

# Religious Education Program Parent Handbook 2020-2021

<https://stjosephberlin.org/religious-education>

St. Joseph the Good Provider Parish  
52 West Street P.O. Box 284  
Berlin, MA 01503

## Goals and Guidelines for Parents/Families

**Goals:** As a Christian parent you are the first and best teacher of your child. By your :

- Attendance at Mass and participation in the sacraments of the Church
- Sharing your faith, reverence for God and the Church
- Knowledge of Catholic teachings, morals and values
- Your love for Family and Community

you will teach your child more than can be found in a textbook. In addition, by participation in the Religious Education Program at St. Joseph the Good Provider, you are reaffirming the commitment which you made at your child's baptism: to raise them in the faith:

"Through Baptism, God enables us to participate in his life in Jesus Christ and makes us his children. It is through this sacrament that we receive the Holy Spirit and become members of the People of God, of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Baptism becomes our commitment to grow in this new life and to strive to acquire spiritual maturity. By baptism, God purifies us from sin. Intimately linked to Confirmation and to Eucharist, Baptism is, with these two sacraments, Christian Initiation. The child is baptized in the faith of their parents, godparents and of the Church."

It is the goal of the Religious Education Program to support you in this commitment. Through participation in the Holy Mass, Religious Education Classes, and Christian Service our goal using the six tasks of catechesis as our guidelines is as follows:

- **1. Promote knowledge of the faith** – Teach the "basics" of the faith as revealed in the signs of creation, Sacred Scripture, Catholic tradition and human experience.
- **2. Liturgical Education** – Teach about the form and meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments and help individuals prepare their minds and hearts to enter into these mysteries of our faith. The Church teaches that the sacraments are necessary for salvation. In each sacrament, the grace of the Holy Spirit unites us with Jesus our Savior and enables us to partake in the divine nature of God. (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 7129) Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, lead us to holiness, build up the Body of Christ and give praise to God. Sacraments "not only presuppose faith, but by word and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it." (Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, 59)

- **3. Moral Formation** – Teach the moral teachings of the Church which are the fulfillment of the Commandments. As members of the Body of Christ, our actions (both good and bad) have an effect on the Christian community. It is together, as Church – the Body of Christ – that we grow to maturity in faith and become true disciples of Christ.
- **4. Teaching to Pray** – Teach that a “climate of prayer” and participation in prayer invites individuals into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Prayer has been described in many different ways through the centuries; at its most basic level, prayer is talking with God. According to Scripture, it is the heart that prays. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2562) In experiencing different forms of prayer, we discover how best to talk with God. Our spirituality is our way of being in relationship with God. Each person is unique and has a unique relationship with God. The desire for God is written in the human heart because we are created by God and for God and God never ceases to draw us to Himself. Only in God will we find the truth and happiness for which we search. (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 27)
- **5. Education for Community Life** – Teach that the human person needs to live in society. Society is not optional, but a requirement of human nature. Love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor. (cf. 1 John, 4:20) Baptized into the Church, the Christian becomes a member of the one Body of Christ. As members of the Body of Christ, we no longer belong to ourselves, but to Jesus who suffered, died and rose for our salvation. (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor.5:15) Through exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue, we develop our potential and respond to our vocations.(cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1879)
- **6. Missionary Initiative** – Teach that all Christian service is an expression of love and is performed by Christians for the purpose of building up the Kingdom of God on earth. The church “exists to evangelize” that is, “to carry forth the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts of men and renew the human race.”(GDC, #46, EN, #18) All are called to live in such a way that they serve as witnesses of the faith to those around them.

### **Options for Religious Education 2020-2021:**

**Option #1 – Grades 3-8** – Homeschool. You will be given all you need – workbooks, lesson plans etc. At the end of each lesson there is a test. I would ask that you send to me by email the completed test.

**Option #2 – Grades 3-8** - In class participation following all of the guidelines for co-vid 19 safety.

**Option #2 – Grades 2,9, and 10** In class participation following all of the guidelines for co-vid 19 safety.

Grades 2 and 10 are sacramental years and it is desired that we prepare them together at the parish. Grade 9 is in preparation for Confirmation so it is desired that they be together.

Again, recognizing this is a unique year, we will work this out if there are individuals who cannot be at class due to the restrictions of co-vid 19.

**Guidelines:** To accomplish our goal in living out the mission of Jesus Christ we need the support of each family for our Pastor, Catechists and our Religious Education Program. We ask for your cooperation with the following guidelines:

- The **Holy Mass is the source and summit of all we do as Catholics.** Weekly attendance at Mass is an obligation of all Catholics. The graces from this are imperative to the understanding and application of what the children are learning. Faith builds upon nature – faith seeks understanding not the reverse. Each Religious Education Class grades 1-6 begins with the Holy Mass at 830 am. For grades 7-10 you may attend the Mass of your choice – 5:30pm on Saturday, 8:30 am on Sunday or 10:45m on Sunday or another Parish. Grades 7-10 are asked to sign in our Holy Mass Book kept in the Sacristy. If you attend a Mass at another Parish please sign in the book and what parish you attended. Fr. Tom reviews the book on a regular basis. If you and/or your child is not able to attend Mass in person then please find a Mass to attend by livestreaming. The Worcester Diocese livestreams all of the Masses. You can go to the St. Joe website for links to the Masses. <http://stjosephberlin.org>
- Attendance at all of the Religious Education Sessions is desired. If there is an occasion that arises that your child will not be in attendance please notify me at [maryjo.kriz@gmail.com](mailto:maryjo.kriz@gmail.com). He/She will be required to make up the work at home and will be given the materials to do so.
- For Sunday morning classes, for safety reasons, we ask that you come into the downstairs hall to pick up your child at the closing of the class.
- At the beginning of the year, there is a required parent meeting on the first day in order for me to communicate important information for each grade level. I ask that you make every effort to attend. The meeting place TBD. In the meantime, the children will be downstairs getting to know their teachers, and the location of their classes.
- Sacramental prep years – grades 2 and 10 are special years. The Sacramental prep is in addition to the scope and sequence of that year in Religious Education. There will be supplemental materials that we will ask that you do at home in order to fully prepare them for these beautiful sacraments.
- Email and flock note are the ways we stay in communication. Please make sure that we have on file a working email and cell number.
- If classes are cancelled for any reason you will be notified by flocknote.
- Please go to the website for pertinent information; <https://stjosephberlin.org/>

## **Safe Environment**

Your children's safety is of utmost importance to us. All of the catechists and volunteers that assist with the Religious Education Program have been CORId, have undergone

training as well as promise to abide by our Code of Ministerial Conduct. The materials we use can be found at:

<https://worcesterdiocese.org/safe-environment>

In addition, a Safe Environment Curriculum has been developed in order for the Parishes to provide Safe Environment Materials for parents and children.

During the first meeting for parents, those who have not viewed the video from Bishop McManus will have a chance to do so. You will have an opportunity to ask any questions at that time as well.

For those who would like their children to have the safe environment training we will provide that opportunity. For those who do not, you may decline.

In addition, we can provide the materials for you to review this material with your children when you deem appropriate.

The schedule and means which we will go about this year is subject to change at anytime given the circumstances surrounding co-vid 19.

#### Goals for 2020-2021

Every Day, Every Class, Every Student, an Encounter with Christ.

To know Him, to Love Him, to serve Him.

- To continue to Come to know Jesus as their Savior.
- Fall in love with Jesus and want to spend more time with Him (prayer, Mass, scripture)
- The Mass comes alive for them as an encounter with Christ and they are transformed every time they encounter Jesus. They will know the importance of and the graces of attending Mass every week.
- The Eucharist is the true Presence of Christ— body blood soul and divinity.
- Learn the prayers that are age appropriate so that they have them to pull from so they can pray.
- Learn to pray.
- Stay well.