

Purpose

The primary purpose of St. Joseph Parish School of Religion (PSR) program is to provide assistance and support to the parents of those students who attend public schools. During the Rite of Baptism for children, the celebrant addresses the parent(s) “You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.” In recognition of this fact, that “since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring.” (Declaration of Christian Education #3 or DCE).

The parish of St. Joseph also recognizes its responsibility as “church community” which involves a sharing of beliefs, expressions, ideals, and values. The church community of St. Joseph Parish aids parents in creating a “family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among children.” (DCE #3)

As a further aid, the Parish has dedicated catechists who volunteer to work with parents for the catechesis of their children. Catechesis is derived from the Greek word meaning “to resound” or “to sound from above.” The word echoed or resounded through catechesis is the “Word” of God, Jesus Christ, and the “word” of Scripture. Catechists assist individuals and communities to acquire and deepen faith and identity through initiation rites, instruction and formation of the conscience. (National Catechetical Directory #7). The catechist does this by resounding the “word” of God in his/her life. Through Baptism, the whole Church is called to participate in the mission of catechesis. “Go therefore and make disciples of every nation...Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Goals

The main objective of the PSR program is to instruct students in the fundamental values and doctrines of our Catholic Faith. Through this process we strive to:

- Encourage each individual to nourish his/her own personal relationship with God through prayer, studying scripture and frequent participation in the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Encourage students to recognize Eucharistic liturgy as the source, expression, and celebration of who we are as Catholic Christians.

-Encourage students to grow through prayer, study, and participation in the liturgical and active life of the Church, as a response to their baptismal call to make the Kingdom of God present here and now in the world.

-Engage families and nurture their faith together with their child(ren).

Policies

Attendance

Each child is expected to attend all of the scheduled classes. Classes are held from 9:15am-10:30am on Sunday mornings as listed on the calendar. Students are expected to attend and participate the entire class period. Supervision is not provided before or after PSR classes. Students should not arrive prior to 9:00am and should be picked up no later than 10:45am.

It is the responsibility of the parents to notify the instructor if the child is to be absent. If the student is absent, he/she is expected to make up any missed assignments of homework within 2 weeks of the absence and submit to the teacher upon completion. Promotion of students with excessive absenteeism (more than four classes) will be under the advisement of the PSR Coordinator and the Parish Priest.

Baptismal Certificates

Each new student must have on file with St. Joseph Parish a copy of his/her Baptismal Certificate. If an original is sent to the parish rectory, a copy will be made and the original returned.

Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Students are prohibited from using cell phones during PSR without consent of the catechist. Other electronic devices (including but not limited to video games, audio devices, cameras, etc.) are not permitted in the PSR classrooms unless specifically requested by the catechist. Cell phones or electronic devices will be confiscated until the end of class when students do not abide by this policy. Frequent violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

Child Protection Training

Both the PSR Coordinator and all catechists must be in full compliance with the Diocesan Child Protection Policy, Section 2.2 before being permitted to serve in the PSR program. The PSR Coordinator has the responsibility of:

- maintaining an annual compliance file of catechists in the PSR program
- providing an annual compliance report in September to the pastor/parish administrator

The PSR Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that children registered in PSR receive age-appropriate instruction in personal safety as described in the Diocesan Child Protection Policy, Section 2.3. Educational Curriculum for Personnel and Children or have a signed waiver from the parent(s) in accordance with Section 2.1 of the Child Protection Policy. (The Child Protection Policy is on the diocesan website: www.diobelle.org).

Class Cancellation

In case of severe weather or other emergency, families will be notified via text and/or email using the information given to the parish during registration. Please do not call the parish priest on Sunday morning to determine whether classes are canceled. The decision to cancel will be made no later than 7:00am on the day of class.

Communication

Communication will occur primarily via email, but also through letters sent home with students, parish bulletins, and the website. Changes in policies or schedules will be communicated to each student's family.

Discipline

It is important to maintain a healthy and productive learning environment. As such, PSR students are expected to behave and treat the catechist and other students with respect. In the event that a student becomes disruptive, the catechist will take the appropriate action to bring control and order to the class. The severity of the disruption will determine the teacher's course of action. Appropriate actions may include, but are not limited to:

- asking the student to behave (pointing out the behavior issue)

- separating the student from the others or assigning seats to students
- removing the child from class to sit the PSR Coordinator until class end. Parent notification will occur.
- Asking the parent to attend class with the child.
- Scheduling a parent and student meeting with the parish priest, PSR coordinator, and catechist.
- Calling the parent to retrieve the child from class.

The school building and its resources are provided and maintained by the parish to be shared by all members primarily as a formal place of instruction. Since the school is used during the week to instruct other students, there are also items of personal property belonging to those students and instructors. PSR students are expected to be respectful of the resources of the parish and possessions of others present in the school. No student(s) should occupy any classroom without the supervision of a PSF catechist.

Emergency

In case of emergency, the parent(s) of students will be notified immediately. When parents cannot be reached, the alternate (emergency) number on the registration form will be called.

Fire/Tornado

In the event of a fire or threat of fire, PSR students and catechists will immediately evacuate the school building. Parents will be contacted after all students and faculty are in a safe location away from the threat.

In the event of a tornado, PSR students and catechists will move to the first floor hall of the school.

Homework/Textbooks

The catechist may assign homework weekly to students in all grades. Students are expected to bring completed assignments along with their textbook and folder to class each week. Students who misplace their PSR textbook(s) or other materials will be

expected to purchase a new textbook(s) or materials as limited additional resources are available for back-up.

The PSR Coordinator, with the approval of the parish priest, selects textbooks designed to cover the teachings of the Catholic Church. The PSR program is currently using the *Ignatius Press Word of Life* textbook series for first through fifth grade. The *Word of Life* program helps the students to learn, celebrate, share, and live their Catholic faith. The program offers an in-person or virtual option, or a hybrid of the two. The *Word of Life* curriculum responds to the call to help Christians “give a complete meaning to their existence, educating them in a mentality of faith in keeping with the Gospel”. Responding to the needs of the contemporary culture and modern man requires an “evangelizing catechesis”. This program centers on an initial proclamation of the Gospel message. Key elements of the program focus on:

- The History of our Salvation
- Virtue and Character Formation
- Christian Anthropology and Theology of the Body
- Liturgy and Sacraments
- Prayer

Word of Life supports the role of the catechist and the role of the parent in faith formation. It uses both a hard copy textbook learning as well as a digital platform for the Teacher, the Parent, and the Student. Digital access will be given to both the Parent and the Student to encourage family faith formation outside of the classroom. The digital platform also provides the ability to have remote learning in the event of missed classes or pandemic restrictions.

The **Second Grade** Sacramental Preparation for Reconciliation and Communion are from *Dynamic Catholic*. The program is titled **Blessed** and is used to ready students for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. This series is used throughout the entire sacramental year and is a combination of textbook, video, and hands-on activities to lead the students in their faith and ready them for the sacraments they are to receive. This program can also be used virtually to allow for make up of missed classes and/or pandemic restrictions, should they occur. www.dynamiccatholic.com → click on “Faith Formation” → click on “First Reconciliation” or “First Communion” to access video content.

Medication

In accordance with State and Federal laws, PSR personnel, salaried or volunteer, are not permitted to administer first aid or dispense medication to any student. In an attempt to serve you, it is requested that you inform the PSR Coordinator in writing of any physical or medical needs.

Privacy

Information obtained from families during PSR registration will be maintained for the sole use of the PSR Program. While this information may be shared with other groups within the St. Joseph Parish Community, this information will not be provided to third parties without the express consent of the family.

Registration

Registration for kindergarten through eight grade of the PSR Program is held annually at the end of the PSR school year. Information regarding the dates of registration and fees will be published in the weekly bulletin and on the parish website. Parents are encouraged to register early to assist the catechist in ordering the proper number of textbooks and materials. Students are required to register annually. Families must be registered parish members in order to register for PSR. *Note: the Kindergarten class will only form if sufficient students are registered (5 or more) and a catechist/teacher can be found.*

Rite of Christian Initiation of Children

For those students who have not received the Sacrament of Baptism, or who have been baptized and have not received the Sacraments of Holy Communion, Reconciliation, or Confirmation, special classes are offered to prepare these children for the sacraments. It is important to remember that these classes are not a substitute for PSR classes. After the student has received the sacraments of initiation, the student's religious education is to be an ongoing process. For more information on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC), contact the PSR Coordinator or the parish priest.

Safety

The PSR Coordinator has the responsibility of keeping children and catechists safe during PSR instruction. Safety and security measures include:

- Unlocking the main entrance of the building(s) in which classes are held no more than 15 minutes before the designated start time of classes (9:00am).
- Locking the entrance of the building(s) at the designated start time of instruction (9:15am).
- A sign will be placed on the door with a number to call/text should you need to pick your child up early from class and need entrance to the building.
- Children arriving late for instruction must have a parent/guardian accompany the child to the entrance. Parent/guardian must identify self and the name of the child needing access into the building when calling the Coordinator on a cell phone to unlock the entrance door.
- Conducting a sweep of the building at the end of instruction and before leaving the building. The sweep includes making sure no one is in the building, nothing used by the children or catechists is left in the building, furniture is in order, lights are turned off, faucets and turned off, toilets have been flushed if necessary and are not running, and that doors are locked.
- Catechists and children must be familiar with the evacuation procedures and practice at least one evacuation drill at the beginning of the PSR calendar. (Fire evacuation procedures are available from the school principal).

The PSR Photograph and Consent Form shall be included in the Registration Packet. Only those children whose parent(s) or legal guardian has signed the consent form shall be photographed or included in a video. It is the responsibility of the PSR Coordinator to maintain an up-to-date file of the consent forms and to alert catechists the names of children who do NOT have the written authorization of a parent/legal guardian to be photographed or videoed.

Sacraments

Before a student can receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation, he/she should regularly attend a Catholic Religion program, at a minimum, one year prior to the sacrament year.

In order to assist parents in the preparation of their children for the reception of these sacraments, St. Joseph PSR provides parent meetings for each sacrament. These parent meetings are a required part of the Sacrament Programs. The parent meetings are designed to familiarize parents with current Church teachings, develop methods to promote and increase family participation in the reception of the sacraments, and to extend the process of catechesis into the home.

Sacramental preparation is designed to help students, parents, and families prepare for the reception of the sacraments, as well as continued participation in the sacraments.

Servers

PSR students who have entered fourth grade will be required to train as a server. Families are strongly encouraged to embrace this ministry; however, once trained, it is a family decision on whether or not to be scheduled for serving. Families may request their Mass preference (Saturday at 5:00pm or Sunday at 8:00am at St. Joseph or Sunday at 10:00am at St. Agatha). It is important for the server to fulfill their commitment if scheduled or by finding a replacement server as the entire parish community suffers when servers do not fulfill their assignments. NOTE: St. Agatha is the parish partner of St. Joseph and servers can participate at both parishes for this ministry.

Tuition

The tuition fee for PSR is as follows:

-\$65 per child, \$120 for two children, or \$150 for three or more children

-\$30 per child for new families joining the program after January 1st

-Free tuition for instructors and directors. These individuals are volunteers and as such, they are not required to pay the tuition fee for their own children.

-Financial assistance, if needed, should be discussed with the PSR Coordinator on an individual basis. All discussions will be confidential.

Confirmation Requirements

Confirmation for our parish can be a one-year (8th grade) or two-year (first year 6th and 7th grade; second year 7th and 8th grade). St. Joseph and St. Agatha PSR students attend the program together and work in concert with the St. Joseph school children with the program.

A candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in a state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ (CC 1319). In order to ensure a candidate is prepared, students who have not regularly attended PSR classes (or another approved catechetical teaching) for the past two years will not be able to receive the sacrament of confirmation without expressed consent of the PSR Confirmation coordinator and the parish priest. Please discuss any concerns with the PSR Confirmation coordinator for clarification.

Sponsor Selection

Each confirmation student will be required to select an *adult* sponsor. The sponsor must be a baptized, confirmed Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church. Non-parish sponsors will be required to provide a letter of recommendation from their parish providing baptismal date, confirmation date, and statement of good standing. The catechist will provide additional instructions regarding requirements.

To emphasize the unity of the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is appropriate that the sponsor be one of the baptismal godparents (CC 1311). While this is not a mandatory requirement, the candidate should select a sponsor that provides the student with a good example of living the Faith (living a holy life through prayer, attending Mass, etc.). The sponsor must reside in the local area so that they are able to support the candidate through the process and provide the candidate a good example of living their Catholic Faith. This type of support and example can be very challenging to provide when the sponsor does not live in the area. Parents or siblings close in age are not appropriate choices for sponsors. Additionally, high school students are not appropriate choices for sponsors.

Community Service

It is the responsibility of the faithful to serve their community as Christ taught us. As such, confirmation students are expected to perform 15/30 hours of community service during their confirmation years. The service hours should be in each of the following three areas: family, parish, and community.

The confirmation student is giving his/her time and talent to others through performing Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. As such, the student should keep the following thoughts in mind when selecting service projects:

- The student is not to be paid
- Normal household chores are not to be used as service hours. Students are expected to perform these activities as a contributing family member.
- The student should try to include a variety of experiences
- The student should perform the project selflessly and lovingly for those in need
- The student should reflect on how his/her actions are helping him/her take on the mind and hear of Christ while fulfilling the needs of others and building up the Christian community
- The student should remember that giving time and talent continues throughout life

The Confirmation catechist(s) has a list of acceptable ideas for community service. The students should consult this list and ask the teachers, the PSR Confirmation coordinator, or the parish priest if they have any questions or concerns regarding the type of project they would like to complete. The catechist will provide additional instructions regarding this requirement.

Letter to the Bishop

Confirmation students will be required to submit a letter to the Bishop reflecting why they would like to move forward with the Sacrament of Confirmation and receive the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All letters must be typed on white paper and should be grammatically correct. The Bishop has requested that all letters be reviewed and that all issues be resolved at the local level prior to submission to the parish priest. The Bishop reads every letter and may invite candidates to write, telephone, or visit him. The catechist will provide additional instruction for this task.

Saints

Confirmation students will be required to select a saint for their confirmation name and write a biography about the chosen saint. The student should select a saint based on the holy life the saint led. The chosen saint should be someone the student would like to model his/her life. The selected saint must be a canonized saint. Thus, students cannot select angels or someone in the process of being canonized. The student must be able to provide factual information about the saint he/she has chosen. This information must be

included in the written biography. The catechist will provide instructions regarding the requirements for this paper.

Prayers

Each confirmation student is expected to have learned his/her Catholic prayers by the time he/she begins the confirmation year. As each PSR classroom focuses on prayer every week, students attending PSR should know the prayers by the age of confirmation. Prayers are located in a separate PSR Prayer Handbook.

Luke 18 Retreat

Each Confirmation year, the parish Youth Ministry Program holds a Luke 18 weekend for confirmation students. This weekend is intended to help the students enrich their Catholic Faith. It is mandatory that all confirmation students attend this weekend. If the student does not attend the parish retreat, they are responsible for locating and attending a confirmation retreat at another parish. Information regarding the weekend date will be provided at the beginning of each PSR school year.

Attendance at the Chrism and Triduum Masses

Each year the confirmation students are requested to attend the Chrism Mass at St. Peter's Cathedral during Holy Week. This Mass is typically celebrated on the Tuesday of Holy Week during school hours. Permission slips are provided to the students to release them from school to attend the Mass. Information is sent home for parents several weeks prior to the Mass. Due to this being during school hours, attendance at this mass is strongly encouraged but not mandatory.

Each year the Bishop stresses the importance of attending the Triduum Masses (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil) as these Masses are the highlight of the Liturgical year. All confirmation students are required to attend these masses during their confirmation year as part of their preparation for confirmation.

Confirmation Textbooks

As the students move into the 2-year Confirmation Cycle, the grades combine for both years: 6&7 grade for year one and 7&8 grade for year two. The textbook used varies based on what is recommended by the diocesan office.

Dynamic Catholic 'Decision Point- This program is a combination of instructor and video led sessions that take place over a one-year time frame when students are in 7th/8th grade. Decision Point is specifically designed to engage young Catholics in a meaningful conversation about the genius of Catholicism. It teaches and inspires teens to respond to

God's grace. Dynamic Catholic is an online free Catholic resource which allows for students to make up missed class sessions as needed.

Ascension Press: Chosen – This program is a combination of instructor and video led sessions that can take place over a one-year time frame (7th/8th grade) or used over a two-year time frame (6th/7th & 7th/8th). It allows the catechists to grow the student's faith as they learn of Jesus' call to each person to become his disciple and the ways in which his teachings, his sacraments, and his Church nourish people for discipleship.

St. Joseph Catholic Church and School Norms for Driving and Transporting

Passengers

These norms are intended to promote a culture of safety in all Church and School activities that involve driving and transporting passengers. The norms are as moderate as is prudent so as not to unduly constrain the good work of the parish and school. Specific norms are requirements of the insurance provider and may be modified as required by the provider.

All individuals in an administrative position, presidents of councils and organizations, chairpersons or sponsors of organizations, ministries, and events; athletic directors and coaches are required to view the online training "Church Transportation - Is it Necessary and Ministry-Based?" This video is located on the Diocesan website: diobelle.org.

The following norms apply to ALL WHO DRIVE ON BEHALF OF ST. JOSEPH CHURCH AND ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL:

- Drivers must be 21 years of age or older
- If minors are transported, driver must be 25 years of age or older
- Drivers must have a valid driver's license
- Each driver must complete a "Volunteer Driver Form". These forms are available in the Parish Office and in the School Office. Completed forms must be on file in either the school or the parish office before transporting passengers.
- Seat belts must be used at all times. Each occupant must have a seat belt when traveling in any vehicle except buses.
- Passengers are not permitted in the bed of a pick-up truck or in the cargo area of a vehicle.

All buses, whether owned, leased, or chartered must meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) for visibility, body structure requirements for rollover accidents,

strength of body panel joints and occupant protection requirements for passenger seating and barriers.

Ownership and/or use of an eleven (11) to fifteen (15) passenger vans is prohibited.

The following norms apply to Privately Owned Vehicles use for church or school business, ministries, and activities:

-The vehicle must be currently registered and in good operating condition and have all the safety equipment as required by law.

-The vehicle must be insured for the following minimum liability limits: \$100,000.00 per person and \$300,000.00 per accident

When a vehicle is rented by the parish or school, liability insurance must be purchased from the rental agency. A Certificate of Auto Liability must be obtained if a vehicle is chartered. The Certificate of Auto Liability must contain the name of the Diocese and Parish as additional insured. The minimum liability limit is \$1,000,000.00 combined single limit. If more than 15 people are being transported, then the minimum acceptable limit is \$5,000,000.00 combined single limit.

VOLUNTEER DRIVER FORM

PLEASE PRINT

Name of Driver: _____ Date of Birth:

Address:

Cell Phone #: _____

Driver's License #: _____ State Issued:
_____ Expiration Date: _____

Insurance Company's Name:

Policy # _____
Expiration Date: _____

Liability Coverage \$ _____ per person
\$ _____ per accident

(Minimum Limits of \$100,000/\$300,000 Required)

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT AS A VOLUNTEER DRIVER, YOUR INSURANCE IS
PRIMARY

Thank you for helping with the transportation needs of St. Joseph Church and St. Joseph School.

Certification

I certify that the information given on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand driving for the Church or School is a profound responsibility and I will exercise extreme care and due diligence while driving. I understand that as a volunteer driver I must possess a valid driver's license, have the proper and current license and vehicle registration, and have the required insurance coverage in effect on my vehicle. I also attest that I am of the

required age as a volunteer driver. I agree that I will refrain from using a cell phone or any other handheld electronic device while driving my vehicle.

Volunteer Driver Signature Date

PLEASE NOTE:

Return this completed form to the St. Joseph School Principal if you are a volunteer driver for the school.

Return this completed form to the Office Manager of St. Joseph Church if you are a volunteer driver for the Youth Ministry or any other organization or ministry of St. Joseph Parish.