

St. John the Evangelist Office of Faith Formation

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Monday-Thursday

11AM-12Noon; 1PM-4:30PM

Phone : (631) 878-0009, ext. 5

Email: faithformation@sjecm.org



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2018-19
Catechist Handbook

Fall 2018

Dear Catechist:

We have been blessed through the years with so many spirit-filled people to work with our children in Faith Formation sessions. The Staff of St. John the Evangelist welcomes our new catechists and remains sincerely grateful to all those who return to our catechetical team year after year.

As we begin another year of prayer, formation, and service to one another, I would like to extend my thanks to you, our catechists, for your sincere dedication and commitment to the younger members of our community. Our hope is that through our sharing of faith and practice of love, all our lives, young and old, will grow to be fully transformed by the presence of God.

Let us walk together and heed the words from the Book of Proverbs that reminds us to: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”*

In His peace,



Michelle Pirraglia
Director of Faith Formation

Accident Reporting

If a student is injured or needs medical attention in anyway, please send him/her to the Nurse's office with another student or send a student to the Office to ask for assistance.

Arrivals and Departures

Levels 1, 2 & Heritage meet on Saturdays at 8:30AM-9:30AM or 10AM-11AM.

Levels 3-6 meet on Mondays at 4:45PM-5:45PM / 6PM-7PM or Tuesdays, 4:45PM-5:45PM or 6PM-7PM.

Levels 7 meets on Monday evenings at 6PM-7PM or 7:15PM-8:15PM

Level 8 meets on Tuesdays at 6PM-7PM or 7:15PM-8:15 PM.

Parents are asked to sign their children in/out at the classrooms. **No child should be dismissed without a parent/guardian or staff member.**

Parents are asked to present a note to you at the beginning of class if they require an early dismissal. The student will be signed out from the Nurse's office.

Attendance

Your class folder can be found and returned to the Nurse's Office each week. It will contain the attendance roster, weekly sign in/out sheets, catechist updates, as well as any announcements that need to go home with the students. You are asked to put any letters or information you receive from parents in this folder.

Please be sure parents sign their children in and out, as that is our legal attendance record. Please take attendance each week by checking off the names of the children who are present. This roster & sign-in sheets are legal documents that we are required to keep. Please do not take these papers home.

Building Safety

For the protection of the children, the doors of the school will be locked 15 minutes after each session begins. No one will be allowed in the school without the permission of a staff member or hall monitor. For safety reasons, catechists are asked to remain with their students at all times. If a situation arises in which you need assistance, please send a student to the Nurse's Office and a staff member will be sent to your classroom. ***PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CLASS UNATTENDED!***

Bulletin / Website / Social Media

The Church bulletin, Facebook page, website and email are our official means of communication. Please try to check the Sunday bulletin each week for news from the Religious Ed office or visit: sjecm.org and click the link to Faith Formation. Please be sure we have your correct email address on file.

Follow us on Facebook: StJohn FaithFormation.

Catechist Attendance

Please contact the Office (preferably via email) if you know in advance that you will not be able to teach on a certain day. This gives us time to get a substitute. If an emergency arises or you become ill, please call the Office as soon as possible so that we can arrange for coverage. **Saturday catechists are asked to email Michelle by Thursday in order for her to arrange for emergency coverage.** If Saturday teachers need to cancel after Thursday, please email Michelle ASAP: mpirraglia@sjecm.org.

Catechists' Letters to Parents

Please give Michelle, **one week in advance**, a copy of any letter you intend to send home to your parents/guardians. By doing so, she will be able to proofread your letter, make copies and have a copy on hand for reference in the event that a parent/guardian calls regarding the contents of your letter. Any outside resource (DVDs, activities, projects, etc.) must have prior approval by the Director of Faith Formation before it can be presented to the class.

Classroom Clean-up

Please encourage the students to clean up the classroom by cleaning off the tables before they leave the classroom. If you moved the tables, please have the students move them back to their original position. Please make sure that all windows are closed and locked.

Classroom Preparation

If you need any audio/visual materials (videos, DVDs, TV, etc) for your next class, please enter your request in the media book located in the Nurse's Office or call the Office. *(A list of DVDs is available at the office).* **If you need copies run off, please give them to us (ideally) the week before as we do not have access to a copy machine in the school building.** Likewise, if you need special paper or supplies, please let us know as soon as possible. Handouts for various seasonal activities, as well as Church Tour guide, Stations of the Cross, etc., are available at our office. Please write down your request for handouts in our "Teacher Correspondence" notebook or call the office prior to class.

Emergency Closing

In the event that class is cancelled for inclement weather, you do not have to call your students. Parents/guardians are instructed to tune into News 12 or log onto either NEWS12.COM or our website for closing information. Should Our Lady Queen of Apostles close for inclement weather, Religious Ed classes will be cancelled for that day as well. An email alert will be sent as well.

Food in the Classroom

Many of our students have severe food allergies. For their safety, please do not encourage the children to bring snacks or drinks into the classroom. **No food or drink is allowed in any of the classrooms.**

Catechist Formation & VIRTUS Training

All volunteers at St. John the Evangelist are required to complete the following:

- Background Check
- VIRTUS: *Protecting God's Children Abuse Awareness Course and Online Training*. All staff members and catechists are required to attend this program to familiarize themselves with detecting possible sexual misconduct. Further training bulletins for catechists are sent to you through the VIRTUS website (virtus.org).
- Commitment of time to pray, prepare, and teach each lesson.

Catechists are encouraged to further their education through our Diocese's professional page drvc-faith.org where information on the following can be found:

- *Virtual Learning Link* launched through a partnership between our Diocese and the University of Dayton.
- Basic and Advanced Certificate courses in Theology such as Scripture, Church History, the Sacraments, etc. These 10-hour classes are offered here and at other parishes throughout the diocese.

Church Tours, Stations of the Cross

Currently, the Church is under renovation and unavailable for Church tours. However, once renovations are complete, catechists may make a request for a Church tour. **These requests must be made at least 1 week in advance, and are subject to availability.** Visual lessons through Church "tours" and praying the Stations (in the Church or on the grounds behind the school) are the original "Catechism book," especially useful with emerging readers. Please let Michelle know if and when you wish to participate in either of the activities. Please feel free to approach any of our priests (Fr. John, Fr. Felix or Fr. Michael) to pay a special visit your classroom or to lead a Church tour.

Discipline and Dress Code

Students are expected to behave in a proper and courteous Christian manner at all times by showing respect and being cooperative with staff members, catechists and other students.

They are expected to:

- Show respect for the rights, property and safety of themselves and others.
- Express themselves with socially acceptable language and gestures.
- Dress appropriately in a Christian manner.

Should a student becomes disruptive to the class, you are asked to send the student to the Nurse's Office. Michelle or a Staff member will speak with the child and if necessary, contact the parent/guardian. Please do not let one student's disruptive behavior prevent you from teaching the other students in the class. Religious Ed classes are a privilege, not an entitlement. Students who do not behave properly may be placed on Home Study.

We have a firm policy against harassment. As followers of Jesus we hold each person to be a child of God, deserving of respect and kindness. Please notify Michelle if any such harassment occurs so that measures can be taken to prevent such an occurrence from happening in the future.

Syllabus, Homework & Tests

Each Grade Level is assigned a syllabus, which catechists are asked to follow to ensure that all pertinent materials for that year are covered. The assignment of homework/tests is strongly encouraged. Students should bring home their Bibles and workbooks in order to work on the family page during the week. Students should be encouraged to say their prayers and read from their Bible each evening.

They should most especially be *repeatedly urged* to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days in order to hear the Gospel message and incorporate it into their everyday lives. **Mass attendance is a vital component of Religious Education.**

Parental Concerns

Please let Michelle know as soon as possible if a parent comes to your with a concern such as:

- A lesson or subject matter that is being taught
- Another child's behavior in the class
- Health or learning concerns of their child
- Inability to get their child to class
- Unusual circumstances at home

The sooner we know we know about a parental concern, the sooner we can contact the parent/guardian and remedy the situation.



**To "be" catechists!
Not to "work" as catechists.
Catechesis is a vocation:
"being a catechist",
this is the vocation,
not "working" as a catechist.**

Pope Francis,
Congress on Catechesis



Excerpts from the Installation Mass homily of our Bishop, Most Reverend John Oliver Barres:

"We celebrate today the Memorial of St. John Bosco, the great 19th Century mystic of Catholic education and the formation of young people. He once made a visit to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome with his Salesian companions and humbly and serenely pointed to the niche in the Basilica where his statue would one day be placed after his canonization.

Similarly today, St. John Bosco points us to the nature of love. He writes: "Where true love is the guiding principle, no one wants anything but the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

This simple sentence drives to the heart of the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the universal call to holiness and mission that is the logic of every person's baptism.

You and I are called to be men and women of communion and mission. We are called to be saints...

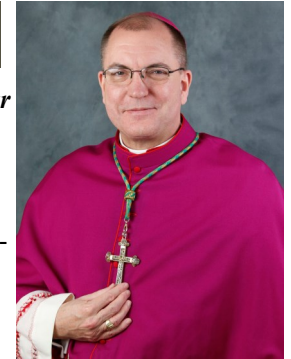
Pope Francis and the American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald have something in common. They both warn us against the pursuit of "artificial paradises." Fitzgerald would warn us in *The Great Gatsby*, a novel fictionally set in this Diocese of Rockville Centre, of the trap of American consumerism.

Pope Francis comes to similar conclusions at the beginning of *The Joy of the Gospel*. He writes: "The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience... That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God's will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ"...

We celebrate this Mass today asking the Holy Spirit for new and creative approaches to strengthening and deepening the missionary dimension of marriage, family, and parish life and for new approaches to pastoral and strategic planning that are both Spirit-driven and data-driven, and that break through a tired and broken "us vs. them" self-referential mentality and cultivate a mutual support and communion between the mission of the Diocese and the mission of every individual parish...

A word to the children, youth and young adults of the Diocese: I am ecstatic about your futures in Jesus Christ and the way you, in the words of Pope Francis, "shake up the Church and the World" with your enthusiasm and desire to dedicate your lives to Jesus and the mission of the Catholic Church in the World. I cannot wait to meet you. I cannot wait to serve you...."

~Bishop's Installation Mass, January 31, 2017, DRVC



A Catechist's Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
Having been called to be a catechist by my parish,
I turn to You for help in accomplishing this
important task.*

*Give me the patience to treat each person with the
dignity and respect I have for You.
Help me to study, understand and apply Sacred
Scripture and Tradition more fully in my own life.*

*Fill my heart with love for You and allow me to feel
that same love for those I teach.*

*Knowing that You are beside me, I will have the
strength to face every situation and the courage to
speak the truth in love.*

*Help me to give glory to God the Father, Son and
Holy Spirit, in all I do and say.*

Amen



THE CHURCH NEEDS YOU. YOUR ENTHUSIASM.
YOUR CREATIVITY AND THE JOY THAT IS SO
CHARACTERISTIC OF YOU.

POPE FRANCIS

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