

St. Jane de Chantal Catholic

Parish School of Religion

Parent Handbook 2023-2024

INTRODUCTION

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that *Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith* (§2223).

Assisting and empowering parents in this primary role of transmitting the faith is the purpose and design of the Parish School of Religion. In his recent encyclical, Pope Francis commented,

“The main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony.”

(p. 153, *Amoris Laetitia*).

The following information will assist you in getting to know a little more about the Parish School of Religion. If you ever have ANY question or concern that is not addressed in this Parent Handbook, please feel free to contact the Director of Religious Education, Holly Schwartz, at 985-248-0391 or email hschwartz@arch-no.org. Meetings are available by appointment.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Jane de Chantal Youth Faith Formation Program, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the direction of the Archdiocese of New Orleans Office of Religious Education, and our pastor, affirms, assists, and empowers parish families in their role as primary catechetical educators of their children’s faith. Through prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments, and ongoing catechesis, we aspire to create opportunities for the family to deepen their knowledge of God, and encounter Him in a personal way.

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

ALL CHILDREN (Grades 1 – 10) are to be dropped-off/picked-up using their assigned carline route. **Staff is on duty to supervise carline beginning at 6:20 pm. If you arrive later than 6:45 pm., you must walk your child to the building.**

Please become familiar with your carline route and the appropriate streets for approaching to secure a safe and orderly flow. **There will be no walkers or 10th grade drivers without prior approval.**

ATTENDANCE

PSR takes place on Monday night from 6:45 – 8:00 p.m. Please see the calendar for special holidays and parish closures.

Parents are expected to make a serious commitment to see that their children attend each scheduled session. If an unforeseen situation should cause a child to miss a session, the child may be asked to complete missed work and return it the following session.

After 4 missed classes (2 per term), parents will be contacted to determine reasoning and will have an opportunity of making up missed classes with Mass attendance or an assignment.

Parents of **Sacramental Year children** (2nd grade) will be contacted and concerns will be discussed if the child misses **more than two consecutive sessions, or more than three total sessions.**

BEHAVIOR

If a child becomes disruptive during a session, and then refuses to cooperate with the catechist's charitable advice to correct his/her behavior, he/she may be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the hour and will sit

with a Hall Monitor until dismissal time. A note will be sent home, or a call made informing the parents of the inappropriate behavior. The child will be expected to repair the wrong by returning to class with a written apology to the catechist signed by his/her parents and the child, when appropriate.

If a child is asked to leave a session more than twice during the year, that child will not be allowed to return to the program without a parental meeting with the Coordinator of Religious Education and, if necessary, the Pastor to pray and discern further action.

If a child needs the support of a parent in the room in order to display virtuous behavior, we may ask the parent to accompany their child to formation classes for a brief time. It is our experience that parents can help tremendously in the “adjustment period” with which some children seem to have some difficulty. **It is our goal to provide an environment where Catholic Virtues, good manners, and respect are displayed by all.**

CARPOOL

Parents must notify the Office of any carpooling in advance. **We are not permitted to send your child home with another parent unless you have given us prior notice and permission to do so.** Parents are required to either send an email to ore@stpeterparish.com or send a note with your child to class, so that we are aware of the situation.

COMMUNICATION

Please frequently check your child’s folder for any flyers, as well as your email for important updates and events.

We always encourage communication with our families. **Please advise us of any family situations such as recent divorce, unemployment, custody, etc, that may affect your child.** Know that all information will be kept strictly confidential and that our ministry is always willing to reach out to assist in any way possible.

CURRICULUM

Throughout the year, children will benefit from spiritually enriching encounters such as the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Novenas and Devotions, The Sacrament of Reconciliation, Holy Mass, and Eucharistic Adoration.

DISABILITIES / LEARNING NEEDS

"All persons with disabilities have the capacity to proclaim the Gospel and to be living witnesses to its truth within the community of faith and offer valuable gifts. Their involvement enriches every aspect of Church life. They are not just the recipients of catechesis—they are also its agents." (National Directory for Catechesis, 2005)

If your child has a physical, learning or other disability or exceptionality, we ask that you would contact our office so that we can meet with you to discern how we can best meet the needs of your child and affirm his/her God-given gifts and abilities.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Our ministry does assist families that are unable to pay the registration fee. Please contact our Office at 985-246-0931 or indicate your need for assistance on the Registration Form.

NO CHILD WILL EVER BE DENIED RELIGIOUS FORMATION DUE TO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.

FIRE

We will use the same exit routes that have been designed by St. Jane de Chantal to ensure the safety of your child(ren). In this very unlikely incident, we will take everyone to the assigned safe locations and will notify the parents accordingly.

GRADE PLACEMENTS

Children are placed in grade levels based on their religious formation the previous year.

Registered children who completed all course work and successfully met the attendance requirements will be promoted to the next year of formation.

Registered children who *failed* to complete the course work or failed to meet the attendance requirements must successfully complete an assessment for that formation year in order to proceed to the next. Returning children to PSR after a lapse of formal religious education are placed based on the outcome of their assessment.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are MANY ways to become involved! **Please contact our Office if you are interested in learning about ways to serve in our ministry.**

We maintain an "Open Door" policy. We encourage you to sit in on your child's class at any time. We do ask, however, that you notify the Office or your child's catechist prior to arriving. We strongly urge you to meet your child's catechist and feel free to contact them during the year.

*Please Note: Any person over 18 years of age who has "ongoing" (more than once) contact with our students **MUST** complete the Safe Environment requirements for the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Additionally, there are many opportunities for our parents to be a special part of the PSR year. The dates for special activities will be highlighted in our calendar.

PRAYER

Truly the power of prayer is real and effective! We beg the prayers of our Youth Faith Formation family knowing that Our Lord hears and answers our every need. Each week parents can commit to lift us up in prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Know that we also remember your family in our prayers as well.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

St. Jane de Chantal joins the Archdiocese of New Orleans in taking very seriously the responsibility of protecting our children. Background checks are run on all Staff members and volunteers, who must also attend an Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training. **Child protection catechesis is taught annually. Parents may refuse the participation of their child in the safe environment lesson but must complete documentation indicating their objection which will be submitted to the Archdiocese.** Parents are certainly welcome to observe the lesson (See Calendar for Dates).

SAFETY

Children are expected to always remain with their class. **At no time may a child leave their class or try to depart by means other than their assigned carline. Please do not instruct your child(ren) to meet you anywhere other than the designated dismissal areas without prior notification.** Our goal is for our time to be peaceful and orderly, with the safety of the children as our highest priority.

Should we ever have to **evacuate a building(s) due to an emergency, parents will be notified immediately by Remind.**

TECHNOLOGY

For safety purposes, our catechists have their cell phones with them at all times to use in case of emergency. Your child should not need the use of their phone (or any other electronic device) during Youth Faith Formation. **If a child *does* come with a cell phone or other electronic device, he/she will be asked to place it out of sight for the duration of the session to avoid distractions.** If a child does not heed the catechist's request to place his/her device out of sight (silent, vibrate, etc.), parents will be contacted regarding the inappropriate use of technology.

WEATHER

If we need to cancel PSR for the evening because of inclement weather, an email will be sent out as well as a Remind notification as early as possible so you may plan accordingly.