

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
CATHOLIC CHURCH
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION



WE ARE CHOSEN

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 through SafeParish Training 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 any adult 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. 5 or 6 2021	Feb 15 or 16, 2022
6:00pm—8:00 pm	
Parish Center	

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/>

**Director of 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:

Joe Neidhard
Phone: 513-777-6433, ext. 114
Email: jneidhard@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, 2021). 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.**

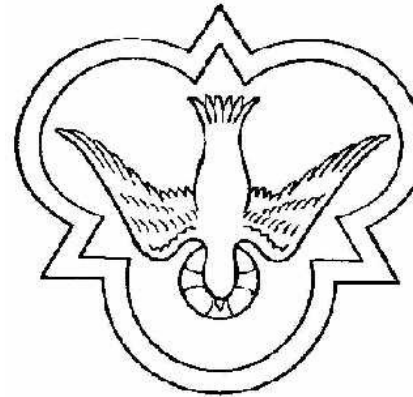
MEETING TIMES & ATTENDANCE

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, provided there is space in the desired class.
- 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 Joe Neidhard, Youth Minister, at jneidhard@stjohnwc.org, or 513-777-6433 ext. 114 for more information.

CONFIRMATION DATES

Sun, 8/29	12:30pm	Parent Meeting, Favret Hall
Sun, 10/10	4:30—6:30pm	Session 1, Parish Center
Sun, 10/17	4:30—6:30pm	Session 2, Parish Center
Sat, 10/23	1:00—5:00pm	Retreat, Pt 1, Parish Center
Sun, 11/7	4:30—6:30pm	Session 3, Parish Center
Sun, 11/14	4:30—6:30pm	Session 4, Parish Center
Sun, 12/5	4:30—6:30pm	Session 5, Parish Center
Sun, 12/12	4:30—6:30pm	Session 6, Parish Center
Sun, 1/9	4:30—6:30pm	Session 7, Parish Center
Sun, 1/16	4:30—6:30pm	Session 8, Parish Center
Sun, 1/30	4:30—6:00pm	Confirmation Rehearsal
Sat, 2/5	1:00—5:00pm	Retreat, Pt 2, Parish Center
Sat, 2/12	5:00 Mass	Rite of Confirmation
Sun, 3/6	4:30—6:30pm	Mystagogia

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 Joe Neidhard, jneidhard@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, 9/27	7:00—8:00pm	Parent Meeting, Favret Hall
Mon, 10/25	7:00—8:00pm	Parent-Child Gathering, Church
Mon, 11/15	6:30-8:00pm	Reconciliation Retreat, Parish Center
Mon, 12/13	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

Mon, 1/24, 7:00-8:00pm	Parent Meeting, Favret Hall
Sat, 1/29, 5:00 Mass	Enrollment Ritual
Sun, 1/30, 11:00 Mass	Enrollment Ritual
Mon, 2/7, 7:00-7:45pm	Show & Tell Mass, Church
Mon, 2/28, 7:00-8:00pm	Parent-Child Gathering, Church
Tues, 3/29—Sun, 3/31	First Eucharist Chats, Parish Offices
Sat. 4/2 9-11:30am	First Eucharist Retreat, Parish Center
Sat, 4/30 5:00 Mass	First Eucharist
Sun, 5/1 9:00 Mass	First Eucharist
Sun, 5/8 11:00 Mass	First Eucharist
Sat, 5/14 5:00 Mass	First Eucharist

ST. JOHN PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION 2018-2019

SUNDAYS, Gr 1 – 6

10:45am—12:00pm

Sept 12, 19, 26
 *Oct 3, 10, 17, 24
 Nov 7, 14, 21
 Dec 5, 12, 19
 Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
 *Feb 6, 13, 27
 March 6, 20, 27
 April 3

WEDNESDAYS, Gr 1 – 6

6:30pm—7:45pm

Sept 8, 15, 22, 29
 *Oct 13, 20, 27
 Nov 3, 10, 17
 Dec 1, 8, 15
 Jan 12, 19, 26
 *Feb 2, 9, 23
 March 2, 9, 23, 30
 April 6

SUNDAYS, Gr 7 – 8

5:00pm—6:30pm

Sept 12, 19, 26
 *Oct 3, 10, 17, 24
 Nov 7, 14, 21
 Dec 5, 12, 19
 Jan 9, 16, 23, 30
 *Feb 6, 13, 27
 March 6, 20, 27
 April 3



HOME STUDY

Gr 1—8

Sept 13 Parent Only Mtg
 7:00—8:00 Favret Hall

PARENT-STUDENT GATHERINGS

Sundays, 1:00—2:00,
 Favret Hall
 Nov 7, Jan 23, March 6

All Chapter Assessments Due:
 April 8, 2022

PSR SPECIAL EVENTS

*Oct 5 & 6	Generations of Faith 6:00—8:00pm
Oct 17	World Youth Day Mass 9:00am
Oct 24	Trunk'n'Treat 6:00—7:30pm
Nov 20	Advent Family Event 9:00—10:30am
Dec 11	Breakfast in Bethlehem 9:00—10:30am
Dec 13	Parish Penance Svc 7:00pm
*Feb 15 & 16	Generations of Faith 6:00—8:00pm
March 28	Parish Penance Svc 7:00pm
April 10	Easter Egg Hunt 12:30—2:00pm
June 20—24	Vacation Bible School 9:00am—12:00pm
June 21—24	Jr High Summer Camp

SNOW DAYS / EMERGENCY CLOSING

If the Lakota school district cancels on a Wednesday due to inclement weather, our evening classes will be cancelled as well.

Sunday morning classes will only be cancelled if weather is so bad that most of our catechists cannot make it to church. (Mass is never cancelled, so generally, Sunday morning classes will go forward too.) Jr High PSR cancellation will be determined on Sunday afternoon around 2pm. Please check your email, the website, & Facebook for more information. Please use your best judgment regarding travel conditions from your home to church.

PROGRESS REPORTS

The purpose of the progress report is to facilitate better communication between the catechists and families. Attendance will be noted on the progress report. Catechists will comment on the child's understanding of material, interaction with catechists and peers, and other relevant issues. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's catechist throughout the year with questions, concerns, comments, and gratitude. Progress reports will be mailed out during the week of Dec 20, 2021 and at the end of the program during the week of April 10, 2022, for all students.

COMMUNICATION

We try to keep parents informed in various ways.

- Periodic emails are sent to families highlighting upcoming events.
- Occasional news notes are sent home with the children.
- **A Weekly-E-memo** with reminders about that week's events is sent out to all parishioners. If you would like to be added to this email list visit our website, click on parish info > parish forms > new email subscription.
- The **Sunday Bulletin** provides up-to-date, pertinent parish and PSR information
- **Facebook** is another communication avenue for parish-wide activities
- **Eagle's Wing's Newsletter** is a bi-monthly newsletter that is mailed out with spiritual readings and reflections.
- If a family situation requires multiple communications or special instructions, please contact Mary Montour, Pastoral Associate for PSR.

DROP OFF & PICK UP

St. John Parish Center is the location for our Grades 1—6 formation sessions. Children should *always* be dropped off and picked up at the Center. The South Wing in Favret Hall will be the location for our Jr High (7-8 grade) Faith Formation. Occasionally, a class may visit the church or prayer trail as part of their lesson, but arrival and dismissal are always from the Parish Center.

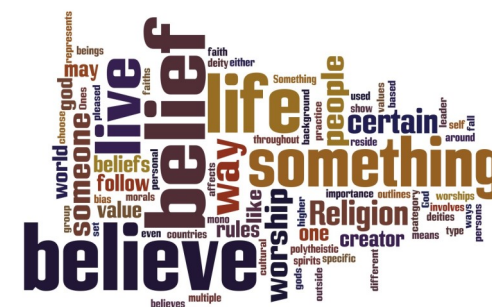
For the safety of all children, parents should park in a marked parking space when they bring or pick up their child. Please form a line of cars within the area marked off with cones, so that children are not darting in front of cars. Sunday morning PSR classes will enter and exit the Center through the front door ONLY. The side door of the Center will remain locked for the safety of the children.

Children in grades 1—3 should be accompanied into the building and will **not** be released from the classroom until they are picked up at the classroom door by an adult or an older sibling.

Children in grades 4—6 will be released from the classroom, but you are encouraged to enter the building to gather your children instead of expecting them to find you in the busy parking lot. Please use caution when entering and leaving the parking lot, especially when it is dark.

Youth in grades 7—8 will enter and exit Favret Hall through the front main entrance, but please feel free to enter the building to gather your children if you want. Please use caution when entering and leaving the parking lot, especially when it is dark.

Children should not arrive more than 10 minutes before the start of class and should be picked up promptly at the end of class. No child will be left alone, so children who are not picked up 10 minutes after dismissal will wait near the office with the Administrator and catechists, and parents will be called.



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 for snack and beverage. They are sometimes needed in the classroom, but will not be asked to prepare lessons.
- **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.

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 stimming 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 understand that “We Are Chosen” to be Christ-like 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.