

St. Joan of Arc Parish
Religious Education Program
2025-2026



Parent/Student Handbook

820 Division St.



Lisle, IL. 60532



630 353-4528

www.sjalisle.org

Updated 9-07-2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter to Parents..... 3

General Information/Parish Mission Statement..... 4

Family Prayer..... 5

Family Participation..... 6

Philosophy/Goals..... 7

Registration Information..... 8

Policies..... 9-13

Religious Education Calendar..... 14-16



ST. JOAN OF ARC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
Parent/Student Handbook
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Dear Parent(s),

Welcome! This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for parents/guardians, catechists and students in St. Joan of Arc Religious Education Program.

Our Program is a vital part of the religious education of your child. However, it is intended to supplement the religious formation you are already giving your child at home as your child's first catechist, and the experience of joining with our parish community for the celebration of the Mass and sacraments.

Consistent with this approach, this handbook describes our curriculum and administrative policies. It is our hope that it will give you an overview and understanding of our program.

The catechists who will be working with your child are all volunteers. We thank them for their dedication. They are the heart of our program. They are here to help your child learn and grow in faith and love of God. In order for them to be effective in their ministry they are in need of your commitment and support. We ask you are parents to:

- Stress the importance of learning our faith and take an interest in what is being done in the Religious Education classroom.
- Help your child to actively practice their faith by weekly attendance at Sunday Mass and by daily prayer in the home.
- Accept primary responsibility for the faith formation of your child. RE classes support what is happening in the home to nurture the faith growth of your child.
- Review with your child the prayers he/she is to learn for the class and go over the chapter in the textbook.
- Encourage your child to be attentive in class.

Please take the time to read and go over this material. Also, complete and return the necessary forms found in the welcome packet. Thank you very much!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Julie Dillenburg
Director of Religious Education

GENERAL INFORMATION

PASTOR:

Rev. Gabriel Baltes, O.S.B.

DIRECTOR OF

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Miss Julie Dillenburg
jdillenburg@sjalisle.org

353-4550

To report your child/ren's absence, please call the Religious Education Office at 630-353-4550 or email Miss Dillenburg at jdillenburg@sjalisle.org.

Religious Education classes are offered on Sunday mornings from 10:45 am until 12:00 pm, immediately following the 9:30 am Mass.

Parish Mission Statement:

Empowered by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Sacramental life of the church, we strive to love God and one another through prayer, education and service.

A FAMILY PRAYER

Children

Praise be to God
Praise be to God
Praise be to God
Praise be to God

Help us, Lord Jesus
Help us, Lord Jesus
Help us, Lord Jesus
Help us, Lord Jesus

Come, Holy Spirit
Come, Holy Spirit
Come, Holy Spirit
Come, Holy Spirit

Be with us, God
Be with us, God
Be with us, God
Be with us, God

Hear us, Lord Jesus
Hear us, Lord Jesus
Hear us, Lord Jesus
Hear us, Lord Jesus

Spirit, we praise you
Spirit, we praise you
Spirit, we praise you
Spirit we praise you

Adults

who made us a family.
for the love that we share.
for sending us Jesus.
for teaching us to care.

fill our lives with your Spirit.
teach us how to forgive.
grant us wisdom and patience.
in your grace may we live.

fill our lives with your gifts.
help us serve other's needs.
teach us faith, hope, and love.
guide our thought and our deeds.

we ask Mary to help us.
we look to Joseph for aid.
may we respect one another.
may our hope never fade.

watch over our family.
help our faith to grow strong.
come and dwell in our hearts.
to you we belong.

you invite us to know you.
may we walk in your light.
may we find you in all things.
all day and all night.



FAMILY PARTICIPATION

At the very heart of your child's religious formation are you, the parents. Parents are the primary religious educators of their children through their lives and examples every day. Your teaching, support, example, attitude, and the values you impart are fundamental to your child.

As Christian parents, you are asked to support our Religious Education program in the following ways:

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and go to Confession frequently (see bulletin or website for times). By demonstrating to your children your love for God and need for His mercy they will learn by your example.
2. Discuss the Sunday readings with your children before/after attending Mass and help them complete the Mass activities in your weekly email newsletter. This will help them to pay attention and understand the Liturgy better. .
3. Help your child learn how to pray by praying regularly with them.
4. Please see that your children attend all scheduled RE classes. See Calendar.
5. Show interest in what is happening in your child's class by sitting down with them at home to review the lessons, discuss them, and share with your family! Use the parent resources provided and complete the activities suggested with your children.
6. Help your children be conscientious about any homework given to them each week.
7. Explore the Gospel Weeklies website www.pflaumweeklies.com for fun and engaging family activities and more information on the weekly lessons.
8. Foster an attitude of respect and cooperation within your child for Religious Education and also for the catechists and assistants who come to share their faith.
9. Emails and letters to parents will be sent home periodically. Please read them as they contain important information and upcoming events. Please read all your emails. Emails will be sent to the address provided on registration forms. Email is our preferred method of bulk communication.
10. Volunteer to be: Catechist, Class Helper, Substitute, Office Helper, Hall Monitor, etc.
11. Actively participate in the sacramental preparation of your child. Attendance at parents' sacramental meetings is vital and at least one parent whose child will be receiving a sacrament is required to attend the sacramental preparation sessions.
12. **PLEASE** be sure that you, along with your children, commit to memory the catechist's name and room number assigned to your children. You are encouraged to communicate with your child's catechist either by visiting after class in the gym or contacting him/her through the Religious Education Office or family portal.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Religious Education Program of St. Joan of Arc is based on three key principles:

1. Religious Education is a life-long process of entering into a personal relationship with God and getting to know him more intimately. We strive to help the children recognize God's unconditional love, compassion, and forgiveness.
2. Religious Education has a threefold mission:
 - a. Through the Word of God, in study and prayer of both the Old and New Testament, the children will hear the Good News of Salvation. They will gain a better understanding of Scripture, learn how to apply it in their lives, and be able to proclaim the Good News to others.
 - b. To promote Worship through prayer and an appreciation and growth in the love of the liturgy, the children will realize that worship is central to our lives as Catholics.
 - c. In Service to the church, community, and at home, the children will learn that helping others, especially those who are elderly, poor, and marginalized, are at the heart of living a life in Christ.
3. In providing doctrinal, moral, liturgical enrichment, as well as formation in the sacramental life and values of the church, we seek to make Disciples of Christ, whereby the children will give witness to Christ by leading lives of holiness.

GOALS

The Religious Education Program will strive to:

1. Develop a sense of personal worth as children of God, made in His image and likeness.
2. Develop a sense of community where relationships may be formed and they can genuinely grow in friendship, trust, and prayer.
3. Teach what Jesus taught by remaining faithful to the principle elements of the Christian message for Catechesis and the Church and assisting families to understand:
 - a. the Life of Jesus
 - b. the Mass
 - c. the Mystery of the Holy Trinity
 - d. the Saints
 - e. the Story of Salvation
 - f. the three sources of Divine Revelation
 - g. the Catechism
 - h. the Sacraments and Grace
4. Assist students in understanding and remembering:
 - a. the traditional prayers & Laws of the Church
 - b. the Beatitudes
 - c. the Ten Commandments
5. Provide students with experiences of Christian Community:
 - a. to celebrate together the principle events of the liturgical year.
 - b. to promote participation in personal prayers and communal worship.
6. Guide students into commitments of Christian Service:
 - a. in doing service projects.
 - b. to activate Christian concern for issues of life, truth, peace, and justice.

REGISTRATION

Parents are asked to register their children for classes each year. To eliminate the possibility of a student not having materials or a teacher for the first class, we ask for everyone's help and cooperation by reregistering for the next year by the last class of the previous school year. We ask new families to register before the end of June.

Registration forms are online forms linked to our website. **Upon registration, a copy of the baptismal certificate is required for children who were not baptized here at St. Joan of Arc.** The registration forms, medical release form, and baptismal certificate must be on file to complete the registration process.

2025-2026 TUITION & FEES

1 child	\$275.00
2 children	\$375.00
3 or more children	\$425.00
Confirmation Prep.	\$ 50.00
Communion Prep.	\$ 50.00

The general fees cover the costs of supplies, catechists' training and manuals, DVD's, and grade level catechetical materials. No child will be excluded from the program due to genuine financial difficulty. Any family unable to pay tuition should contact the director of Religious Education.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is expected. **It is recommended that parents schedule all extracurricular activities at times not conflicting with religion class.** In the event of an emergency or illness parents are asked to **call the RE office at 630-353-4550 to inform us of your child/ren's absence.** As mandated by the diocese, we are required to call home if a child is not reported absent and is not present for class. In the event the student misses four classes, parents will be contacted in writing; five absences will necessitate a parent conference. Make-up work under the direction of the parent is required for each absence. It is the parent's responsibility to call the catechist to arrange for make-up work and ensure that the work is turned in the following week. Those in 8th grade will need to contact the RE Director to schedule a time to make up the videos they missed. In the event that a student is absent more than five times for reasons which are absolutely necessary, the director and parents can meet to plan a make-up program. This make-up program may make it possible for the student to continue to the next grade.

TARDIES

Children are expected not only to attend all sessions, but also to be on time. The first 15 to 20 minutes of a class are key to the content input. Tardiness is detrimental to a good learning experience and disrupts the concentration of the entire group. If children are more than 5 minutes late for class, they must enter through **DOOR #7** off the school parking lot where an Office Helper will ask for a note from the parent explaining the tardiness. The child will then be sent to the classroom with an Office Tardy Slip.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

1. **DROP OFF** -Parents should park in the church parking lot and enter the church narthex. After Mass parents should escort their children to the gym using the LINK that connects the church to the school. We will have opening announcements in the gym after which our catechists will bring the students to their classrooms and attendance will be taken there.
2. **PICK UP** – Parents should park in the school South parking lot and enter the building through the gym lobby doors. At the end of class children will be dismissed from the classrooms and brought back to the gym where they will sit with their classes. Parents may pick their children up there from their catechist.

Please discuss your procedure as a family before classes begin.

EARLY DISMISSAL

A student is expected to attend the entire class. Early dismissals are discouraged, as they are disruptive to the class. If for some reason the student must leave early, please inform both the catechist and RE Office indicating the time your child/ren are to be released. Please use **DOOR #7** when arriving to pick your children up early. **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED FROM THE CLASS to you. They must be called down to the RE Office for release where you can sign your child out.**

DELAYED PARENTS

We expect children to be picked up promptly after class. If a parent is delayed in picking up their child, for the safety of the child, he/she will wait in the vestibule outside the school gym. The parent will need to come inside for the child.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline is integral for it promotes within each child the development of a solid system of moral values. Good discipline is based on the fundamental Christian principles of thoughtfulness, responsibility, and respect toward others. So that all children, parents, and RE staff members are aware of the basic directives of the St. Joan of Arc Religious Education Program, these are the regulations and policies that we expect the children to follow:

Rules and Regulations:

1. Respect and obey catechists, assistants, and other adults; show respect to classmates.
2. Bring textbooks, folders, Bibles, and other required materials to each class.
3. Enter and exit school in an orderly fashion.
4. The catechist must be present in the classroom for the student to enter. Take your assigned place in the classroom.
5. Stand for the beginning and ending prayers and pray reverently.
6. Raise your hand and wait for permission before speaking during class.
7. Stay in your seat unless you have permission to leave.
8. All homework is to be completed on time and done to the best of the child's ability.
9. All administered tests and progress reports are to be signed and returned to catechists on time.
10. Modesty of dress is to be adhered to at all times, especially because of church visitations.
11. Do not touch any books or supplies in the desk you are using. Damaging school property or private property on school premises is regarded as a serious offense. Do not touch the property of your classmates.
12. Swearing/obscenity in any oral, visual, or written form is forbidden.
13. No food, gum, candy, electronic toys, etc., are allowed in class.
14. Weapons of any kind are not permitted on campus at any time.
15. Cell phone use is prohibited during class, unless approved by your catechist. Any cell phone that rings, is used as a camera, or used to text message is to be claimed by the catechist.
16. The need to use the washroom should be taken care of before children arrive for RE classes. Using the washroom during classes should only be done if absolutely necessary. If a medical situation exists where a child needs to use the washroom more frequently, please inform both the catechist and the Religious Education Office at the beginning of the program year.
17. Snowball/ice throwing during winter months is not permitted.
18. Coats and hats are not to be worn during class.
19. Guests of students are welcome and encouraged! However, arrangements must be made with the office in advance of the visit.

Unacceptable behavior will first be handled at the catechist level and may include a parent phone call. If the problem persists, the student will meet with the director. In the event the student sees the director a second time, a parent conference will be requested. Serious misconduct will result in a parent conference with the Pastor, which must take place before the student returns to class.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The catechists send Progress Reports home in January (first semester) and on the last day of classes (second semester). Progress is determined in the following areas: Demonstrates an Excitement about the Faith, Attention and Participation, Behavior, Completion of Activities, Knowledge of Prayers and Catholic Teachings, and Comprehension of Faith Concepts.

CHURCH REVERENCE

“Lifting up the mind toward God is an expression of our adoration of God: prayer of praise and thanksgiving, intercession, and petition. Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God’s commandments” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2098).

Because prayer is so essential to our relationship with God, we should always strive to make our prayer environment quiet, focused, and reverent, wherever it may be. Nowhere is this more important than the environment we create for prayer in Church.

Whether our children are in Church for classroom visits, practices, Prayer Services, Stations of the Cross, Confession, or the Eucharistic Liturgy, we expect the best from them, in terms of appropriate Church behavior and dress, at all times. It is equally important as partner catechists that we set the best of examples for them of prayerful reverence, especially in Church.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

Class cancellation due to inclement weather will be posted to Chicagoland's Emergency Closing Center, which broadcasts on WGN Radio 720 AM, WBBM Radio 780 AM, CBS Channel 2, NBC Ch. 5, ABC Ch. 7, WGN Ch. 9, WFLD FOX Ch. 32, and CLTV Cable. We will also use REMIND which is a texting service. Please be sure to approve the REMIND text when it comes to you so that you can receive our texts. They will only be sent in case of an emergency or for the reminder of an important event.

SACRAMENTS

Sacraments are sacred moments in a person's life as he/she encounters Jesus Christ. Preparation for the Sacraments are joint efforts on the part of the child, the parents, and the catechist. Class time, parent meetings, parent participation, retreats, and celebration experiences are all necessary ingredients for a meaningful initiation into these sacramental experiences. Classes alone for children are not sufficient in themselves for proper preparation.

Sacraments are usually celebrated in:

	Grade 2 First Reconciliation and First Eucharist
	Grade 8 Confirmation

First Reconciliation preparation begins in grade one and is further developed in grade two. Parental participation and attendance at the meetings are an expectation of the sacramental preparation process. The sacramental celebration is held in January if the parents, in conjunction with the pastor and director, deem the child ready.

First Eucharist preparation begins in grade one and is further developed in grade two. Attendance at the retreat is a required part of the child's preparation. Parental participation and attendance at the meetings is an expectation of the sacramental preparation process. The celebration of this sacrament usually takes place the first Sunday in May when the parents, in conjunction with the pastor and director, deem the child ready.

Preparation for the initial reception of Sacrament(s) by children in grades three through eight will be arranged, and attendance in our tutoring program is required.

Confirmation preparation begins in grade seven (Year I) and continues through grade eight (Year II). The candidate must have completed two consecutive years of Religious Education before they can be confirmed. If they have not taken Year I they will be required to do so. Parents and Candidates attend a meeting to go over what is expected of them.

There must be a desire and commitment to the requirements of the preparation programs and the Catholic faith on the part of the children and families preparing to receive sacraments

Sacrament calendars will be provided at the sacrament parent meetings listing all known and required dates for which students and families must attend.

STUDENT MATERIALS

Children in the program will be given folders in which they can carry their papers, homework, letters home, etc. **Please check their folders weekly** and remove papers. We are using multiple curriculums to meet the needs of students and families. **EVERY NEW CHILD in grades 1 – 8 will be given a Bible** and should bring it to every class. Your child will also have a textbook. This must also be brought to class every week. Students who lose their materials may purchase replacements from the Religious Education Office.

CONTINUITY

Parents are reminded that their child/ren should be enrolled in the Religious Education Program the entire nine years. Acceptance into the Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation Programs is based upon regular attendance of the student in the Religious Education Program. If a child misses a year of formation, extra catch-up classes will be required.

EXPECTATIONS

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to inform the Director of Religious Education of a change in status of the marital situation, a custodial situation, the child's health, or a child's special needs. Also, please inform our office if there should be a change in contact information: home phone number, work phone, cell phone, address, email, etc.

FIRST AID

Minor injuries with cleaning and Band-Aids. The Religious Education Office has available to all catechists in a convenient location a supply of: disinfectant, Band-Aids, and rubber gloves. If there is a serious injury, we will call 911 and notify parents immediately.

MEDICATIONS

Except in extraordinary circumstances, which must be approved by the Director of Religious Education, personnel will not maintain, administer or supervise the taking of medication.

SECURITY

In order to safeguard the well-being of our children during class time, our building doors will be locked at the beginning of each class. Any student coming late or person having business in the school building during these hours are asked to come to the Religious Education desk at Door #7 to state his/her business and sign in. Any adults that are to remain in the building during classes are required to have participated in the Protecting God's Children program and be compliant with all Diocesan requirements.

EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

On the night before He died, Jesus directed us to remember Him by celebrating the Eucharist. It is the most important thing He told us to do. It is a GREAT blessing to be Catholic, which the God of the universe should humble Himself and take on the form of bread and wine, so to be intimately united to us. The Eucharist is the GREATEST gift we will ever receive! What a tremendous grace that we are called to share in this profound mystery of the Eucharistic meal, "the wedding feast of the lamb" (Rev. 19:9).

There is NOTHING more important in our whole life that we will ever do than go to Mass. God is so madly in love with us and longs to be with each one of us. We should have a great desire to want to attend Mass on Sunday, and as often as we can, to be so closely united to Our Lord. Mass is essential to coming to know God and growing in our relationship with Him. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, show by example their commitment to weekly participation in the Sunday Eucharist. May we help our children grow in love of God and the Eucharist by attending Mass on Sunday as a family?

SERVICE

Service is incorporated at every grade level. Every family is invited to complete two family service projects per year. These projects are included in our yearly calendar (St. Nicholas Outreach and St. Joseph Table). Grades K-6 are encouraged to participate in class service projects. Grades 7 and 8 will be required to determine how they will serve their community as part of their Confirmation requirements.

