

# St. Joseph Catholic Church

## Formation Parent Handbook

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

*Moses led the people out of slavery in Egypt. They spent 40 years in a desert. Just before they entered the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey, he gave to the people his final instruction.*

*"Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. <sup>7</sup> Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. <sup>8</sup> Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem<sup>[a]</sup> on your forehead, <sup>9</sup> and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."*  
(Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

*What was so important? What were these words?  
"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might!"*  
(Deuteronomy 6:5).

*People often tell me that they want to do the right thing. They want to raise their children right. They want to do God's will. Yet they are not always sure what God's will is.*

*The Bible makes clear that the will of God is for the parents to teach their children to know, love and serve the Lord. The church helps you. St. Joseph helps to form all of its members to be mature disciples of Jesus Christ. Our adult formation sessions will grow your faith and prepare you to share it with others -- especially your children; your parish is here to help you grow in your faith. Your pastor, catechetical staff, and catechists are here to help you to model that gift of faith for your family.*

*How do you grow in faith? Treasure our time together in Faith Formation as an opportunity to share the Catholic faith. After all, for us, church is a way of life just as our faith is for life -- both lifelong and life-giving.*



### ***It's for Life!***

*Faith Formation Program is Life Long and  
Life Giving*

### **Mission Statement:**

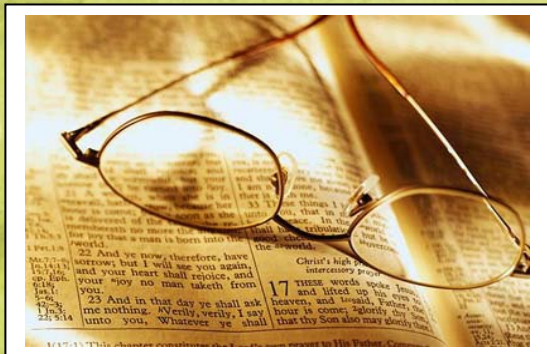
St. Joseph Catholic Church welcomes all to deepen their faith. Our formation programs provide lifelong learning opportunities that promote knowledge of the faith, formation, and celebration of our liturgical life. All are invited to deepen their spiritual and moral lives and to develop households of faith so that all will know and love Jesus Christ and follow in his way as missionary disciples.

*In Christ,  
Matthew McCauley,  
Youth Faith Formation  
Coordinator*



## OUR PROGRAM

- Uses texts/materials approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- Incorporates catechetical themes such as Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, The Church, Morality, Sacraments and Kingdom of God. Each age group learns about the same themes, but at an age-appropriate level.
- Adults meet in the church while children meet by grade level in classrooms.



***Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.***  
-St. Jerome

Contact **Matthew McCauley** at the parish office.

**Phone #:** (407) 275-0841

**Email:**  
[mmccauley@stjosephorlando.org](mailto:mmccauley@stjosephorlando.org)

**Website:** [www.stjosephorlando.org](http://www.stjosephorlando.org)

## POLICIES

Formation is for all adults, teens and children. Each household completes a formation registration form.

- ✠ Must be active, registered members of St. Joseph Catholic Church. Please call the parish office at 407-275-0841 or visit [stjosephorlando.org](http://stjosephorlando.org) if you need to register as a member of the parish.
- ✠ Every household is expected to attend Mass weekly, to make consistent sacrificial gifts using the envelopes in the offertory or on-line giving, which financially support all ministries of our parishes. All households are also called to share their time and talents in the parish.

## SECURITY PROCEDURES

Security guidelines developed by the Diocese of Orlando are used to keep your children safe. All catechists are fingerprinted and clear a Background Check and learn the Diocesan safe environment training process. No adult without these clearances is permitted in the classroom except for dropping off or picking up your children.

**Arrival** – Grade school parents, for weeks 1-2, bring kids straight to classroom if registered. For the remainder of the year, parents are to bring children to their grade level catechists in the Church. The catechists will take the children to the hall and the parents will remain behind for adult faith formation. Middle school and high school parents are to enter the social hall through the portico.

**Dismissal** – For all grade levels, pick up your child at his/her classroom door when directed. Parents/guardians must sign out their children.

**Emergency Evacuation** – If evacuation of the building is required, catechists will escort your children to a safe location on the parish grounds to meet you.



## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

### RESPECT:

- ✚ Listen to and follow the instructions of the catechist.
- ✚ Teasing and name calling of fellow classmates is not tolerated.
- ✚ Help keep the room straightened and return supplies as requested.
- ✚ Cellphones are not allowed to be used during faith formation. Youth are generally allowed to keep them on their person, but the catechist reserves the right to have students place phones in a safe spot in the classroom during class time to be picked up by the student at the conclusion of class if they deem phones could be / are being a distraction.

### SELF-CONTROL:

- ✚ Stay seated unless otherwise directed by your catechist.
- ✚ Do not leave the room without a catechist's permission.
- ✚ No running is allowed.

### PREPAREDNESS:

- ✚ Regular, on time attendance is expected for adults and children.
- ✚ Class time is limited; prepare for class by using the bathroom prior to sessions.
- ✚ Please have a snack or meal before class time to get the most out of the sessions.
- ✚ Parents assist their children with any lessons not completed in class.

### TARDINESS:

- ✚ If a student is tardy 3 times throughout the course of the year with no excuse note or email notice, it will count as one absence.

### RESTROOM USAGE:

- ✚ Students who need to go to the restroom need to have a hall pass.
- ✚ Catechists will send one student at a time with a hall pass.
- ✚ Hall monitors will be ensuring that the students are using the restroom in a timely manner. *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. – 1 John 5:3*

### ATTENDANCE:

- ✚ Students are not allowed more than 3 absences without a parent's excuse note prior to the class.
- ✚ Students from 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> can submit their excuse note by Friday via email.
- ✚ Students from MSYM can submit the excuse note by Monday via email.
- ✚ HSYM can submit their excuse note by Wednesday.
- ✚ If a religious education student is absent three times with no excuse or notice throughout the year (Fall or Spring), he/she will be no longer be able to receive any sacrament they would have that year, and may need to undergo another full year of faith formation and sacramental prep in order to receive the sacrament.
- ✚ If a student who is preparing for sacraments is absent three times with no excuse or notice throughout the semester (Fall or Spring), he/she will be withdrawn from the sacramental preparation program. He/She

### DISCIPLINARY ACTION:

- ✚ **First Offense:** Student will be warned by the Catechist and reminded of the Student Code of Conduct.
- ✚ **Second Offense:** Parents will be notified of the student's misconduct by the catechist or the Formation Coordinator. Misconduct may be noted in the child's records.
- ✚ **Third Offense:** If unacceptable behavior continues, the student will be escorted by a catechist to the social hall to sit for the remainder of the session with the parent or guardian. The Formation Coordinator will speak with the parent(s). Parents may need to teach the remainder of the sessions at home.



## SACRAMENTS

*The sacraments are “efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (CCC 1131).*

*In other words, a sacrament is a sacred and visible sign that is instituted by Jesus to give us grace, an undeserved gift from God. (See also CCC 1084).*

*Christ was present at the inception of all of the sacraments, which He instituted 2,000 years ago. Christ is also present every time each sacrament is celebrated. The Catholic Church has all of the seven sacraments instituted by Christ, which include Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that “the seven sacraments touch all the stages and all important moments of the Christian life” (CCC 1210).*

### Sacramental Preparation

✠ Sacramental Preparation is separate from and **in addition** to faith formation.

✠ Adults desiring these sacraments should contact Andy Alvarez (Adult Coordinator) at the parish office.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation and 1<sup>st</sup> Communion –

generally those eligible are in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade or above and participate regularly at Mass and in faith formation during the prior school year.

**Confirmation** – generally those eligible are in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or above and participate regularly at Mass and faith formation during the prior school year.

**Becoming Catholic, OCIA** – this process is designed for those adults and children over 7 years of age who have not been baptized and are seeking inclusion in the Catholic Church. For more information, contact Matthew McCauley at the parish office for ages 7-17. Contact Andy Alvarez (Adult Formation) for the adult OCIA.

*Train the young in the way they should go; even when old, they will not swerve from it – Proverbs 6:22*



# REGISTERING

Registration for faith formation starts in the beginning of the summer and continues until September 1st. The online registration form is available on the parish website [www.stjosephorlando.org](http://www.stjosephorlando.org) during these months. At least one parent or guardian must enroll in Adult Faith Formation and attend in order for their child to be enrolled in Youth Faith Formation. First time students need to submit sacraments certificates. (This applies for students who are doing First Communion (and/ or) Confirmation. See website for specific dates and materials fees for Faith Formation and Sacramental Prep.

## Youth Ministry

The purpose of this ministry is to involve our youth in our parish and community while deepening their faith and relationship with God.

Middle School Ministry meets every Thursday from 6:30pm – 8pm in the Social Hall. High School Youth Ministry meets every Monday from 6:30-8:00 pm in the social hall.

Youth Group events and activities are typically centered around social, spiritual, and service activities.

Youth Ministry gives teens a great way to make friends and have fun as they live their faith and grow closer to Jesus.

For more information, please Matthew McCauley at [mmccauley@stjosephorlando.org](mailto:mmccauley@stjosephorlando.org) or call at (407) 275-0841.

## Resources for Households of Faith

### Websites:

[www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org)  
[www.catholicmom.com](http://www.catholicmom.com)  
[www.sadlier.com](http://www.sadlier.com)  
[www.teachingcatholickids.com](http://www.teachingcatholickids.com)  
[www.bustedhalo.com](http://www.bustedhalo.com)  
[www.lifelongcatechesis.com](http://www.lifelongcatechesis.com)  
[www.lifeteen.com](http://www.lifeteen.com)  
[www.blessedishe.net](http://www.blessedishe.net)  
[www.formed.org](http://www.formed.org)

### Books:

Catholic Household Book of Blessings and Prayers  
Catechism of the Catholic Church  
United States Catholic Catechism for Adults  
New American Bible

# 2025-2026

## Formation Calendar Elementary-High School Grades

August '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
				4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January '26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
					3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February '26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March '26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April '26						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
				4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

	Faith Formation in Session
	No Faith Formation
	Parent Meeting @ All Sessions
	Catechist Meetings
	ConfPrep/ Rec and FHC prep (6th -12th)
	Advent Mission

	First Holy Communion Rehearsal
	First Holy Communion @ all Masses
	Confirmation Rehearsal & Mass
	Reconciliation/Communion Prep 2nd-5th
	Ash Wed/ Holy W /Penance Service
	Youth Retreats



# Volunteer Opportunities

Our Formation Program's success comes from the effort and hard work of our Volunteers. Our Volunteers are the backbone of our program and without them, the St. Joseph's families and children wouldn't be able to receive their Religious Education and Sacraments. We ask that if there's any way you could share your gifts and talents with us to help the betterment of our program, that you would please consider Sharing those gifts and talents with the St. Joseph's Formation program. Your service will not only bring success to our program but will build up the Kingdom of God for the future generations of the parish. Please pray and discern if this is something that the Lord is putting in your heart. It is never too late to say yes to Him! There are plenty of opportunities for serving. If you feel the call, please Contact Matthew McCauley at [mmccauley@stjosephorlando.org](mailto:mmccauley@stjosephorlando.org) or call the Parish Office.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Catechetical Positions

- Catechist
- Catechist assistant
- First Communion and Reconciliation Preparation Catechists
- Confirmation Preparation Catechists

### Other positions

- Hospitality leader
- Hospitality assistant
- Sign in/out
- Formation evenings Volunteer Coordinator
- Hall Monitors