

# **St. Joseph - Bonne Terre Parish School of Religion Family Handbook**

## **Mission of St. Joseph PSR**

The mission of St. Joseph Parish School of Religion is to assist parents, as the first and primary educators of their children, in faith, moral and spiritual formation, by supporting whole family faith formation at the various appropriate to families with school-age children.

## **Goals of St. Joseph PSR**

- To assist parents in their primary roles as educators of their children.
- To support students' development of a vibrant, intimate relationship with God.
- To teach Roman Catholic Doctrine and traditions of the Church.
- To provide opportunities for friendship and service within the family, faith community, and society.

## **St. Joseph – Bonne Terre**

**Parish School of Religion**

**15 St. Joseph Street**

**Bonne Terre, MO 63628**

**573-358-2112**

## PSR Admission Requirements

Parents seeking to enroll their children in St. Joseph Parish School of Religion must assume their primary right and duty to educate their children in the practice of our Catholic faith. In the rite of the Sacrament of Baptism, parents receive the following call from God to evangelize their children:

*You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training her (him) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring her (him) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor... You will be the first teachers of your child in the ways of the faith. May you be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what you say or do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Aware, then, of the dignity of this holy parental call, and with a reverent awe for that responsibility you are asked to affirm the following Statement of Faith.

I commit myself to be, in word and example, the first and best teacher of my child(ren) in the faith. Practically, this means I will:

- Understand that the authentic teachings of Jesus as taught by the Catholic Church will be part of my child's education and formation;
- To the best of my ability respect the teachings of the Church and help my children respect the Church and its teachings;
- Regularly participate in the Sunday Eucharist with my family;
- Include prayer in my daily life and form my children in the faith;
- Commit to speak frequently with my children about God and to include prayer in our daily home life;
- Participate in and cooperate with the School or Parish School of Religion in programs that enable me as a parent to take an active role in the religious education of my children, including sacramental preparation for my children;
- Support the moral and social doctrine of the Catholic Church to ensure consistency between home and school;
- Teach my children by word and example to have a love and concern for the needs of others;
- Meet my financial responsibilities in supporting the Parish School of Religion and practice stewardship in support of the school and parish. While parents have the responsibility of supporting the school and parish, financial concerns will not be a barrier. If PSR fees are a burden for your family, please contact the pastor who will work out a suitable solution with you.

All parents enrolling students in PSR will provide the following:

- Completed PSR registration form.
- When applicable, a copy of current IEP or 504 plan, which will be kept confidential.
- When applicable, a copy of any custodial agreement, which will be kept confidential.
- Registration fee paid in full or prior arrangements made with pastor.
- An official Baptismal certificate for any child not baptized at St. Joseph - Bonne Terre. No registration is complete until this copy is presented.

## **New Students**

New students coming into PSR for First Penance/First Communion or subsequent levels must show proof of prior religious education, if any, to determine appropriate class placement. A copy of the child's sacramental certificates are required if the sacraments were not made at St. Joseph in Bonne Terre.

The parents of any student not yet baptized should make arrangements with the pastor to prepare for baptism.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students will receive age-appropriate activities during PSR with their parents or while parents are attending PSR activities for older siblings.

## **Family Religious Education**

St. Joseph's Parish respects parents as their child's primary teachers of faith and morals. For this reason, PSR and Parent Support classes monthly to provide resources and support for parents in instructing their children. At each session, students will meet with their teacher and peers for assessment and instruction. Assessments will be provided as an objective means to inform parents instruction of their children. Class activities are a means of supplementing home instruction and provide age appropriate communal faith activities.

## **Class Level**

**Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten** – will meet for the benefit of parents with school-age children who are attending Family PSR. Parents without school-age children may attend the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten class with their child.

**Beginning** – Students first-grade or older who are Baptized or whose families are taking Baptismal instruction and have not attended PSR in the past.

**First Penance and Communion** – Students who have been Baptized and have attended beginning instruction.

**Grades 3 & 4** – Students who have made their First Penance and Communion and are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades or higher as needed.

**Grades 5 & 6** – Students who have made their First Penance and Communion and are prepared for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> level instruction.

**Grades 7 & 8** – Students who have made their First Penance and Communion and are prepared for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> level instruction.

**Confirmation** – Students, who have made their First Penance and Communion, have had sufficient instruction and the desire to make their Confirmation. Confirmation requires a two year preparation and may be taken concurrently with Grades 7 & 8 level instruction. Students without grades 3-8 instruction must meet with the Pastor to determine if the candidate is prepared to make the commitment Confirmation requires or if an alternate course of study would be more beneficial at this time.

## Fees

The fees for PSR are due on or before the first class meeting with the completed registration form, however, no child shall be denied PSR enrollment because of finances. A family that wants to arrange a payment plan should contact the Pastor; all conversations and decisions are held in confidence.

The fee for active families of St. Joseph/St. Anne is \$50.00 per family.

The fee for families who are not active members of St. Joseph/St. Anne is \$100 per family.

Active families of St. Joseph/St. Anne are those families who:

- Seriously fulfill their obligation to attend Weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation primarily at St. Joseph-Bonne Terre.
- Attend, as a family, the Sunday family mass which will be held after the monthly PSR class.
- One or more family members participates in a scheduled liturgical role within St. Joseph/St. Anne and complete their stewardship card.
- Participate in one or more parish support committees or groups: Knights of Columbus Member, Ladies of St. Joseph/St. Anne, Parish Council, Bingo Volunteer, Festival Committee, etc.
- Financially support the St. Joseph/St. Anne parishes regularly including signing their ACA card annually.
- Participates in other activities as often as possible such as the Living Rosary, Benediction, Parish BBQ, donut Sunday, etc.

## Sacramental Preparation

The sacraments of **Reconciliation** and **Eucharist** are normally received by children in the second grade. Children must have an adequate understanding, preparation, and attitude regarding the sacraments. Normally this means that the child has had at least one year of formal training in a religious education program prior to the year the sacraments are to be received. Should a child begin PSR in the second grade, students are placed in the first grade program. This is not meant to be a punishment, but to help the child best be prepared to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

The sacrament of **Confirmation** is received in the spring, every other year, by children who have completed or are in the process of completing the eighth grade. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation begins the year prior to receiving the sacrament and requires that students have had acceptable attendance in all eight years of PSR classes. In the event that a child enters the parish school without formal religious training after First Communion, an evaluation will be made to assess readiness and determine an individual sacramental preparation plan, as needed. St. Joseph's Parish School or Religion will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in the spring of 2018.

As Catholics, Mass is the central prayer and our primary form of worship. Being a Christian, as taught from the earliest days of Christianity, isn't a private matter. We are called to engage in public and communal worship in the Sunday Eucharist.

For this reason, students enrolled in either of the Sacramental Preparation Programs are required to attend Mass and Holy Days of Obligation, as is expected of all faithful Catholics.

Regular attendance and participation in all activities are necessary for reception of the sacraments.

## **Progress Reports**

Reports of your child's progress will be available at each class period. If you have concerns about your child's progress, the catechist will be available to answer any questions and will support you in any areas needed.

## **Attendance**

Families are expected to be in the auditorium for prayer at 8:30 pm and are expected to attend all classes and scheduled activities. For the health and benefit of all, please do not send students who are ill. If a student is absent, parents should contact the catechist for information and assignments missed as soon as possible. Families missing multiple class periods will be asked to meet with one or more of the following: teachers, PSR Coordinator, and/or pastor to determine if the student has gained the knowledge necessary to be successful in the next level of instruction, or would benefit from an alternative educational plan. (There may be just cause for excessive absences due to certain illnesses, hospitalization, and parent custody issues. These issues need to be brought to the attention of the PSR Coordinator as soon as possible.)

## **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

Parents and students are to meet in the Auditorium. At 8:30 students will be escorted to class by their teachers. Parents will remain in the Auditorium for the PSR Parent Workshop.

Students must be escorted by their own parent as they exit the building for the safety of all students. Classes will be dismissed at 9:45.

## **Medical Issues**

In case of student accidents, injuries or illness occurring on the parish property during PSR, the Catechist/PSR Coordinator shall contact the parents to determine the proper response and action.

## **Emergency Drills**

For the safety of all children in the PSR there will be emergency preparedness drills for fire, tornado, earthquake, reverse evacuation and intruder during the year. Procedures for these drills are the same as would take place during a true emergency.

## **Participation and Behavior**

A positive and effective learning atmosphere is necessary. Students are expected to be attentive and participate fully during PSR classes and activities, to the best of their ability. Teachers will set clear expectations of respectful behavior which include the following:

- Coming to class with a positive attitude and desire to learn about God and the message he wants all of us to hear.
- Being sensitive and respectful of the feelings and ideas expressed by others.
- Attentively listening to the person speaking.
- Properly caring for parish property and the property of others.
- Refrain from bringing items not required during the course of PSR including: food, gum, beverages, toys, and electronic devices.

The following steps will be taken, as needed, in the event a student does not exhibit behavior that supports the learning environment for all:

- A verbal warning.
- If the disruption continues, the student and parents the catechist and the C.R.E. will meet in an effort to resolve ongoing disruptive behavior.\* If the behavior is severe in nature, the student will be removed from the class or activity and escorted to their parent.



## **PSR Cancellation**

In the event classes are canceled due to inclement weather, teachers will contact families by phone, text or e-mail. Each canceled class period will be rescheduled for the following Sunday.

## **Classroom Visitors**

Occasionally families must bring additional children with them due to family circumstances. Please contact both the child's teacher and CRE so materials will be available for the visitor.

## **Protecting God's Children**

The national sexual-abuse prevention program "Protecting God's Children" was adopted by the Archdiocese of St. Louis in November 2002 and is provided at no cost to parishes, schools, and archdiocesan agencies. All archdiocesan employees and volunteers who work with children on a regular basis are mandated to attend a presentation of the program. Priests in the archdiocese also participate in the program.

## **Safe Touch**

As a caring Catholic community and as part of our ongoing commitment to provide a safe and healthy environment for our children, the Archdiocesan Child Safety Committee has developed a school-based curriculum for grades K-8 that contains practical, helpful information to help children protect themselves from dangers that exist today. The objective of this curriculum, entitled Safe Touch is to teach our children self-protection skills. Children will learn body safety rules in an age-appropriate and non-threatening manner. This curriculum will be presented by a trained individual. It will consist of one class period. The materials will be made available for parents to preview if they wish and at the time of the lesson.

## **God's Own Making**

Parents are the primary educators of their children in human sexuality. Parents seek the assistance of the elementary school and parish schools of religion to support them in this role. Therefore, schools and parish schools of religion support the parents by incorporating within their regular religion curriculum a chastity education program approved for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, which emphasizes the moral teaching of the Church. The only chastity education series approved for use in the parish schools of religion is *God's Own Making*, originally written by the Archdiocese of St. Louis and now published by the Wm. H. Sadlier Publishing Company. God's Own Making contains lessons for grades four through eight. The lessons are centered on three themes: Respect for Life, Relationships and Life-Giving, Love-Giving. There is no discussion of the physical aspects of the human reproductive system in these sessions/discussions in class. The booklets are available for parent viewing in the PSR office.

*Archdiocese of St. Louis, Administrative Manual of Catholic Education #5104.4*

## **ACRE**

Children in grades five and eight are required to take the ACRE test. (Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education). These standardized tests are to provide data for the parish to assess the total outcome of the PSR program and make improvements where needed. Individual reports may be ordered for an additional fee for parents showing their child's progress in relation to others within the group and to pinpoint areas of great success or that need extra work. ACRE results are used by the faculty in an effort to assess program effectiveness and to adjust emphasis in the classrooms in order to meet national standards. They are not part of the students' report card.

## **Notice of Policy Amendment**

These policies and procedures are designed so that all parents and students may have a clear understanding of our PSR's philosophy and expectations. The administration retains the right to amend policies and implement or waive consequences as it deems appropriate. Changes of policy or procedures will be published and sent home to the parents as soon as possible following their implementation.