

SAINT JOSEPH

PARISH COMMUNITY



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22 Halsted Street - Newton - New Jersey - 07860-2003

www.stjosephnewton.org

973.383.1985



Faith Formation Handbook

Sacramental Policies/Requirements:

Preparation for the Sacraments of Penance/Reconciliation and First Holy Eucharist consists of two (2) years of formal classroom instruction (*normally beginning in the First Grade*).

In addition to class time, there will be additional parent meetings, activities, special retreat times and practice sessions throughout the year. Attendance by one or more parents/guardians is mandatory. A separate listing of these sacramental dates will be supplied at the time of the Parent Meeting.

The children will receive Penance/Reconciliation prior to First Holy Eucharist. Children will receive First Holy Eucharist during normal weekend liturgy normally scheduled in the Spring. Assignments of the specific time and date of the liturgy will be done during the second year of preparation.

Students wishing to enter into the Confirmation Preparation Program in Grade 9 must be able to submit proof of sequential Faith Formation attendance for Grades 1-8.



If there is a need to contact anyone in the Faith Formation Office, the following contact information may prove helpful:

Ms. Deborah Henegan, *Director of Faith Formation*
973-383-8413 - dehstjoesred@yahoo.com

Revised May 2016

Change of Address, Telephone Number and/or Email Address:

Please notify the Faith Formation Office immediately if you should have a change of address, telephone number and/or email address.

Child Abuse Policy:

If a Catechist and/or staff of the Faith Formation Office suspects a child has been abused, New Jersey State Law requires that the proper law enforcement agency be notified immediately.

Illegal Substances and Weapons:

Drugs, alcohol, tobacco and weapons of any kind are not allowed on church property. If a student is found to be in possession of any of these, the student will be detained until the police and a parent/guardian is notified.

Visitors:

Other than students, Catechists, Catechist Aides and Parish Staff, no persons are permitted in the halls, classrooms, or restrooms during Faith Formation classes and activities. Parents and Guardians are welcome to visit their child/dren's classroom. There will be times when Catechists will invite you to observe and participate in their classes. However, to maintain the safety, security and continuity of all our classrooms, any adult visitations must be pre-approved by the Faith Formation Office prior to this visit.

Catechists are asked to contact the Director of Faith Formation immediately if they notice any unauthorized persons in the building.

Mission Statement

Saint Joseph Parish Community emphasizes that all people gathered in the name of Jesus, strive to build a community of faith and love and in particular, through the ministry of our Faith Formation Program from Grades 1-8 for your children and young adults.

Our change from "CCD" to Faith Formation is to highlight Faith Formation as continuous, developmental and experiential. Because of this, it is extremely important that this formation continue even after 8th Grade as our young adults begin to prepare for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Having been given the serious responsibility of educating your children in the ways of faith, we feel that coming to classes must be supported by weekly attendance at Eucharist, the "source and summit" of our faith.

Baptismal Covenant

At your child's baptism, you made the commitment for them to be raised in the catholic faith. This faith must be nurtured in a faith environment. Registering your child/ren for Faith Formation is an opportunity to continue this serious commitment.

The intent of our Faith Formation Program is to present the truths about our catholic faith to our young people, helping them to grow spiritually, morally and faithfully. We have chosen theme teaching so that every child in your family will study the same subject matter (*presented at the appropriate age level*) and hopefully invite you to family discussions.

This Handbook is divided into two parts: **Curriculum and Policies.**

Curriculum includes:

- ◆ Attendance at Liturgy
- ◆ Family Faith Formation



Policies include:

- ◆ Registration
- ◆ Attendance
- ◆ Student Records/Sacramental Policies/Requirements
- ◆ Arrival/Dismissal/Emergency Procedures/Illness
- ◆ Discipline/Behavior
- ◆ Classrooms/Homework/Class Assignments
- ◆ Cancellations/Emergency Closings
- ◆ Emergency Contact Information
- ◆ Change of Address, Telephone Number and/or Email Address
- ◆ Child Abuse Policy
- ◆ Illegal Substances and Weapons
- ◆ Visitors
- ◆ Sacramental Policies/Requirements

Classrooms/Homework/Class Assignments:

- ◆ **ABSOLUTELY NO** food or beverage of any kind is allowed in the classrooms.
- ◆ Students must respect the property in the classrooms and leave desks, chairs and other personal property as they found them.
- ◆ Books will be given to the students **to take home**; each book will contain a label with the student's name, class session, room number, grade and catechist name. Please remind students to bring their books with them each week.
- ◆ Students will primarily be placed in classes randomly. At times, a class may be kept together from one year to the next. This is mostly done in Grades 1 and 2 while they are preparing for Penance/Reconciliation and First Holy Eucharist.
- ◆ Parents/Guardians are welcome to express concerns or questions directly or by email to the Director of Faith Formation at: 973-383-8413 or Dehstjoesred@yahoo.com.

Illness:

If your child becomes ill during class, you will be notified by telephone immediately and asked to pick up your child.

Cancellations/Emergency Closings:

If the Newton Public Schools are closed or have an early dismissal due to inclement weather, then Saint Joseph Church's Faith Formation will cancel classes for that day as well. If a parish decision is made due to inclement weather, notification will be provided on Saint Joseph Church's website (www.stjosephnewton.org) and an email message will be sent to each email address supplied during registration.

Emergency Contact Information:

Parents/Guardians are responsible for insuring that the Faith Formation Office always has the current telephone number on file of a parent or other designated adult who can be called in the case of an emergency.

Discipline/Behavior:

Students are expected to follow the “Student Code of Behavior” as listed below and part of the diocesan guidelines:

- ◆ Students are expected to attend class each session and Mass every week.
- ◆ Students are expected to come to class on time and prepared with their textbooks.
- ◆ Students are expected to project an image of Christian consideration, sensitivity and respect, being mindful of language, dress and behavior.
- ◆ Students are expected to refrain from inappropriate touching, verbal harassment and peer sexual harassment.
- ◆ Students are expected to respect other persons and/or property.
- ◆ Students are expected to refrain from actions that could result in injury and/or damage to property.
- ◆ Students are expected to attend all scheduled activities, arriving promptly and staying for the entire event.
- ◆ Students are expected to maintain the spirit of the event.
- ◆ Students are expected to report problems of any kind to a trusted adult.
- ◆ Students are expected to abide by the rule that the **use of cell phones is prohibited** during class, Mass, retreat days or any other events (*in an emergency, students may ask the catechist or Director of Faith Formation of this need*). Additional electronic devices are also **not permitted** from the time they enter the building until they are picked up by their parent/guardian.

Catechists will deal with behavior issues immediately. After two warnings, the Catechist will send the disruptive student to the Director of Faith Formation and his/her parent or guardian will be called. If disrespectful behavior persists, the Faith Formation Office may ask the parent/guardian to attend class and/or discuss their child/ren’s continuation in the program.

CURRICULUM

Attendance at Liturgy:

Families attending weekly liturgy is a primary component of our Faith Formation Program and is a pivotal aspect of Catholic life. As the primary religious educator of your child/ren, we need to stress that if you choose not to attend Mass with your child/ren, there is a disconnect between your religious education practice and denial of an essential element of our Catholic identity.

Family Faith Formation:

Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility to educate their child/ren. Through their words, guidance and example, parents/guardians form the child/ren’s first experience of faith and continue to be the child/ren’s most important faith teachers. Be sure to talk with your child/ren about God and the Church and spend time in family prayer. Be as involved as possible in what your child/ren are learning in Faith Formation classes, and reinforce these lessons at home. Please become familiar with your child/ren’s textbooks and grade requirements, as well as the need to aid them in their class assignments and homework.

POLICIES

Registration:

To participate in the Faith Formation Program each family must first be registered with our parish (*which includes filling out an updated Census Form*). Registration for Faith Formation classes will take place, in person, in the Spring. At the time of registration, each family will be asked to sign a “Commitment Covenant” which includes conditions for being accepted into our Faith Formation Program. The criteria for acceptance is that each family agree to:

- ◆ Faithfully bring your child/ren to church on a regular 12 month basis.
- ◆ Bring your child/ren to Faith Formation on a regular basis, prepared and on time for class.
- ◆ Faithfully and conscientiously support your parish community.

(By either using online giving and submitting slips or the Parish Envelope System only)

Attendance:

Students are expected to be present for each class unless illness or other serious reason prevents attendance. Please call the Faith Formation Office (973-383-8413) if your child/ren will be absent. A child who has been absent is required to present upon his/her return, a note of explanation signed by a parent/guardian. Excessive absences may prohibit the continuation of the child in the Faith Formation Program (*as noted in their Commitment Covenant signed at the time of registration*). **Sports and other extra curricular activities are not acceptable excuses for absence, early dismissal from or late arrival to Faith Formation classes.**

The Faith Formation Office will be following up with any student who is absent by phone or email to ascertain why they were absent and to assign the make-up work which is expected to be completed by the next class session. We kindly ask the parents/guardians to help their child/ren with this work and to have it completed, ready and on time.

In an effort to keep parents involved in the Faith Formation of their child/ren, homework may be assigned. **Please help your child/ren with this.**

Student Records:

The Faith Formation Office maintains a record for each student in the program. These records include the dates of the sacraments that have been received and other important facts. All information is kept confidential. If there is any information which you feel is vital to note in your child/ren's record, please contact the Director of Faith Formation so that we may arrange an opportunity for you to meet with someone on staff to include the information needed.

All students entering the program must submit a copy of their Baptismal Certificate and when applicable, must also submit their record of sequential Faith Formation from their previous parish.

If you move to another parish (*making it necessary to leave our program*), we ask that this request be made in writing (*which will automatically remove you from our parish census*). Upon receipt of this request, the Faith Formation Office will then forward the necessary formation information to your new church once we have received this request from your new church (*also in writing*).

Arrival: For Grades 1-8 we ask that a parent/guardian drop their child/ren off at the main doors of the school (*located at the side entrance of the school on Jefferson Street*). **Please make sure your child/ren arrive on time for class.**

Monday-Tuesday: First Session: Classes begin at 4:05pm and end at 5:20pm. Students should arrive by 4:00pm.

Monday-Second Session: Classes begin at 6:50pm and end at 8:05pm. Students should arrive by 6:45pm.

Dismissal: Parents are asked to pick up their child/ren at the main entry hall (*located at the side entrance of the school on Jefferson Street*). **Under no circumstances** will a student be released to anyone other than a parent or guardian (*unless written permission has been received prior to the class date by the Faith Formation Office*).

Family Emergency:

If a family emergency arises necessitating your child/ren be dismissed early, we ask that a **parent or guardian first contact the Director of Faith Formation, Ms. Deborah Henegan at: 908-914-6656**. Please note that no student shall be dismissed early for any other reason.

