

St. John the Evangelist

Religious Education Parent Guidelines

Philosophy of Religious Education

The family is the “Domestic church” and a child’s parents are their first catechists, first evangelists and first confessors. **The Religious Education Program of St. John Parish’s Parish is intended to deepen the faith and understanding of our children so they have faith for their entire lives, not just for sacramental preparation.** The church is here to assist the family in this endeavor so it is expected that each family be actively involved in their children’s faith formation classes and in St. John’s parish in order to model a living, conscious and active Christian faith and to reinforce the values and attitudes for living that faith. The family and their children also must act in accordance with these values and attitudes.

Mass Attendance

Additionally, you are expected to attend Mass with your children every Sunday. **Mass is an integral part of your child’s faith formation and Mass attendance goes hand in hand with the Religious Education Program. One cannot do the work of the other.**

Celebrating Mass is the highest form of worship Catholics have; therefore missing Mass is very serious. Sending your children to Religious Education and then not attending Mass sends a mixed message to your children, as they are learning the importance of Mass attendance here and may be confused as to why their parents are not bringing them to Mass. Remember to keep the Lord’s Day holy.

Dress Code

All students are expected to dress respectfully and modestly for classes. If a student comes to class improperly dressed, he/she will be sent home and marked as “absent”.

- Girls are **not** permitted to wear short shorts (inseam no shorter than (5) inches), short skirts (no shorter than (4) inches above the knee), low cut tops or bottoms, bare midriff shirts, pajama-style clothing, or hats. Belly buttons should not be exposed.
- Boys are **not** permitted to wear t-shirts with offensive language, tank tops, pants that show undergarments, pajama-style clothing or hats while in the classroom.

Discipline Policy

We expect student to display Christian behavior at all times. This includes respectful and courteous classroom behavior (ie no feet on tables/chairs, no talking out of turn) and that they are paying attention, participating, respecting others, respecting parish materials and complying with the teacher's instructions. **Any student who disrupts a class, fails to cooperate with the Catechist, or violates the Religious Education Policies, shall be subject to the following procedures:**

- First Time: Teacher will address/redirect student
- Second Time: Teach will speak to the student regarding the unacceptable behavior
- Third Time: Student will be taken to the office and their parents notified

In the event that the student is continuously disruptive and no evidence is seen of the student attempting to correct his/her behavior, the student will be dismissed from the Program.

Student Arrival in Classrooms and Tardiness

- Please be sure that your child arrives on time. The entrance doors will be unlocked 10-15 minutes prior to the start of the class once there is a catechist in each classroom. **Classes begin promptly and students are expected to be in their seat and ready for class at that time.** Please plan to arrive a few minutes early. Classroom time is very limited and the catechists need to begin the lessons on time.
- **Also note that the doors will be locked 10 minutes after classes begin and no entry will be permitted** unless the parent has advised that their student will be late and prior arrangements have been made. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and disrespectful to the other students and the teacher. The student that arrives late misses opening prayers and the introduction of the topic being discussed during class time.

Early Dismissals Not Permitted

- Students are **not permitted to leave the class early** except in an emergency situation. Sports practice, dance class, etc., are not considered emergencies. **Parents must notify the office before class begins if their child needs to be picked up early and the reason for the emergency. Parents must come to the office to pick up the child.**

Pick Up and Drop-off

- **Students in Pre-Communion, Communion and 3/4 classes** must be picked up by their parent, grandparent or legal guardian in their classrooms.
- **Students in Confirmation I, Confirmation II and 5/6 class** may meet their parent or guardian in front of the Parish Hall.

Cell Phones

- **Pre-Communion, Communion and 3/4 classes** – Students can keep their phones in their pocket or backpacks but they can not be used during class or they will be taken and put on the counter
- **Confirmation I, Confirmation II and 5/6 class** – Each student will have a Ziploc bag assigned to them the first day of class with their name on it and they will put their phone into the bag at the beginning of each class. All phones will be kept in a basket at the front of the classroom. They will retrieve their phones as they leave class for the day.

Annual Class Schedule

- The **class schedules** for both Tuesday and Wednesday classes, as well as a copy of these **guidelines, can be found on our website at** saintjohn-bocaraton.com/childrens-faith-formation. Scroll down until you see “Class Schedules 2024-2025” and “Parent Guidelines”.
- Also note that we only follow the Palm Beach County Schools with regard to emergency closings due to storms and their spring break week. **Please check our class schedules for class dates, do not assume we are closed if your school is closed.**

Attendance Policies

Your child should attend each and every class. Every class is important in the student’s catechetical formation and attendance will be tracked. Unfortunately, even with perfect attendance, they will receive less than 30 hours of religious instruction! We sympathize regarding the choices that must be made, however, sporting activities and dance classes in no way outrank religious education as priority items. Please don’t confuse your child by placing these activities before the message of Jesus.

- **Students in sacramental preparation can not exceed three (3) absences within a given year or they may have to repeat the year.** The DRE must be advised of ALL absences ahead of time preferably via email at sjreligious@stjohnevangelistbr.org with a reason for the absence so that a record can be kept.
- **If your child is not in sacramental preparation we still require that they attend ALL classes with no more than (3) absences.** As many of you know, we have very limited space for the years between sacraments and if your child has been given a space in one of these classes, please treat the class the same way as a sacramental class as other students were unable to register and not given the opportunity this year.

Emergency Closings

- If the public schools are closed **due to a hurricane or tropical storm**, religious education will also be cancelled. In the event that schools are in session during the day but afterschool programs are cancelled **due to an impending storm**, our classes will also be cancelled.

Food / Drinks / Bathroom Breaks

- Food and drinks are not permitted in class. Please do not ask teachers if you can bring cupcakes or cookies to celebrate your child's birthday. We are happy to celebrate with a song, however our class time is much too short to include birthday celebrations with food. Please give your child a snack or meal before bringing them to class.
- Since we do not have a working water fountain for the girls, students may bring **closed water bottles/containers only** to class if needed. However, due to the limited class time we do not want students constantly needing to use the restroom. **Teachers will be implementing "bathroom breaks" based on their class needs but please be sure to have your child use the restroom before they begin class.**

Guests

- Students are not permitted to bring friends or relatives to class.

Make-up Work

- If illness or family emergency prevents a child from attending class, **parents are responsible for contacting the teacher for instructions regarding any work that needs to be made up.** A student who misses a class must complete and turn in all missed work and assignments within two weeks of his return to class.

Custody Issues

- If parents are divorced or separated, the Religious Education Office presumes that both parents have access to the children unless one parent can provide evidence that he or she has sole right. If there are other custody arrangements, a copy of such agreement must be on file in the Parish Religious Education Office.

- I have read, understand and will abide by all the guidelines as outlined in the pages above
- I understand that this program is made possible by the many volunteer Catechists and Seminarians who give freely of their time and talents for our children
- I will notify the Religious Education office of any changes in personal contact information, medical information or emergency information that was previously provided on the registration form
- **I have reviewed my student(s) schedule for the coming year and I understand that the class(es) that I have registered my student(s) for will be their class(es) through April and that no ongoing conflicts with other activities exist and no changes will be made.**
- **By registering for Religious Education I believe that the education in my faith is priority and will not allow absences except for illness or emergency.**