



*St. Joan of Arc Church*

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101 EVANS ROAD, MARLTON, NJ 08053

856-983-7575 - REM@STJOANS.ORG

# FAMILY HANDBOOK



**2025-2026**

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# About Our Program

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to accompany and support families as they raise their children in our beautiful Catholic faith. We seek to provide the children of St. Joan of Arc with a faith formation experience which communicates to them how very loved they are by God, to help instill in them the riches of Scripture and Tradition which form the basis of our faith, and to prepare them to be “Christ for others,” bringing His love to the world. We strive to pass on to our children the great faith of our Patroness, who said, “I place trust in God, my Creator, in all things; I love Him with all my heart.”

## The Purpose of Religious Education

Parents are the primary teachers and role models of the faith for their children. At Baptism, parents are asked the following by the priest or deacon:

*“You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?”*

This reflects the Church’s teaching that “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2223) In fact, research has demonstrated that [“the parents of American youth play the leading role in shaping the character of their religious and spiritual lives, even well after they leave home and often for the rest of their lives.”](#)

**The purpose of a Religious Education Program is to support the parents in their desire and efforts to raise their children in the Catholic faith. Religious Education Programs are meant to supplement, not substitute for, what is assumed to be happening in the faith life of the family.** Of primary importance is Mass attendance. The Mass is the most vital aspect of our lives as Catholics, and attending Mass regularly gives children the necessary and crucial context for understanding what is taught in class. It also offers other irreplaceable experiences: being part of the Catholic community, understanding what it means to be Catholic, and most importantly, the reception of Christ, truly present in the Eucharist.

It is a blessing and a privilege to have our families approach our Parish to seek Religious Education for their children, and we look forward to working together to support you through these years as you strive to raise your child in our beautiful Catholic faith.

## *Religious Education Staff and Contact Information*

### **Staff:**

Pastor: Msgr. Richard D. LaVerghetta  
Parochial Vicar: Rev. JM Patilla  
Director: Mrs. Jessica Donohue  
Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Suzanne Frank

### **Address:**

St. Joan of Arc School  
101 Evans Road  
Marlton, NJ 08053  
Attn: Religious Education Office  
Phone – 856-983-7575

**Email:** [rem@stjoans.org](mailto:rem@stjoans.org)\*

**Web Site:** <http://www.stjoans.org/religious-education/>

**\*Please use this email address for communication with the RE Office and for all questions related to our program.**

### *General Overview*

Our parish offers Religious Education to all children of the parish from 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

To register a child for our program, you must be a parishioner and you must provide a copy of the Baptismal certificate at registration if your child was baptized outside of St. Joan of Arc Church. Registration is completed online via electronic form.

Tuition for 2025-2026 for our Fall Program, including our weekly/traditional classes, home study, family programs, Special Disciples class, and OCIA Tweens and Teens classes is \$125 for one child, \$150 for two children, and \$175 for three or more children. There is a \$25 fee for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades to help partially offset expenses related to Sacramental preparation/celebration (retreats, Confirmation gown rentals, etc.).

**Volunteers are essential to our program.** Our catechists (teachers), their aides, and our hall monitors are all parents, grandparents, family members and parishioners who dedicate their time and talent to our children to ensure they are learning about and growing in the faith. Support is provided to our catechists through classes and Diocesan workshops and other events. Volunteers must have a background check/fingerprinting done through the Diocese of Trenton and attend a VIRTUS workshop, which addresses the topic of child protection.

## *Programs and Schedule of Classes (Fall and Summer)*

Our parish currently offers four different options within our overall program:

\*Important to note: We do our best to accommodate each family's day request and to keep all children in a family on the same day. Parents can note preferences on the registration and re-registration forms, and these requests are considered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Volunteers receive first consideration with regard to schedule requests.

### **2025-2026 – Program Options**

Our parish currently offers four different options within our overall program:

#### *Weekly Traditional Program*

- ⌘ Offered for grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>
- ⌘ Runs from the end of September/beginning of October (dates depend on how the calendar falls) and the end of April
- ⌘ Classes meet once a week
- ⌘ Scheduling for 2025-2026 is as follows:
  - Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> from 5:15 pm – 6:30 pm
  - Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> from 5:15 pm – 6:30 pm
    - Parents opt for either Monday or Tuesday. *Late registration may affect our ability to grant the preferred class day.*

\*Important to note: We do our best to accommodate each family's day request and to keep all children in a family on the same day. Parents can note preferences at the time of registration, and these requests are considered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Volunteers receive first consideration with regard to schedule requests.

#### *Summer Program*

- ⌘ Our Summer Program encompasses 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades and is generally scheduled sometime between the end of June and mid-July. Children attend for one week from Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 2:00 pm. **Please note that the scheduling of the summer sessions each year depends on several factors. Some of these factors, such as the public school calendars and the scheduling of maintenance work being done in our school, are not in our control.**
- ⌘ Families are required to attend between four and six events throughout the year in the parish, in person (choices will be offered). Each student will have a "parish passport" to bring to the events/liturgies attended, where he or she will receive a stamp acknowledging attendance. This passport must be handed in to the RE

Office by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

- ✦ Children in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades will be required to attend any additional Sacramental preparation opportunities as deemed necessary by the Religious Education Office. This includes any regularly-scheduled Sacrament meetings (parents) and retreats.

\*Important to note: The Summer Program is a nontraditional Religious Education model. Due to the condensed nature of the scheduling, the following requirements must be met:

*Students must have successfully completed the previous year of Religious Education at St. Joan of Arc, i.e. home study work must be submitted on time, attendance must be good for students attending weekly.*

*All children in the summer program must be on grade level, i.e. they must enter the program having completed all prior grade requirements. The Summer Program cannot be utilized as a “catch-up/make-up” option.*

*The family **must** be committed to daily attendance during the summer and attendance at the required number of liturgies/events during the year.*

*These criteria are simply required for placement and continuation in the program without exception in order to ensure the integrity of the program. Any family unable to meet the above criteria must move to the Fall Program so we may offer placement to families on the waiting list who are able to do so. Not following policies and procedures of the Summer Program may also preclude a family from choosing the summer option for the following year.*

### Home Study

We will offer home study as an option for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> graders for 2025-2026. Home study begins **after** in-person classes have begun. Parents are notified of a date/time for pick-up of home study materials, which includes the textbook and a syllabus detailing when assignments are due. Assignments, which are the chapter reviews from the text, must be sent to the office in hard copy format, and are reviewed and corrected by our catechists. Families will also be required to attend a certain number of activities in the parish during the year; families will be given several options to choose from. (This addition to the home study model is per guidelines in the revised Religious Education manual, given to parishes in May 2023 by the Diocese of Trenton.)

### Family Program

Our Family Program is an option for 1<sup>st</sup> graders and their families. This program meets once a month on a Sunday from 11:30 until 12:30 in either Pedata Hall or our school cafeteria (parents will be informed of the location prior to the beginning of classes). The main themes of that month’s unit are presented to help families as they work through the

text at home, and a craft is included each month to help reinforce one of the topics for the unit or from the liturgical season.

### OCIA Tweens\*

This class is offered for children in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> who may not have received First Reconciliation and First Communion, or have received Sacraments but missed multiple years of religious education. Our RCIA Tweens class is specially-designed to provide children with the necessary religious education and faith formation experience for receiving Sacraments and for preparing to move forward on grade level the following year. This class is typically held weekly on Mondays from 7:00 pm – 8:15 pm.

### OCIA Teens\*

This class is for children in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades/early high school who have received Religious Education in the past, but have missed multiple years of faith formation. RCIA Teens is specially designed to provide this age group with the necessary religious education and faith formation from missed years and to provide them with Sacramental preparation for Confirmation. The scheduling of this class is determined by the catechist, but is typically on either a Monday or Tuesday evening. Parents should contact the office regarding scheduling.

\*Registration for OCIA Tweens and OCIA Teens is permitted after approval from the Religious Education Office. Parents interested in these options should contact the office to discuss.

### A Note About December Classes

For December, all children in our program are required to complete Advent Family Lessons at home. The lesson reflection pages are due back in January; details to come.

### Sacraments

**First Reconciliation** celebrates God's loving forgiveness. The experience of forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel message. Jesus came to show us the Father who is loving and forgiving. This is the God whom we wish our children to meet in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. *First Reconciliation is celebrated during March on a Saturday. Exact dates are communicated to families during the fall.*

**First Communion** is an opportunity to introduce the children of our parish into a fuller participation in God's family of which they are members through Baptism. The faith community of St. Joan of Arc welcomes these children to the Table of the Lord, as they receive for the first time the Body and Blood of Jesus. First Communion celebrations take place during the Easter Season, i.e., during Saturdays following Easter. These dates are communicated to parents well in advance for planning purposes; typically we are able to let you know your child's assigned date and time for First Reconciliation and Communion in the fall.

Any special issues related to First Communion should be communicated to the Director as soon as possible. These may include but are not limited to the need for a low-gluten Host for the First Communicant or family/friend attending the Mass, seating accommodations for guests with special needs, etc.

Usually, our parish children are in the second grade or are in our OCIA Tweens program when they celebrate these Sacraments for the first time. Family meetings are scheduled to help families fully prepare their children to celebrate these Sacraments.

*Food Allergies:* Low-gluten hosts are available for those who need them. With regard to such issues as peanut allergies, there is always the possibility of cross contamination, especially with regard to the cup. Families should discuss any such issues with the Director in advance.

**Confirmation** is the celebration of God's Spirit, during which our candidates affirm their Baptismal promises. This sacrament is usually celebrated during the fall of 9<sup>th</sup> grade (this date is scheduled for us by the Bishop's Office). Confirmation ceremonies are typically on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday with ceremonies at 4 pm and 6 pm; these dates and times are assigned to us by the Diocese and are communicated as soon as possible to families. We will send you the specific information for your child's ceremony as soon as we receive it from the Bishop's Office. A Parent/Candidate meeting is scheduled early in the year to begin the immediate preparation.

\*All sacraments are preceded by two years of faith formation (i.e. Religious Education classes) in preparation for the reception of any particular sacrament. Children prepare for First Reconciliation and First Communion during 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, and make both sacraments in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year. Children prepare for Confirmation during 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, and are Confirmed in the fall of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Any issues regarding Sacraments should be brought to the Director's attention at registration.

### **Registration and Re-Registration Procedures**

All families are required to be registered parishioners of St. Joan of Arc in order to register for Religious Education classes. If you do not know if you are registered, please contact us and we can check for you. Please note that if you were married or your child was Baptized at St. Joan's this does not necessarily mean that you are a registered parishioner. Parish registration is a simply process which involves filling out a form on our website at <http://www.stjoans.org/register/> .

#### **Annual Registration**

Families must register for Religious Education each year to ensure we have the most up-to-date information for each child with regard to contacts, special needs, first choice of class day, etc. Registrations are processed on a first come, first served basis, and class sizes are limited to ensure that the classes are manageable for our catechists. Registration information is typically sent out in early to mid-spring.

**It is crucial that parents register for classes on time.** It is difficult and sometimes impossible for us to give families their first choice of class day when registration is submitted late, i.e. after August 15<sup>th</sup>. *We will not add students to classes that are already at maximum capacity.* Early registration allows for the necessary time for staff to plan so that we can honor scheduling requests.

### New students

Families who are joining our program for the first time, i.e. did not have children attending last year, must contact the office prior to registration. This is to ensure that the family is registered in the parish, and to evaluate the appropriate class placement for each child based on age and previous religious education.

### Transferring from another program

If your children attended a religious education program in another parish or a Catholic school and you would like to transfer to our program, we require the following to be submitted *prior* to registration:

- ❖ Copy of the Baptismal certificate, unless Baptized at St. Joan's
- ❖ Letter from the previous parish detailing grades completed and dates of First Reconciliation and First Communion, if 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and above

Please note that if you are transferring into our program, we can only accept home study for the previous year(s) if it was completed under the guidance of a Catholic parish religious education program; successful completion must be confirmed by the administrator of that program. *Self-guided home study cannot be accepted as fulfilling the previous year's requirement.*

### Tuition and Fees

Tuition for 2025-2026 is currently \$100 for one child, \$125 for two children, and \$150 for three or more children. There is also an additional tuition fee of \$25 for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to help partially offset expenses related to sacramental preparation/celebration (i.e. retreats, Confirmation gown rentals, etc.). We ask that tuition payments are made at the time of registration, or by the first day of class. If you are unable to remit payment by the first day of class for any reason, please contact the office. **No child will be denied registration due to inability to pay.** Please let us know if this is an issue for your family so that we can work together on a solution.

Replacement of a lost textbook or a lost Bible is \$20 (6<sup>th</sup> graders receive bibles which they use throughout the rest of their Religious Education).

Tuition supports our purchase of textbooks and Bibles for the children, supplies for the classrooms and for parent meetings as well as sacrament-related purchases, supplies for sacramental year retreats, general maintenance of the facilities we use, and more. As such, payment of tuition is necessary in order for our program to run smoothly and to provide the children and catechists with what they need in the classroom.

*\*Any tuition issues (i.e., tuition is not paid and the parent has not contacted the office or responded to reminders) must be resolved before re-registration.*

### **Textbooks and Other Resources**

We currently use the “Alive in Christ” series of texts published by Our Sunday Visitor for 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades, and “Decision Point” for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, which is specifically oriented towards Confirmation preparation and published by Dynamic Catholic. We also use RCL Benzinger’s “Family Life” series as part of the Diocesan safe environment program. All three series are approved by our Diocese for use in our program.

Each child receives a Bible in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and is expected to bring the Bible to classes through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. **There is a replacement fee of \$20 for a lost Bible or textbook.**

Any other materials used in the classroom must be approved in advance by the Director.

### **Curriculum**

Our program adheres to the guidelines set by the Diocese of Trenton Department of Catechesis and Evangelization. Our textbooks cover all aspects of this curriculum, and each catechist is given a plan with regard to ensuring that all necessary chapters are taught.

### **Statement Regarding Child Abuse**

**New Jersey state law requires that any staff member having reason to suspect that a child is the subject of child abuse must immediately report the suspicion to DYFS. This law applies to all catechetical staff personnel.**

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Arrival and Dismissal – Weekly Classes (5:15-6:30)**

[Please click here](#) to read through our procedures. An important reminder: these directives are not only in place to ensure that arrival and dismissal run smoothly and efficiently, but are also in place to help ensure the safety of everyone on our campus. As such, complying with these procedures is mandatory for participation in our program.

**The arrival and dismissal information for all other options in our program (OCIA Tweens/Teens, Special Disciples, etc.) will be communicated to parents with children enrolled in those options directly via email.**

### **Attendance**

#### **Attendance Policy**

Children are expected to attend each class unless extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent them from doing so. **No more than three absences are allowed during the year.** Regular attendance is essential for students to progress to the next grade level.

#### **Sacrament Years**

*For children preparing to receive Sacraments*, consistent weekly attendance is especially important to ensure they are properly prepared. Excessive absences may result in the postponement of Sacrament reception to allow time for adequate preparation.

*For intensive programs, i.e. OCIA Tweens/Teens and the Summer Program*, attendance is particularly important, as a great deal of content is being taught in a relatively short period. As such, regular attendance is mandatory, and a doctor's note is required for any absences.

If your child has to be absent from class, please do the following:

- ⇒ Contact the Office of Religious Education at 856-983-7575 or email us at [rem@stjoans.org](mailto:rem@stjoans.org) as soon as possible. If the reason for the absence is offered, we will note this in the attendance record. We will inform your child's catechist of the absence.
- ⇒ Have your child complete any missed work or assignments and submit as directed by the catechist or staff. \*You can find information and instructions for this on our website at <https://www.stjoans.org/religious-education/>.
- ⇒ If you have a doctor's note to excuse the absence, please submit to the office at your earliest convenience, either in hard copy format or scanned and emailed to [rem@stjoans.org](mailto:rem@stjoans.org).

### Early Dismissal

Early dismissals should only be requested when absolutely necessary, as they interrupt the classroom environment. **Early dismissals absolutely must be reported in advance for safety and security purposes.** Please contact the office as much in advance as possible if your child needs an early dismissal. Parents must sign their child out at the front door when there is an early dismissal and must be prepared to present identification.

### Class Cancellation

Occasionally we may need to cancel classes due to inclement weather or if a catechist cannot attend class and we are not able to schedule a substitute. In these cases, we will inform you via email and text through the Flocknotes system. We will also post this information [on our web site here](#).

## General Safety & Security

### Driving/Parking Lot

- The parking lot of our parish is very busy throughout the day and evening. Prudent driving is essential to the safety of our children and to the safety of our parishioners who are on the parish grounds as well. Please be sure to drive slowly and carefully at arrival and dismissal.
- Please see our [parking lot overhead view here](#), which shows the “safe zones” and the required traffic flow.

### School Building

- For safety reasons, the doors of the building will be locked during each session. If you need to enter, please go to the front door of the school (facing the parking lot) and ring the bell.
- Please note that we cannot allow people inside the school to use the restrooms prior to or during class times.
- A security officer will be present in the building during our weekly classes.
- Staff, volunteers and students will go through fire, lockdown, and shelter-in-place drills in the fall and after the new year.

**\*\*A note about our policies and procedures:  
All policies and procedures are put into place  
to ensure the safety and well-being of our children.  
Cooperation with these policies and procedures is absolutely mandatory.**

## *Behavior*

All students are expected to share in the faith learning experience of the parish program. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him/herself or others, or makes the running of the classroom unduly difficult for the catechist/aide, the steps below will be followed to ensure that group participation may continue:

- 1) At first incident the student will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior.
- 2) After the second incident, the student will be sent to the Director.
- 3) If inappropriate behavior continues, the student's parent/guardian will be contacted. The student will be allowed the opportunity to rejoin his/her group if an understanding can be reached as to how all involved may best continue to learn and grow in their faith.
- 4) If the student's behavior continues to disrupt the learning environment, the Director and the parent will discuss an alternative religious education option for the student.

\*We understand that some behavioral issues are related to a child's special needs. Our knowing in advance what works best for your child enables our staff and catechists to facilitate an optimal classroom environment and experience for him/her and the other children in the classroom. As such, we invite our parents of children with special needs to advise us on their child/children's unique way of learning, perceiving, interacting etc. so that we may be able to accomplish this together.

## *Serious Behavioral Issues*

In a case where there is an incident or behavioral issue which creates serious concern, the following steps will be taken:

- The parent is called immediately and asked to come to the school.
- The Director meets with the parent to explain the issue.
- The issue is addressed by the parents at home/within the family.
- The parent and the Director have a follow-up discussion to discuss the child returning to the classroom.
- The decision of whether or not it is possible for a child to return to the classroom is made at the discretion of the Director in consideration of the nature of the issue and its resolution, the overall classroom environment, and the ability of the program within available resources to accommodate any resulting issues or concerns. Home study may be offered as an alternative, in which case the Director will work with the family to design a program which will meet the child's needs.

**All decisions are made with the well-being of the child and his/her classmates in mind, and with the compassion and love we are called to in our faith.**

### *Electronic Devices Policy*

Our technology policy is designed to support a learning environment that is free from distractions, where children can focus on their faith formation and catechists can teach effectively without the added responsibility of managing inappropriate use of electronic devices. This policy applies to all students and parents, and is in place to ensure the safety, well-being, and growth of every child in our program.

Please carefully review the following guidelines:

- **Electronic devices may not be used during class time.** Each classroom is equipped with a shoe organizer for students to store their phones at the beginning of class. Alternatively, devices may be placed face down on desks. The catechist will decide which option will be used by the class.
- **Students are strictly prohibited from bringing cell phones or any electronic device into the restrooms.**
- **If a student needs to contact a parent during class,** they must first request permission from the catechist and will be directed to the office, where staff will assist them.
- **If a parent needs to contact their child during class time,** they should call the office. Staff will then retrieve the student from the classroom as needed.
- **Earbuds and headphones are not permitted** in class at any time.
- **Smartwatches must be turned off** or used **only for basic timekeeping.** If a smartwatch becomes a distraction, the student may be asked to turn it off or leave it at home for future sessions.

If a student has difficulty adhering to this policy, a parent will be contacted to help ensure the student is supported in meeting these expectations.

Thank you for your cooperation in maintaining a respectful and focused faith formation environment for all.

***\*\*We are aware that a child may have a health issue that requires an electronic device for monitoring; for example, a diabetic child may need access to his or her smartphone in order to monitor blood sugar levels. If this is the case for your child, please contact the Religious Education Office so we are aware, and so that we can communicate this exception to our staff as needed.***

### *Health Concerns and Special Needs*

At registration, health and special needs concerns as well as any family concerns, such as custody issues, should be brought to the attention of the staff. If a child receives a diagnosis after registration, please inform our staff as soon as possible. We do have volunteers in our program who have experience working with children with special needs and, when we are aware, we are able to find the optimal class placement for each child. Due to the fact that many children have food allergies, we do not allow food in the classroom under regular circumstances. The only

exceptions are in the Summer Program when children must bring in lunch and snacks due to the length of the class (in this case, sharing of food between students is prohibited).

## **Expectations**

### **Parents**

Mass Attendance with Your Child/ren. The parent is the child's first teacher and role model in the faith. The Religious Education program represents the Church's partnership with parents to raise children in the Catholic faith. It is essential that families attend Mass each week and on holy days of obligation so that the children not only receive the most important part of their faith formation experience, but also because Mass attendance gives the child a context and understanding for what they learn in the classroom. Our weekend Mass and Confession schedule at St. Joan of Arc is as follows:

Confessions – Saturdays at 4:00 pm or by appointment

Masses –

Saturday: 5:30 pm Vigil

Sunday: 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 10:30 am, 12:00 pm

Please remember that it is never too late to come back to church if you haven't been in a long time – you are welcomed with open arms at St. Joan's!

Adhering to **our calendar** – parents are expected to stay on top of the Religious Education calendar. Please mark all pertinent dates on your calendar at the beginning of the year.

Communication of health and/or special needs and circumstances to the RE Office Being aware of your child's health or special needs allows us to ensure that the classroom experience is optimal for all. If your child receives a diagnosis after the year has begun (i.e., after you have already registered your child for Religious Education classes), please be sure to call us and let us know so we can make sure your child is getting whatever he/she needs in the classroom and from the program.

Attendance. We expect that parents registering their child/children for classes have made Religious Education a priority and will ensure their child's regular attendance at classes, as well as making sure any missed lessons are covered at home.

Payment of tuition in a timely manner or contacting the office if payment of tuition is a difficulty at that time. Please note that if this is the case, we encourage you to get in touch. There is always a solution to tuition issues, and it is important to us that every parishioner who wants Religious Education for his or her child is able to have it.

Compliance with policies and procedures of the program, as delineated in this manual and in any communication from the RE office. All of our policies and procedures are created with the following in mind: the well-being and safety of the children, the provision of a quality, sound

Religious Education experience for each child, the policies and procedures set forth by the Department of Catechesis of the Diocese of Trenton and the parish, and consideration for those who share our parish facilities and consideration for our neighbors in the surrounding area.

**Following these standards is mandatory for enrollment and participation in this program.**

We are blessed to have a large program at St. Joan of Arc; a program of this size can only run smoothly if every parent/guardian is committed to our policies and procedures.

**\*All staff and volunteers are required to go through background checks and Virtus safe environment training regularly, per Diocesan protocols.**

### Staff

Communicate to families all aspects of the program.

Facilitate a faith-filled, learning and community environment for families.

Assist families with any and all aspects of children's faith formation.

Ensure that children are prepared for Sacraments.

Monitor program in order to make any necessary changes/improvements.

Be available to families when requested or needed.

Support volunteers in their efforts to learn and enhance the gifts and talents they bring to our program.

Ensure that the Pastor's vision is reflected in all aspects of the program.

### Catechists

Provide a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that children will be able to grow in their faith.

Prepare and teach the designated lessons.

Model our Catholic faith.

Communicate regularly with and involve parents in the faith development of their child/children.

### Children

Behave in a Christian manner at all times, showing respect and being cooperative with adults and other students.

Actively participate at Sunday Mass (according to age/development).

Attend classes and complete any assignments.

Actively participate, to the best of his/her ability, in group activities and discussions.

Adhere to our dress code:

- Clothing with words or graphics contrary to our Christian message are unacceptable
- Clothing exposing the midriff
- Children are to wear shoes, sneakers or sandals (no flip-flops or Heelys)

Adhere to our behavior and technology guidelines.

Prepared for classes with the textbook (and Bible for 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up – Bibles are distributed in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and we expect children to bring them to class through 8<sup>th</sup> grade).

Follow procedures for arrival and dismissal.

Adhere to our technology guidelines, i.e., no using cell phones, handheld devices of any kind etc. during class. (If a child is found using an electronic device, the catechist will hold it until the end of class and return it to the parent at dismissal.)