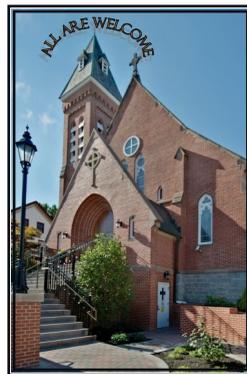


# SAINT JOSEPH

PARISH COMMUNITY



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

[www.stjosephnewton.org](http://www.stjosephnewton.org)

973.383.1985



FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK

2022-2023

GRADES 1-6

## **Sacramental Policies/Requirements**

According to Diocesan Guidelines, 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 activities, special retreats 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 the normal weekend liturgy schedule (normally in the Spring). Choices of the specific time and date of the weekend liturgy will be done during the second year of preparation.

Also, according to Diocesan Guidelines, preparation for Confirmation consists of two (2) years of formal classroom instruction beginning in Seventh Grade. Students wishing to enter into the Confirmation Preparation Program in Grade 7 must be able to submit proof of continual Faith Formation attendance for Grades 1-6.



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

**Mrs. Joanne Zayac**, *Assistant to the Office of Faith Formation*  
973-383-8413 - [ffassistant@stjosephnewton.org](mailto:ffassistant@stjosephnewton.org)

### **Change of Information**

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/school 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 are notified.

### **Visitors**

Other than students, Catechists, Classroom Aides, General Assistants and Parish Staff, no persons are permitted in the halls, classrooms or restrooms during Faith Formation. Parents and Guardians are welcome to visit their children'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 Office of Faith Formation **prior** to their visit.

***Catechists are asked to contact the Office 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. In particular, through the important ministry of our Faith Formation Program (Grades 1-6), your children will be educated in the faith and nourished at the "Table of the Lord" which is the "Source and summit" of our Catholic faith.

Several years ago, we changed the name of "CCD" to Faith Formation in order to highlight Faith Formation as a continuous, developmental and experiential journey which does not end with formal classes as children. Because of this, it is extremely important that this formation of our faith continues even after 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, when our young adults have celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Having the serious responsibility of educating your children in the ways of our Catholic faith, we are uncompromising on the requirement of not only coming to classes, but more importantly, by **weekly Mass attendance** as a parish family.

### **Baptismal Covenant**

At your child's Baptism, you made the commitment and promise to raise them "*In a Catholic home and according to the Catholic faith*" (from the Rite of Baptism). This faith must be nurtured in a faith environment. Registering your children for Faith Formation is an opportunity to continue this serious commitment, but must be supported by the reception of Holy Communion each and every week.

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 to use theme teaching, so that every child in your family will study the same subject matter (presented at the appropriate age level) and hopefully will lead you to family discussions.

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

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Attendance at Liturgy**

Family attendance at **weekly** Mass is a primary component of our Faith Formation Program and is an essential aspect of Catholic life (as indicated by the signing of the Commitment Covenant at the beginning of the year). We need to stress that if you, as the primary religious educator of your children, choose not to attend Mass with your children, there is a disconnect between your faith formation practice and denial of an essential element of our Catholic identity. **If this practice is not followed, then you will choose to absent your child from our Faith Formation Program.**

### **Family Faith Formation**

Parents/Guardians have the primary responsibility to educate their children. Through their words, guidance and example, parents/guardians form the children's first experience of faith and continue to be the children's most important faith teachers. Be sure to talk with your children about God, the Church and Christian values in every day life. It is also a good idea to spend some time in family prayer. Be as involved as possible in what your children are learning in Faith Formation classes and reinforce these lessons at home. Please become familiar with your children's textbook and grade requirements, as well as the need to assist them in their class assignments.



### **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 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:

Catechists will deal with behavior issues **immediately**. After two warnings, the Catechist will send the disruptive student to the Office of Faith Formation and his/her parent or guardian will be called.

### **Classrooms/Books/Concerns or Questions**

- ♦ **ABSOLUTELY NO** food or beverage of any kind is allowed in the classrooms.
- ♦ Students must respect the property in the classrooms and leave desks and chairs 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, grade and Catechist's name. Please remind students to bring their books with them each week (Part 2 of the Covenant Commitment).
- ♦ Parents/Guardians are always welcome to express their concerns or questions directly to Father ST at: [FatherSTS@gmail.com](mailto:FatherSTS@gmail.com) or 973-383-1985.

### **Cancellations/Emergency Closings**

If the Newton Public Schools are closed or have an early dismissal due to inclement weather, then Faith Formation classes will be canceled 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](http://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 ensuring that the Faith Formation Office always has the current telephone numbers on file of a parent or other designated adult who can be called in the case of an emergency.

## Family Emergency

If a family emergency arises necessitating your children to be dismissed early, we ask that a **parent/guardian first contact the Faith Formation Office at: 973-383-8413 or the Parish Center at: 973-383-1985.**

Please note that no student shall be dismissed early for any other reason.

## Illness

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

## Discipline/Behavior

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

- ◆ 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 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 to use their cell phone*). Additional electronic devices are also **not permitted** from the time they enter the building until they are picked up by their parent/guardian.

- ◆ Faithfully bring your children to Mass here at Saint Joseph Church on a regular 12 month basis.\*
- ◆ Bring your children to Faith Formation on a regular basis, prepared and on time for class.
- ◆ Faithfully and conscientiously support your parish community.\*

*\*The only acceptable way you may fulfill these obligations is by using your Offertory Envelopes (if you choose to use online giving, kindly mark the “Online Giver” box on your envelopes.) Unfortunately, we are not able to give you credit for cash or loose checks. If you are having financial difficulties, please bring this confidential matter to the attention of Father ST. Remember that no child will ever be turned away from our Faith Formation Program for their family’s inability to make financial contributions to the Parish.*

## Attendance

Students are expected to be present for each class unless illness or other serious reason prevents attendance. **Please call the Faith Formation Office at 973-383-8413 or email us at: [ffassistant@stjosephnewton.org](mailto:ffassistant@stjosephnewton.org).** 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 by telephone or email with any student who is absent to ascertain why they were absent. The Catechist will then assign the make-up work at the next class which is expected to be completed. We kindly ask that parents/guardians help their children complete this work.

## Student Records

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



## Sacramental Certificates

In order to complete their registration, all students entering the program must submit a copy of their Baptismal Certificate and, when applicable, also submit a record of sequential Faith Formation from their previous parish.

## Transfer of Records

If you transfer to another parish (making it necessary to leave our program), we ask that this request be placed in writing (which will automatically remove you from our parish census). When we receive a written request **from your new church**, our Office of Faith Formation will then forward the necessary information to the Faith Formation Office of your new parish. **We do not provide the records to the parents!** This transfer of information is made from parish to parish.

## ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

We ask all parents and guardians **PLEASE DO NOT PARK** on Jefferson Street or behind the school. Please park on **Elm Street** (located behind the church) and walk to the school by way of the pathway.

## WALKERS

Parents and Guardians, if you are not using our student drop off and pick up in the rear of the school, your children will be considered "WALKERS."

Because we are concerned with the safety of your children, we would like the parent of every child who walks home to please fill out the "PERMISSION TO WALK HOME FORM." This form allows your child to walk home without adult supervision.

**Please note, students in Grades 1-4 will not be allowed to walk home without a parent approved adult or older sibling.**

**Arrival:** All walkers must enter through the front lobby of the Community Center. Each child must check in with our volunteers in the front lobby.

**Dismissal:** Will take place through the front lobby of the Community Center. Parents and Guardians of WALKERS in Grades 1-4 must sign our "SIGN OUT SHEET" for us to release their child.

## REAR ENTRANCE VEHICLE DROP OFF AND PICKUP

**Arrival:** In order to avoid confusion and limit traffic problems, we ask that parents and guardians please drop off their child **behind the school** (where there will be adult supervision).

**Dismissal:** Children will be dismissed at the rear of the school with adult supervision. **Please tell your children to leave their classrooms as soon as they are called in order to avoid delays.**

***Under no circumstances will a student be released to anyone other than a parent/guardian (unless written permission has been received prior to the class date by the Office of Faith Formation).***