

St. Joseph - Bonne Terre Parish School of Religion Family Handbook

Mission of St. Joseph PSR

The mission of St. Joseph Parish School of Religion is to assist parents, as the first and primary educators of their children, in faith, moral and spiritual formation, by providing formal instruction in a classroom setting

Goals of St. Joseph PSR

- To assist parents in their primary roles as educators of their children.
- To support students' development of a vibrant, intimate relationship with God.
- To teach Roman Catholic Doctrine and traditions of the Church.
- To provide opportunities for friendship and service within the family, faith community, and society.

**St. Joseph – Bonne Terre
Parish School of Religion
15 St. Joseph Street
Bonne Terre, MO 63628
573-358-2112**

PSR Admission Requirements

Parents seeking to enroll their children in St. Joseph Parish School of Religion must be active members of St. Joseph Church* and assume their primary right and duty to educate their children in the practice of faith. In the rite of the Sacrament of Baptism, parents receive the following call from God to evangelize their children:

You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training her (him) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring her (him) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor...You will be the first teachers of your child in the ways of the faith. May you be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what you say or do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Aware, then, of the dignity of this holy parental call, and with a reverent awe for that responsibility you are asked to affirm the following Statement of Faith.

I commit myself to be, in word and example, the first and best teacher of my child(ren) in the faith. Practically, this means I will:

- Understand that the authentic teachings of Jesus as taught by the Catholic Church will be part of my child's education and formation;
- To the best of my ability respect the teachings of the Church and help my children respect the Church and its teachings;
- Regularly participate in the Sunday Eucharist with my family
- Include prayer in my daily life and form my children in the faith.
- Commit to speak frequently with my children about God and to include prayer in our daily home life;
- Participate in and cooperate with the School or Parish School of Religion in programs that enable me as a parent to take an active role in the religious education of my children, including sacramental preparation for my children;
- Support the moral and social doctrine of the Catholic Church to ensure consistency between home and school;
- Teach my children by word and example to have a love and concern for the needs of others;
- Meet my financial responsibilities in supporting the Parish School of Religion and practice stewardship in support of the school and parish.

** Parishioners of other parishes seeking to register students in the St. Joseph PSR program may be permitted with special permission by both the St. Joseph's pastor, home parish pastor, and a fee of \$100 per child.*

All parents enrolling students in PSR will provide the following:

- Completed PSR registration form.
- When applicable, a copy of current IEP or 504 plan, which will be kept confidential.
- When applicable, a copy of any custodial agreement, which will be kept confidential.
- Registration fee paid in full or prior arrangements made with pastor.
- An official Baptismal certificate for any child not baptized at St. Joseph - Bonne Terre. No registration is complete until this copy is presented.

New Students

Kindergarten students must be 5 years of age prior to August 1. New students coming into PSR at 2nd grade level or higher must show proof of prior religious education before being placed in their grade level. As needed, home study and/or alternate grade placement will be provided to help bring the student to grade level. A copy of the child's sacramental certificates are required if the sacraments were not made at St. Joseph in Bonne Terre.

Fees

The fees for PSR are \$50.00 per family. The fees are to accompany the registration form or may be paid on the first night of PSR. However, no child shall be denied PSR enrollment because of finances. A family that wants to arrange a payment plan should contact the Pastor; all conversations and decisions are held in confidence.

Sacramental Preparation

The sacraments of **Reconciliation** and **Eucharist** are normally received by children in the second grade. Children must have an adequate understanding, preparation, and attitude regarding the sacraments. Normally this means that the child has had at least one year of formal training in a religious education program prior to the year the sacraments are to be received. Should a child begin PSR in the second grade, students are placed in the first grade program. This is not meant to be a punishment, but to help the child best be prepared to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

The sacrament of **Confirmation** is received in the spring by children who have completed or are in the process of completing the eighth grade. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation begins the year prior to receiving the sacrament and requires that students have had acceptable attendance in all eight years of PSR classes. In the event that a child enters the parish school without formal religious training after First Communion, an evaluation will be made to assess readiness and determine an individual sacramental preparation plan, as needed. St. Joseph's Parish School or Religion will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in the spring of 2018.

As Catholics, Mass is the central prayer and our primary form of worship. Being a Christian, as taught from the earliest days of Christianity, isn't a private matter. We are called to engage in public and communal worship in the Sunday Eucharist. For this reason, students enrolled in either of the Sacramental Preparation Programs are required to turn in Sacramental Signature Cards. These cards should be signed after Saturday evening or Sunday Mass by Fr. Bill, Deacon Mark, or clergy from the Mass your family attended. These cards will be passed out monthly beginning with the first PSR class in September and should be turned in monthly.

Regular attendance and participation in all activities are necessary for reception of the sacraments as well as additional support at home. For this reason, at least one parent is required to attend parent meetings regarding sacraments.

Report Cards

.Report Cards are given in the sincere hope that they will help parents guide and encourage their child in learning and valuing the faith. While a child's relationship with God cannot be graded in any way, objective judgments can be made about one's knowledge and effort. A Report Card will be sent home with students three times during the PSR year as indicate on the calendar providing a report on your child's understanding of material, attention/participation in class, assignments, and behavior . If you have concerns about your child's progress, the catechist will be available to answer any questions.

Attendance

Students are expected to be in the auditorium for prayer at 6:30 pm. Students arriving after 6:30 pm are considered tardy.

Students are expected to attend all classes and scheduled activities. For the health and benefit of all, please do not send students who are ill. If a student is absent, parents should contact the catechist for information and assignments missed prior to the next class period.

Parents of students missing more than five (5) classes and/or not completing class assignments will be asked to meet with one or more of the following: teachers, PSR Coordinator, deacon, and/or pastor to determine if the student has gained the knowledge necessary to be successful in the next level of instruction, or would benefit from an alternative educational plan. (There may be just cause for excessive absences due to certain illnesses, hospitalization, and parent custody issues. These issues need to be brought to the attention of the PSR Coordinator as soon as possible.)

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

Supervision of children begins at 6:15pm. To ensure the safety of students, please do not drop students off before this time. Students should go directly to the auditorium upon arrival to wait for PSR to begin. Parents are encouraged to accompany their child to the auditorium and participate in the PSR opening prayer.

For the safety of our students, the doors to the St. Joseph Community Center will be locked promptly at 6:30 pm, and will be unlocked again at 7:45 for dismissal. If for some reason your child arrives late please ring the bell and wait with him or her until the door is answered.

PSR will be dismissed at 7:45. Parents may pick up students from the St. Joseph Community Center Auditorium. Students must be picked up in a timely manner.

Medical Issues

No medication will be given/taken during PSR and no medication shall be brought to the classroom.

In case of student accidents, injuries or illness occurring on the parish property during PSR, the Catechist/PSR Coordinator shall contact the parents to determine the proper response and action.

Emergency Drills

For the safety of all children in the PSR there will be emergency preparedness drills for fire, tornado, earthquake, reverse evacuation and intruder during the year. Procedures for these drills are the same as would take place during a true emergency. You may request a copy of these procedures by contacting the PSR Coordinator.

Participation and Behavior

Homework may be given to extend lessons, and increase understanding. When homework is given, it is expected that it will be complete, presentable, and on time. Parents are encouraged to speak with their child about any homework he or she may have.

A positive and effective learning atmosphere is necessary. Students are expected to be attentive and participate fully during PSR classes and activities, to the best of their ability. Teachers will set clear expectations of respectful behavior which include the following:

- Coming to class with a positive attitude and desire to learn about God and the message he wants all of us to hear.
- Being sensitive and respectful of the feelings and ideas expressed by others.
- Attentively listening to the person speaking.
- Properly caring for parish property and the property of others.
- Refrain from bringing items not required during the course of PSR including: food, gum, beverages, toys, and electronic devices (cell phones may be brought at parents' discretion, but must be turned off)

The following steps will be taken, as needed, in the event a student does not exhibit behavior that supports the learning environment for all:

- A verbal warning.
- If the disruption continues, the student will be sent to the office to discuss the behavior with the PSR Coordinator.
- A note will be sent home to parents if the disruption continues.
- The student and parent will conference with one or more of the following: teachers, PSR Coordinator, deacon, and/or pastor, in an effort to resolve ongoing disruptive behavior.

* If the behavior is severe in nature, the student will be removed from the class or activity and parents will be called.

PSR Cancellation

In the event classes are canceled due to inclement weather, announcements will be made on KTJJ 99.8 FM and KREI 800 AM radio and parents may also receive the information through the www.remind.com contact system. Information regarding Remind.com will be sent home along with log-in information when classes begin. *Often when it is necessary to cancel school during the day, it is safe to hold class in the evening*

Classroom Visitors

Children are allowed to occasionally bring visitors to class at the discretion of their teacher. Permission must be obtained from their teacher at least one day in advance of the visit. Permission may be denied if class activities and/or resources are not conducive to visitors on the day requested; e.g. testing, guest speaker, substitute teacher, etc. The teacher will inform the CRE of visitors in the classroom.

Protecting God's Children

The national sexual-abuse prevention program "Protecting God's Children" was adopted by the Archdiocese of St. Louis in November 2002 and is provided at no cost to parishes, schools, and archdiocesan agencies. All archdiocesan employees and volunteers who work with children on a regular basis are mandated to attend a presentation of the program. Priests in the archdiocese also participate in the program.

Safe Touch

As a caring Catholic community and as part of our ongoing commitment to provide a safe and healthy environment for our children, the Archdiocesan Child Safety Committee has developed a school-based curriculum for grades K-8 that contains practical, helpful information to help children protect themselves from dangers that exist today. The objective of this curriculum, entitled Safe Touch is to teach our children self-protection skills. Children will learn body safety rules in an age-appropriate and non-threatening manner. This curriculum will be presented by a trained individual. It will consist of one class period. The materials are available for parents to preview in the PSR office.

God's Own Making

Parents are the primary educators of their children in human sexuality. Parents seek the assistance of the elementary school and parish schools of religion to support them in this role. Therefore, schools and parish schools of religion support the parents by incorporating within their regular religion curriculum a chastity education program approved for the Archdiocese of St. Louis, which emphasizes the moral teaching of the Church. The only chastity education series approved for use in the parish schools of religion is God's Own Making, originally written by the Archdiocese of St. Louis and now published by the Wm. H. Sadlier Publishing Company. God's Own Making contains lessons for grades four through eight. The lessons are centered on three themes: Respect for Life, Relationships and Life-Giving, Love-Giving. There is no discussion of the physical aspects of the human reproductive system in these sessions/discussions in class. The booklets are available for parent viewing in the PSR office.

Archdiocese of St. Louis, Administrative Manual of Catholic Education #5104.4

ACRE

Children in grades five and eight are required to take the ACRE test. (Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education). These standardized tests are to provide data for the parish to assess the total outcome of the PSR program and make improvements where needed. Individual reports may be ordered for an additional fee for parents showing their child's progress in relation to others within the group and to pinpoint areas of great success or that need extra work. ACRE results are used by the faculty in an effort to assess program effectiveness and to adjust emphasis in the classrooms in order to meet national standards. They are not part of the students' report card.

Notice of Policy Amendment

These policies and procedures are designed so that all parents and students may have a clear understanding of our PSR's philosophy and expectations. The administration retains the right to amend policies and implement or waive consequences as it deems appropriate. Changes of policy or procedures will be published and sent home to the parents as soon as possible following their implementation.