

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
CATHOLIC CHURCH
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION



WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST

FAMILY HANDBOOK

9080 CINCINNATI-DAYTON RD.
WEST CHESTER, OH 45069
513-777-6433
WWW.STJOHNWC.ORG

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

We are the Catholic Christian community of St. John, diverse in age, talent and theology. Our stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure provides opportunity for spiritual and personal growth. We are called to love and serve God through each other by caring for those within our community and beyond and by creating an environment that promotes Christian growth and faith. As a Christian community, we help individuals and families become more Christ-present through worship, education and service. We are actively committed to reach out selflessly and prayerfully to others.

We warmly and openly welcome all who seek to deepen their faith in Jesus Christ.

***** **W**elcome! *****

The Religious Education of the children of St. John Parish is a communal effort among Parents, the Religious Education Staff & Pastoral Staff, and parish. Working in cooperation, we can ensure that the religious formation of our children is relevant to their lives, appropriate to their age, and enjoyable. The Church teaches that parents are the primary religious educators of their children (CCC 1653), and we are here to support you in this mission. Through prayer and our shared experiences, we can help our children become people of deep and lasting faith in the God who loves them and cares for them. We can teach them to reach out to others in small ways that they can readily understand in the hope that this spirit of giving will help them develop into loving, caring Christian adults. We thank you for your support and cooperation. All Christian education finds its source in the Sacramental life of the Church, especially in opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. “The Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church’s life” (CCC 1407). As parents, you can ensure that your child is leading a rich life of faith by attending Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Children are admitted to the Parish School of Religion without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability or handicapping conditions. If your child has a medical condition, food allergies, or any special needs, please let us know. This information should be noted on their Emergency Medical Form. **Please make sure to read this entire handbook and bookmark its location for future reference. This Parent Handbook will only be available online; we ask that you bookmark it for future reference.**

ROLE OF THE PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM & CATECHISTS

- ◆ Create and maintain a welcoming, safe and caring environment for all children and youth
- ◆ Present the doctrines and teachings of the Catholic faith in an authentic, engaging and systematic fashion
- ◆ Invite children and youth to ongoing faith formation which includes Scripture, dialogue, and liturgical, communal and personal prayer experiences
- ◆ Recognize and respect the dignity and influence of family and culture
- ◆ Witness to love of God and the Catholic Church, its evangelizing mission, and call to missionary discipleship

ROLE OF PARENTS

- ◆ Keep God at the center of family life through prayer and witness
- ◆ Attend Mass regularly with your children; share thoughts and reflections on the readings and homily
- ◆ Intentionally and joyfully participate in parish life using your talents and gifts for the common good
- ◆ Prioritize continuing faith formation in your children through regular attendance at weekly classes and parish events, dialoguing and evaluating for spiritual growth
- ◆ Show gratitude to God, children and neighbor for the gifts each brings to the individual and parish community
- ◆ Be attentive to, and supportive of, the role that pastor and catechists play in the religious formation of your children
- ◆ Witness to love of God and the Catholic Church, its evangelizing mission, and call to missionary discipleship

ROLE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- ◆ Conduct yourself like a true disciple of Christ, treating everyone with kindness, fairness, and love
- ◆ Be punctual and prepared for PSR—bring folders, textbooks, etc., and be ready to participate and share
- ◆ Pray reverently with your class; be ready and willing to learn prayers and prayer forms
- ◆ Remember that every young person has the right and privilege to learn in a safe and caring environment; show respect for different learning styles, opinions, questions
- ◆ Take good care of parish property; help to set up and clean up when needed
- ◆ Witness to love of God and the Catholic Church, its evangelizing mission, and call to missionary discipleship

TEXTBOOKS GRADES 1-8 AND HOME STUDY ALL GRADES

Finding God, published by Loyola Press, is the textbook series used in all classes.

Our faith is meant to be lived out in our homes, at our schools, in our jobs, and in our communities. *Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts* is a faith formation program that invites children and their parents into a new way of living in relationship with God, family, community, and the world. This comprehensive program provides **sound doctrine, Scripture, Tradition, and prayer** through experiential activities that make these essential lessons part of a lifelong practice of faith.

Supplemental materials are also used in addition to the textbook. We incorporate art, dramatization, videos, music, and children's literature into the program to enhance some lessons.

Finding God has a web site--<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2021/> -- which includes activities, games, and reflections for families and children.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All employees, clerics and regular volunteers must receive training in the Virtus Training Sessions which includes the 2018 Decree on Child Protection published by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and participate in *Selection.com* for the purpose of a background check. A regular volunteer is anyone who functions in a regular, significant relationship with children, such as a catechist (PSR teacher or assistant), scout leader, coach, etc. Any volunteer who works with children must comply with this policy.

CLASSROOM SERVICE PROJECT

Children will work together planning and implementing as a class (or with multiple classes) a service learning project that is age-appropriate and demonstrates ways that they can serve in their church, family and larger community. Catechists will be in contact with parents about any special activities and supplies needed for these projects. Presentation of service projects and/or key learning will be on the last day of classes. Parents and guardians are welcome to join us for this final class and the show-case of service projects.



GENERATIONS OF FAITH

Generations of Faith is a series of gatherings designed for the entire parish, all generations, all family members! Attendance (including all members of your household) is considered to be part of the regular program for all children registered in PSR, including those students in the Home Study program. **Children cannot be dropped off for this event; parent partnership and supervision is required!**

Generations of Faith...

- ◆ Is an innovative approach to faith formation for all members of a community
- ◆ Gives you a way to grow in faith as grandparents, parents, young adults, and children.
- ◆ Provides ways for parents to learn with their children and it's easier to carry the learning home with you.
- ◆ Helps parents share faith and values with their children
- ◆ Is an opportunity for families to spend time together (and share a meal together!)
- ◆ Is for everyone!!!!!!
- ◆ To register and if you and your family would like to help with either of these events please log on to <https://www.stjohnwc.org/generations-of-faith-registration-form.html>

Registration is necessary and you will have **your choice of dates**. The events (including a salad and pizza dinner) are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday evenings on the following dates:

Oct. 6 or 7, 2020 **Feb 9 or 10, 2021**
6:00pm—8:00 pm

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Pastor: Fr. Don West

Parish Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday:
8:30am—5:30pm
Friday: 8:30am—12noon

Parish Website: <http://www.stjohnwc.org/>

**Pastoral Associate for PSR, Grades 1– 8,
First Reconciliation, First Eucharist:**

Mary Montour,

Phone: 513-777-6433 ext. 118
Email: mmontour@stjohnwc.org

PSR Administrative Assistant:

Karen Simmons,
Phone: 513-777-6433 ext. 111
Email: ksimmons@stjohnwc.org

Early Childhood Coordinator:

Katie Behrle,
Email: kbehrle@stjohnwc.org

Confirmation:

Annie Mesewicz,
Phone: 513-777-6433, ext. 121
Email: amesewicz@stjohnwc.org

Grades 1—8 Textbook: ***Finding God***,
Loyola Press, © 2021

***Finding God* Textbook Website:**

<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2021/>

REGISTRATION/FEES

Registration will take place beginning in late spring for the following school year. Registration forms for the coming year are in the Parish Office and available online at <http://www.stjohnwc.org/childrens-faith-formation.html>. St. John offers an early bird fee of \$70.00 per child, with a max of \$210 per family if the forms are postmarked by a published deadline (this year, July 31, 2020). The regular fee of \$80.00 per child, with a max of \$240 per family, applies from Aug 1 on. If PSR fees cause a hardship for your family, please contact Mary Montour at 513-777-6433 Ext 118. No child will be denied admission to the program because of inability to pay. Refund of fees is available if requested prior to first class. **Weekly/full-time volunteers for the PSR program will be exempt from fees for all of their children, including their children in the Early Childhood Program.**

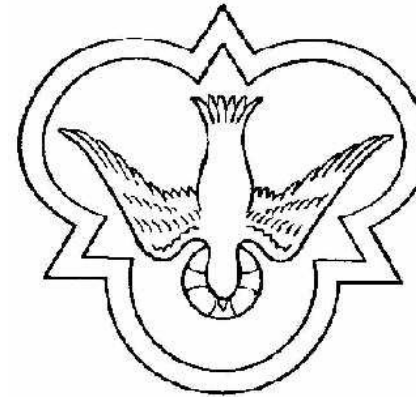
MEETING TIMES & ATTENDANCE

Classes meet weekly (with occasional scheduled breaks)

- ◆ **Grades 1—6: Sunday, 10:45—12:00pm, in the Parish Center**
- ◆ **Grades 1—6: Wednesday, 6:30—7:45 pm, in the Parish Center**
- ◆ **Grades 7—8: Sunday, 5:00—6:30pm, in Favret Hall, South Wing**

It is important for your child to form a faith community where they feel comfortable to share their faith with their peers and teacher. Regular attendance helps children and youth to feel comfortable in the class setting, and is expected. Attendance records are kept on file in administrator’s office. If your child will not be present, please call the PSR Office in the Center (513-755-4973) or Mary Montour, (513-777-6433, x.118), or email mmontour@stjohnwc.org to report the absence.

- We respectfully ask parents to notify us if child(ren) need to be absent. Families will be contacted to talk about multiple unreported absences.
- Students wishing to switch sessions (either Sun/Wed) because of unforeseen schedule changes may do so **one** time and remain in that session for the rest of the year.
- Parents will be responsible for helping absent children to read, reflect on, and discuss the material from missed class sessions. Most often the missed lesson will be sent home with children at the following class. Home Study lessons can be found online on the Parent Page under each grade level at: <https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2021/>



CONFIRMATION

Youth typically in the 9th grade or higher prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Weekly gatherings will be held in the Parish Center for preparation in community. For more information please contact Scott Steinke, Pastoral Associate, at ssteinke@stjohnwc.org, or 513-777-6433 ext. 115 for more information.

CONFIRMATION DATES

Sun, 8/30	12:00pm	Parent Meeting, Chapel
Sat, 9/26	1:00—5:00pm	Retreat, Pt 1, Parish Center
Sun, 10/4	4:30—6:30pm	Session 1, Parish Center
Sun, 10/18	4:30—6:30pm	Session 2, Parish Center-
Sun, 11/8	4:30—6:30pm (w/sponsor)	Session 3, Parish Center-
Sun, 11/15	4:30—6:30pm	Session 4, Parish Center-
Sun, 12/6	4:30—6:30pm	Session 5, Parish Center
Sun, 1/10	4:30—6:30pm	Session 6, Parish Center
Sun, 1/31	4:30—6:30pm	Session 7, Parish Center-
Sat, 2/6	1:00—5:00pm	Retreat, Pt 2, Parish Center
Sun, 2/21	4:30—5:30pm	Confirmation Practice
Sat, 2/27	5:00 Mass	Rite of Confirmation

*Other dates & information can be found at <https://www.stjohnwc.org/confirmation.html>

Candidates will share faith in small groups with a catechist/mentor. All sessions build upon each other and therefore we strongly encourage attendance at all sessions. Please contact Annie Mesewicz, amesewicz@stjohnwc.org, if your child must be absent, to talk about ways to make up the missed session.

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Children in the 2nd through 4th grade or higher prepare for the Sacrament of First Reconciliation. Preparation for the celebration of Reconciliation begins with the parents—the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. Home preparation takes place using the RCL *Reconciliation* materials. There is an additional fee to cover the books, materials, and retreat.



FIRST RECONCILIATION DATES

Mon, 9/28 7:00—8:00pm Parent Meeting, Pavilion
 Mon, 10/26 7:00—8:00pm Parent-Child Gathering, Church
 Mon, 11/16 6:30-8:00pm Reconciliation Retreat, Parish Center
 Mon, 12/14 7:00pm First Reconciliation at Parish Advent

FIRST EUCHARIST

Children in the 2nd grade or higher prepare for the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Preparation for the celebration of First Eucharist begins with the parents—the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. Home preparation takes place using the RCL Benziger *Eucharist* materials. There is an additional fee for the books, materials, and retreat. Please visit <http://www.stjohnwc.org/first-eucharist.html> for more information. In addition, there is also a Show and Tell Mass and Eucharist retreat at the parish. The child and parent will also meet with a member of the pastoral staff towards the end of their preparation in order to assess their readiness for the sacrament. First Eucharist celebrations will be held during regular Masses during the Easter season. Information will be sent to you in **early January**.

FIRST EUCHARIST DATES

Thurs, 1/25, 7:00-8:00pm Parent Meeting, Favret Hall
 Sat, 1/30, 5:00 Mass Enrollment Ritual
 Sun, 1/31, 11:00 Mass Enrollment Ritual
 Mon, 2/22, 7:00-7:45pm Show & Tell Mass, Church
 Mon, 3/1, 7:00-8:00pm Parent-Child Gathering, Church
 Tues, 3/16—Sun, 3/21 First Eucharist Chats, Parish Offices
 Sat, 4/17 9-11:30am First Eucharist Retreat, Parish Center
 Sat, 5/1 5:00 Mass First Eucharist
 Sun, 5/2 9:00 Mass First Eucharist
 Sun, 5/9 11:00 Mass First Eucharist
 Sat, 5/15 5:00 Mass First Eucharist

ST. JOHN PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION 2018-2019

SUNDAYS, Gr 1 – 6

10:45am—12:00pm

Sept 13, 20, 27
 *Oct 11, 18, 25
 Nov 1, 8, 15, 22
 Dec 6, 13
 Jan 10, 17, 24, 31
 *Feb 21, 28
 March 7, 14, 21
 April 11, 18, 25

WEDNESDAYS, Gr 1 – 6

6:30pm—7:45pm

Sept 16, 23, 30
 *Oct 14, 21, 28
 Nov 4, 11, 18
 Dec 2, 9, 16
 Jan 13, 20, 27
 *Feb 17, 24
 March 3, 10, 17, 24
 April 14, 21, 28

SUNDAYS, Gr 7 – 8

5:00pm—6:30pm

Sept 13, 20, 27
 *Oct 11, 18, 25
 Nov 1, 8, 15, 22
 Dec 6, 13
 Jan 10, 17, 24, 31
 *Feb 21, 28
 March 7, 14, 21
 April 11, 18, 25



HOME STUDY

Gr 1—8

Sept 13 Parent Only Mtg
 1:00—2:00 Favret Hall

PARENT-STUDENT GATHERINGS

Sundays, 1:00—2:00,
 Favret Hall
 Nov 15 & March 14

All Chapter Assessments Due:
 April 30, 2021

PSR SPECIAL EVENTS

*Oct 6 & 7 Generations of Faith
 6:00—8:00pm
 Oct 18 World Youth Day Mass
 9:00am
 Oct 25 Trunk'n'Treat
 6:00—7:30pm
 Nov 14 Advent Family Event
 9:00—10:30am
 Dec 12 Breakfast in Bethlehem
 9:00—10:30am
 Dec 14 Parish Penance Svc 7:00pm
 *Feb 9 & 10 Generations of Faith
 6:00—8:00pm
 March 8 Parish Penance Svc 7:00pm
 March 28 Easter Egg Hunt
 12:30—2:00pm
 June 21—25 Vacation Bible School
 9:00am—12:00pm
 June 22—25 Jr High Summer Camp

MISSED CLASSES

It is important for each child to learn all of the material covered in the PSR year. Parents of children in grades 1—6 should go over any missed lesson(s) with your child(ren). Please refer to the schedule in your child's folder; you will be provided with the missed lesson material from the text. If you want additional help with teaching the lesson to your child, please refer to the Loyola Press website on page 6. ***Please note that lessons are not necessarily taught in numerical order.***

CODE OF CONDUCT

• **Respect for Others**

Appropriate classroom behavior is expected of every child. Students are expected to demonstrate respect and courtesy toward their teachers and classmates. Disruptive behavior such as speaking out of turn, shouting, teasing and the use of profanity cannot be tolerated. Parents will be contacted if a pattern of behavior needs your assistance.

• **Ready to Learn**

Children are expected to come to class prepared, bringing their folder, homework, and textbook, if applicable. (Typically student texts are kept in the classroom cabinets.) DO NOT BRING: Soccer balls, basketballs, squirt guns, candy, gum or toys from home. Please make sure to use the restroom before or after the start of classes. Please share any information with your child's catechist regarding calming or stimulating devices needed during class. **Cell phones may not be used during class time, unless specifically instructed by the catechist. Please instruct your child to follow the instructions of the catechists regarding silencing phones or keeping them out of sight.** No drugs or weapons of any kind may be brought into St. John Center.

• **Rewards and Discipline**

Students who demonstrate behavior or attitudes that show that they are trying to be "Christ to One Another" will be noted by catechist teachers. Students who are disruptive and have difficulty calming themselves will be brought to the office and parents will be notified of the inappropriate behavior by phone or in writing. The Administrator retains the right to make exceptions to the disciplinary rules and consequences if necessary.

PARENT CONNECTION

Parents and guardians are the first and foremost educators of their children in the faith. We want to share with opportunities to be part of discussions, prayers, and learning with your child on their faith journey.

All student textbooks have perforated pages and typically, as each lesson is covered, the pages are sent home with the children. Parents are encouraged to review the lesson, expound on the family activities suggested and unfinished work with their children. Homework may be given at the discretion of the catechist.

Our young people need mentors in their lives to show them how to live out their Catholic faith and how they are called by God to use their gifts for their families, parish, and larger community. There are many opportunities to share your gifts and talents and mentor our young people. You might consider the following:

- **Catechist, Assistant Catechist, Special Education Assistant or Substitute (1st-6th Grade Teacher (Wed or Sun))**
- **Substitute Catechist or One-Time Event Volunteer**— On call to help as needed.
- **Jr. High Catechists (7th-8th grade - Sunday)** - Share your faith and join in discussions and activities with our young people. Note: Parent helpers scheduled for each week. They are present to facilitate conversation, etc., but will not prepare lessons.
- **Musician/Song Leader** - Help with songs for prayer services through the year.
- **Office Assistant (weekly, Sun or Wed)** - Prepare materials, assist catechists as necessary, etc.
- **Guest Speaker to Classroom (Sun or Wed)** - Speak on a topic which could include: your experience with one of the sacraments (Eucharist, Reconciliation, Marriage, RCIA process, etc.), different ways that you pray, how you serve at St. John, etc.
- **Sacramental Team** - Help with the special retreats for those receiving First Communion and First Reconciliation. Parents of children receiving these sacraments should not volunteer., but rather enjoy the day with your child!
- **Generations of Faith Team** - Help plan seasonal activities (typically once or twice a year) for parishioners of all ages to enjoy learning together.