

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2011 – 2012

**ST. JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO
CATECHETICAL MINISTRY**

**CUPERTINO, CALIFORNIA
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Welcome & Catechetical Office Information	2
Philosophy	3
Goals	3
Parent's Role	4
Child's Role	4
Overview of Program	5
Grade Level Themes	5
Diocesan Catechetical Standards	6
Virtus – Protecting God's Children	6
Sacramental Preparation	6
Registration Procedures	7
Parental Participation	8
Attendance	8
Arrival and Dismissal	9
Map	11
Communication Procedures	12
Discipline Policies	12
Harassment	12
Emergency/Safety Procedures	13
Outreach	14
Field Trips/Off-Site Activities	14
Right to Amend	15
Catechetical Standards Virtus: Protecting God's Children	Appendix

WELCOME

Dear Parents and Children,

The catechetical staff of our parish hopes this handbook will provide you with valuable information about St. Joseph of Cupertino Catechetical Ministry for children/youth. It is important that you read it and discuss it with your family. After you have done so, please sign and return the colored insert to the Catechetical Office.

We ask you to keep this handbook in a convenient place and refer to it as needed. We welcome any questions you have and look forward to serving you and your family.

Sincerely,

Tam Tran
Director of Catechetical
Ministry

CATECHETICAL OFFICE INFORMATION

Director of Catechetical Ministry: Tam Tran
Administrative Assistant: Huong Tran

Office Hours: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday – Thursday
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Sunday (when classes are in session)

Phone: (408) 252-7653 Ext. 60
Fax: (408) 252-5263
Email: catmin@stjoscup.org
Website: www.stjoscup.org/releduc.php
Yahoogroups: sjccatministry@yahoogroups.com

PHILOSOPHY

St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish believes that Catechetical Ministry is a share in Jesus' own mission of proclaiming the Reign of God. Catechesis is that activity which enables faith to become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction -- especially by sharing God's Word in Scripture, sharing the tradition of the Catholic Church, participating in the prayer life of the community, and engaging in the service activities of the community. Catechesis is a life-long process for each individual as well as the work of the entire Catholic Christian community.

The Church teaches that the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth and development of the children rests first and foremost with the parents. Parents may share the responsibility with others, but they do not relinquish it. The Church assists the parents in passing on their faith through the ministry of catechesis. Catechists echo the Catholic faith in a way that those being catechized (children, youth, adults) can understand. Catechists must do more than merely teach about their faith. They help children/youth/adults build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. Catechists do this by proclaiming the Word, building a sense of community, leading to prayer and worship, and encouraging loving service to others. Catechists also lead others to faith through their example and by living a life consistent with the teachings of the Church.

Our catechists are all volunteers, from many walks of life. They are people who have answered a call to minister to our children/youth/adults and who have prepared themselves in a variety of ways to serve as catechists. Above all, they are people for whom faith is important enough to share. While our parish Catechetical Ministry Program does have a professional staff, they help fulfill the goals of the ministry as the volunteer staff of the program. The professional staff could not fulfill the ministry of this program without their service to others in our parish community.

In conclusion, the catechetical process seeks to open children/ youth/adults to the discovery of the goodness and beauty of God as reflected in their world, and help them to experience this world within the Catholic Christian community. It seeks to help them grow further in their faith, their understanding of our Catholic tradition, our unity in Christ and the many gifts of the Holy Spirit.

GOALS

The goals of the Catechetical Ministry Program at St. Joseph of Cupertino are:

- 1 Ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ
- 2 Full participation in the life of the Catholic Church

PARENT'S ROLE

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Our staff is eager to work with parents to help them fulfill this responsibility and asks each parent's cooperation in the following ways:

- 1 Celebrate Sunday Mass regularly with your children/youth. Our parish Mass schedule is as follows:
 - Saturday – 5:00 p.m.
 - Sunday – 8:00, 9:30, 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.
- 2 Participate actively in the sacramental and community life of the parish.
- 3 Share your faith and what it means to you with your children.
- 4 Pray with your children and help them memorize the traditional prayers of the Church.
- 5 Attend all parent meetings.
- 6 Familiarize yourself with scheduled catechetical sessions and events for your children/youth.
- 7 Read and act promptly on all communications from the Catechetical Ministry Office.
- 8 Assure your children's punctual and regular attendance at all sessions.

CHILD'S ROLE

Children also have a responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit from the catechetical sessions at St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish. They are expected to:

- 1 Be respectful of the catechist and other children.
- 2 Listen carefully, follow directions and participate in the session activities.
- 3 Complete home assignments.
- 4 Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures, and discipline policies.
- 5 Share what they have learned and experienced in their catechetical sessions with their parents and families.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

St. Joseph of Cupertino welcomes all children and youth, baptized or not, to participate in the catechetical program which runs from October through the first week of May.

Ages 3 – Grade 1: Sunday mornings 9:20-10:30 a.m.

Grades 2 – 6: Sunday mornings 10:50 a.m-12:00 p.m.

Grades 7 and 8: Wednesday evenings from 7:30-8:45 p.m.

Catechesis for children/youth with disabilities is provided in regular or specialized religious instruction, particularly with regard to preparation for the sacraments. Please contact the Director regarding the specific needs of your child/youth.

GRADE LEVEL THEMES

St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish welcomes all children and youth, baptized or not, to participate in the Catechetical Ministry Program.

Early Childhood: *I Am Special, Our Sunday Visitor Publisher*

- 1 3 year – olds – Developing a positive self image of themselves created and loved by God
- 2 4 year-olds – Developing abilities to develop their self image in God's world
- 1 Kindergarteners – Stimulate faith development in our Catholic community

Grades 1 – 6: *Blest Are We, RCL Benziger, Publisher*

- 1 Grade 1 –Belonging to the Community
- 2 Grade 2 –Participating in the Sacramental Life of the Community
- 3 Grade 3 –Coming to Know the Story of Our Church Community
- 4 Grade 4 –Coming to Understand the Actions of our Church Community
- 5 Grade 5 –Participating more Fully in the Sacramental Life of the Our Community

Grade 6 –The Bible is the primary text, with supplementary materials to make the Scripture come alive for our young people.

Junior High: *Edge by Lifeteen*

In grades 7 and 8, the youth examine different life experiences and relate them to Scripture, Church teaching, acts of justice and liturgical celebration as they continue their growth in faith.

A CALENDAR OF ALL PROGRAM DATES IS SENT TO PARENTS IN SEPTEMBER. THE CALENDAR IS ALSO AVAILBLE ONLINE. SPECIFIC CLASS CALENDARS ARE ALSO STAPLED TO THE *BLEST ARE WE* TEXTBOOKS.

DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL STANDARDS

The Catechetical Standards are a set of age-level competencies for the catechetical programs of the Diocese of San Jose to identify the basic things that need to be learned taught and celebrated for children in grades 1-8.

In his letter to parents and guardians on August 20, 2007, Bishop McGrath stated;

"The Diocesan Catechetical Standards will strengthen the partnership that exists between the home and the parish so that children and youth will be able to develop life-giving relationships with Christ and his Church. Not only will these standards enable parents, clergy, catechetical directors/coordinators, catechists, and the entire parish to see what is expected at each grade level, but the standards will also support them in their efforts to contribute to the faith formation process.

Even young children should know that from us, they can receive the authentic teaching of the Church. At the same time, because their many questions may be difficult to answer, you—as parents—will need to seek continuing formation and education to be up to the task.

It is my hope that these Catechetical Standards will assist all who teach children about their faith—parents, clergy, and catechists—to do so fully, faithfully, and confidently."

VIRTUS – PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN

VIRTUS is the safe environment program that will be presented to the children registered in Catechetical Ministry, grades K-12. The VIRTUS program consists of lessons designed to educate the children on how to keep themselves safe at all times. The children learn how to say “No,” when and how to “Go,” and who to “Tell.” **Appended to this handbook is the Virtus packet for families.**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The first step in the sacramental preparation process for all families is attendance at an orientation meeting in the Fall conducted by the Parish Catechetical Director and the Religion Coordinator of the Parish School. The Pastor usually participates in this orientation process.

CONFIRMATION: Here, at St. Joseph of Cupertino, we have restored the order of the sacraments of Initiation. This means that children will celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation before they celebrate the sacrament of Eucharist. At the present time, we are offering the preparation and celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation to all children in the parish, second grade and up. Therefore, all children are prepared for this sacrament during class time. Please contact Primo Martinez at 252-7653 or primo.martinez@yahoo.com for more information regarding Confirmation preparation for your high school age children.

FIRST EUCHARIST (Communion): Children are prepared for this sacrament during the second grade year. Preparation is a two-year process beginning in first grade. Children past second grade age are prepared through the Older Sacramental Preparation Process. Participation in this process is determined by the catechetical experience of the child in consultation with the Director.

FIRST RECONCILIATION (Confession): Children are prepared to celebrate this sacrament before they are prepared to receive their First Communion. All parents are expected to assist in the sacramental preparation of their children and to attend the parent meetings for this purpose.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN is a process for children seven years of age or older who are not yet baptized or who have been baptized in another Christian tradition and now wish to be part of the Catholic Church. This process requires full participation of the parents. Children who complete this process will receive the three sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

INFANT BAPTISM: Baptism is celebrated upon completion of the Parent Baptism Preparation Program. Contact the Parish Office at 252-7653 for information about preparation of parents for infant Baptism.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

REGISTRATION

All families currently registered in our program are registered for each following school year. New families to the parish are asked to call the Catechetical Ministry Office about registration information.

FEES

One child per family	\$ 90.00
Two children per family	\$125.00
Three or more children per family	\$150.00

There is an additional fee of \$35.00 per child for the Sacrament Preparation Programs.

Anyone who cannot afford to pay these fees because of financial difficulties should feel free to make arrangements with the Director. Everyone is entitled to catechesis regardless of their ability to pay registration fees. We grant scholarships as a family makes a request.

BAPTISMAL INFORMATION

A baptismal certificate is required for all children who are preparing to celebrate Confirmation, First Reconciliation and First Communion.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE

Please notify the catechetical office of any change of address or telephone number (work or home) immediately so that the catechetical staff will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency involving your child/youth.

EMERGENCY FORMS

Each child/youth must have an emergency card on file in the office. Failure to submit an emergency card within the first three weeks of catechetical sessions may be cause for removal from a class. Please see that the information listed on the card is kept accurate at all times.

CONFIDENTIALITY

When you register in our Catechetical Ministry Program, your family will be added to the catechetical database. The Catechetical Office will not release any information about you or your family to an individual or special interest group inside or outside the parish without your permission.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Parents are required to aide in our Early Childhood Classes (age 3 through Grade 1). Helping will give you the opportunity to observe your child's class and see how your child is responding in class. You will also be helping the catechist by assisting her/him in activities that require more than one set of adult helping hands. You will need to schedule yourself once or twice in each child's class. Parents are given the opportunity to sign up for times that are convenient for them.

Also, two or three times a year the Early Childhood Program gathers together for prayer. It means a lot to your children for you to be present, because all children participate in the prayer service in some way.

OVERALL CATECHETICAL PROGRAM

We ask that each family give two hours of service each year, in an area of their choice on the parent volunteer form. St. Joseph of Cupertino Catechetical Program seeks to engage the children with a variety of learning styles. Therefore, we prepare many activities each week in order for the classes to be engaging. Because of this, we particularly need volunteers during the Sunday sessions to work in the office helping prepare lesson material.

ATTENDANCE

ABSENCES

Promptness and attendance at every class is important for the sake of continued understanding and for development of faith in our children. If it is necessary for your child/youth to miss a session, a telephone call to the office is to be made in advance. This will excuse your child's absence. Parents/guardians will receive a phone call after three unexcused absences. If your child cannot attend on a regular basis, please call and discuss the situation with the Director. (Custody situations would be an example of what would cause irregular attendance.)

EARLY RELEASE

If your child must leave the session before the usual dismissal time, the parent/guardian must sign the child out in the Catechetical Ministry Office. Once you obtain a note from the office, you can go straight to the classroom to pick up your child. Children will only be released to parents, guardians or persons listed on the child's emergency form.

VISITORS

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit their child's catechetical session after registering in the office. If your child would like to bring a friend to class, please contact the catechetical office to obtain a *visitor information card*. All children/youth who are visitors must have a completed visitor information card before being allowed to visit classrooms.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

ARRIVAL BY CAR

Sunday Morning: You are to park your car in the parking lot and walk your child across the parking lot to the school. Children ages 3 through second grade are to be walked to their class by a parent/guardian. Children in Grades 3 and above may walk from the concrete walkway in front of the school to the classroom by themselves. If you have been to Mass with your children prior to class time you are asked to walk them down to the school for classes. People are entering and leaving the parking lot and you need accompany your child safely across the lot.

Sunday Morning During Inclement Weather: During inclement weather you may drop your children off along the sidewalk in front of the school. Please drive down the second aisle in the lot away from the grassy field and drive toward the church along the front of the school. (see map on the next page). You may stop along the red curb in front of the parish hall to drop your children off there. Parents/guardians of children ages 3 through Grade 2 are still asked to escort their children to class.

Children/youth should not arrive earlier than 15 minutes before the beginning of their session.

PARENTAL PICK UP BY CAR

At the end of the sessions children should wait outside their classrooms for their parents/guardians to pick them up. At no time will children be allowed to walk across the parking lot to a car unsupervised. Children ages 3 through Grade 2 will be kept inside the classroom with the catechist until a parent/guardian comes for them. The catechist will wait with the children for 10 minutes then bring any children still waiting to the Catechetical Office to be picked up.

Children/youth should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after being dismissed.

WEDNESDAY EVENING DROP OFF AND PICK UP FOR JUNIOR HIGH:

Please drive down to the front of the Youth Ministry room, pull into a parking space and drop off your youth. Please do not drop him/her off in front of the school office. We ask you to pick up your child in front of the Youth Ministry room also. We do not allow the youth to walk up into the main parking lot because that would place the youth outside of immediate supervision.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL BY FOOT OR BICYCLE:

Children/youth will not be allowed to be dismissed on foot or bicycle without prior written authorization from their parent or guardian. Dismissal on foot or bicycle will only be allowed during daylight hours. All evening programs require that children/youth be picked up by a parent/guardian.

- 1 Parents/guardians should establish a safe route to and from the parish with their children/youth. When children enter or leave the parish grounds on foot they must use the marked crosswalk.
- 2 Children/youth riding bicycles must walk their bicycles on parish grounds and use the marked crosswalk to enter and leave.
- 3 Bicycles are to be parked in designated area.
- 4 Parents/guardians are advised that children/youth riding bicycles to and from school grounds are required by state law to wear helmet.

Roller blades or skateboards are not permitted on parish grounds.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

The primary responsibility for seeing that custody arrangements are carried out rests with the parents. The Catechetical staff wishes to cooperate with special custody arrangements of families to the best of their ability and will do so by following the diocesan policy below:

- 1 A copy of the decree of dissolution which defines the custody rights of the parents, or a copy of any other pertinent legal document, must be on file in the catechetical office.
- 2 The person who drops off the child for catechetical sessions must pick up the child. Upon arrival, the parent/guardian or person designated by him or her in writing must bring the child to the classroom and sign in with the catechist (teacher). At dismissal time the same parent/guardian or designated person must sign him or her out. **The child will not be released to anyone except the person who has dropped the child off.** These arrangements or any modifications to this arrangement must be made with the Director prior to the child beginning classes.

Please remember these rules are made for the protection and safety of your child and the children of others.

MAP

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Parents/guardians and catechetical staff work in partnership in helping children/youth grow in faith, therefore good communication is essential. If problems develop, they should always be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. If a parent/guardian wishes to talk with a catechist, they may do so after the session or they may make an appointment with the catechist by calling the catechetical office. Parents/guardians may also call or visit the catechetical office if they wish to talk with the Director. The phone number is 408-252-7653 Ext. 60.

Catechists and/or the catechetical office will communicate with parents/guardians by phone, mail, or by sending notes home with the children/youth. The catechetical office publishes a monthly newsletter that is sent home by e-mail or with the youngest child in each family from the last class session each month. If you do not receive this newsletter, please call the office and one will be sent to you.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

One of the catechist's first concerns is to maintain an atmosphere in which the children/youth can form a community, share faith, and enjoy an optimum learning environment.

As part of a Catholic Christian learning environment children and youth are expected to:

- 1 Behave respectfully and courteously toward all catechists, adults, and other children/youth. Inappropriate behavior includes disrespectful verbal and body language.
- 2 Participate positively and be attentive in the catechetical session.
- 3 Respect parish property and the property of others.
- 4 Follow the rules of the program and the class.

Parents/guardians will be called if their child/youth repeatedly disrupts the class session. The Director of Catechetical Ministry, in consultation with the pastor is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations.

HARASSMENT

St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish believes that any form of harassment is contrary to the sanctity and integrity of all persons and is committed to providing an environment free of harassment. All children/youth/adults are forbidden from engaging in any form of harassment directed toward another child/youth/adult. This includes verbal, physical, visual, or sexual harassment. Any allegation of harassment will be dealt with in a serious manner according to our harassment policy. A copy of this policy is available in the Catechetical Ministry Office for you to read if you should wish to do so.

EMERGENCY/SAFETY PROCEDURE

The safety of the students and catechetical staff is of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and well being of both students and staff members. In the case of emergency/natural disaster the Emergency Procedure Plan will be followed.

In the case of an emergency/natural disaster, catechists, and the Director will remain with the children until either a parent or designated person picks the children up. A checkout system will be provided for parents/guardians to sign out their child.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT/SUDDEN SICKNESS

In case of accident or sudden sickness, the Catechetical Director, or her delegate will give appropriate immediate care and notify the parents/guardians.

DANGEROUS MATERIALS

The Catechetical Director or designated persons have the right and duty to protect the health and welfare of the participants of the catechetical program. This includes the right to inspect property of individuals suspected of possessing alcohol, drugs, weapons and other illegal materials. If alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons, or other dangerous materials are found, the police, parents/guardians, and Pastor will be notified as appropriate.

GANGS

The parish catechetical program is a gang-free environment. No evidence of gangs or gang related activities will be tolerated. Persons participating in any gang or gang related activities while on parish property or in conjunction with program related activities will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

CHILD ABUSE

As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities. The Diocese of San Jose has implemented the "Protecting God's Children" Safe Environment Program. St. Joseph of Cupertino Parish will offer the Touching Safety Program to give children the tools they need to protect themselves from those who might harm them. Detailed information about the program will be offered at parent meetings, with parents having the option to not have their child participate in the program.

OUTREACH

The parish Catechetical Ministry Program has an Outreach Project to families who live in Alviso. The women in these families participate in a support group that was started by one of our former parents. We will have outreach opportunities during Thanksgiving (dinner), Christmas (gifts), and Easter (baskets for the children). Each child is asked to contribute an item for each project. We coordinate this project to help our children learn the values of respect for others, compassion, caring and generosity.

FIELD TRIPS AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

Field trips or off-site activities such as service projects and retreats are occasionally scheduled with the permission of the Director. When such an activity is scheduled, the following policies are in effect;

- 1 No child/youth may go on a field trip or an off-site activity unless a completed permission form signed by a parent/guardian has been submitted to the catechetical office.
- 2 Verbal permission given over the telephone or in person will not be accepted
- 3 Separate permission forms are required for each field trip or off-site activity.
- 4 A copy of the permission form used for field trips and off-site activities is included in the back of this handbook for your information

Parents/guardians driving children/youth to and from field trip or off-site activity locations are required to have a current California driver's license, been fingerprinted by the diocese, proof of automobile insurance and a seat belt to accommodate each child in the car.

RIGHT TO AMEND

The Director of Catechetical Ministry has the right to amend this handbook for just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

This family handbook has been approved by

Director of Catechetical Ministry

October 3, 2011

Date