

St. John the Evangelist

Religious Education Parent Handbook

Philosophy of Religious Education

The Religious Education Program of St. John's Parish is intended to deepen the faith and understanding of our children, and not just for sacramental preparation. The program is designed to have continuity from first through ninth grade. All grade levels of religious education are important, each assisting the child to grow in a deeper knowledge of God and of their faith, and an increased awareness of their responsibilities as a disciple of Jesus Christ and as a member of the Catholic Christian community. Skipping of years in between sacraments does not allow for adequate faith formation. It is difficult, if not impossible, for a child and teacher to make up for inadequate preparation. **We strongly encourage that children attend religious education every year.** If a child has skipped faith formation between sacraments, the child may be placed in a catch-up class before beginning sacramental preparation.

General Expectations

It is expected that each family become actively involved in St. John's parish in order to model a living, conscious and active Christian faith and to reinforce the values and attitudes for living that faith. The family and their children also must act in accordance with these values and attitudes.

Mass Attendance

You are expected to attend Mass with your children on Sunday. Mass is an integral part of your child's faith formation and Mass attendance goes hand in hand with the CCD Program. One cannot do the work of the other. Celebrating Mass is the highest form of worship Catholics have; therefore, missing Mass is very serious. Remember to keep the Lord's Day holy.

Procedure for Stamping Mass Cards

Mass Card stamping begins the first weekend after classes start

1. After Mass is over, go outside the main entrance in the courtyard to the Mass Card table.
2. Find your Mass Card in the index card boxes which are sorted alphabetically by last name.
3. Give your card to the volunteer.

Every child must present his/her own card. Volunteers will not accept cards handed in for someone else. Please **WAIT FOR THE VOLUNTEER** before you enter the room. If you leave your Mass Card on the table before the volunteer arrives, your card will not be stamped.

Dress Code

Girls are not permitted to wear short shorts, short skirts (no shorter than 4 inches above the knee), low cut tops or bottoms, bare midriff shirts, or hats. Belly buttons should not be exposed.

Boys are not permitted to wear t-shirts with offensive language, pants that show undergarments, or hats while in church or classrooms.

If a student comes to class improperly dressed, he/she will be sent home.

Conduct

We expect students to display Christian behavior at all times. This includes reverent behavior in the church, not talking when the teacher is talking, paying attention, respecting others, respecting the property of others, and general courtesy. **Any student who consistently disturbs a class or who continually fails to cooperate with the Catechist and other students within a class shall be subject to the following procedures:**

1st--2nd offense Catechist will speak with the student and try to resolve the behavior in the class setting, giving the student the opportunity to correct his own behavior.

3rd offense The student will be sent student to the office and will not be permitted to return to class that day and will be given make-up work for the missed class. The teacher or DRE will contact the parents by phone to schedule a conference about the situation.

4th offense The student will be asked to leave our Religious Education program.

Student Arrival in Classrooms

Students may not enter a classroom before the Catechist arrives. The doors to the classroom will remain closed until the Catechist has arrived and is ready for class.

Early Dismissals Not Permitted

Students are not permitted to leave class early except in emergency situations. Sports practice, dance class, etc. are not considered emergencies. **Parents must notify the office before class begins if their child needs to be picked up early and the reason why.** Parents must come to the office to pick up their child.

Pick-up and Drop-off

For the safety of your child and all children, **car lines are not permitted.** Everyone is required to park in the parking lot. **For grades 1-5, parents must pick up their children in front of the church and escort them across the parking lot.**

Cell Phone / Electronics Policy

Cell phones, electronic games, music devices, or any other type of electronic devices are not permitted in the church or classrooms. Please have your student leave these items in the car. If we find a student using a phone, electronic game, music device, etc., the item will be confiscated. **We will not return confiscated items directly to students—the parent must come to the office to retrieve the confiscated item.**

Texting Policy

For obvious reasons, texting during class is not permitted. **Any student who is texting during class may be expelled.**

Attendance Policies

Your child should attend each and every class. Every class is important in the student's catechetical formation and attendance will be tracked. Unfortunately, even with perfect attendance, they will receive less than 30 hours of religious instruction! We sympathize in advance regarding the choices that must be made. However, sporting activities and dance classes in no way outrank religious education as priority items. Please don't confuse your child by placing these activities before the message of Jesus.

When a student in sacramental preparation exceeds four absences within a given year, the student will be required to repeat the same grade the following year.

The six classes immediately prior to the reception of a sacrament should not be missed for any reason. If a student must be absent from any class at this time because of illness or death in the family, he/she must meet with the DRE to arrange to make up any missed work.

Tardiness

Classes begin promptly and students are expected to be in their seat and ready for class at that time. Please plan to arrive a few minutes early. Students will be marked tardy at 5 minutes after the start of class. If a student is more than 15 minutes late, it will be treated as an absence. Every third tardy will count as one absence.

In Case of Absence

When your child is absent from class, please notify the Religious Education Office in writing with the date of the absence and the reason for the absence. The Office phone number is (561) 488-1373.

Make-up Work

If illness or a family emergency prevents a child from attending class, parents are responsible for contacting the Religious Education office for instructions, picking up any homework, and going over the material that was covered in class so that the child will not fall behind. A student who misses a class must complete and turn in all missed class work and assignments within two weeks of his return to class.

Guests

Students are not permitted to bring friends or relatives to class.

Food / Refreshment Policy

Food and drinks are not permitted in class. Please give your child(ren) a snack or meal before bringing them to CCD.

Emergency Closings

If the public schools are closed due to a hurricane or tropical storm, CCD will be canceled also. If the public schools are closed for more than a week following a storm, re-opening of religious education classes will be determined based on the conditions in our immediate area. It is the parents' responsibility to call the church and find out the re-start date of CCD classes.

Custody Issues

If parents are divorced or separated, the Religious Education Office presumes that both parents have access to the children unless one parent can provide evidence that he or she has the sole right. If there are other custody arrangements, a copy of such agreement must be on file in the Parish Religious Education Office.