

ST. JOSEPH PARISH PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
A WORD FROM THE DIOCESE
2020-2021

Parents share in their children's development as true Christians and strong Catholics, as stated in "Sharing the Light of Faith," the Catechetical Directory of the Bishops of the United States:

"Parents are the first and foremost catechists of their children. They catechize informally (but powerfully) by example and instruction. They communicate values and attitudes by showing love for Christ and His Church and for each other, by reverently receiving the Eucharist and living in its spirit, and by fostering justice and love in all their relationships. Their active involvement in the parish, their readiness to seek opportunities to serve others and their practice of frequent and spontaneous prayer, all make meaningful their professions of belief. Parents nurture faith in their children by showing them the riches and beauty of lived faith. Parents should frequently be reminded of their obligation to see to it that their children participate in catechetical programs sponsored by the church.

"When children are baptized, the Church community promises to help parents foster their faith. It keeps this promise, first of all, by its own witness as a worshiping, believing, serving community; and also by providing formal catechesis for adults, youth and children.

"The church community also keeps its promise to parents by providing programs intended specifically to help them in their catechetical role. Such programs focus on the task of parents in relation to particular moments or issues in the child's religious life, such as sacramental preparation and moral development. They also seek to familiarize parents with the stages in children's growth and the relevance these have for catechesis.

"When formally participating in the catechesis of their children, parents must be mindful of the pre-eminent right of the Church to specify the content of authentic catechesis. They always have an obligation to catechize according to the teaching authority of the Church."

Therefore, with regard to our/your children, we ask of you as parents to:

Sstress the importance of learning about his/her faith. One way of doing this would be by talking about and taking an interest in what was done in the faith formation classroom. Ask questions...lots of them.

Help your child to actively practice his/her faith. Examples could include weekly attendance at Sunday Mass, making daily prayer an integral part of your child's home life, finding ways to serve those in need.

Acept primary responsibility for the religious education of your child.

Re-enforce the catechist's attempt to maintain a teachable atmosphere in the classroom. *The Catechist has a right to the respect of your child, which will in turn mean proper conduct in the classroom.*

Encourage good attendance at faith formation classes. A call or email to the Director of Faith Formation or church office before class would be appreciated when your child will be absent.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns about our program, we will be happy to discuss them with you at any time. Thank you for your continued support for our religious education program. We hope to see you as a volunteer sometime during the year as we work hard to build the kingdom of God, one child at a time. Many hands really do make light the work.

Religious Education Program General Information

Pastor: Rev. Tim Johnson, Pastor

Director of K-12 Religious Education: Sharon Mayer

Director of Youth Ministry: Teresa Goehring

Director of Music: Cain Junkman

Office Phone Number: (712) 338-2274

Fees

The Faith Formation fee is \$35 per child with a maximum of \$85.00 per family. Early registration discount is available when paid by the time classes begin.

Class Schedules

Classes for grades K-5 are held on Wednesdays from 4 - 5 p.m.

Classes for grades 6-12 are Wednesdays from 7-8 p.m.

It is requested that families make every effort to have children here on time.

Please be courteous and call the church or email Sharon if a student will be absent.

Religious Education Board

The religious education board of St. Joseph Parish meets quarterly to discuss policies, curriculum and help in planning upcoming events. Some of them are Catechists or assist with the program in other ways. Board members are happy to visit with those who have a question or concern regarding the program.

Besides the pastor and director, the following people
volunteer for the religious education board:

Jeanette Baack
Chris Hinshaw
Jennifer Prentice
Larry Sattler
Abby Walleck
Molly Foss
Lynnette Cook

If you are interested on being on the religious education board, please contact the director, pastor(s) or any current member of the board.

NINTH GRADE

Ninth grade students begin preparation for Confirmation which will be completed in their tenth-grade year. They start the year by examining where they are in their faith journey. They study Jesus' life- who He knew, how He taught and what others thought at the time. Bibles will be utilized more this year. They begin to study the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They learn the prayer to the Holy Spirit.

TENTH GRADE

Tenth grade is the year of Confirmation. During the year, the Bible will be used extensively as well as a program called Decision Point. Other sources used will include YOUCAT, a youth version of Catechism of the Catholic Church. This curriculum will incorporate scripture study, and small group discussion. Students will work with their sponsor to assist them through this Sacrament as well as research a Saint that they can identify with to select their Confirmation name. Attendance to class and church is very important during this year. A small retreat and prayer walk are included this year.

ELEVENTH and TWELFTH GRADES

Students in these grades made a choice to be Confirmed in their faith as tenth graders so we will build on that to expand their knowledge of our faith. Topics will be covered to help them be better disciples of Jesus. As this age group approaches adulthood, so do the discussions. Topics such as marriage, finances, vocations, choices and their consequences, death, staying active in church, and independence will be discussed as well as more Catholic Doctrine. Field trips may be a part of this class. They will be asked to take more of a leadership role during masses and events.

RCIA for Youth

Sometimes even though children are in a Catholic family, they have not attended religious education classes and may never have received some or all of the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Eucharist or Confirmation. If you have or know of a child in this situation and would like them to receive their Sacraments, we can accomplish this through private lessons with parent and child. Contact either the pastor or director of faith formation for instruction in our faith.

CLASS MASSES

Once a year, each K-12 class will be responsible for a class Mass. Duties will include greeting, ushering, reading, gifts and altar serving. It is important for our students to understand that many things and people go into having Mass. All of the duties can be lifelong ministries so exposure to them is part of their learning. Masses during the year on Wednesdays will also involve the youth in ministry positions.

SNACKS

On Wednesdays, students are asked to arrive **shortly** after school dismisses and a snack will be provided. We do have students with food allergies, so nothing with peanuts or processed around peanuts will be offered. Meat/cheese/crackers, pretzels, fruit and cookies are usually offered. Should your child want a particular snack on Wednesday, feel free to send it along so he/she can have that after school. Snacks are not generally provided in the evening program, although that is left to the discretion of the Catechist. Sometimes food is a part of a lesson being taught. If a parent should want to provide a snack, we welcome that anytime, but it must be 100% peanut free and not made on equipment that also handles items with peanuts. Prior knowledge should be given to the director of religious education.

VISITORS

Parents or Grandparents may visit the classroom and are welcome to come during special events throughout the year. The best teaching moments for a parent are to lead by example; Showing your child that religious education and Mass are important to you are part of those moments.

K-6th CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Students in the K-6 faith formation program will learn the basics of our Catholic faith through approved curriculum materials and through special events. They are also expected to attend Mass on Saturday or Sunday with their families and participate in their class Mass held once a year. Learning about our faith is a lifelong process. This is just the beginning.

K-6 students will meet in individual classrooms. Textbook materials cover the basic practices and seasons of our faith. Lessons prepared by the Catechists might include some games, booklets, written material, quizzes and crafts.

In addition to this, specific prayer learning will be part of class time. Teaching children how to pray is essential to practicing their faith. We will follow the guidelines set out by the Diocese of Sioux City. Prayer reinforcement should be done at home.

Second grade students will study for their Sacraments primarily using the Family Formation material along with other textbook lessons. It is expected that parents of this group of students be particularly attentive to what these children need to do at home to prepare for their Sacraments. Workshops will be held for the student and parents before each Sacrament. **Attendance is required at both workshops.** Regular mass attendance is highly encouraged for all grades.

7th and 8th CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

When students reach these grade levels, attitudes change toward adults and each other. We will give them opportunities to understand themselves and each other from a Catholic point of view as well as study the Bible and history of the church, and social expectations of our faith. Textbook lessons and quizzes are a part of this curriculum.

COVID PRECAUTIONS

This year, due to the virus, students will come in the NW door and use hand sanitizer upon entering. Students should go directly to their classrooms. All students and Catechists must wear masks upon entering the building as well as in church. Everyone will maintain about a 6-foot distance between each other and may not share anything while here. If your child has a fever of any grade, cough, runny nose and generally is not feeling the student must stay home. If necessary, work will be sent to you to do with your child.