

Faith Formation Parent Handbook - 2025



“Fan the Flame”

St Joseph Catholic Church

830 Poplar St.

Macon, GA 31201

Phone: 478-745-1631 Ext. 121

Fr. John Johnson, Pastor

Fr. Christopher Awiliba, Parochial Vicar

Fr. Robert Phillips, Parochial Vicar

June Marie Kountz, Coordinator of Religious Education

JKountz@St-Joseph.cc

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Let us help you to inspire, encourage, and grow your child's personal *friendship* with Jesus as they learn what we *believe*, how we *celebrate*, how we *live*, and how we *pray*.

Why go to Faith Formation?

- We will help *you* to build a strong spiritual foundation for your family.
- We will help *you* to learn and understand the Bible.
- We will help *you* to build lifelong friendships.
- We will help *you* to make Mass more personal and relatable.

You and your family are important to us. Please share with us and we help each other come to know and love God more each day. WE cannot do it without YOU!

Our Faith Formation program at St Joseph Parish offers classes for grades K3 through Confirmation, including sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. All classes will start with prayer, be filled with ways to see and know our Lord, and end with songs of celebration. Thank you for sharing your family with us.

CATECHISTS & VOLUNTEERS

“Enlighten my mind to know these mysteries which your Church treasures and teaches. Move my heart to love them and my will to live in accord with them. Give me the ability to teach this Faith to others without pride, without ostentation, and without personal gain.”

Thank you for answering the call to “Fan the Flame.”

***** Parents, Grandparents, Relatives, and ALL Parishioners are encouraged to Fan the Flame of Faith in all the children and families of our Parish!***

REGISTRATION

Faith Formation registration begins in July and continues through September.

All children in grades K3-9th and all teenagers not yet confirmed are highly encouraged to register and participate in Faith Formation, regardless of school affiliation. All parish families with children preparing for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, or Confirmation (including those enrolled at SJS or MDS) should register and participate in our Faith Formation program. Sacramental preparation for Confirmation is for all 9th graders and older. First Reconciliation will occur in the Fall, and First Holy Communion and Confirmation will occur in the spring of 2026.

If your child has not yet been baptized and is already 7 years of age or older, we offer the Christian Initiation for Children (CIC). Please see June Kountz after registering.

If you need to register your family *at St Joseph Catholic Church*, please *register* on the “Parish Registration Form” at [Welcome - St. Joseph Catholic Church](#).

To register in Faith Formation, please:

1. Complete family registration (please include your name, and email address) on Flocknote at <https://tinyurl.com/mrye9nze>

or scan the QR code:



2. Tuition is \$25 per child with a \$50 maximum per family. Please *pay* at <https://osvhub.com/stjosephmacon/giving/funds> or scan this code:

Every child is welcome regardless of ability to pay.



3. Please register on FORMED so that you have access to the curriculum. To register for FORMED, go to the [signup page on FORMED](#), select your parish (or enter “31201”), and register with your name and email address. There is more information about using [FORMED Home Page](#) here.



4. Please *email* Baptismal certificates for sacramental prep students only as a PDF to faithformation@st-joseph.cc.
5. VIRTUS is especially important to our diocese. All volunteers are asked to *complete VIRTUS certification* at [Empowering God's Children](#).



6. Please call, email, or stop by the parish office at any time. June Kountz, our Coordinator of Religious Education, is always available at 817-939-3129 or by email at jkountz@st-joseph.cc.

FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We have changed our program this year in several ways to:

1. Engage the parents more in Faith Formation.
2. Provide engaging and interactive formation for children.
3. Incorporate more activities and events, i.e., not just be classroom based.
4. Improve consistency and participation in middle years.
5. Make the calendar less fluid to improve attendance and avoid confusion.

Help, I'm A Catechist!
Catechist Training Retreat 2025



We have scheduled two retreats before classes resume this year. The first one, titled "Help! I'm A Catechist," is a training retreat for our catechists and volunteers to get to know one another, pray, and review the curriculum and materials for the program as well as answer any questions regarding the program.

The second one is for current and prospective teachers, sponsors, and volunteers, and is titled “Priest, Prophet and King Retreat.”

Both retreats are open to all adults. More info is available through Flocknote and the bulletin.

Please join us for the
“PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING”
Retreat

 Take time to be with God, learn about God, and see God work in your life. As our knowledge of God grows, so does our love for him; and as our love grows, our desire to serve God does too. Please join us and take time to renew your spirit through prayer, reflection, food, and fun!

 This retreat is for prophets of all kinds: seasoned or new or wannabe catechists, godparents, sponsors, and parents!

 Join us on Saturday, September 13, 2025, beginning with Mass at 9:00 a.m., followed a continental breakfast and then prayer, reflection, and more food and fun in the Social Hall.

Sign up today!
 The baptized serve as priests through their sacrificial efforts to bring people to God. They serve as prophets through their witness to the truth in word and deed. And they serve as kings in their efforts to lead others—again through word and deed—to use their talents to advance the kingdom of God (see CCC 893).

Starting in September, each month will consist of one *Family Event (FE)*, two in-the-classroom classes and one in-the-church lesson/tour (TOUR). The calendars will be posted on the website at [Faith Formation - St. Joseph Catholic Church](#) and weekly Flocknote newsletters will give update information as needed.

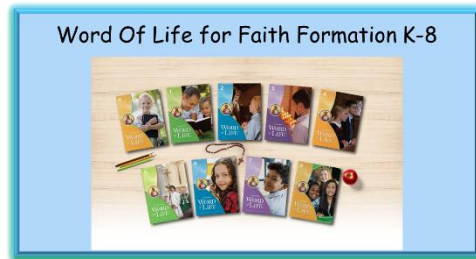
***PLEASE NOTE – ALL K3-8 students will check-in and check-out from the SJCS cafeteria.** Please note that if you are running late, you may have to take your child(ren) to the church if they have a tour scheduled. All parents will check children will check out from the school.

Where to meet for “classwork” (CW):

1. Pre-K and Kindergarten will meet in the SJCS Kindergarten classroom but check-in from the SJCS cafeteria.
2. 1st grade will meet in the SJCS Library but check-in from the SJCS cafeteria.
3. First Holy Communion (FHC) prep will meet in the SJCS Resource Room but check-in from the SJCS cafeteria. This class is for children in grades 2nd-5th who have not received FHC.
4. 3rd-5th graders will meet, as one class, in SJCS 4th grade classroom but check-in from the SJCS cafeteria.
5. 6th-8th graders will meet, as one class, in the SJCC Social Hall but check-in from the SJCS cafeteria.
6. Confirmation preparation class will meet in the Knights of Columbus Hall. This class is for all teenagers who have not yet been confirmed.
7. Faith Formation for Parents will meet in the SJCS cafeteria with coffee and donuts.

Online and written material for classes:

- a. All **grades K3-8** will be using *The Catholic Youth Bible, 4th Edition* and the recently published [Word of Life series](#) from the Augustine Institute.



Please click here to see [Letter to the Parents from Word of Life.](#)

- b. **Communion preparation students** will be using the Signs of Grace books: [You Are Loved](#) and [You Are Forgiven](#). This series help children discover the love and mercy of Christ that has been revealed both in Sacred Scripture and through the rich teaching of the Church.

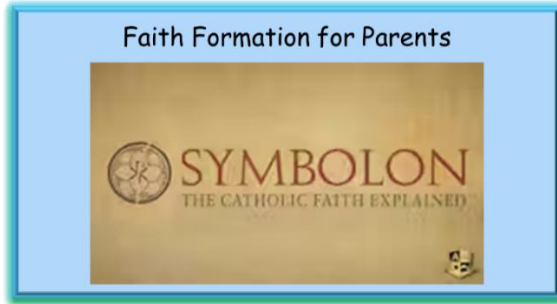


- c. **Confirmation preparation students** will be using *The Catholic Youth Bible, 4th Edition*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and [Symbolon Teens](#) from the Augustine Institute.



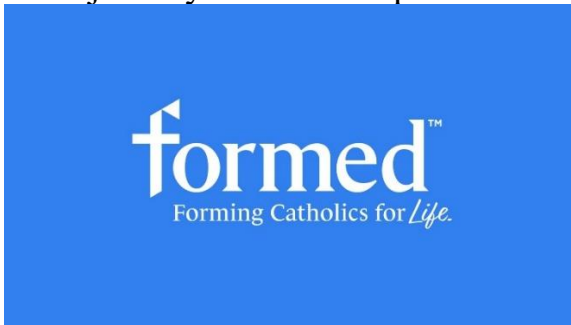
In addition, there is on-line access for this series and others at [FORMED](#). Please click here to see more information about [FORMED Letter to Parents.](#)

- d. **Faith Formation for Parents** will be using *The Catholic Youth Bible, 4th Edition*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and [*Symbolon*](#) through [FORMED](#).



Please click here to see the [Symbolon Playbook](#).

- e. **All students and parents will have** on-line access to courses and [FORMED](#). Formed guides Catholics and those they evangelize to a fully Catholic life through faith-informed content. As a faithful authority and helpful guide, which draws people closer to Christ, the Formed platform provides a captivating experience that is comprehensive, customizable, educates, and moves with you wherever you are in your Faith journey. Formed empowers and satisfies curiosity by forming Catholics for life.



- f. All students and parents are invited to download the [AMEN: Catholic Bible and Prayers App](#). The AMEN: Catholic Bible and Prayers app is a free application designed to inspire daily conversations with God through various features:
- It offers daily Catholic prayers, Bible readings, and meditations to help deepen your spiritual practice.
 - Users can access Catholic Mass recordings, rosary prayers, and immersive Bible studies.
 - The app includes Christian meditations and sleep recordings to promote relaxation and spiritual growth.



For the “in-the-church activities/tours” (Tour), children should still check-in and check-out from the school. To learn more about the Tours, [click here](#). The tours are scheduled as follows:

Sept - Oct	The Liturgy of the Word and The Liturgy of the Body Tour (Mass)
Oct - Nov	Prayer and Adoration Tour (Prayer)
Nov - Dec	Baptism, Reconciliation and Confirmation Tour (Grace)
Jan	Marriage/Holy Orders/Anointing of the Sick Tour (Oils)
February	Stations of the Cross Tour (Stations)
April	Art and Music Tour (Art)

For “Family Events” (FE), families will meet in the Social Hall at 9:30 unless noted otherwise. There are also three Works of Mercy (WOM) opportunities for all Faith Formation families. To learn more about the Family Events, [click here](#). The family events scheduled are scheduled as follows (**dates may change**):

09/07/2025	Opening Mass at 11 followed by Sunday Cupcake Social
10/26/2025	All Saints Party
11/30/2025	Advent Wreath Party, Gifts for the Needy Collection (WOM), and Nativity donations
12/6/2026	Penance Service in the church at 10 am
12/07/2025	Breakfast with Santa at 9 am in SJCS cafeteria
12/24/2025	Nativity Play in the church before 6:30 pm Mass
02/01/2026	Candlemas Pancakes and Coats for the Homeless Collection (WOM)
02/27/2026	Family Stations of the Cross in the church at 7 pm
03/12/2026	Lenten Penance Service in the church at 7 pm
03/15/2026	Feed the Hungry Canned Food Drive (WOM)
03/29/2026	Palm Sunday Procession
04/26/2026	Year End Mass at 11 followed by Sunday Sundae Social
05/10/2026	Celebration of Mary

NEWS

Weekly newsletters are available through Flocknote.

CALENDARS - Student calendars may be found at [Faith Formation - St. Joseph Catholic Church](#).

[Grades K3-8th Calendar](#)

[First Reconciliation/First Holy Communion Preparation Calendar](#)

[Confirmation Preparation Calendar](#)

Christian Initiation for Children (CIC) Calendar

ATTENDANCE

Parents are the first evangelists for their children and the first to teach them the faith. Please let us help you to make them ready to celebrate the sacraments in which we experience God's love, healing, forgiveness, nourishment and strengthening! The fact is, we need you here – to learn *about* you, to learn *from* you and to share God's love *with* you!

COMMUNICATION

All Faith Formation program information is on our website at:

<https://stjosephmacon.org/faith-formation/>.

Reminder notices and parent letters will be emailed and texted via Flocknote. Parents are highly encouraged to join Flocknote at <https://login.flocknote.com/login> for important email and/or text messages about the program.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

For the safety of all our children and volunteers, parents **must** drop off & pick up all K3-8th grade children in SJCS cafeteria. Class, tours, and activity times are 9:45 am – 10:45 am. Family Events begin at 9:30 am in the Social Hall unless otherwise noted.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT (VIRTUS) FOR CHILDREN LESSONS

Every year, the Diocese of Savannah requires that the students registered in Faith Formation at any level receive an appropriate age explanation and lessons on Safe Environment Training (VIRTUS). Parents will receive these lessons through Flocknote to share with their children.

All adults who volunteer in any capacity at St Joseph Catholic Church or St Joseph Catholic School **MUST obtain a Safe Environment certification (VIRTUS)**. This is an online course on Student and Children Safety which includes a Required Background Check. You can fulfill this requirement on our website: <https://www.diosav.org/en/resources/how-do-i/register-for-virtus-training>.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We need your help! All parents *are highly encouraged to* prayerfully consider helping with at least one event each school year. Sign up at:

<https://stjosephcatholicchurch97.flocknote.com/signup/220994>.

FAITH FORMATION FOR PARENTS

Everyone is welcome! This year, each Sunday while the children are in class, we invite all adults/parents to enrich their faith. We will be using Augustine Institute's [SYMBOLON](#) available on FORMED. This 16-episode series, guided by the Creed, explores everything from sacraments to inspiring saintly stories, empowering you to understand, live, and share your faith confidently.

**If you are a parent who needs Sacraments themselves, please reach out to us! We can help you get your Civil Marriage blessed, help with annulments of past marriages, help you get Baptized, receive your First Communion, your Confirmation, whatever you need!*

RESOURCES Find everything you need to know, including documents, [here](#).

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION



"For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Confirmation



Christian Initiation for Children

