

*Saint Joseph*  
*Parish Religious Education Program*  
*(PREP)*

*865 Roosevelt Avenue*  
*Carteret, New Jersey*  
*732-969-8767*



*2024-2025*  
*Parent/Family Handbook*

*Our program is built on a basic Catholic belief. That belief is that "Out of the praying community comes the believing community."*

**WE BELIEVE:** the purpose of our catechetical ministry is to proclaim authentically and fully the message of Jesus, to foster an understanding of and build community in all areas of life, and to encourage service to each other for the good of all.

**WE BELIEVE:** you have entrusted your children to us to deepen the Faith you have given them as parents.

**WE BELIEVE:** with your cooperation, such as, attending parent meetings, celebrating the Eucharist and the Sacraments together, and reinforcing Christian values in your homes, we can help you, help your child grow in their faith as they journey with you.

**WE BELIEVE:** the goal of religious education through formation is to make us aware of the action of God in our lives, both within us and outside of us. That religious formation is faith brought to understanding.

**THEREFORE,** we will work with you to awaken this awareness in your children and encourage them to gradually accept responsibility for their own Christian development, as they are able.

#### **OUR MISSION**

We realize that our ministry is accomplished in partnership with the parents who are the primary catechists. Together we will proclaim Christ's message, prepare your children to receive the sacraments of Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation and lead them students in prayer and worship and motivate them to do Christian service.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Monday – 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Wednesday – 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Stay in touch with the St. Joseph PREP by visiting the website weekly at [sjps.net](http://sjps.net). We will be posting information regarding our Religious Education program on a regular basis. You can also send an e-mail message to [mndoherty@sjps.net](mailto:mndoherty@sjps.net).

For your convenience the office has a 24-hour answering machine on 732-969-8767. Please leave your phone number and a detailed message. We will make every effort to reach you in a timely manner. Communicating well is important to our ministry.

## **PREP OFFICE ENTRANCE**

The St. Joseph PREP office is located in the St. Joseph school. During Religious Education classes, please use the school gym door. After 6:15 p.m., please call the PREP office so that the door by the statue of Saint Joseph can be opened for you.

Please remember that class hours can be hectic. If you need to speak with the Director we ask that you please make an appointment at 732-969-8767. This will allow us to give you our full attention.

## **CATECHETICAL STAFF**

Catechists are women and men who are members of our parish family and have agreed to represent all of us in a specific area of ministry. In this ministry catechists work as aides to the parents who are the primary catechist. Our role is to help, not to replace the vital role parents have as the primary catechists. It is our role to help the parent's journey with their children as they deepen their faith and love for our Lord. We would like to thank all the young people and adults who are not mentioned here but volunteer their time in so many ways to help create a wonderful environment for learning, prayer and worship.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

Any child wishing to receive a sacrament must have a full year of religious education sessions prior to the Sacramental year itself. The preparation is the bringing together of elements that allow us to celebrate the sacraments in community. If you are interested in preparing your child to receive a sacrament you and your child must be a member of Saint Joseph Parish or a parish in our surrounding area. You and your child will have the opportunity to participate in family experiences as they prepare to receive the sacrament. Each sacrament has requirements that are meant to enrich the family and child.

**Reconciliation** is a two-year process. The Reconciliation preparation is done in the weekly faith sessions. We also encourage you to participate as a family in Reconciliation services held in the parish throughout the year.

**First Eucharist** This program provides for the involvement of priest, parents, catechist, and children, faith sharing at home, and special Family Sacrament Experiences. We expect you to attend weekly Mass with your child in preparation for their reception of First Eucharist.

**Confirmation** The Confirmation process at Saint Joseph PREP is a two-year program involving seventh and eighth grades. Confirmation candidates, their families and sponsors study their faith by participating in both small and large group experiences. They participate in special Liturgies, Christian service opportunities, a review of basic information and prayers of the Catholic religion, an interview with a member of our pastoral staff as well as a Confirmation Retreat Day.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS**

- Parents are expected to pray with their children, attend Mass every Saturday (5:00 pm) or Sunday (8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. (Spanish) and receive the sacraments as a family. Your family is the first model of parish family for your children.
- As their primary catechist it is important to live, model and talk about your faith with your children. This will enrich them and you.
- Students will bring completed homework (when assigned) to the next session and come prepared to participate in the sessions.
- Students are expected to bring their text books to each class. If your text book or Bible is lost contact the office and arrange to pay for a replacement. (Replacement cost \$20.00)
- Parents are asked to read all correspondence sent home. It is one of the primary ways for us to stay in touch.
- Parents are asked to keep the PREP Calendar in the home for ready reference to session dates, Family Masses, special events, etc.

## **POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

### **Enrollment Policies**

Enrollment in the Religious Education Program is open to any child whose family is registered with Saint Joseph parish or a surrounding parish, in grades 1-8th. The

grade level of a child entering the program is left to the discretion of the Director in dialogue with the parents.

### **Registration Fees & Tuition**

Tuition is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and is due at the time of registration. The fees are kept as reasonable as possible. Additional fees are assessed for Sacramental Preparation in grades 2 and 8. Special financial arrangements may be made if there is a need. No child will be turned away from Religious Education due to lack of the ability to pay the fees.

### **Continuity**

Faith, like Religious Education, is a life-long process. Every child is expected to faithfully participate in each grade without skipping any grade. You know that all of life's success is built on the learning that preceded it. Similarly, our program is designed to build on and deepen the teachings of the previous grade. In the event of a missed or skipped grade we will work with you to help bring the child up to the proper grade level.

### **Absences**

In the event that your child is going to be absent, we ask that you call 732-969-8767 and leave the child's name, catechist name and reason for absence. Any child who is absent for a session must pick up the missed work and return it at the next session. Any child who is absent for more than two sessions without making up the missed work will be asked to come in with their parents and meet with the Director to work out a solution.

### **Classroom Policies**

Classes in the Saint Joseph Parish Religious Education Program will be taught in conformity to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and in accordance with the guidelines and policies for Religious Education Programs within the Diocese of Metuchen.

**NO CELL PHONES, IPODS, OR OTHER SUCH DEVICES MAY BE USED THE CLASSROOM SESSIONS; IF FOUND, PARENTS WILL NEED TO PICK UP THESE ITEMS FROM THE CATECHIST AFTER THE SESSION.**

### **Dress Code**

NO hats of any style are allowed to be worn inside the building. Hats are to be removed when in the building. We encourage the children to wear comfortable

clothes. Please remember that this is a religious learning environment when you select clothing for your children.

### **Discipline**

There is a close connection between discipline and personal growth. We expect the best from your children and encourage them to act in that spirit in this and every environment they find themselves in. In the event of a problem, you will be contacted. Since good behavior, cooperation, attention, and courtesy are expected from every child, the

- 1st offense will have the catechist speak privately with the student
- 2nd offense the catechist will inform the Director and we will contact the parent.
- 3rd offense the Director, catechist, parents and child will have a conference about the situation. In the rare event that a child is removed from a classroom, the student will be escorted to the office and the parents will be called to pick up the student.

### **Arrival Time**

We ask that you arrive no more than 15 minutes ahead of your session time-- an adult **MUST** accompany the child into the building. Please enter through the Saint Joseph School Gym. The bell will be rung promptly at 6:00 PM. The catechist will escort the children to the classroom. Late arrivals (6:15 pm or later) must come to the door by the Saint Joseph statue. A parent must accompany the child who will pick up a pass from the PREP office. Any child who is tardy three or more times will be asked to come in with their parents and meet with the DRE/CRE to work out a solution.

### **Closing Time**

Sessions end at 7:30 pm. In the event of an early dismissal you will be notified. Please pick up your children promptly so we can safely close each session on time.

### **Dismissal**

The children in all grades will be dismissed from school gym. Please come into the the gym to pick up your child. Children will be brought to the gym from their classroom room by their catechist or an aide. An adult must accompany every child as they leave the building. This policy is for safety reasons. If your child is to walk home, please send a note with that information to the RE office and it will be kept on file for the year.

### **Excused Early Dismissal**

If a child must leave early, please advise the PREP assistant, Ms. Marge. She will relay the information to your child's catechist. A parent must collect the student from the PREP office. This is for your child's safety as well as part of our responsibility toward your child.

### **Keeping in Touch**

Please look for information sent home for your use in the folder provided for this purpose. You will be kept informed about up-coming events in the parish, religious opportunities and parent meetings through e-mails (*please ensure that we have your correct e-mail address*) and letters. We ask that you take the time to read any notes/letters sent home with yours child as they will contain information regarding the Religious Education Program.

### **Change of Information**

Please notify our office of any changes in address, phone numbers, emails, or medical situations.

### **Lost and Found**

If your child loses an item, please contact our office at 732-969-8767. We will do our best to assist you.

### **Fire Drill and Lock-Down Practice**

There will be at least one drill each per year with the catechists and the students.

### **PREP Staff and Contact Information**

Pastor, Monsignor John B. Gordon  
pjuanla@aol.com  
732-541-8946

Director, Mrs. Marcelle N. Doherty  
mndoherty@sjps.net  
732-969-8676 Ext. 105

Assistant, Ms. Marge Cena  
[mcena@sjps.net](mailto:mcena@sjps.net)  
732-969-8767

St. Joseph PREP and Parish Website – [www.sjps.net](http://www.sjps.net)