

St. John the Baptist Parish Office of Religious Education

Marion Catholic Community
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Religious Education Program Handbook

(Revised 6/2020)



Mission Statement

St. John the Baptist Religious Education Program seeks to reach children from pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade by proclaiming Christ's message through instruction, prayer experiences, and the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. We realize that our ministry is accomplished in *partnership* with the parents who are the primary catechists. Together we will proclaim Christ's message, help develop a better faith community, lead the students in prayer and worship and motivate them to do Christian service.

It is our responsibility to work *with* our parents to help our children grow in their faith.

It is the responsibility *of* our parents to work with us to help our children grow in their faith.

+Our Philosophy+

Our ministry of religious education flows from the mandate of Jesus to go into the whole world and teach the Good News. The Church has, throughout time, initiated and developed systems to proclaim Christ's message, to foster community, to call people to worship and to challenge them to service.

Catechesis is about the conversion of the whole person to God, Jesus Christ and the Church. It is living and learning in the midst of a Christian community that shares, nurtures, and strengthens the faith of the individuals to make up the Body of Christ.

The aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and in intimacy with Jesus Christ, who alone can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit.

+Religious Education Program Creed+

WE BELIEVE, that the purpose of our catechetical ministry is to proclaim the message of Jesus, to foster the understanding of and build community in all areas of life, and to encourage service to each other for the good of all.

WE BELIEVE, that you have entrusted your children to us to deepen the faith you have given them as parents.

WE BELIEVE, that with your cooperation, such as, attending Mass, celebrating the Eucharist and other Sacraments together, attending parent sessions and reinforcing Christian values in your homes, we can help you & your child grow in their faith as they journey with you in life.

WE BELIEVE, that the goal of our faith formation program is to make us aware of the action of God in our lives, both within us and outside of us.

WE BELIEVE, that together we will awaken an awareness in your children and encourage them to gradually accept responsibility for their own Christian development as they are able.

+Catechetical Staff+

Catechists are women and men who are members of our parish family and have agreed to represent all of us in a specific area of ministry. In this ministry catechists work as assistants to the parents who are the primary catechist. Our role as catechists is to help, not to replace the vital role parents have in the home or domestic church. It is the role of the Church to help the parent's journey with their children as they deepen their faith and love for our Lord.

+Role of our Parents+

We believe that parents are the primary teachers of their children and that the home environment is the most important source of a child's religious development. While we can provide the formal education, the parents provide the lived-out experience of faith. Therefore, we encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's ongoing development in the Catholic faith, especially by participating in weekly Sunday Mass together.

+Role of our Catechists+

Catechists in our parish religious education program are Catholic persons of faith who share their time and talent to share the gift of faith with the young of our parish. Catechists strive to build up along the youth a community spirit which will strengthen and nourish them, and which will call them to call, witness, proclaim and enrich the Gospel message to grow in faith.

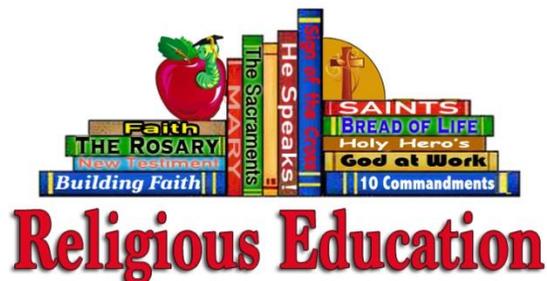
+Role of our Support Staff+

Our religious education support staff consists of catechist aides, office help, hall monitors, traffic monitors, gym monitors and class parents. The service of these volunteers is essential to the smooth running of our program and enables the catechists and the C/DRE to better fulfill their specific roles.

+Appreciation From Our Parish+

The pastoral staff of the Marion Catholic Community and our own parish community are incredibly grateful for all of our volunteer catechetical personnel for their generous assistance with the challenging and awesome ministry of Religious Education.

Our program is sustained by the goodness of God, graciously mirrored in the goodness of our families. We believe that every person has talents, gifts and abilities to be shared for the building up of the Body of Christ. Each year we ask each family to take an active part in carrying out the many and varied tasks which encompass our program.



+Entrance / Admission+

Non-Discrimination Policy

The St. John the Baptist Religious Education Program is operated under the Catholic Archbishop in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. We do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, handicap, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its policies, supplementary programs or any other program-based function. As such all are admitted with equal rights and privileges accorded to the students in this program.

Enrollment Policy

Enrollment in our religious education program is open to any child whose family is registered in the St. John the Baptist parish in grades pre-kindergarten-twelfth grade. The grade level of a child entering the program is left to the discretion of the C/DRE in dialogue with the parents. The grade level upon a child entering our program does not necessarily have to align with the child's grade level at school. Enrollment must be completed no later than July 31st. Exceptions will be made only for extraordinary circumstances on a case by case basis. At home formation options may still be available after this date.

Parish Subsidy

Our parish subsidizes our program from the generous offerings of the total Parish Community. For this subsidy, we are grateful to the people of our parish.

Tuition & Fees

Tuition is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. The fees are kept as reasonable as possible. However, no child will be turned away from our program due to the lack of the ability to pay the fees. Tuition is due at the time of registration or in full by July 31st. Special fees may be assessed for Sacramental Preparation in grades 2 and 9. Special financial arrangements can be made if there is a need. Please contact our parish C/DRE for more information.

Sunday Morning Program (Preschool)

\$30.00 per preschool student

Parish CCD Program (Kindergarten)

\$50.00 per kindergarten student

Parish CCD Program (1st grade – 12th grade)

\$80.00 per student with a max of \$320.00 for four or more students within the same family/household that are in grades 1-12.

General Information

St. John the Baptist utilizes photographs and other media for communicative and promotional purposes. These media can sometimes include the recording of a minor's likeness, namely, his or her face. While we take precautions to prevent misuse of a minor's likeness across the various media available, parents or guardians have the right to opt-out of their child's likeness being used for such purposes. Any parent or guardian who wishes may complete a Revocation of Use of Social Media With Children form which can be picked up at the parish office.

Home Based Religious Education

We recognize that circumstances may arise where a family would need to take advantage of our home based program. Please contact the parish C/DRE for more information about this program.

+Program Details+

Class Hours for Sunday School

Sunday: 10:30am – 11:30am Pre-Kindergarten

Class Hours for CCD

Wednesday: 7pm – 8pm Grades K-12

Please refer to the schedule for each program for the exact dates.

Class Sizes

The goal is to maintain a class size between 10-15 students. You may wish to become a catechist to help us maintain this goal. Class sizes will vary depending on the number of catechists we have for each grade level.

Arrival & Dismissal

Please refer to the separate arrival & dismissal procedures sheet for more information.

Attendance Policy

Consistent and punctual attendance is imperative if the children are to benefit from our program. Excessive absence can affect the grade level for the following year. Please inform the C/DRE in writing of any circumstances that might keep a student from regular attendance. Students who miss more than 5 classes for the entire year or consistently leave early will be required to complete a review packet over the summer. This will help

ensure the student is ready to move to the next grade level. Please take into consideration your child's sports, drivers education and activities schedule for the whole year.

Class Absences

We are responsible for students during the time they are registered for our program. Therefore, we must keep accurate attendance and tardiness records on file in the office. When a student will be absent, please contact the catechist for C/DRE. The student is responsible for any work missed.

Tardiness

While it is understandable that everyone occasionally runs late, consistent tardiness is unfair to all involved; the student who misses the beginning of class, the class that is interrupted, and the catechist who has to repeat the material. A student is considered late any time he/she arrives after the starting time. Late students should report to the hall monitor before going to class. Parents are asked not to walk late students to the classroom.

Communication

Parent/Catechist communication is strongly encouraged. A phone call to your child's catechist encourages both the child and the catechist. Monthly and periodic e-newsletters or bulletins will be emailed to each family by the C/DRE. Many catechists also send a weekly email as well. It is important that these be read by all parents.

Parents are also encouraged to be in communication with the C/DRE whenever there is a concern, a question, or a suggestion. It is usually best to do this at a time other than class time.

Custody of Child

Concerns regarding parental custody of a child in our program must be communicated in writing to the C/DRE. Non-custodial parents may be given access to unofficial copies of student records, and catechists will be available to discuss the students' progress unless a court order stating otherwise is filed with the C/DRE.

Materials & Supplies

Each student receives the materials and supplies necessary to participate in class. Parents are responsible for the cost of replacing any and all lost books, folders, etc. Replacement books are \$25.00. Students are not permitted to write in the books.

Discipline Policy

Following Jesus' command, "Love one another as I have loved you", our Religious Education staff and students should treat each other with mutual respect. Religious catechesis is a process that provides instruction on the truths and traditions of our Catholic faith while incorporating the formation of students into full membership in our Church for ministry and mission.

Our program has expectations that concern attitude, behavior and attendance. Catechists, together with the students, discuss and agree upon a few, clear basic classroom rules assuring a respectful, Christian environment for learning and interacting. Realistic, appropriate consequences are also discussed and agreed upon. In general, students who disregard classroom or program rules are given timely warnings. A student, who continually disregards classroom rules after timely warnings, warrants that involvement of administration and parents to determine the course of action to be taken. Ridicule and public humiliation are always to be avoided. Corporal punishment or any type of physical form of discipline is never permitted.

The following behavior is deemed unacceptable:

- The display of belligerent attitude by way of words, gestures, or actions toward the staff or other students
- The display of anger by way of physical or verbal abuse toward the staff or other students
- The display of unchristian-like behavior by way of put-downs or practical jokes toward the staff or other students
- The display of willful destructive behavior by the misuse of the buildings and furnishings as well as the personal property of the staff and other students
- The display of disregard for the safety of others. This includes possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco products and weapons of any kind

For severe or ongoing behavior problems, the student may be expelled by the C/DRE, with immediate notification of the parent/guardian.

A student may be expelled from the religious education program for the following, non-inclusive reasons:

- When a student's behavior is of a serious nature, or constantly disruptive
- When the student resists all attempts at correction by the catechist, hall monitor, C/DRE and the parent/guardian

- When the student has a negative impact on the learning environment of the classroom to diminish other students' opportunities to learn

If a student is expelled and wants to come back to our program, there is a re-admission process that both the student and parent/guardian must follow. The parent/guardian and student will meet with the C/DRE to determine if the student's unacceptable behavior has been resolved and there is an assurance of cooperative behavior. After that meeting, the C/DRE will decide on re-entry. The student will then be responsible for making up any work that was missed. The student might have to be retained in a certain level due to missing so many classes.

Search and Seizure

If a student is suspected of having weapons, drugs or alcohol in his/her possession, the C/DRE is required to investigate. The procedure that will be followed is:

- Reasonable suspicion of possession
- The student will be walked into a secluded area with at least two adults
- In the student's presence, the situation will be explained (by the catechist or the person who suspects something)
- The student will be questioned about the suspected item, and if he/she admits possession of it, will be asked to give it to the C/DRE.
- Parents will be notified of the incident whether an item was found in the students' possession
- If a student denies having such an item, and there is reasonable suspicion that he/she does possess it, or admits having it and refuses to give it to the C/DRE, the parents will be contacted to come and assist in the search
- If parents refuse to cooperate, the student may be excluded from the program immediately
- If a weapon, alcohol, or drugs are found to be in the student's possession, the pastor and law enforcement will be notified. Pending review of the situation, the student may be expelled from the program.

Use of Buildings

We "rent" the facilities from Marion Local Schools. Students are to not touch anything that is not part of the religious education program in the classrooms. Students are to take all items with them before they leave each session. Food IS NOT allowed in the buildings. This includes gum, drinks, candy, etc. Specific permission must be obtained from the C/DRE for an exception to this rule. When permission is given, it is the responsibility of the catechists and aides to have all trash collected in a garbage bag and brought to the dumpster or outside trash area. The classrooms must be left in perfect order.

Incllement Weather/Emergencies

In the event of bad weather, we will post closings on the Marion Catholic Community Cluster Facebook page. We will also send out a text and email reminder via our Flocknote communication system. It is important that the religious education office always has an updated cell phone number and email address on file. If Marion Local Schools close then there will be no CCD that evening.

Guest Speakers

Guest speakers are welcome. *Prior permission from the C/DRE is mandatory* for all guest speakers. Guest speakers should check in with the hall monitor before going to a classroom.

Off Grounds Trips

It is important that we stay on school property. If a catechist would like to take students off grounds, the catechist must obtain prior permission several weeks in advance. Parents will be expected to sign a permission form which releases the parish from liability before the student is allowed to go on any type of field trip.

+Safety & Emergency Procedures+

Reporting to the Classrooms

Students will be escorted by the hall monitors to their respective classrooms from the assigned meeting places before class.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Please refer to the addendum to the handbook labeled "Arrival & Dismissal Procedures."

Safety Procedures

Students and staff are expected to follow all safety procedures outlined by Marion Local Schools in the event of a fire, tornado, or lockdown.

Accidents

If an accident were to occur, proper emergency treatment would be executed and then notification of parents/guardians.

Emergency Care

Since children are with us such a short time, we expect all medications to be administered before or after class. However, it is understandable that there may be a need, such as the need to use an inhaler, which would warrant medication to be brought to class. The C/DRE must be informed of any medication a child will be bringing to class and appropriate forms will then need to be completed by the parents.

+Code of Christian Behavior+

Dress

We believe that attitudes are affected by what one wears. Students are to dress neatly and appropriately for class. Clothing that is torn, bears obscene or inappropriate messages or carries a logo for alcoholic beverages or cigarettes may not be worn. Halter tops, short shorts, or any immodest apparel is prohibited. Shoes must always be worn.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Elementary: There is to be absolutely no cell phones or electronic devices brought to class

JH & HS: Students may have their cell phones with them, but they must remain off or in silent mode during class. All other electronic devices should not be brought to class.

Loitering

There shall not be any loitering in parking lots after class

Safety

Religious Education personnel take every reasonable precaution to ensure the safety of those in their care and to notify the administration of any unsafe conditions. Students are never left alone or unsupervised.