



Policy Statement of Expectations – Parent Handbook

Parish Mission Statement

The Catholic Community of St. John the Apostle Parish commits to live out the teachings of Jesus Christ, nourished by the Eucharist, guided by the Holy Spirit and rooted in prayer. Together we continue the mission of Christ through Evangelization, Discipleship and Charity.

Religious Education Statement

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church...

Catechesis aims at putting “people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.” CCC 426

Religious Education is a life - long learning process in which the family is the **PRIMARY** educator! The parish, for children, is an extension of the religious education received from their families, through the parish mission. The religious education program assists families in the teaching of the Catholic faith. A formal religious education program is available from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

It is important that children continue their formation each year so they can come to understand and experience their faith at each level of their development.

Tuition and Registration Procedures

Families registering for classes must:

- Fill out **all forms completely**
- Have a copy of the child(ren) **Baptismal certificate** (either on file or included with registration).
- Tuition payment (full or partial with agreement) at time of registration.

While paying tuition in full at time of registration is preferred and helpful to the parish, we do have payment plans available to help families afford tuition.

Payment plan due dates are the responsibility of the parent. All due dates are listed on the tuition agreement form.

A family will not be turned away because of an inability to pay. If you have a need for tuition assistance, please speak to the Religious Education Director or the Pastor.

SACRAMENTS

The Diocese of Joliet requires that children complete a minimum of two (2) consecutive years of religious education before receiving sacraments.

Sacramental preparation involves additional parent and student activities during the school year. Parents will be notified of all meetings and special events.

Children receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in the second consecutive year of religious education after all requirements have been met.

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated in the 8th grade following two (2) consecutive years of religious education and meeting all requirements. Confirmation is a sacrament which requires the student to make a personal choice to be Catholic.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Weather and Other Emergency Closings

If a class is cancelled due to bad weather or other emergency situations, St. John the Apostle participates in the Emergency Closings Center. A flyer listing how to obtain the information will be available opening day and in the Religious Education Office during the school year.

Change of Information

Please notify the Religious Education office should you move or change any of your phone numbers, including your emergency contact number.

Custody Issues

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform us of a change of marital situations involving custodial issues. Normally, it is presumed that both parents have equal access to a child. If this is not the case, the custodial parent must inform the Director in writing, with documented evidence.

Parent Communications

The Religious Education program will send home letters concerning changes in schedules, upcoming events, etc. with the children. Please check with your child and/or in backpacks for any of these communications.

Parent Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns please call the Religious Education office at 630 832-7588 or stop by any time during class time.

POLICIES

Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to running a religious education program. Please contact the Director if you are able to give your time and talents.

All catechists and others who work with children are required to attend a program called *Protecting God's Children* and fill out a background check release form.

Carpooling

Parents are to write a letter giving permission for individuals (naming them), other than a parent, allowing a child to be picked up by them.

Attendance & Absence

Attendance is **expected** for the **full class** each session. Leaving early or arriving late is discourteous and disruptive and should be for emergency purposes only. While understood, participation in non-religious activities is also important for a child's social and physical well being, these activities should **NOT** interfere with religion classes. Each class builds upon the preceding class and is essential for the learning process. Children showing a pattern of absences, late arrivals or early dismissals will result in the parent being called to come in and discuss with the Director ways to resolve these issues.

In the event a child must leave class early, a parent must come into the religious education office to sign a child out. **NO** child will be dismissed from class without a parent coming to the office. Children arriving late must have a parent also, come in to sign a child in.

When a child is going to be absent a parent needs to call the office 630 832-7588 with the child(ren) name(s) and why they will be absent. It is the responsibility of the parent and or child to contact the teacher for make up work.

Cell Phone Policy

If your child carries a cell phone, it must be turned off during class time and be kept in a jacket pocket or purse. Any cell phone which is visible during class will be confiscated and returned after class.

Special Needs

In the space provided on the medical form, indicate any special needs your child may have regarding health concerns, allergies, hearing or visual impairments, educational needs, etc. Please feel free to contact the Director of Religious Education to discuss your child's special needs.

Conduct

Good conduct, cooperation, attention and courtesy are expected from all students. This also means showing respect for other participants, catechists and church property. Any student who continually fails to cooperate with the catechist and or other students shall be subject to disciplinary action which may include:

- Sending the student to the Director of Religious Education office for a conference.
- Calling the student's parents in for a conference.
- Requiring parents to attend classes with the student until the student's behavior improves.
- Expulsion from the program.

Serious misconduct includes fighting, stealing, cheating, possession/use of drugs, weapons, and/or alcohol, gang involvement, vandalism, aggressive behavior, threats and disrespect to staff are all eligible offenses for expulsion from the program.

Student Drop-off and Pick-up

In order to provide adequate supervision for the health and safety of each child, we ask the following:

- **NO SPEEDING** in the PARKING LOT
- Cars are to enter at the North end of the lot so that students are dropped off nearest to the front door of the school.
- Do **NOT** drop students off earlier than 20 minutes before scheduled time unless prior arrangements have been made with a catechist or Director of Religious Education.
- Cars are **NOT** to take "shortcuts" through the parking lot but instead must travel along the outer perimeter of the parking lot.
- When picking up your child please **DO NOT** stop right in front of the entrance. This has led to many close calls.
- Please be prompt in picking up your child at the end of classes.
- Cars are to exit at the south end of the parking lot.
- No child will be allowed to walk or bike ride home unless a parent has provided the religious education office with a written permission note.

Dress Code

Appropriate dress attire is expected. While it is understood that dress styles change constantly and children desire to "Be in Style" we also have to maintain a level of moral decency. The religious education program is an extension of the Church; our focus is on learning about our faith and should not be distracted by what someone is wearing.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS

Religious Education begins with the family. It is expected that the students and those members of their families who are Roman Catholic are practicing the faith.

- Regular Sunday Mass attendance, Mass attendance on Holy Days of Obligation and the reception of Reconciliation and Holy Communion at least once during the Easter season.
- Help your children learn their prayers. Pray with your children.
- Make sure your children are prepared for class and that they bring their books and necessary supplies to class.
- Review what has been sent home from class and help children with any homework.
- Make sure that religious education classes are a priority for the whole family.
- Talk to your children about your own faith and values.
- Be examples of Christian service in the parish and the community.
- Attend at least 3 of the 5 parent formation sessions in the fall and 3 of the 5 parent formation sessions in the spring.
- Help children become familiar with reading the Bible.