

Saint Joseph Religious Education Program Guidelines & Curriculum 2017 - 2018



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Table of Contents

Title	Page
Introduction To Our Catholic Faith	3-5
• God Is Love	3
• Becoming a Child of God (Sacrament of Baptism)	4
• God Has A Plan	4
• Parents Are The Primary Educators	5
• Practice Of Faith	5
Responsibilities: Parish, Parents,	6-7
• Our Parish Mission	6
• Parental Responsibility	6
† Mass Attendance	6
• Religious Education Responsibilities and Goals:	7
Religious Education Curriculum Grades 1-8	8-15

I. Introduction To Our Catholic Faith

God Is Love

Scripture says: “God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.” *1John 4:16*

“God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, & Holy Spirit, and He has destined us to share in that exchange of Love”. *CCC 221*

This is truly, what our Faith is all about – Learning how to fall head over heels in love with God – who is head over heels in love with us.

A journey that begins on our Baptism day, when the Lord pours the fullness of His love deep within each of us - Never to leave us from that day on. A journey that continues until we come Face-to-Face with our Lord. On that day, will the Lord see in us, His love being reflected back to Him?

We as humans have a great capacity for giving and receiving this love. We do not want our love to be just a momentary feeling either; we want it to become visible, tangible, lasting, and always more real. It is good that we have such desires.

Love has four Dimensions: Spiritual, Emotional, Mental, and Physical. We love each other in all four dimensions. It is also the way God loves us and asks that we love Him in return.

That is exactly what Jesus did to us. He Touched us. He became Visible, He needed to be nurtured, loved, fed, and taught. He grew up spending His whole life touching us in the four Dimensions of Love.

Before Jesus went to His Passion, He said I am not leaving you alone. I am not taking back the Physical Dimension of my Love. I will always be with You.

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him.” *John 6:56*

After Jesus’ Resurrection, He continues to Touch us. Jesus did many physical signs so you may (come to) believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and is physically present with us now; and that through this belief you may have life in His name.

Becoming a Child of God (Sacrament of Baptism)

Every Sacrament has two dimensions, that is, the dimension of the covenant and grace, and the dimension of sign. *John Paul 129*

Baptism confers covenant and grace upon us. Baptism is one of the Sacraments of Initiation, cleansing, strengthening, and welcoming. Baptism welcomes us into the community of Christian believers. It offers forgiveness of original sin, (personal sin for older children) and a new life in which we become the children of God, followers of Christ, temples in which the Holy Spirit dwells. Baptism leaves an indelible spiritual mark on our souls that makes us holy and opens us to salvation and eternal life with God. This is why we are only be baptized once; we have this indelible spiritual mark.

In Baptism, the potent symbols (signs) of water, oil, candles, white garment, words and Sign of the Cross are used to wash away our sins and the effects of sin itself. It gives us a new identity, connects us to a new community of believers, initiates us into a new way of living, and provides a clear mission in life.

God Has A Plan

God has a Plan and we are Part of His Plan. Have you ever wondered why did God create me?

God has created us in His image and likeness. We have been created to complete His love. We do this by coming to know, love, and serve God in this world and be happy with Him forever in the next world.

In our birth, we complete our parents love. We too complete our Lord's love as well. Just as we come to know, love and serve (honor and obey) our parents, we need to come to know, love and serve our Lord as well. God has a Plan, we are Part of His Plan, and Baptism is the beginning for you and your children to walk with God in Love.

Think of this as you decide: Who do I choose to Be in this life?

Who do I want my child to be?

O, Lord, help us to love You more and more!

O, Lord, help us, to love each other more!

Parents are the Primary Educators

Just as Jesus spoke often of doing his Father's will, it is the intention and teaching of the Catholic Church that parent(s) are the first teachers of their children in the ways of the Faith.

Parents are the primary educators, and they teach their children whether they know it or not. We teach by our words, example, action, and our relationships within the family and others.

The Parish of St. Joseph's welcomes and wants to help our parents be prepared and willing to accept the responsibility of raising their children in the practice of the Catholic Faith.

Practice of Faith

We can only come to know God and love Him by being part of His family. Just as your child is part of your family, he/she cannot come to know you, love you and respond to you without being around you. Your child needs to grow up learning all about you and your extended family.

Within your family, you have certain norms, expectations, customs and traditions that you have learned through experience and knowledge. You were taught these by your family.

Think of your family when they celebrate. They come together at table to listen and talk with each other (Word), they eat and drink at Table (Eucharist), and they exchange thoughts and ideas (learning).

Our Church is the Family of God (Body of Christ). By our participation at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist on a regular basis, we participate in family. We listen to our Father's and Jesus' Words together, we partake in His actual physical presence with and in us.

Since Baptism is entrance into a living and lived Faith, parents participate at Mass not only for your own good, but also as a model for your children. You should explore your understanding and participation in the Mass and Sacraments as you prepare for your child's Religious Education

"We have asked to have our child baptized. In doing so, we are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the Practice of the Faith. It will be our duty to bring him/her up to keep God's Commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.

We clearly understand what we are undertaking?" (Rite of Baptism)

II. Responsibilities: Parish, Parents, & Religious Education

Our Parish Mission

The Mission of the Church of Saint Joseph's Church is to be a welcoming, caring, Christ-centered Catholic Community. We desire to experience and share God's unconditional love. Inspired by the example of Jesus, we strive to lead all people to wholeness and fullness of life.

Parental Responsibility

Parents give life to their children and it is their duty to create a family atmosphere, inspired by love and devotion to God and love and service to others, which promotes an integrated personal, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual education for their children. Parents teach by example and word. They communicate values and attitudes by:

- Showing love for Jesus, the Church, and each other.
- Reverently receiving the Eucharist and living its spirit.
- Fostering justice and love in relationships.
- Actively supporting and being involved in the parish.
- Seeking opportunities to serve others.
- Praying frequently and spontaneously.

Mass Attendance

The Ten Commandments are God's laws of love. God gave us these Commandments as a gift to help us live in peace. The Third Commandment is: "*Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day*". **Weekly participation at Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days fulfills the serious obligation of every Catholic and is an integral part of St. Joseph's Religious Education.** How can one learn what is not practiced or not put into action by the family? How can Jesus touch us, if we are not present to Him each week?

Parents' have the responsibility to bring their children to Mass each week. Since Eucharist is the source and summit of our Faith, celebrating the Eucharist as family strengthens not only the bond of faith, but also the bond of family, which is the "Domestic Church"

It is expected that all families enrolled in St. Joseph's Religious Education Program are attending weekly Mass.

Religious Education Responsibilities and Goals:

The Religious Education Program is designed to assist parents in their

ministry to lead their child to God. It builds on the faith that parent's witness on a day-to-day life experience in "The Church of the Family".

Religious Education is the process of communicating the beliefs, values, and practices which help people grow as Catholic Christians. It is the work of handing on, from one generation to the next, the faith that has come down to us from the apostles and the way of life to which that faith calls us.

The Goal of Religious Education

- Assist parents in imparting the Catholic Faith to their children as a living and life-giving Faith;
- Teach students what a Roman Catholic Christian believes and how a Catholic lives in response to that message;
- Forming children to make good moral decisions.
- Involve students and families in the life of the parish worship, community, and service;
- Encourage parents to continue their own faith development

Through Our Parish Parent Education Programs We Aim To:

- Assist parents in their own growth in faith so that they will become better communicators of the Christian message.
- Assist parents in their understanding of the human development of their child.
- Relate this understanding to the religious development of the child.
- Familiarize parents with the formal religious instruction given to their children to incorporate and deepen the Church in the home.
- Give parents an opportunity to discuss programs of instruction with their child's Catechist.
- Empower parents to prepare their children for the reception of the Sacraments.

III. Religious Education Curriculum

Saint Joseph's Parish offers children and parents a developmental

program of Catholic faith through catechesis, through personal and communal prayer, through service...in order for them not simply to *know* about God, but to *know* God...inspiring them to develop a personal, intimate relationship with God and to model their lives on the example of Jesus.

The greatest challenge is to help children realize that religion is not an academic subject, but a way of life. As Disciples, we strive to “Live in the Lord”, as witness to our Christian Faith.

The Archdiocese of New York has prepared Guidelines to help your child grow in Faith and Love of the Lord, Jesus Christ and His teachings for His Church. The Guidelines assist the parents, catechists and Director to identify the essential content to be taught each year.

Grades 1- 8 will be using Finding God by Loyola Press. Grade 6 will be presented with a Bible.

Twice a year the students will be evaluated in written form to determine their progress in learning their faith. This will help ensure they are prepared for the next grade level.

- Grade One Theme:**
- God is our Father who loves us.
Jesus is the Son of God who tells us about our Father.
The Holy Spirit helps us to be holy.
- Objective:**
- To develop an awareness of God the Creator who gives us life and grace and promises us eternal life through Jesus.
- Profession of Faith**
- First statement of the Apostles Creed: “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”
- Words to be taught:**
- Advent, Amen, Catholic, Christmas, Church, Creator, Easter, Guardian Angel, Lent, Liturgical Year, Mass, Parish, Sacrament of Baptism, Sacred Scripture, Saint.
- Liturgical symbols and gestures to be taught:**
- Altar, Baptismal Font, Genuflection, Holy Water Font, Kneeling, Lectern, Sanctuary, Sign of the Cross, Tabernacle, Tabernacle Lamp.
- Prayers to be Learned:**
- Sign of the Cross,
 - Our Father,
 - Hail Mary,
 - Glory Be to the Father (Doxology)
 - Morning and Evening Prayers,
 - Grace at Meals
- Other Requirements**
- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance.
 - Children will be orally evaluated on the required prayers throughout the year.
- Text Books:**
- **Finding God**, Loyola Press
 - **A Parent Guide to Prayer**

Grade Theme:

Two

- Jesus nourishes us and strengthens God's life and grace within us.

Objective:

- To present Jesus as the model for Christian living, and to introduce the sacraments of Baptism, Penance and Eucharist.

Profession of Faith:

- Apostles Creed up to ...He will come again to judge the living and the dead”

Words to be taught:

- Ascension, Blessed Sacrament, Crucifixion, Charity, Grace, Heaven, Hell, Holy Day, Holy Week, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Pentecost, Prayer, Rite of Penance, Resurrection, Sacrament of the Eucharist, Sacrament of Penance.

Liturgical symbols and gestures to be taught:

- Altar, Baptismal Font, Genuflection, Holy Water Font, Kneeling, Lectern, Sanctuary, Sign of the Cross, Tabernacle, Tabernacle Lamp.
- Reconciliation room, Confessional

Prayers:

- Act of Contrition,
- Simple responses at Mass,
- Act of Contrition
- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament
- All prayers taught in Grade 1

Other Requirements

- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance. Children must hand in weekly Mass slips
- Children will be orally evaluated on the required prayers throughout the year.
- 2nd Grade Liturgy on Sunday. This Liturgy is special for the 2nd Graders This is part of the Religious Education Program & children are expected to attend.
- Mass on the Feast of Corpus Christi, followed by a light

breakfast

Text Books:

- Finding God, Loyola Press
- **A Parent Guide to Prayer**

Grade Theme:

- Three**
- Jesus continues His life and work through His Church.

Objective:

- To deepen the child's understanding of the Church and to help the child experience the Church as a Christian community.

Profession of Faith

- The complete Apostles' Creed

Words to be taught:

- Annunciation, Assumption, Bishop, Deacon, Disciple, Lay Man, Lay Woman, Parables, Pastor, Pope, Priest, Religious Brother, Religious Sister, Samaritan, Savior, Stewardship, Trinity, Word of God.

Liturgical symbols and gestures to be taught:

- Presider's Chair, Sacred Vessels, Sacristy, Vestments.

Prayers:

- Review Prayers of the Previous Grades 1-2:
- Sign of the Cross
- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory to the Father
- Act of Contrition
- Morning and evening prayer
- Grace at meals
- Spontaneous prayer
- Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament

Other Requirements

- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance.
- Children will be orally evaluated on the required prayers throughout the year.

- 3rd Grade liturgy, a special Mass for the 3rd Graders and they are expected to attend.

Text Books:

- **Finding God**, Loyola Press
- **A Parent Guide to Prayer**

Grade Theme:

Four

- As God's people we are called to live as Jesus did, choosing a life of love, characterized by obedience to God and service to others.

Objective:

- To help the children form their consciences according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, and to learn the basis of Christian morality as taught in the Old and New Testaments.

Profession of Faith:

- Review the Apostles' Creed

Words to be taught:

- Absolution, Beatitudes, Commandments, Communion of Saints, Conscience, Contrition, Corporal Works of Mercy, Covenant, Holiness, New Testament, Old Testament, Saint, Sanctus, Spiritual Works of Mercy, Temptation.

Liturgical symbols and gestures to be taught:

- Give Sacred Scripture a special place in the classroom.
- Encourage a reverent and prayerful attitude in the place of worship.
- Foster the children's participation in the prayer and worship of the parish community.

Prayers:

- Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary
- The Ten Commandments
- Sanctus
- Act of Faith
- Stations of the Cross
- Review Prayers taught in Grades 1 -3.

Other Requirements

- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance.
- Children will be orally evaluated on the required prayers throughout the year.
- 4th Grade Liturgy, a special Mass for the 4th grade & part of the Religious Education Program & the 4th grade is expected to attend.

Text Books:

- **Finding God**, Loyola Press
- **A parent Guide to Prayer**

Grade Theme:

Five

- Through the sacraments the Church celebrates Christ's saving actions in our lives.

Objective:

- To help the child experience and understand the rites of the sacraments and so become a more conscious and active participant in the Church's sacramental life.

Profession of Faith:

- Review the Apostles' Creed

Words to be taught:

- Absolution, Confession, Contrition, Evangelization, Gloria, Minister, Ordination, Original Sin, Paschal Mystery, Sacrament, Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, Sacrament of Confirmation, Sacrament of Holy Orders, Sacrament of Matrimony, Sign, Transubstantiation, Vocation.

Liturgical symbols and gestures to be taught:

- Give Sacred Scripture a special place in the classroom.
- Encourage a reverent and prayerful attitude in the place of worship.
- Foster the children's participation in the prayer and worship of the parish community, in particular in the rites of the Sacraments.

Prayers:

- Gloria

- Responses of the Mass
- Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary
- Act of Love
- Review Prayers from the Previous Grades 1-4

Other Requirements

- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance.
- Children will be orally evaluated on the required prayers throughout the year.
- 5th Grade Liturgy, A special Mass for 5th Grade & they are expected to attend.

Text Books:

- **Finding God** Loyola Press
- **A Parent Guide to Prayer**

Grade Theme:

Six

- God's saving actions are found throughout history. The Bible, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, records God's plan of salvation.

Objective:

- To understand the Old Testament as the revelation of God in history of a people, a revelation fulfilled in the New Testament.

Profession of Faith:

- Review the Apostles' Creed

Words to be taught:

- Bible, Canticle, Chosen People, Community, Exodus, Incarnation, Inspiration, Lector, Manna, Magnificat, Paschal mystery, Passover, Prophet, Psalm, Revelation, Worship.

Liturgical symbols and gestures to be taught:

- Give Sacred Scripture a special place in the classroom.
- Encourage a reverent and prayerful attitude in the place of worship.
- Foster the children's participation in the prayer and worship of the parish community.

Prayers:

- Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

- Act of Hope

Review Prayers of the Previous Grades

- Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory to the Father, Act of Contrition, Responses of the Mass, Joyful and Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, Morning and evening prayer, Grace at meals, Spontaneous prayer, Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Act of Faith and Love, Stations of the Cross, Sanctus, Gloria.

Other Requirements

- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance.
- Children orally evaluated on the required prayers.
- 6th Grade Liturgy, A special Mass for 6th Grade. 6th Graders are expected to attend as part of the Religious Education Program

Text Books:

- **Finding God**, Loyola Press
- Student Bible
- **A Parent Guide to Prayer**

Grade Theme:
Seven

- The growth and change experienced during adolescence are part of the unfolding of God’s plan for our development as fully Christian persons.

Objectives:

- To develop in the young adolescent a sense of self- worth and self-respect nurtured and strengthened by a knowledge of God’s love.
- To acquaint the young adolescent with an understanding of the virtues necessary for a life of goodness and faith.

Prayers:

- Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary

Review Prayers of the Previous Grades

- Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory to the Father, Act of Contrition, Responses of the Mass, Complete Mysteries of the Rosary, Morning and Evening prayer, Grace at meals, Spontaneous prayer, Prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, Act of Faith. Love, and Hope, Stations of the Cross, Sanctus, Gloria.

Other Requirements

- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance.
- 7th Grade Liturgy a special Mass for 7th Grade. 7th Graders are expected to attend as part of the Religious Education Program.

Text Books:

- **Finding God**, Loyola Press
- **A Parent Guide to Prayer**
- Meditation on Faith – Creed
-

Grade Eight

Preparation for Confirmation:

- **Text: Finding God**, Loyola Press
- **Workshops and Retreat:**
- To deepen the young adolescent's knowledge of the Church and to lead them to a fuller participation in its life and mission.
- Weekly & Holy Days Mass attendance
- Retreat is in January & is **mandatory** as part of the preparation for Confirmation.
- Confirmation is held in April.