

### Child & Adolescent Protection Policy

In a pastoral effort to respond to a heightened need for the protection of our children, the Diocese of Honolulu requires a catechesis be given to children and youth in all grades of Parish Programs and Catholic Schools.

A letter will be sent to each family, notifying parents of the dates of the classes some time before April as that is the month we celebrate Safe Environment and Child Abuse Prevention Month.

All priests, deacons, school administrators, teachers, youth ministers, parish catechists, support personnel, coaches, and other volunteers having "ongoing, unsupervised contact" with minors are required to attend training in the prevention and recognition of all forms of abuse against children. This program is provided online by the Diocese of Honolulu at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). All persons who have ongoing, unsupervised contact with minors in the Diocese of Honolulu will be required to complete a background check as part of the safe environment training.

Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will also follow all diocesan policies on such matters. If you have questions, feel free to contact the Diocesan Office of Safe Environment.

### Right to Amend

This handbook is primarily a means of communication. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information as to how we intend to go about our work. St. Joseph Parish Catechetical Program reserves the right to amend the information in this handbook as necessary including dates of class sessions.

### Volunteers\*\*

The parish catechetical program welcomes and needs volunteers to assist in some of the activities and service projects throughout the year. Anyone interested in volunteer service such as clerical and office help, babysitting, catechist, aid, monitor, etc., should contact the Parish Religious Education Office or the RE coordinator.

**\*\*NOTE:** In the Diocese of Honolulu, all volunteers who have substantial contact with children and youth under the age of eighteen (18) are required to complete the Diocese of Honolulu Safe Environment Training and have a background check. This can be arranged by contacting the RE coordinator.

## *St. Joseph Church, Hilo-HI* **Religious Education** **Family Handbook**



**"So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation."  
-2 Corinthians 5:17-18**

**Religious Education Department**  
**St Joseph Church**  
**43 Kapiolani Street**  
**Hilo, Hawaii 96720**  
**(808)935-1465**



## Religious Education Program Mission Statement

The mission of the catechetical program of St. Joseph Parish of Hilo, Hawaii, is to help all participants and their families develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and to live out their Catholic faith in ways that draw others to Christ and the Church. We seek to carry out this mission through catechesis, sacramental preparation, liturgy, and service.

**Motto: Let us meet Jesus in his sacraments and  
in his Holy Church.**

### *Objectives of our Parish Catechetical Program\**

- To present a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith
- To center on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- To be appropriate to the age level, maturity, circumstances, language and ethnic background of each participant
- To involve all members of the parish community, particularly the parents
- To focus on the symbols, rituals, and prayers of the Church
- To enable the believers to live out their faith in their everyday life

\* from the *National Directory for Catechesis, 2005*

The parish catechetical program admits students of any sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this catechetical program. Where possible, our parish program strives to make accommodation for children and youth with disabilities.

### Student Behavior and Expectations

Students will be expected to show respect to their teachers and classmates. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Classroom rules are posted in each classroom. At the first disruption, the child will be referred to classroom rules. After the second incident, the child will be sent to talk with the RE coordinator. If inappropriate behavior continues, the parent/guardian will be contacted.

All students are expected to share in the faith learning experience of the parish program. They are also expected to complete assignments and participate in group projects.

Students attending parish catechetical sessions are expected to regularly attend the Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days, and celebrate sacraments in *this* parish. Parents or guardians are also encouraged to do so.

### Sexual and other types of harassment

Harassment, racial slurs, fighting, smoking, drugs, or other inappropriate (or gang -related) conduct among students will not be tolerated. Violations of this rule will warrant immediate notification of parents/guardians of the child involved, and may warrant suspension or even dismissal of the involved from the program.

### Weapons

In the unlikely event a student is suspected of possessing a weapon or drugs while on parish premises or as a participant in catechetical program or a youth ministry event, the RE coordinator or Youth Ministry Leader will immediately notify the parents of the child. The proper civil authorities may also be notified.

### General Expectations

It is expected that each family become actively involved in the parish and in the catechetical program so that by their participation they model a living, conscious and active Christian faith, and reinforce the values and attitudes for living that faith. The family and their children are expected to embrace and live these values and attitudes.

Before a student will be permitted to participate in the catechetical program their parent or guardian must sign the Parent Consent Form at the end of this handbook stating that they have read these rules and policies, and that they agree to be governed by them.



Information regarding the programs of religious education is regularly communicated in advance **PRIMARILY** through the parish **Sunday Bulletin (WHICH CAN BE VIEWED ON THE PARISH WEBSITE, WWW.STJOEHILO.COM)** as well as through handouts with the students during the year. If you have provided us with an email on your child(ren)'s registration form and have indicated you would allow us to contact you through your email, *we will be utilizing a paperless method.*

### **Download Our Parish App TODAY!**

Stay connected with our parish throughout the week with instant notifications, an easy-to-access event calendar, and the ability to quickly reply to or share messages via Facebook or Twitter. Also enjoy a bunch of additional features like prayers, daily readings, helpful reminders to silence your phone before Mass or Confession, and much more.

Help foster a stronger parish life at St. Joseph Church and better engage the New Evangelization.

*Register with your email and join the group "Religious Education Family Ministries".*

Download our app today at myparishapp.com or search your phone's app store for myparish.

### **Emergency Class Cancellation**

If local schools are closed due to an emergency situation (natural disasters or otherwise, etc) catechetical classes will generally be cancelled. If you have any questions about cancellation, please contact the RE coordinator or your child's catechist.

### **Fire Safety and Disaster Preparation**

Procedures for fire or disaster evacuation are posted in each room. Each catechist will instruct the class on their evacuation procedures, and conduct at least one drill per year.

### **Health Concerns**

Health information is collected on the Catechetical Registration Form. Catechists and other personnel are not allowed to dispense or administer medication to students.

If your child is on medications (for ADD or other such medications), please follow their doctor's orders in administering their medication.

Dear 'Ohana,

Welcome to our parish catechetical program. The purpose of this program is to follow Christ's call **"to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world and to hand his message on to successive generations by professing, living and celebrating the faith..."** (*National Directory for Catechesis #15*)

In our parish, the pastor, working with parents and those in catechetical ministry, plans and carries out this catechetical mission. This handbook has been designed to provide general information, dates, and requirements for participation in the parish program. The parish reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified, in writing, if changes are made to any procedure or information contained in this handbook. We hope this serves to enhance communication, and provide a clear presentation of expectations and responsibilities of students and their families. In the long run, we hope it makes family life easier!

In the *National Directory for Catechesis*, the U.S. Bishops remind us that it is in the parish that the faithful are "energized to carry out Christ's mission." It is here that the "spiritual, moral and material support for the regular and continuing catechetical development of the parishioners" is provided. (*NDC, #60*)

**We understand that it can be challenging to raise your family in the Catholic faith especially in this generation filled with many additional activities that compete for your time and energy. Know that through your witness you are providing a foundation for your family with ongoing catechesis and your example of a sacramental life.**

**This will equip them for a happy life.**

**We, your parish community is here to assist you in this witness to Jesus.**

May the Lord bless our efforts.

**Me ke aloha o ke Akua,**

**Department of Religious Education  
St Joseph Church Hilo**



**ANNUAL OBSERVANCES/HOLIDAYS:  
No classes or gatherings for RE or Youth Ministry**

<b>July:</b>	<b>Independence Day</b>
<b>September:</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>
<b>October:</b>	<b>Fall Break</b>
<b>November:</b>	<b>Veterans Day</b> <b>Thanksgiving</b>
<b>December:</b>	<b>Winter Break</b> <b>Christmas</b>
<b>January:</b>	<b>New Year's Day</b> <b>Martin Luther King Day</b>
<b>February:</b>	<b>Valentine's Day</b> <b>President's Day</b>
<b>March:</b>	<b>Spring Break</b>
<b>March/April:</b>	<b>Good Friday</b> <b>Easter</b>
<b>May:</b>	<b>Memorial Day</b>

**Sat. & Sun. RE Students: Sacramental Celebrations**

- Family RE Mass
- First Penance/Reconciliation** (Mandatory)
- Confirmation & First Holy Communion  
(Combined Mass for grade 2 to Teens)
- To Be Determined w/ the Office of the Bishop*

**REQUIRED 'OHANA  
SESSIONS:**

These sessions are designed for the **sacrament-seeking students** & their 'ohana. At least One (1) adult member must be in attendance.

- Reconciliation
- First Communion / Confirmation Rehearsal @ church



**Youth Ministry**, as defined by the US Bishops in *Renewing the Vision*, high school youth (grades 9-12). This age group should be ministered to within different programs and events because of age and developmental differences.

Goals of Catholic Youth Ministry:

- Goal 1: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. (RTV, p.9)
- Goal 2: To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. (RTV, p. 11)
- Goal 3: To foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. (RTV, p. 15)

***Parish Catechetical Policies***

**Attendance Policy**

Students and parents should make every effort to attend the catechetical sessions and/or parent meetings offered at the parish. Parents are expected to have their children there on time, and to pick them up promptly. Students, who **miss more than 5 sessions per year**, may not advance to the next grade level of catechesis. Students and parents with specific family dilemmas preventing them from attending weekly catechetical sessions will be handled on a case by case basis by the RE coordinator in consultation with the pastor.

**Arrival and Dismissal**

Please bring your child to class on time (preferably 5 minutes before the start of class), and pick your child up at dismissal time. Children, younger than 8 years old, must be collected by the custodial parent (or their designee who has been identified to the RE coordinator).

**Kindergarten, Classes for Grades 1 & 2:**

A parent or guardian, *not a sibling (under the age of eighteen)*, signs the child in and out of the classroom on the sheet provided with the teacher EACH WEEK. The adult is to remain with the child until the teacher is present.

**Communication**

Since the catechist has the most direct contact with your child, parents should discuss any classroom problems with the catechist first. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, parents should speak with the RE coordinator. If still unresolved, the problem may be brought to the pastor.



## Parish Programs for Children and Youth

### Kindergarten (Combined class)

- Preschool classes for age 5 & Kindergarten aged children.
- These classes are held on Sundays, from 10:15-11:15am. Students should be taken to the restroom by a parent or guardian BEFORE signed into the class each week.
- A parent or guardian, *not a sibling (under the age of eighteen)*, signs the child in and out of the classroom on the sheet provided with the teacher EACH WEEK. The adult is to remain with the child until the teacher is present in the classroom.
- The sessions are activity-oriented and parents are welcome to join at any time.

### Grade 1 through Grade 8

The (Finding God by Loyola Press) is used in Grades 1 through 8. This series focuses on specific faith themes and content in each grade and/or sacramental preparation, and has been found in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the U.S. Bishops. The text includes age-appropriate activities and prayers for memorization. We encourage parents to become familiar with their child's catechetical textbook by visiting the publisher's website, ([www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com)) and creating a family login. Here you may access different lessons, prayer styles and activities/discussions to share as a family. There are various lessons for the different liturgical seasons. Learning the faith begins at home and our program is designed to assist you in your role as primary educator of your child.



### Youth Ministry and Teen Confirmation

**These students meet Saturday nights, 5-8pm in the church rectory library.** It is a faith formation community that teaches 100% Catholic teachings in a **non-classroom** setting. Here youth may learn about prayer, worship and applying their faith in everyday settings.

Some examples of topics are:

Vocations, Social Justice, Morality, Person of Christ, Stewardship, Sacraments.

### What is Youth Ministry?

Young people have gifts that can transform a faith community, if the community is open to those gifts and the changes that they may necessitate. Youth ministry is as much about helping young people as it is about helping young people to share their gifts with the parish community.



## RCIA

*Students ages 8 and older seeking Baptism will receive Confirmation & First communion at the Easter Vigil. There will be additional preparations made for these students outside of Sunday Classes.*

- \*Scrutinies (Lent)
  - First Scrutiny
  - Second Scrutiny
  - Third Scrutiny

### The following events are for the RCIA candidates & their sponsor:

*Dates and times are to be determined and candidates will be notified accordingly.*

- \*Rite of Acceptance  
Into the Order of Catechumens

\*Rite of Election:  
*To Be Determined by the Office of the Bishop or the Vicariate*

- \*RCIA Retreat:  
At SJS patio w/ all catechumens, candidates & sponsors

- \*RCIA Rehearsal:  
At the church w/ all catechumens, candidates & sponsors

## **E KOMO MAI**

To register for any of our programs below, please visit our website at [stjoehilo.com/re\\_classes.php](http://stjoehilo.com/re_classes.php), and complete a form. Or call our Front Office at (808)935-1465:

1. Baptism (For under 7 years)
2. Holy Communion & Confirmation (For the Baptized)
3. Youth & Young Adult Ministry
4. Adult Faith Formation
5. RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults):  
For New and Returning Members seeking Baptism, First Holy Communion, and/or Confirmation



### Parish Policies and Fees:

All families enrolling their children in the grade K-11 Religious Education program are first required to register in the parish. The RE Registration fee is \$25.00 per child, with a family rate of \$65.00 for three or more children enrolled.

If any family cannot make the payment, arrangements can be made with the Religious Education Department *prior* to Registration. Students must be registered by the first months of classes to attend in that year unless **proof** of attendance at another program is presented.

**Only children registered in the parish religious education program may attend classes. No guests of students will be permitted in the classrooms.**

## **Special Catechetical Programs**

### Adult Faith Formation (AFF)

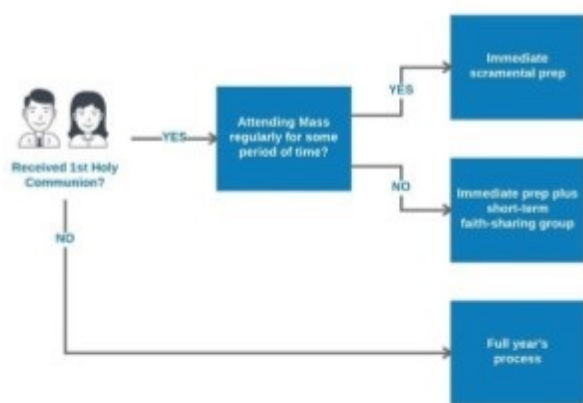
Our parish sees each parent/guardian as having an important role in their child's faith development. We welcome your involvement in the program as a volunteer and/or catechist. We depend on your assistance in helping your child learn their prayers and participate in the parish catechetical program and other enriching activities of parish life. Equally important is your commitment to enriching your own faith life.

### Goal of Adult Confirmation Sacramental Preparation

The priority of any Confirmation preparation process is to assist our Catholic adults as they deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ. Developing and strengthening one's relationship with the person of Jesus as well as with his Body, the Church, is tantamount. Confirmation empowers the faithful to more fully live out their baptismal call; sacramental

preparation should be offered with this goal in mind. Beyond this, "the general principle to be followed is that catechesis is to be tailored to the person's needs." (#69, Diocese of Honolulu's Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and First Penance, available on the diocesan website.)

Formation Needs For Adult Confirmation Candidates



## **Sacramental Preparation Guidelines**

### Baptism

Pre-baptism classes are offered for those children infant to age 6. These class/classes are designed to assist parents with nurturing their faith as they welcome a new member into their family. To schedule your participation, please call (935-1465, rectory office).



### First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion

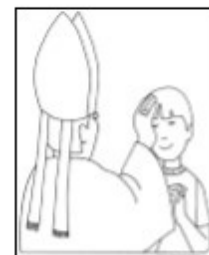
Children in second grade who have attended a year of catechetical instructions are eligible to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. This (remote) preparation takes place in the parish catechetical program, the Catholic School, or home settings. Special (immediate) preparation classes are held in the fall for Reconciliation, and the spring for First Holy Communion. There are sessions for both parents and children.

### Confirmation

The sacrament of Confirmation will be offered for students in Grades 2-11.

To be eligible for this sacrament the student **MUST**:

- Be Baptized in a Catholic Church (provide proof)
- Make the Holy Sacraments an important role in their everyday lives.
- Attend and participate in Sunday Mass weekly.
- Pray daily as a family as well as an individual. This is a great example of growing their relationships with God.



### The RCIA is for:

- **Unbaptized...** persons at the age of reason (7 years and older) who follow a process to help them grow in awareness to God's call to conversion as well as ways to respond to that call. They are considered **catechumens**.
- **Baptized in Another Christian Church...** those catechized and uncatechized persons from a faith tradition other than Catholic who are seeking full communion with the Roman Catholic Church (Eucharist and Confirmation). They are considered **candidates**.
- **Baptized but uncatechized Catholic Adults...** persons who were baptized as infants in the Catholic Church yet not given any religious upbringing within the Catholic Tradition. These adults will be prepared to celebrate the sacraments of penance, confirmation and eucharist. They are also considered **candidates**.

**(our parish has a separate class for ADULTS on Monday nights)**