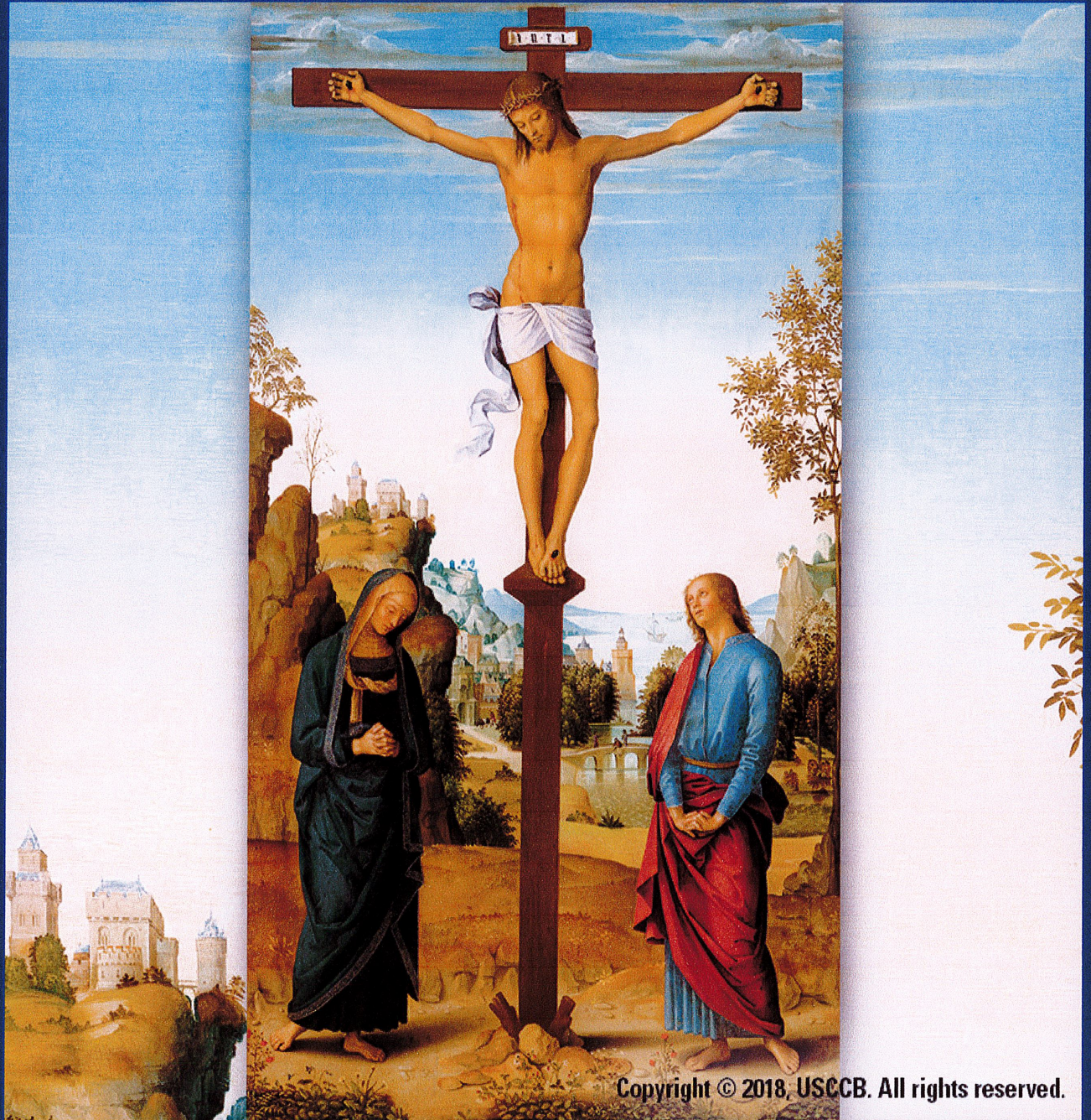


**Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church
Religious Education**



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Parent - Student Handbook

Dear Families,

On behalf of the Parish staff, we welcome you and your children to our Religious Education program! Our program is an extension and support of the Faith practices established in your home. Our mission is to expound upon our Catholic teachings which you have instilled at home, while you demonstrate leadership within the Parish community. Living the example of Christ is what we're all called to do!

The textbook series we utilize is Faith and Life by Ignatius Press. Our online program, My Catholic Faith Delivered, contains the same material, so that no matter whether in class, or in the comfort of your own home, your child is receiving a concise, yet thorough education in the Catholic Faith.

Those students utilizing the online option will be receiving a workbook to accompany their studies, which **MUST** be turned in at the completion of the online course. In addition, the online certificate will become printable once your child has completed the program. Your online login and password will be sent to you within the first few weeks of October.

Those students attending class, especially those in Sacramental years, will be given their textbooks and workbooks the first day of classes. It is important to note that there is a retreat required prior to the reception of a Sacrament. Because Sacramental years are of such great importance, we offer only in-class instruction with our terrific team of catechists, who will ensure your child(ren)'s readiness for reception of the Sacraments.

The Parish staff and I wish to emphasize the absolute importance and necessity of honoring and living the Precepts of the Faith. The very first Precept is to attend Mass weekly and on all holy days of obligation. It confuses children when they are told that they must attend CCD, but rarely attend Mass. They are unable to make the connections to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. We are told in the Catechism of the Catholic Church that "the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life". We can only receive these great graces by attending Mass and frequenting Communion in a state of Grace. On the day of your child(ren)'s baptism, you promised God you would raise your child in the Catholic Faith. This IS our Faith. We are here to help and encourage you to do that!

The attached handbook includes all policies and procedures. Should you have any questions at any time, please do not hesitate to reach out to me! May God bless us in our endeavors to lead our children to Him!

Pax Christi,



Mrs. Lauren Walters
Coordinator of Religious Education

Saint John the Baptist Religious Education Program Policies and Procedures

OBJECTIVE: To assist the parents in developing and strengthening their children's awareness of God in their everyday lives. We are committed to proclaiming the mysteries of the Catholic Faith, fostering community, encouraging worship and prayer, and motivating to service to others.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Religious Education Office Contact

Office Email: sjbRelEd@optimum.net

Office Phone: (609)259-3586

Coordinator of Religious Education: Mrs. Lauren Walters

Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Donna Graham

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Families must be registered, active members at Saint John the Baptist Parish to participate in the Religious Education Program.
2. A Baptismal certificate is required for all new students.
3. Online registration is available annually and will close when classes are filled.
4. If a student is transferring into our program, a history of any previous formal religious education must be provided before being placed in a grade.
5. All students must be registered before classes begin. Children must re-register every year. Registration and payment is now completed on-line.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Our in-class program offers weekly classes in the Religious Education Building. The yearly calendar is available on our website.

Attendance: It is required that your child attend class on a regular basis. A child who misses more than three classes, without a doctor's note, may be asked to repeat the year's curriculum or to complete a home-study program over the summer.

Arrival: Punctuality is required and expected. Habitual tardiness affects student learning and disrupts the class for other students. Your child must check into the office when he/she arrives late. The ideal time to arrive to class is 5 to 10 minutes before the scheduled start time, no earlier, as there may not be sufficient supervision. The safety of your children is of utmost importance. For this reason, students will not be permitted into the building prior to 10 minutes to the start of class. Any parent dropping their child off must stay with their child outside until the building is unlocked.

Dismissal: Parents are required to pick up their children at the rear doors, away from the front entrance of the Religious Education building, both to and from class. Your child will not be released until we see you out of your vehicle. Likewise, children are not permitted in unlit areas, nor the parking lot, to ensure their safety. If your child will be dismissed to someone other than the parent, a written note is required.

Early Dismissal: Please keep other appointments and obligations (which may interfere with attendance of the 75 minutes of instruction) to a minimum. We do recognize that there may be exceptions when unexpected circumstances require the need for your child to be dismissed early from class. Please follow early dismissal procedures to ensure the safety and security of your child:

1. Written notification should be sent to your child's catechist or the office about any need for your child to be dismissed from class early. In an emergency situation, written notification would not be expected.
2. For all early dismissals, please come to the Religious Education office upon arriving to pick up your child.

Emergency Closings: If the Allentown and Upper Freehold Regional School District schools are closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, our Religious Education program will be closed as well. Check the St. John the Baptist Parish website.

Report Cards: Report cards will be distributed midyear and at the end of the program. They will report attendance, conduct, completion of assignments, understanding of content, class participation, knowledge of the most necessary prayers and the Catechism. Parents are asked to review the report card and discuss it with their child. Comments or questions are welcome. Parents must sign and return the report card at the end of the first period. Please review any comments or instructions for your child.

Testing: Tests are given periodically to help the catechist assess your child's understanding. Any take-home tests are open-book tests, in which a child can use their book to find the appropriate answer.

Learning Differences: If your child has an IEP or 504 plan, we welcome your help in assisting your child to learn the Faith. Please call our office to set up an appointment, so that we can develop a plan.

Food policy: The Religious Education building is a food free building. No food will be eaten or distributed to children during any classes for the safety of students with food allergies.

Dress code: Students should not wear clothing that may create a distraction. The following articles

of clothing are prohibited in the program. Suggestive clothing, including but not limited to:

- Bare midriff, lower riding pants exposing abdomen or underwear, tight fitting or transparent clothes.
- Short skirts or shorts that are overly short and revealing.
- Hats, caps, any head covering.
- Footwear such as slippers, cleats, spikes.
- Clothing that may contain inflammatory, offensive/obscene pictures or words.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

Expectations:

Be punctual.

Be prepared by bringing books and assignments for class.

Be cooperative and participate in all sessions and activities to the best of their ability.

Demonstrate self-control and dignity. Do not speak out of turn. Listen attentively.

Remain seated during lessons.

Must share the contents of their Homework Folder with their parents/guardians every week.

Dress appropriately.

Attend and participate in Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation

Rules:

- Being disrespectful to teachers, classroom assistants, other staff members, and fellow students will not be tolerated.
- Students are to show respect for the Religious Education building, classrooms, and church property.
- Name-calling, and/or the use of profane or foul language are strictly forbidden.
- Pushing, fighting, or other aggressive behavior will not be tolerated.
- Eating food, gum or candy in the Religious Education building is not allowed. The classrooms are to be food-free.
- Cell phone usage during class is not permitted. Phones will be confiscated and returned to parents through the office.
- Distracting toys and electronic devices such as iPods are not allowed in the building.

Discipline: All students are expected to maintain dignity and decorum as outlined above. Repeated disruptive behavior or flagrant disrespect to catechists, students, objects, or elements of the Faith will result in a parent meeting with our Pastor and Coordinator. Removal from class to the online program could follow.

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Living good examples of following the Commandments of God and the Church, particularly in attending weekly Sunday Mass and receiving the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. Remember your example is what teaches your children what it means to live as a Catholic.
- Ensuring that your children attend all scheduled religion classes on time and are prepared to learn.
- Be active in the Sacramental preparation of your children. Attending parent meetings, practices, etc.
- Assist your children in learning their prayers. Make a habit of reciting prayers in the evening before bed, nightly.
- Complete weekly reading and written assignments with your child. Show interest in what they are learning in class.
- Foster an attitude of respect for Religious Education by making it a priority in your child's life.
- Cooperate with staff when enforcing discipline matters.
- Parents are required to sign a form stating they have read the rules and regulations outlined in this handbook and they agree to abide by those rules.

LOST AND FOUND: Please label your child's clothes, such as sweaters, hats, coats, and gloves. Our program cannot assume responsibility for lost or damaged articles; therefore it is recommended that your child does not bring any valuable articles to class. All unclaimed items will be donated to the poor or disposed of at the end of the year.

TEXTBOOKS: The textbook must be returned to the teacher at the end of the program year. The activity book is for your child to keep.

If a student loses his/her book, or if the text book is seriously damaged, the student's family will be responsible for the cost of a replacement book, which is \$25.00. Please be responsible with program books to avoid this fee.

HOME ASSIGNMENTS FOR FAITH FORMATION: Every family is certainly busy and moving in all directions in this day and age. However, that does not excuse any of us from the commission that Jesus gave us to pass on the Catholic Faith and spread the Good News. Since parents are their child's first teacher of the Faith, we ask that you make time at home to do the following in preparation for each week's class:

- Please refer to your child's folder for the weekly assignment.
- Check your child's folder for additional handouts and notices.
- Read the assigned chapter to/with your child regardless of his/her age. *
- Ensure that your child understands the "Words to Know" and the basic concept of the chapter through simple discussion.
- Check that your child has completed the assigned workbook pages, quiz or worksheets.
- Practice the prayers your child is learning with him/her.

*Please note that the textbooks are purposely written a grade level ahead. Reading with an adult will allow the child to hear the richer language instead of just struggling to decode the words. Although older students are able to read the words, they do not always comprehend their meaning. That is why we recommend that all students be read to or read with an adult at home in preparation for class time.

Good Saint Joseph, patron of the Domestic Church, Pray for us!

FIRST CONFESSION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:

The parents of second year students will help prepare their children for these Sacraments with home instruction in addition to the formal weekly class time. To be eligible for these sacraments, children must attend classes for one full year before entering the Sacrament year, attend weekly Mass and know the required prayers.

We will hold student and parent retreats to help you to prepare your children for the celebration of the Sacraments. It is imperative that you attend. The Sacrament of Confession will be administered during the Parish Penance Service in Advent. The date for the First Holy Communion Masses is the first Saturday in May.

CONFIRMATION:

This Sacrament is bestowed upon those who have been baptized, received the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion, have been instructed in the Catholic Faith, and have demonstrated a capacity and willingness to participate in the life of the Church. The date of the Confirmation ceremonies will be announced in October. Attendance at the retreat is mandatory for all Confirmandi and a sponsor/parent. All Confirmandi must pass a final examination, both written and oral in order to fully demonstrate their knowledge of and commitment to keeping the Catholic faith.

