

**ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH
PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
91 STILLHOUSE ROAD
MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP, NJ 08510
732 792-2270**

PLEASE NOTE → In order to give everyone an opportunity to receive these forms no registration forms will be accepted before May 17th.

May, 2017

Dear Parents,

Attached is all the information you need for registration for the Religious Education Program for the 2017-2018 year. Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Please complete the registration information as soon as possible. When a class is full, **no exceptions will be made to put more students in the class.** By registering your child in the program, you are making a promise to follow all of the policies.

The fee for Religious Education Classes is: Register by June 30th - \$100.00 per student
Register July 1st through July 31st - \$125.00 per student
Register after July 31st - \$150.00 per student

Anyone who has financial difficulty should speak with me and we will work it out. No one will be denied Religious Education due to an inability to pay a fee, but I do have to have the ability to discuss the situation with you. Please do not postpone submitting your registration because of financial difficulties.

Please note that once classes begin, registration fees are non-refundable. Cancellations prior to the start of class are subject to a \$50.00 fee. Registration Fees also apply to those who choose to home-school to cover the costs for the book, processing the information and reviewing your child's work.

Please note that due to decreasing number of children in the area in grades 1-8, we are eliminating the Wednesday afternoon session. There is adequate space for all children to be placed in the other sessions. But this does mean that some sessions will fill up quicker than normal. So please be sure to register as soon as possible. Students are placed in class on a first-come, first-served basis. Once a class is filled, there are no exceptions made. While we will try to accommodate your first choice, there can be no guarantee since there are only so many spots per class. Remember, just because your child attended a particular session this year, does not guarantee that he/she is automatically registered in the same class for the coming year. Also, if a particular class does not have enough students, it may be necessary to consolidate classes and offer you a different session. Be sure to indicate 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices. If there are not enough students for a class your child will be placed in one of your other choices for a day and time.

Please remember that the Religious education of your child is a big undertaking and can not be accomplished simply by attending class once a week. The Religious Education of your child requires that your child be actively engaged in the Sacramental life of the Church. Children need to be at Mass and (for those who have already celebrated the Sacraments) each child needs to receive the Eucharist every week and Reconciliation on a regular basis if they are to have an effect in your child's life. This is a wonderful opportunity to put your faith in action and fulfill the commitment you made at your child's Baptism.

Please return the re-registration form to the Parish Office as soon as possible. **Please note that the form enclosed is for returning students only.** Registration forms for new students (First Grade/Transfers) can be picked up in Church.

Please remember to keep our Religious Education Program in your prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Mike

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICIES

Class day and time – We are not able to switch class times for students to accommodate sports or other activities. Home-schooling is permitted only if done for the entire year. Home schooling for grades 1, 2, 7 and 8 is not permitted because these are Sacrament preparation years. Homeschooling is only permitted if you bring your child to church every week as required of all those in the Religious Education Program. Registration requirements and fees apply to home schooling as well. *Please do not call during the year to ask for changes in class times and days to accommodate other activities.*

Attendance - It is important that your child be in class in order to learn the material. Religious Education is only one time a week for one hour and fifteen minutes. Because there is so much material to cover and so little time, if your child misses more than 5 classes during the year he/she will have missed too much of the material to be able to continue in the class and move on to the next level. If there is an unforeseen illness or injury that will keep your child from class for a long period of time, please contact the office to see if something can be worked out. Sports practices, games, music rehearsals, play practice, recitals and the like do not fall under the categories that should keep your child from participation in Religious Education. The number of children in the program and the number of activities that they are involved in simply makes it impossible to come up with special programs to accommodate the needs of every child.

When a child is absent from class, it is his/her responsibility to find out what work was missed and make sure that it is done at home.

Punctuality – It is extremely difficult for our volunteer Catechists to stop class as children arrive late for class. It is not fair to them and it is not fair to the other children in the class who arrived on time. No child will be permitted to enter class 10 minutes after the start of class (4:40 PM for afternoon sessions and 6:40 for evening sessions). Please do not drop children off after those times as you will be called to pick your child up. Doors to the buildings will be locked (preventing outside entrance only – it does not impede exiting the building) at 4:40 PM and 6:40 PM. **But please understand that this is not intended as a 10 minute grace period** – children are expected in their classroom by the start of class. Children who are late will be marked as late. If you bring your child late repeatedly you will be asked to withdraw your child from class. We have to avoid constant interruptions to class.

LEAVING CLASS EARLY – Early dismissals cannot be accommodated and will not be

permitted. If a child has to leave class it causes an interruption to the entire class. Please plan appointments and other activities accordingly. No early dismissals will be considered, please do not ask. If something else is more important, please do not send your child to class. Missed work is the student's responsibility. An absence does count toward the maximum number of absences.

ATTENDANCE AT MASS – When you had your child baptized, you made a commitment to “train them in the practice of the faith.” Part of our faith is to make time for God and to receive the Sacraments. Parents are expected to bring their children to church to be nourished by Word and Sacrament. It is part of the child's religious education. Participation at Mass is the only way that children can understand what we believe, what God offers us and how we put our beliefs into practice. A child cannot be ready to receive other sacraments if they are not given the opportunity to receive God's gifts. A child cannot be ready to receive the sacraments until they are given the opportunity to be part of our community of faith. Many things can occupy our time. Other activities are too often given greater importance over the practice of our faith. It is a choice that must be made. However, if the choice is made that the other activities are more important than following the 10 Commandments, giving time to God and receiving God's gifts, then it is not the right time for your child to be involved in a Religious Education Program. If a child does not attend Mass, he/she cannot be ready for the sacraments. You should choose to have your child in Religious Education when you can make the commitment to actively practice your faith. Again, this is a choice. If you choose to have your child prepare for the Sacraments then it means that you must also choose to practice the faith. If you do not practice the faith, you have also chosen for your child not to receive the sacraments at this time. Therefore, each parent must decide to choose the whole package, Religious Education Classes and participation at Mass, if your child is going participate in the Religious Education Program and receive the sacraments. Of course I thank all who bring their children to Mass and give them the opportunity to celebrate with the community. By bringing your child to celebrate God's Sacraments and hearing God's Word, you are giving your child the gift of faith which is something they will be able to use for a very long time. It is something they will thank you for later in life.

COURTESY AND RESPECT – All participants are expected to show respect. Disruption of class is not acceptable behavior. A child who is disruptive will be sent out of class. If a child continues to be disruptive, a parent will be required to stay with the child during the whole class or withdraw the child from the program. It is not expected that our Catechists will have to tolerate any disrespect. Cell phones use is banned from the buildings. Students using cell phones will be asked to leave class, call a parent and not return until assurances are given that the participant is ready to participate in class. Anyone who defaces property will be asked to withdraw from the program for the remainder of the year. **Eating and drinking are not permitted during class time except when a special class activity is planned.** It is courteous to come to class ready to participate, with paper, textbook and writing instrument.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS – In order to cover all information, it is necessary that homework assignments be given. It is expected that children will complete assignments prior to class. When work is not completed, it is an indication that the individual is not ready to move on. Faith Formation is a matter for the whole family, not just the teachers in our religious education program. Homework is an opportunity for parents to discuss matters of faith with their child. Remember though, it is supposed to be your child's work, not yours. It does not take a great deal of training to know when a parent does the work and not the child.

PARKING LOT POLICIES – Everyone who enters the parking lot of the Parish is expected to demonstrate the highest level of courtesy and respect in order to ensure the safety of all people. Parking is permitted in parking spaces only. Do not block the driving lane anywhere in the parking lot. When dropping off your child you may stop in front of the building and allow them to leave your vehicle if they are ready to depart only. Remember, there are others waiting to drop their children off – courtesy is important. **If your child is not ready, pull into a parking spot instead of blocking the way for others.** If you need to enter the building for any reason, you must park your car in a parking spot – not in front of the building. Anyone who does not drive responsibly or is discourteous to others in the parking lot will be asked not to return. If others are dropping off or picking up your child, it is the responsibility of the parents to inform them of the procedures and policies.

MISC. – The key to all of our policies is respect and courtesy. Please think about how any action may impact another person. As an example, some children are very afraid of dogs, therefore it is inappropriate to bring your dog while waiting for your child. If the dog begins barking it is a disturbance. If you walk your dog anywhere on church property, be sure to clean up after it. It is all a matter of respect and courtesy.

To be sure that there are no misunderstandings about our policies, every family must enter into a covenant contract with the parish. The Covenant must be signed and returned with all registrations. No child will be registered unless a covenant is signed by the parent. The covenant states that you are going to fulfill your responsibility to train your child in the practice of the faith – INCLUDING PARTICIPATION AT MASS EVERY WEEK. It also states that you have read all of the policies, that you understand that Religious Education is the primary responsibility of the parents and that you will adhere to the policies. This Covenant will hopefully help us to avoid misunderstandings if a situation comes up.

THE PARISH COMMUNITY OF ST. JOSEPH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM RE-REGISTRATION 2017-2018
(FOR RETURNING STUDENTS ONLY)

PLEASE PRINT NEATLY

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone # _____ Emergency phone # _____

Email _____

Student's Name: _____

Grade to enter in September 2017 _____

Preference for class time: (list 1st choice, 2nd choice, etc)

_____ Monday 4:30 – 5:45 _____ Monday 6:30 – 7:45

_____ Tuesday 4:30 – 5:45 _____ Tuesday 6:30 – 7:45

(If you do not list 2nd and 3rd choices and your first choice is full, we will place your child in the first available class)

Student's Name: _____

Grade to enter in September 2017 _____

Preference for class time: (list 1st choice, 2nd choice, etc)

_____ Monday 4:30 – 5:45 _____ Monday 6:30 – 7:45

_____ Tuesday 4:30 – 5:45 _____ Tuesday 6:30 – 7:45

(If you do not list 2nd and 3rd choices and your first choice is full, we will place your child in the first available class)

Office Use Only: Date Received: _____

Amount Paid \$ _____

Student's Name: _____

Grade to enter in September 2017 _____

Preference for class time: (list 1st choice, 2nd choice, etc)

_____ Monday 4:30 – 5:45 _____ Monday 6:30 – 7:45

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FAMILY NAME: _____

FAMILY – PARISH COVENANT

2017-2018

In seeking to have my child(ren) be part of the Religious Education Program of St. Joseph Parish I agree to the following:

- To accept my role as primary Catechist for my child or children, discussing aspects of our Faith with my child(ren) and talking about homework assignments and matters of faith.
- To help my child understand the beliefs of the Catholic Church and to give my child(ren) the opportunity to practice our faith by:
 - Bringing my child(ren) to Mass every week and Holydays
 - celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year
 - giving positive witness to my child(ren) for Christian living as I promised to do when I presented my child for Baptism.
- Being involved in my child(ren)'s Religious Education by ensuring that homework assignments are completed and handed in on time.
- Ensuring that my child(ren) attends class. I understand that more than 5 absences may require repeating the same level next year.
- Have my child(ren) at class **on time** to prevent unnecessary interruptions to the class.
- I have read and agree to abide by the policies of the Parish Religious Education Program Including: **no early dismissals**, parking lot rules and behavior policies.

I freely choose to enroll my child(ren) in the Religious Education Program. I understand that if I choose not to uphold my part of this covenant that I have also chosen not to present my child for reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and/or Confirmation and not to have my child advance to the next level until such a time as I am able to uphold all parts of this covenant. If Homeschooling, I understand that failure to uphold the parts of the Covenant that apply may end the opportunity for homeschooling.

Parent(s) Signature

Date

As the Parish part of this covenant, the Parish of St. Joseph promises to provide Religious Education for your child helping your child to understand the teachings of the Catholic Church, the Good News of Jesus and preparation that will allow your child to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. The Parish also promises to pray for your child and to encourage your child on his/her journey of faith. We also promise to make every attempt to give Christian witness to the children of the parish.

*Designated representative
on behalf of the parish community*

Date