director or your child's catechist directly.

We welcome your family and your ideas on how we can work together to enhance your family's faith experience – together we can support and strengthen our parish, have fun, bring our Catholic tradition home, and serve members of our community!

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance helps your child and family to feel a part of the group, fosters a sense of continuity, and emphasizes the importance you place on faith formation. Children and families cannot benefit from the activities and instruction planned each week if attendance is inconsistent. Except for illness or the occasional unforeseen circumstance, everyone is expected to attend all sessions. Frequent absences and/or recurring tardiness may result in a meeting with the Director of Faith Formation. Absences during sacramental preparation years are limited to two each semester. Exceeding this limit will result in a meeting with the Director.

ABSENCE

For PK- 6 classroom sessions, If you know in advance that your child or your family will miss a session, please call the CFF Office at 847.362.5797. A twenty-four hour voicemail system is available for your convenience. Please provide your child or family's full name, time and day of the program you attend. If your child is not present in class and has not been called in, we will call you to ensure your child is safe.

For Seventh- and Eighth-grade sessions, please call the catechist directly. On the first day of sessions, catechists will share the best means to contact them.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Sunday/Tuesday Classroom Sessions:

In an effort to provide a safe and secure environment, children may enter the building at the Main Entrance on Park Place only.

ALL PK-2nd Grade children are to be brought to their classrooms and picked up from their classroom when the session ends. They cannot be released on their own.



SUPERVISION

We ask that the children arrive no earlier than five minutes before the session begins and that they are picked up within ten minutes after the session ends. **NO SUPERVISION IS PROVIDED BEFORE OR AFTER THIS TIME.** If you are unavoidably detained, please come to the office where your child will be waiting for you.

ARRIVING ON TIME

Tardiness disrupts the group dynamic already in progress and makes it difficult for individuals to “catch up” with the focus of the session. Please make every effort to arrive on time. Recurring tardiness may necessitate a family conference with the Director of Faith Formation.

EARLY DISMISSAL is strongly discouraged.

Students who do need to be released early will NOT be dismissed from their room to meet their ride outside. Parents must come to the School Office located at the Park Place main entrance of school. We are in the office directly to the right of the doors as you walk in. Parents can sign out their children and students will be sent down to the school office to meet their parents. We will not release a child to anyone other than a parent or guardian without written permission.

PARKING/DROP OFF REGULATIONS

Safety is our utmost concern. NO drop offs are permitted on the South side of Hurlburt Court. PLEASE approach the school moving westward, so that you can drop your child on the north side, thereby eliminating the need for them to cross the busy street. If you park, PLEASE accompany your child through the designated crosswalk! Thank you!

Remember: parking or standing is NOT PERMITTED on either side of Hurlburt Court; license numbers will be taken and tickets issued. Please use the lots available. Your cooperation is essential to insure the safety of the children as they enter and leave the building. Thank you.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In general, sessions are canceled in the event of dangerous weather conditions or if a problem arises in the building, which makes holding sessions impossible. Cancellations are notified via School Messenger, a robo call service. **Each family is required to provide a phone number and/or email address so that we can reach the family for news concerning the Religious Education Program.**

ILLNESS/ACCIDENT/SPECIAL NEEDS

In the event of an illness or minor injury, simple first aid procedures are followed, a written report is filed in our office, and parents are notified. In the event of a serious medical emergency, procedures listed on the Medical Information form are followed and the parent/guardian is notified. A Medical Release is part of our registration packet.

MEDICATION

Law prohibits us from dispensing medication of any kind.

If, however, you feel it would be beneficial for us to be aware of any particular medication your child is taking, please contact the office. Similarly, if a special health condition (severe allergic



reaction, for example) or a learning or behavior challenge exists, please let us know. Having such information is in the best interest of your child and is treated confidentially by the director and/or your child's catechist. Knowing special circumstances helps us respond to special needs.

CUSTODY ISSUES

In the case of divorce or separation, the Children's Faith Formation Office will presume that both parents have access to the child(ren) unless we are told otherwise. When custody is disputed, we require the parent with sole custody to provide the office with written verification and a clear explanation of procedures to follow. Similarly, we presume that both parents have access to the child(ren)'s records unless one parent provides evidence that he or she has the sole right.

PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

During the course of a year, photographs are sometimes taken of group activities or special events. When we gather for family events or we write about program activities in the parish bulletin or on our parish website, some of these photos may be displayed in publications and media as granted by our authority. INDIVIDUAL NAMES of children are never used in conjunction with these photos. Our registration form each year asks parents to indicate whether or not they wish their child's photo to be used in this way.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

We reserve the right to inspect all desks, lockers and other parish supplied enclosures. In addition, we reserve the right to inspect a participant's personal property when there is a reasonable belief that the individual is violating the rules, regulations, and policies of St. Joseph's Religious Education program.

BEHAVIOR

Whether we are together for weekly sessions, monthly family catechesis, or any other parish function, we assume that the children and young people of St. Joseph will show respect and consideration for all catechists, aides, volunteers, office personnel and each other.

We further expect that everyone will come on time, bring all books and any other materials required for each session, and participate in group discussion and activities.

Good conduct, cooperation, attention, and courtesy are also expected. Occasionally, it may be necessary for a child or young person to be kept after a session for disciplinary reasons or other purposes. Contact is made with a parent/guardian in the event that a child or youth is detained. The parent/guardian is responsible to see that the child/youth reaches home safely.

However, if a child or young person continually disturbs a group session or consistently chooses not to cooperate with the catechist, and if the catechist's repeated efforts to encourage better behavior effect little improvement, a member of the staff may contact the parent or guardian to come and pick up their child.

In the case of an ongoing, serious behavior problem, the director will arrange a conference with the parent/guardian and the student to determine whether further participation in the program is



possible. The final authority for all discipline decisions rests in the hands of the Director of Faith Formation.

PARISH PROPERTY

Since we share space with St. Joseph School, it is important that our students respect the desks and personal property in the classrooms. This includes projects, displays, works in progress—everything in the room that represents someone else’s work and that deserves not to be disturbed.

We remind those attending sessions in a private home that they are guests and should treat the furnishings respectfully.

However, if a student damages parish or school property or the property of the home of an adult hosting a small group session, the student and his/her family is/are responsible for repair or restitution.



FAMILY FAITH PRAYERS

A Prayer for the Family

Lord of Life,
Bless and sustain our family.
Hold us close, keep us connected and protect us from all evil.
Gift us with love and patience for one another.
Help us reconcile that which divides us
and celebrate all that unites us as one family,
where you live and reign now and forever.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Parents

God of All Creation,
your breath gave life to all humanity.
Breathe into us your love and guidance,
so that we may parent with wisdom and compassion.
Gift us with your strength and courage,
so we may proclaim your presence through our words and actions.
Enlighten us with words of truth and comfort, as they are needed
and bring us patience and humility as we lead our family along this journey.
Help us pass onto our children a faith that matters,
with you as the center and foundation for our family.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for Children and Teens

God of Youth,
your hope and promise abound in and through the young church.
Bless and hold our children close. Give them
eyes that see your presence each day,
ears that hear your words of everlasting life,
lips that speak your truth, and
hands that reach out to all in need.
May each step they take lead them closer to knowing you more deeply.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.