

St. Joseph Religious Education 2023–2024

Parent Handbook

God calls each of us in many different ways to serve Him. Your calling is to be a parent. The parish supports the parents' responsibility as the primary educators of their children. As parents, you are the most influential agent of catechesis for your children. Catechesis given by parents to their family "precedes, accompanies, and enriches all other forms of catechesis," as stated in the National Directory for Catechesis.

St. Joseph would like to welcome your family to the Religion Education (Rel. Ed.) if you have a child that is within the age ranges of the 1st Grade through the 8th Grade. We would encourage you to enroll your child in Rel. Ed. this year and to maintain registration all subsequent years to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.

Your family's participation in the faith life at St. Joseph through Sunday Mass, service to others, and dedication to daily prayer demonstrate your authentic profession of faith. Authentic faith and a combined faith of the parents help secure the children's faith as they become adults. We can teach them the faith, but family and community help them live the faith.

St. Joseph bases its curriculum on the [Diocese of Columbus Graded Course of Study for Religion](#) and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Our parish family promises to help you, as parents, foster your child/children's faith, and assist you in your role of catechist for your children. Parents are welcomed to attend Rel. Ed. classes at any time. We encourage parent participation as much as possible.

Class Information:

1st–6th Grade	Session I	Monday, 4:30 PM–5:30 PM
1st–6th Grade	Session II	Monday, 6:30 PM–7:30 PM
7th–8th Grade	Session III	Sunday, 9:40 AM–10:50 AM

****Important—Please Note****

Classes will begin Sunday, September 10, 2023, for the 7th and 8th Grade Classes and Monday, September 11, 2023, for the 1st– 6th-grade classes.

Class size will be limited to 10–13 students per class, so that the catechist and aide can get to know each child as well as assist in creating suitable conditions necessary to learn the Christian message.

The Rel. Ed. does not run without cost, nor does it run without the time generously donated by our volunteers. Whether you can contribute your time and talent and/or monetarily, all contributions are equally invaluable to the success of our Rel. Ed. program. It takes the time, talent, and resources of our entire parish community to effectively catechize our children. Your donation in whichever capacity that you can give is greatly appreciated and always welcome. The program cannot run without our volunteer catechists, aides, and hall monitors.

Please prayerfully consider volunteering for one of these positions.

Any parent volunteering in the Rel. Ed. is required by the Diocese of Columbus to be certified in "Protecting God's Children" (PGC) before volunteering in the classroom. No exceptions will be made with this policy. Please contact the office to inquire about registering for a "Protecting God's Children" training session. [Pre-register for PGC.](#)

Registration and Fees

Student registrations will be processed in the following order as they are received with **complete payment** and paperwork filed.

1. Registered St. Joseph Parishioners will register from April 20, 2023 thru July 31, 2023.
2. Currently enrolled non-parishioner Rel. Ed.-only families will register from August 1, 2023, through August 14, 2023. Fees are for registration and if applicable retreats.
3. Registration for any remaining open spaces will occur after August 15, 2023.
4. Paperwork and Fees must be submitted by the following deadlines:
 - Parishioner: July 31, 2023
 - Non-Parishioner Re-Enrolling: August 1, 2023
 - New Non-Parishioner Submissions: August 14, 2023

NOTE: Registration will be closed after Monday, August 31, 2023

Registered St. Joseph Parishioner: The non-refundable registration fee is \$75.00 per student with a \$150.00 maximum fee per family. A parishioner is defined as being registered in the parish before January 1, 2023, having a census number assigned by the Diocese of Columbus and are **actively contributing to the parish**.

Non-Parishioner: The registration fee is \$150.00 per student with no family maximum. Non-parish families with students enrolled during sacramental years will incur retreat fees: First Communion retreat is \$35.00, First Reconciliation retreat will be \$35.00 and Confirmation retreat fees will be \$65.00. We reserve the right to remove any non-parishioner from our Rel. Ed. for any reason. We request that you **actively contribute to our parish**.

Non-parishioners must be enrolled in grades 1-8 consistently to receive the sacraments at St. Joseph's.

The following paperwork must be completed and returned with payment by all those in the Rel. Ed. before registration is complete:

1. Rel. Ed. Registration Form
2. Identifiable Release Form
3. Rel. Ed. Registration Fee / any retreat fees for Non-Parishioners
4. Copy of Baptismal Certificate if not baptized at St. Joseph
5. Signed Harassment Policy Form
6. Non-parishioner Enrollment Policy

Registration Fee Exemptions: Parishioners volunteering for at least 75% attendance as a catechist, aide, or hall monitor during Rel. Ed. is exempt from Rel. Ed. registration fees. Two hall monitors are needed for each session. A non-parishioner volunteering for at least 75% attendance as a catechist, aide, or hall monitor will be given a half-price discount on **one** student's registration fees.

Community Building and Continuing Education

We encourage the **first grade parents** to assist in the **First Reconciliation and First Communion retreats** so the families can become familiar with the activities their children will be a part of next year. Then the next year they will be catered to by the first grade parents. Please be proactive in selecting when and where you can help so you get what you are best suited for before it is already assigned.

The **seventh grade parents** are encouraged to assist at the **Confirmation activities such as the retreat, the rehearsal and the actual Confirmation**. This way they will be familiar with the expectations for their child in the next year and the seventh grade next year will reciprocate the hospitality for you. Please keep this in mind when you are reviewing the calendar for the year. Please be proactive in selecting when and where you can help so you get what you are best suited for before it is already assigned.

Since we have established that you "as parents, you are the most influential agents of catechesis (teaching the faith by word and deed) for your children" **it follows that your active participation beyond the minimum of Sunday Mass is expected**. Our St. Joseph Community offers many adult faith experiences that you are encouraged to take part in throughout the Liturgical Year. Some examples in order of importance are: **weekly bible studies, Men or Women's Conference, Lecturing or Eucharistic Minister, Knights of Columbus, Walking with Purpose, That Man is You, FORMED.ORG app, and fall socials**. This will help you to more convincingly pass on the faith to your children. It is common knowledge when our faith has grown since our Confirmation or last high school class we can speak more fervently about that faith.

Student Safety

All parents with children in 1st–4th grade are required to escort their child/children into the building and walk them all the way to their classrooms upon arriving.

Parents are also required to return to the building to pick up their child/children from the classroom at the conclusion of class. Catechists and aides are instructed to keep the children in the classrooms until a parent or guardian comes to pick them up. *Please do not leave your child in the classroom unless a teacher or aide is present.*

The parking lot is extremely busy at arrival and departure times of Rel. Ed. and we need to make sure that all children are safe. **Older children are not permitted to escort their younger brothers and sisters in and out of the building.**

Please note that classrooms will be locked once the class has started; this is for the safety of the children. We appreciate you making every attempt to arrive on time so that the class is not interrupted.

Class Cancellations: If Jonathan Alder Local Schools are closed, Rel. Ed. and all parish activities are canceled. If Rel. Ed. classes should be canceled for any reason (snow, tornado warning, etc.) it will be posted on Facebook and the parish website, www.stjosephpc.org.

For Sunday Rel. Ed. classes, if Union or Madison County has declared a level one snow emergency or higher, then please stay home and be safe. Always use your own discretion when venturing out in questionable conditions.

Sacraments Policy: Students in the year before sacramental preparation begins (1st and 6th grades) and the year of the sacramental preparation (2nd, 7th, and 8th grades) **must have a minimum of a 75% attendance record the entire year.** If a student's attendance is less than 75%, a pastoral conference with Father Trapp will be required to determine if the student is ready to move to the next grade level.

Students and parents must attend all meetings and retreats to be eligible to receive the Sacraments.

Attendance: Mass attendance and participation for the youth with their family is critical and expected. Actively contributing is also expected. This is how we are able to produce a quality program for our children. Regular attendance in Rel. Ed. by students for age-appropriate coursework each year as a part of their ongoing religious education is also expected. A student experiences greater and longer lasting benefit and has increased confidence concerning the faith with consistent participation. Students registered in Rel. Ed. are expected to attend classes and miss only when there is an unavoidable reason. If a student must be absent from class, a parent/guardian must contact the office by phone or email (not the catechist) stating the student's name, grade, class time and the reason for the absence. If a student is absent he/she will be required to complete the chapter for that day's lesson at home and return completed work to the catechist.

Non-parishioners must be enrolled in grades 1-8 consistently in order to receive the sacraments at St. Joseph's. Mass attendance is also expected.

Diocese of Columbus Graded Course of study for Religion **Do you want to know what your child should be learning this year?** The Diocese of Columbus has created the Graded Course of Study to be implemented throughout the diocese "to ensure that the total content of faith is taught in a systematic and age-appropriate way." This Graded Course of Study is based on the National Directory for Catechesis (NDC) and The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC). Each year, the study of the four pillars of the CCC ("The Profession of Faith", "The Celebration of the Christian Mystery", "Life in Christ", and "Christian Prayer") are stressed at a deeper level in an age-appropriate way. Therefore, attendance during every grade level is crucial to the religious education development of each individual. The Graded Course of Study, while it will help to nurture a mature Catholic Christian, is not completed when an individual reaches 18 years of age. They need to seek out adult faith formation opportunities in their college years and beyond.

The basic text for students is *The Faith and Life Series* by Ignatius Press. This series is approved by the Diocese Department of Education for Parish Schools of Religion. This series leads students to the Person of Jesus Christ and then immerses them in the Mystery of Christ. Each grade level has a specific focus within the context of the narrative of salvation history.

Our 7th and 8th-grade students will be doing "The Chosen" program by Ascension Press. *Because these grades are sacrament preparation you cannot homeschool in 7th or 8th-grade.*

Discipline: One of the most important things we want children to know is that they are loved in our parish. We want to be firm, but kind and accepting to what a child might need at a moment where he/she is having difficulty. We will try to redirect and talk to the child about their actions without it being a distraction to the rest of the class. We will also show genuine praise and encouragement for acceptable behavior. Our goal is to create reasonable and clear limits so the children will know what is expected of them in their classes. In the event that the catechist and aide are unable to help a child a parent will be called in to sit in class and be with their child until the child can display acceptable behavior.