



Saint Joan of Arc Parish Faith Formation Family Handbook

61 Canal Road, Orleans, MA 02653

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Introduction and welcome

Welcome to St. Joan of Arc Parish and to our Faith Formation program. We're happy you are here!

Philosophy of Faith Formation

Our Faith Formation program is committed to the role the family plays in being the primary catechists of their children. We are committed to working together with you, as partners, in the formation of your family's faith. We welcome your suggestions, concerns, and questions. We are open to helping with your needs as Catholic Christian families.

Mass

As we worship together, our weekend celebration of Mass is the center of our life as Catholics. Vatican Council II called the Eucharist "the source and summit of the life and mission of the Church." This is not an optional activity for a Catholic. We can attend either the Vigil Mass on Saturday evening or any of the Sunday Masses to nourish our souls. Weekly participation at Mass is an integral and essential part of your child's faith formation by assisting them in participating in songs, listening to the Word of God, and receiving the Body of Christ. We encourage you to join with the community of faith to worship.

We ask students to attend Mass every weekend with their parents and family and to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation as needed. Please remind your child to sign in each Sunday and to note the time of the Mass they attended. If your family is travelling, please find a Mass to attend together. Your child can bring a bulletin signed by the priest who celebrated that Mass to the Director of Faith Formation. If your family normally attends another parish, please have your child bring a signed bulletin to Faith Formation on Monday nights and give it to the Director of Faith Formation.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the most unique and beautiful aspects of Catholicism. Jesus Christ, in His abundant love and mercy, established the Sacrament of Confession, so that we as sinners can obtain forgiveness for our sins and reconcile with God and the Church. The sacrament "washes us clean," and renews us in Christ.

"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (John 20:21-23).

We encourage you to help your child (3rd grade and up) receive the sacrament on a regular basis, or at least once per year. The Faith Formation program will offer a penance service for our students during Lent.

Operating information

This section contains contact information for the Faith Formation program, session information, attendance and participation policies, and information about Safe Environment, both at St. Joan of Arc parish and at the Diocese of Fall River.

Contact Information

Parish Office - 508-255-0170

Parish Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM; 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Director of Faith Formation: Julie MacAller Hickey

Faith Formation email: religed@joanarc.org

Faith Formation phone: 508-255-1257

Faith Formation information page on the parish website: <https://www.joanarc.org/information>

Email is the best way to reach the Director of Faith Formation.

Session day and time

All classes for all grades meet on Monday evenings from 5:45 PM to 7:30 PM in the Parish Center. Classes start on the first Monday in October and end on the first Monday in May.

Calendar

The Faith Formation program aligns to the Nauset School District calendar. When Nauset schools are not in session, Faith Formation classes are cancelled. The current Faith Formation calendar is always available on the Faith Formation information page on the parish website.

Attendance

Each child is expected to attend scheduled classes listed on the calendar each year. If your child will be absent, please email the Faith Formation office at religed@joanarc.org, or call 508-255-1257 and leave a message. If your child misses two consecutive classes without notice, we will call to find out if there is a problem or a situation that has developed.

Important: For students in sacramental years (grades 2 and 9), missing three classes or more without an excuse puts their reception of the sacrament at risk.

Participation

We ask that students not only participate in the classes each week but do their best to live the lessons that they learn by putting them into practice. This includes going to Mass and confession regularly.

Safe environment

St. Joan of Arc Parish, along with the Diocese of Fall River, is committed to doing everything to ensure the safety of all those entrusted to its care. Since we believe that everyone is created in the image of God, we also hold that all individuals must be treated with dignity and respect. Therefore, the Diocese of Fall River considers any abuse or neglect of any kind to be unacceptable and contrary to Christian principles.

Diocese of Fall River requirements

We are responsible to provide educational materials about child sexual abuse to parents as part of our compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Information about child sexual abuse and prevention and internet safety is now available in the Faith Formation Office for your review. We invite you to become informed on this topic.

Registration and sacramental preparation policies

This section describes our registration and sacramental preparation policies.

Parish registration

Students should be registered under their parents' names in the parish directory before beginning classes. You may register at the parish office.

Faith Formation registration

Registration for the Faith Formation program is held each year before the classes begin in the fall. Registration takes place electronically through our website at <https://www.joanarc.org/information>. You can also register in person at the Parish Office. Registration is for students in grades 1 -9. All students must register for the Faith Formation program each year, even if they are returning students.

Fees

The student fee for the program is \$45 per student with a family cap of \$120. No student will ever be denied admission for lack of payment.

Baptismal certificates

A student who was not baptized at St. Joan of Arc parish must present a copy of his or her Baptismal Certificate on the first day of class, or as soon after that date as possible. It will be placed on permanent file. You do not have to resubmit the information every year unless your child is in a sacramental year.

If you send an original copy to the office, we will make a copy, and return the original to you.

Sacramental preparation

We normally prepare students to receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation for the first time in Grade 2. Students in grades above grade 2 may still prepare for the sacrament. Contact the Director of Faith Formation for details.

We celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation every year in the spring of the 9th Grade year. Before receiving the sacrament of Confirmation, we hold a required retreat to give students a final spiritual preparation for the sacrament.

We also require Confirmation students to participate in an interview with the Pastor and the Director of Faith Formation. In that interview, we ask students why they want to be confirmed and what they hope to gain from receiving the sacrament.

If older students have missed any sacraments at the normal time, we will make special arrangements for them. Notify the Director of Faith Formation at the beginning of the year if any special arrangements are needed.

To assist you in the preparation of your children for the reception of the sacraments, our Faith Formation program provides Sacramental Preparation Meetings for Parents. These meetings are a required part of the sacramental program. The Parent Meetings are designed to familiarize you with current Church teachings; develop methods to promote and increase family participation in the reception of the sacrament; and to extend the process of catechesis at home. You will be informed concerning the dates of meetings and other sacramental information.

Drop off and pick up procedures

This section describes our procedures for dropping off and picking up your child.

Drop off

You can drop your children off in front of the Parish Center or escort them in, whatever is most comfortable for you.

Pick up

We dismiss students from their classrooms into the Parish Center. Please park your car and come in to the Parish Center to pick up your child. Parents, guardians, or other authorized persons specified on the registration form are the only people to whom we will release your child. If your child will be picked up by someone other than those identified on the registration form, please alert the Faith Formation Office by email or phone before the start of class.

The Director of Faith Formation will wait with all students until they are picked up. Again, the safety of your children is of paramount concern and adhering to these procedures will help us to keep your children properly supervised.

Early dismissal

If you need to pick up your child before the end of the scheduled session, please alert the Faith Formation Office by email or phone. You can go directly to your child's classroom to pick him or her up.

Child custody issues

If you are the custodial parent, it is your responsibility to provide copies of documents related to child custody, and/or restraining orders and to personally bring to the attention of the Director of Faith Formation and catechist any unique concerns. In such cases, you must give a phone number where you can be reached immediately, and you must be always available while your child is attending Faith Formation sessions.

Sample session schedule

We start at 5:45 PM with a simple dinner. At 6:15 PM, students separate into their classrooms. At 7:30 PM, classes are dismissed.

Dinner and supplies

We serve a simple dinner for our students before classes start, with foods like pizza, mac and cheese, or chicken nuggets. Faith Formation personnel and St. Joan of Arc cannot ensure an allergy-free environment. If your child has food allergies, please note them on the registration form and feel free to send food with your child so that he or she can eat with the other students. If your child will be late and wants dinner, please let us know so we can hold food back.

Supplies

All supplies and materials are provided for the students by the Faith Formation program. The textbook belongs to the students, and they may write in the books. We keep the textbooks in the classrooms during the year and allow students to take them home when classes end for the summer.

Sick days and schedule interruptions

Please keep your child home if he or she is sick. Call or email the Faith Formation office to let us know when your child will be absent.

If we must cancel Faith Formation classes for any reason, we will notify you using the Flocknote messaging system. For weather-related cancellations, you can assume that if Nauset schools are cancelled, Faith Formation is also cancelled.

Special activities

On occasion we do activities as a large group: service projects, lessons and carols, penance service, and the like. We expect all Faith Formation students to participate in these activities.

Serving at Mass

All Faith Formation students in grade 4 and up are welcome to participate in Mass as altar servers, lectors, or ushers.

Code of conduct and discipline procedures

We gather in safe and inviting places in which to learn. We encourage Christian attitudes and growth in self-discipline. Cell phones, smart watches, and other devices are not used during class. Your child can leave such devices with you or turn them off until class is over. Children are not to leave the classroom or campus without permission.

Respect

Students are to always show respect for the property of St. Joan of Arc parish. Students should never touch any property that is not theirs or that is not part of the Faith Formation program. Students are to always show respect to all priests, sisters, deacons, catechists, aides, volunteers, the Director of Faith Formation, the youth minister, and to each other.

Discipline

Ordinary discipline problems are handled by the Catechist in the classroom as they occur. When a student's behavior disrupts the class on a continued basis, the Catechist may send the student to the Director of Faith Formation. The Director of Faith Formation will call you to pick up your child immediately.

Health concerns and medication

Please provide information about medical needs or conditions on the children's registration form. You hereby acknowledge that Faith Formation personnel and St. Joan of Arc are not medical providers and cannot administer any medication. If your child has a special medical concern or need, you must leave a written phone number with the Catechist and the Director of Faith Formation so that you can be reached immediately, and you must be always available while your child is attending Faith Formation sessions.

Emergency procedures

This section describes our emergency procedures and how we will notify you in case of an emergency.

Safety when classes are in session

We will hold a fire drill at the beginning of the year to make sure that everyone understands the best way to evacuate the Faith Formation area in case of an emergency.

If an emergency occurs during class time, you will be notified as soon as possible using the Flocknote messaging system.

If you have any questions regarding our emergency procedures or the safety plan, please don't hesitate to email the Faith Formation Office.

Parent communication

All communication regarding Faith Formation events, changes in policy or schedules, and all other information will be communicated to you through our Flocknote messaging system. Other information regarding the program may be found in the Sunday bulletin, on the Faith Formation page on the parish website, or by calling the parish office. Cancellations, event reminders, and notices will also be communicated using our automated Flocknote messaging system. We expect you to sign up via email and/or text messaging to our Flocknote system to receive time sensitive notices and reminders.

To sign up to Flocknote, text SJAFF to 84576 (En Español: 202-765-3441). Text STOP to 84576 to stop text notifications at any time. Text HELP for help. There is no charge for this service, but your carrier message and data rates may apply. View privacy policy & terms at flocknote.com/txt. There is also an app for your phone that you can download for Flocknote.

Additionally, you may subscribe to the google calendar for important dates and class dates:

If you would like handouts covering what your child learned each week, please email the Faith Formation office. If you would like a conference with your child's catechist, please email the Faith Formation office. This meeting is subject to the availability of the catechist and the Director of Faith Formation who will gladly join a parent-catechist conference at the request of either the catechist or parent. Please do not try to hold a discussion with the catechist during the Faith Formation class time.

Requests by parents or guardians to meet with the Director of Faith Formation are always welcome. Please email the Faith Formation office to set up an appointment. If you have questions regarding your child's class performance, please consult the catechist first.

Parents are always welcome to visit their children's class. Please let the catechist and the Director of Faith Formation know if you would like to do this.

Announcements

Please consult the weekly Sunday bulletin for general information regarding the Faith Formation program. Although written communication reflecting changes in the program calendar or special up-coming events will be communicated using the Flocknote messaging system, the Sunday bulletin provides the main means of communicating information about the program.

Emergency closings

The Faith Formation program at St. Joan of Arc aligns to the Nauset School District calendar. When Nauset schools have an emergency closing because of weather or other reasons, Faith Formation sessions will be cancelled. If Faith Formation sessions are to be cancelled for any

other reason, the information will be communicated to you in advance, if possible, through the Flocknote messaging system. Please use your own good judgment as to the weather conditions in your own area. Safety is our greatest concern at any time!