

St. Joseph Catholic Church  
1695 Wallenberg Blvd.  
Charleston, SC 29407  
Telephone: 556-4611  
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[www.saintjosephchas.com](http://www.saintjosephchas.com)

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday - 9 AM - 4:00 PM  
Friday - 9 AM - 12:00 noon  
Summer Office Hours: Wednesdays & Fridays close at noon

Class Time Wednesday  
Evening 6:15 - 7:30  
p.m.

Staff

Rev. Gabriel J. Smith, Pastor

Rev. Mr. Thomas J. Baranoski, Deacon

Director of Religious Education  
Rita H. Schoene, BA MA

Parish Secretary  
Regina Plichta

Financial Secretary  
Candy Pucino

Family Life Center Director  
Al Katko

St. Joseph Parish, a family oriented parish within the Diocese of Charleston, offers opportunities for parish membership to grow in faith through the various religious formational, educational and sacramental preparation programs.

Please read the parish bulletin for updated programs, information and schedule changes.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

The Ministry of Religious Education flows from the mandate of Jesus to go into the whole world and teach the Good News. The Religious Education Program of Saint Joseph Parish is rooted in this decree and nourishes a community of faith. This community is dedicated to sharing, nurturing, and strengthening the faith of its students, thus enabling them to manifest the gospel message through worship in community and in service.

## **GOALS**

The Religious Education program accepts its responsibility as co-educators with the family and the Church to provide a solid catechetical experience for children. We commit ourselves to:

Present our Catholic faith accurately, authentically, and completely, consistent with the age and readiness of the students.

Provide a safe atmosphere where children can develop their faith.

Foster a clear sense of Catholic identity and an appreciation of Catholic beliefs, values, prayers, practices and sacramental celebrations.

Encourage the development of attitudes, behavior, and courageous living that identify them as followers of Jesus.

Nurture a deep respect and appreciation for all that is good, true, and beautiful in human experience.

Develop a greater sense of responsibility towards outreach and justice for the greater good in our homes, throughout our communities, and into the world.

To create a sense of interdependence among administration, catechists, parents, and students which promotes mutual respect, concern and preserves the integrity of the Catholic faith.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

Our catechists are generous volunteers who devote time to spreading the message of Jesus and building up our faith community. They work as teachers, teacher trainees and teacher aides.

All catechists are required to:

Be in good standing with the Catholic Church by living their Catholic faith in their daily lives.

Conform to all the Diocesan requirements. All catechists, assistants and parent helpers must attend a session on the prevention of sexual abuse (VIRTUS). They are also given copies of the *Policy of the Diocese of Charleston Concerning Allegations of Sexual Misconduct or Abuse by Church Personnel*.

They must sign a Code of Conduct pertaining to their personal behavior. They are aware of the parish's safe environment efforts. They know the procedure for reporting an allegation and also must be aware of mandatory reporter laws. Both the DRE and the deacon are trained facilitators in the VIRTUS program, having attended a three-day workshop in Columbia.

These teachers deserve respect and appreciation from all students and parents for their sacrifice of time and service that they offer to the families of the parish.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**REGISTRATION** - Registration of **new** students usually takes place during the summer months. The process includes three-forms; the general information, a medical form and a photo permission release.

Requirements for registration include:

Presentation of a copy of a baptismal certificate for each child baptized in other churches. Need date of Baptism if baptized here at Saint Joseph's Church. Read and acknowledge (through a signature form) the understanding of the Religious Ed Handbook

**RE-REGISTRATION** - Registration is ongoing throughout the summer. The forms may be downloaded from the parish website. We offer a discount for early registration. We encourage timely registration as this permits us to maintain current records and order our materials.

## TUITION

Tuition is charged to each family for the cost of operating the Religious Education Program. The fees are:

Grades 1 through 8:       \$25.00 - per child  
Maximum:                   \$50.00 - per family.

Early and late registration fees are applied annually.

A student text is included in the tuition charge. If lost or misplaced, a fee will be charged for a new book.

No child will be refused admission to the Religious Education Program because of inability to pay tuition. Parents for whom tuition would cause a severe financial burden should contact the Pastor or the Director of Religious Education.

**Children who participate in any of St. Joseph's sports' programs, MUST be a registered member of the Parish and attend Religious Education classes and abide by attendance requirements.**

## TRANSFERS: IN AND OUT

Students in grades 1 through 8 who are transferring into the program from another parish or program are required to present the following records:

Verification of completed levels of religious education.  
A copy of child's baptismal certificate

These records need to be presented as soon as possible as they are necessary for appropriate placement and enrollment into the program.

When a student is transferring out of the program, it is the parent's responsibility to request a letter from the director or the coordinator of the program. This letter will transfer with the student and verify his/her completed level of religious education.

## TRANSITION CLASSES

Any child enrolled in grades 2-8 who has had no previous religious education or has missed a year of religious education will be required to complete a remedial program before entering the classroom. Upon completion of the program the Director of Religious Education will place the student in his/her grade level. This program will be designed by the Director of Religious Education to fit the needs of the individual student.

The purpose of this program is to relieve the students of undue embarrassment as they enter the classroom for the first time.

## **ACCIDENTS/EMERGENCY FORM**

The Religious Education Office must have on file an emergency form with a telephone number and all information that may be vital to the safety and welfare of your child. In case of minor accidents, first aid will be given at school. A medical form is included as part of the registration process.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Students are frequently given flyers containing information pertinent to the program. This information refers to scheduling changes, attendance at church, or for any other special event. Please check with your child weekly for this material. One member of the family will be the designated messenger. We will set this up during the parent meeting on the first night of class. Special announcements, changes in the calendar, etc., will also appear in the parish bulletin.

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL**

All students should be in the building at least five minutes before the beginning of class (6:10 p.m.). We do not want the children alone in the building before class. If you must come to the building early, please remain with your child until classtime. Because of the limited amount of time for instruction, it is important that students be on time for religious education classes. Scheduling and transportation problems that unavoidably result in regular tardiness should be discussed with the Director of Religious Education. Each week the students will meet in the mall of the Family Life Center for communal prayer. They will then proceed to their classrooms for their catechesis. Dismissal will be at 7:30 p.m.

Children should be dropped off in the front of the Family Life Center and enter the front of the building only. Children must be picked up at the same location. Parents of young children must come into the building to claim their children.

**NOTE:** Be extremely careful in the parking lot area because other activities may be going on in the building. Please observe the **Enter** and **Exit** signs posted on the property. This allows for the safe flow of traffic.

**\*\*\*\*NO CHILD SHOULD LEAVE THE BUILDING WITHOUT A PARENT/GUARDIAN OR CAR POOL DRIVER. \*\*\*\***

**PLEASE BE PROMPT**

for arrival and dismissal!!!!

## ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

Because our Religious Education Program has a very limited teaching time frame in which to provide a consistency of instruction, it is required that children attend regularly.

Our program is sequential, therefore, it is expected that children will attend at **all** grade levels. Each grade level builds on the previous year.

All absences are considered as un-excused except for the following:  
Illness of the student.  
Exceptionally urgent reasons that affect the child.

SPORTS, DANCING OR OTHER EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES are **NOT** acceptable excuses for absence or early dismissal from religion classes.

For every absence a written statement signed by the parent or guardian is required on the day the student returns to class. Instead of a written excuse, you may send an email to the DRE before class with the appropriate information. [Rita@saintjosephchas.com](mailto:Rita@saintjosephchas.com). Any missed classroom work will have to be "made up".

No student is permitted to leave the building after arrival for class, except in case of sickness or similar emergency. In such cases, the student will wait at the office until the parent arrives. **NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO WAIT OUTSIDE THE FAMILY LIFE CENTER.** If a student needs to be dismissed early, a written statement from the parent must be sent on the day of the early dismissal and parents must meet the student inside the building. Parents should notify the office if someone other than the parent will transport the child.

A student who arrives after the beginning of class will be marked tardy.

When **three** un-excused absences and/or an excessive number of excused absences occur, and there has been no effort to make up classes, the child may have to repeat the grade.

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Students may have homework throughout the year. Check with your child each week for homework assignments. Parents will be notified of incomplete assignments and asked to see that all assignments are completed in a timely manner.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Discipline in behavior and good habits are an important aspect of moral formation. The purpose of all discipline is to foster personal development and promote self-respect for others and for duly constituted authority. Saint Joseph Religious Education Program embraces the philosophy that discipline should be positive and constructive. It is our aim to cultivate our students' goodness as children of God by fostering within them a sense of right and justice, respect, and love for everyone. When our students do misbehave, they will be dealt with immediately and with action taken according to the seriousness of the offense. Corporal punishment is **never** administered.

We feel that problems of discipline should not arise in a religion class setting in a period of one hour and fifteen minutes. But, if the occasion does arise, the following procedures will be followed:

First offense - The teacher will take the initial action to correct the problem reminding the student of his/her responsibility to himself/herself as well as to the class.

Second offense - The teacher will send the student to the Director of Religious Education who in turn will speak to the student and if necessary call the parents so they can be made aware of the infraction and become involved in a solution to the problem.

Third Offense- The teacher will send the student to the Director of Religious Education. Parents will be called and informed that the student has an in-school suspension. The student will work independently under supervision at the school until parents/student meet with the Director of Religious Education.

We trust this is as far as we have to go. However, if serious breaches of discipline occur, matters will be referred to the Pastor.

## **SUSPENSION**

Students may be suspended from religious education classes/activities for serious breaches of discipline; these may include but are not limited to any or all of the following:

Conduct endangering fellow students, teachers, or school personnel.

Fighting.

Damaging or destroying school property.

Insubordination.

Leaving the school building or school grounds without permission.

Smoking or possession of cigarettes.  
Possessing, using, or selling controlled substances.  
Possessing or drinking alcoholic beverages.  
Violence of any type.  
Bringing weapons of any sort into the Family Life Center (knives, guns, cutting tools, anything that could cause serious damage). Any infraction of this rule will result in an immediate call to the Charleston City Police Department. This includes toy look-alikes.

Whenever an incident occurs that may lead to suspension, the Director of Religious Education and/or pastor shall investigate the alleged offense. This investigation shall include a discussion with the involved student and the student will be given an opportunity to be heard with regard to the alleged offense.

### **DRESS CODE**

We believe that children's attitudes are affected by what they wear. Therefore, we ask that all students dress appropriately for religious education classes. Tank tops or halter-tops of any sort (including blouses with spaghetti straps) are not permitted. No midriff should be showing. Skirts and shorts must be a decent length. Hats must be removed when entering the building. Pants must be worn properly, no low hanging pants. Clothing that is torn, bears obscene or inappropriate messages, or carries a logo for alcoholic beverages or cigarettes may not be worn. Good taste and proper judgment should be utilized.

All electronic equipment is prohibited by students on the premises. This includes, but is not limited to, game systems, I-pods, disc players, or any device which requires headphones, etc. These items are distracting and need to be left behind for this period of time. The DRE will collect any such items and keep them until the end of class and return them only at that time. Cell phones must be turned off and only used for calling for transportation home. The office phone is also available for outgoing calls.

### **HARASSMENT**

Our parish affirms the inherent value of every individual and upholds the respect due to each because of his or her uniqueness as a child of God. Therefore, we are committed to providing a safe working and educational environment which is free from physical, psychological, sexual or verbal harassment for its staff, students, and volunteers,



## **MEDICATION**

The guidelines of the Diocese of Charleston will be followed regarding the procedures for distribution of medication during religious education. Parents are asked to administer medication before or after any religious education class or activity. Parents are permitted to come to school to administer medication to their children. If it is essential that a student receive prescription medication during a religious education class or activity, parents must first meet with the Director of Religious Education to go over the guidelines that will be followed. This will be done on an individual basis.

## **SAFETY**

Our goal is to create and maintain a safe environment for all children while attending Religious Education classes on the parish property. As previously mentioned, the DRE and catechists have been properly screened through background checks. The diocese has also mandated that all students, whether in parochial school or a parish school of religion participate in a *Teaching Touching Safety Program*. The creators of the Protecting God's Children program developed this additional series for children. This is a sexual abuse awareness/prevention program that is taught by the DRE and the deacon during regularly scheduled class-time. The program curriculum is offered in three-year cycles with age appropriate material.

Additional information will be given in the parent welcome packet at the meeting during the first night of class.

Parents are invited and welcome to attend these classes, which are held in the open mall area of the Family Life Center.

**If you determine that you DO NOT want your child to participate, an "optout" form is available.**

## CURRICULUM

### ELEMENTARY (GRADES 1-6)

Our parish has chosen the *Finding God* series, created by Loyola Press, a Jesuit company dedicated to nurturing a lived faith as the tool for teaching our the children of St. Joseph's Parish. The title, *Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts*, reflects the inspiration of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and describes what Catholic formation calls us to do:

Recognize the presence of God in our own lives.

Discern the presence of God in all peoples and circumstances.

Recognize the presence of God in our experiences of God's creation

Live as people for others.

**GRADE 1: Goal:** God is our Creator and loves us as our Father.

**GRADE 2: Goal:** We prepare for the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.

**GRADE 3: Goal:** God call us to live in community as members of the Church.

**GRADE 4: Goal:** God calls us to lead a moral life.

**GRADE 5: Goal:** Through the sacraments we live more fully in the Holy Spirit.

**GRADE 6: Goal:** We explore the history of salvation through the Old Testament.

While each grade level has its own theme or focus, all six-grade levels follow the five overarching themes of God, Jesus, the Church, the sacraments, and morality. This approach, a spiral curriculum, gives each student the opportunity to build on his/her knowledge of Catholic faith throughout the journey, while being formed and grounded in this faith tradition.

The Scriptures are used and studied in all grade levels. Music and guided meditations are integrated into the lessons.

### JUNIOR HIGH

## **SEVENTH GRADE CURRICULUM**

The seventh grade year is the first of a two-year program in preparation for the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation (see Confirmation Program). Therefore the seventh grade curriculum summarizes Catholic beliefs about God, Jesus, Church, Sacraments, Scripture, and Commandments. It emphasizes the importance of living the Good News. Studies include uncovering the life of Jesus in the Gospels. Students are challenged to understand the messages of the Gospel writers as well as the writings of Paul for living in the twenty-first century.. The course is designed in the Catholic tradition to help pre-teens come to a fuller and deeper understanding of the essential beliefs and practices of Catholic Christianity in relationship with Jesus. Conversation and group discussion is encouraged. The bible is used extensively during this year.

## **EIGHTH GRADE CURRICULUM**

Eighth grade students begin their final year of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore, the focus of the curriculum is designed to help teens come to a fuller and deeper understanding of Confirmation as they grow in Christian maturity. Along with the study of the theology of the sacrament of Confirmation, they learn the connection with the other two sacraments of initiation, Baptism and Eucharist. The students spend time discussing Catholic morality, making moral decisions and integrating this ideal into their everyday lives through role play and conversation. They will also study the Eight Beatitudes, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, all the other sacraments and the lives of several saints.

## **SACRAMENTS**

### **RECONCILIATION/EUCHARIST PROGRAM**

Preparation for the sacraments is an integral and important part of the Religious Education Program. These celebrations mark important phases in the faith journeys of the children. They are special moments for reflection and renewal for the immediate family and the faith community. At Saint Joseph's there is a **two-year preparation period**.

Remote preparation begins in first grade.

Immediate preparation begins in the course of the second year of formal religious education.

The candidates are required to attend a half-day retreat at Saint Joseph's. This takes place on a Saturday.

Children who come to the program from other parishes must bring a written record of the previously completed levels.

Parental involvement in the sacramental preparation of children is of the greatest importance. Parents are expected to take an active role in the faith journey of their child. Consider volunteering your family to take up the gifts in the Offertory procession during Mass. This ministry is meaningful to the child and helps him/her to be more involved in the Liturgy.

It is the responsibility of the parents to:

Nurture the spiritual life of the child by;

Participation in weekly Saturday or Sunday Mass.

Fostering an active family prayer life.

Be responsible for taking you child to First Reconciliation.

Participate in all parent meetings

Timely completion of paperwork.

## **CONFIRMATION PROGRAM**

Under the sacramental guidelines at St. Joseph's, the Confirmation Program is a **two-year program** beginning with grade seven and concluding in eighth grade with the celebration of Confirmation. Since Confirmation is the second sacrament

of initiation, it calls for priority and active participation by parents, candidates, sponsors, and the local faith community.

Participation in religious instruction throughout the elementary and junior high school years by regular attendance in either a parish religious education program (CCD) or a parochial school.

Candidate's parent participation in the "Requirements Workshop" is necessary in assisting your son/daughter in their preparation for the sacrament.

All candidates are expected to contribute service hours to their parish community and family.

All candidates are required to research the life of a saint and present a written/typed two to three pages report. This subject of this report is their chosen Confirmation name or their given baptismal name. Further instructions for this project will be given during the class.

Attendance and full participation in the Confirmation Retreat.

It is important for the candidates to lead a sacramental life and attend weekly Saturday or Sunday Mass .

Timely completion of necessary forms.

Parents are expected to take an active role in supporting their son/daughter for the sacrament. Parents are encouraged to share their own faith experience, participate at all workshops, attend major liturgical celebrations of the Confirmation Program, assist the program wherever possible (i.e., classroom, retreat), and nurture the candidate in his/her spiritual development by sharing conversations about Church, faith and morality. Please pray together as a family and keep everything associated with Confirmation a positive experience for your candidate as well as for your entire family.

## **OUT OF GRADE PREPARATION**

There are a number of reasons why a student may not be confirmed in eighth grade. Occasionally, families with high school students may move into the parish

from another diocese where Confirmation is conferred in a later grade. In such cases, the Coordinator makes evaluation of readiness and a thorough sacramental preparation program is offered to the candidate and his/her family.

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### **DEFINITION: ACTIVE PARISHIONER**

In the day-to-day operation of the parish, the term “Active Parishioner” is used in a number of instances.

When determining the cost of renting facilities (sanctuary, gym, mall, classrooms, Scout Hut), whether or not a person is an “Active Parishioner” is taken into consideration.

When we send our children to a Catholic school, the school checks with the parish to see if the parents are “Active Parishioners” prior to giving the parents the parishioner rate for tuition. When someone is asked to be a sponsor (Baptism, Confirmation, RCIA) by other parishes, the other parish wants to know if the potential sponsor is an “Active Parishioner”.

When enrolling children in our school of religion, it is assumed that the parents are “Active Parishioners”. Because the term “Active Parishioner” is used in so many instances in this parish and the diocese, we feel that a definition of the term would be useful to all.

An “Active Parishioner” is defined as a registered parishioner who attends Mass on a regular basis, Sundays and Holy Days; contributes their TIME, (i.e. volunteering), TALENT (teaching, choir, parish ministry, etc.), and TREASURE (\$20/week recommended) in the parish offertory and that the contribution of TREASURE is done in an accountable way, i.e. parish envelope. Our volunteer collection counters may not recognize your check if it is placed loosely in the collection baskets and your contributions will not be posted to your name. Due to various checks and balances, one group does the actual counting while another person posts the amount written on each envelope to the parishioner’s contribution. If you choose not to use the parish envelope, your check is considered “loose” and counted as unknown contributions. Thus, we have no way of determining your attendance at Mass or your weekly contributions. If you want to be an “Active Parishioner,” please use you envelopes)

A three-month registration period is asked of all Catholic parents who seek Baptism for their children. Catholics being asked to serve as godparents or sponsors for Baptism or Confirmation need to observe this regulation as well.