

## Guidelines, Policies & Expectations for Catechesis

2011 – 2012 ✠ St. Joseph Church ✠ Winterset, Iowa

**We have confidence that you as parents or guardians want the best for your children. Your decision to participate in catechesis is an expression of your desire to help your children in their faith formation.**

**You are the primary religious educators of your children and are the most important models of Christian values for your children. We will make every effort to assist you in this important responsibility.**

**Admission Policy:** Before parents can register their children for any catechetical program, they must register as members of this parish or St. Patrick's in Cumming, Iowa. Exceptions can be made at the discretion of the priest and coordinator of catechesis.

**Mass:** Commit your family to regular participation in the weekly celebration of mass.

**The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd:** This is the faith formation program used by this parish. It was founded in 1954 by Sofia Cavalletti, a scripture scholar, and Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori educator. Children meet in a specially prepared environment called an Atrium.

**The Good Shepherd** Atrium is for children 3 years old, by September, through children in Kindergarten.

**The True Vine** Atrium is for First through Third grade children.

**The Covenant** Atrium is for Fourth through Sixth grade children.

**Session options:** There are multiple options. If a particular session does not have enough registrations, it may not be offered.

Sunday .....8:45 am to 9:45 am

Wednesday .....3:45 pm to 5:00 pm

Monday .....3:45 pm to 5:00 pm

Wednesday .....5:30 pm to 6:45 pm

Wednesday .....7:00 pm to 8:15 pm

**Jr. High:** The Holy Spirit Atrium is for Seventh and Eighth grade children and meets from 7:00 pm to 8:15 pm on Wednesdays in the Church Hall.

**High School:** The High School Youth Group (L.I.G.H.T.) meets on Wednesdays from 7:00 pm to 8:15 pm.

**Cost:** *No one will be turned away because they cannot afford fees.*

\$25 for 1 child

\$45 for 2 children

\$60 for 3 or more children

*No fees for families of catechists and catechist helpers!*

**Cancellation of Catechesis:** If Winterset Schools are cancelled or dismissed early **because of bad weather**, catechesis is automatically cancelled. If classes are cancelled for other reasons, cancellation will be announced at school, catechists will call families, and/or emails will be sent. If in doubt, call the parish office, 515-462-1083.

**Absenteeism:** The coordinator of catechesis will call parents when a child has missed three consecutive sessions.

**Parental Involvement:** Parents are expected to attend any meetings scheduled during the year. Parents are also encouraged to visit their child's atrium during the year.

**Communication:** Occasionally notes may be sent home with information about what the children are learning or about upcoming events. The parish newsletter, parish website ([www.saintjosephchurch.net](http://www.saintjosephchurch.net)), and the hallway bulletin board are also sources of information.

**Bibles:** First graders receive a Bible from the church. This Bible is meant to grow with them and will be used every year in catechesis. Bibles may be taken home during the summer, but should be returned in the fall. After Confirmation, Bibles may be taken home and kept.

**Food:** Do not allow your child to bring food into the atrium unless specifically requested by the catechist. Special occasions are permitted if prior arrangements have been made with the catechist. If treats are distributed for a special occasion, it is usually at the end of class.

Children coming immediately after school and Junior High students are assigned dates to bring snacks.

**Prayer Corner:** Each atrium has a special place for prayer. Please consider setting aside a prayer space in your home or in your child's bedroom.

**Behavior:** Children should be dropped off no more than ten minutes before their session begins. Children are expected to show respect for adults, each other, and for the church building and grounds.

In the Atrium, behavioral expectations are made clear from the time children begin at the youngest age in the Good Shepherd Atrium. A child may be removed from the atrium for a short time if displaying inappropriate behavior or a particular work may be removed if it is not being used as intended.

If serious problems arise, parents will be contacted to discuss what steps need to be taken to resolve the problem.

**Sacramental Policies:** It shall be the policy of St. Joseph Parish that children shall not be admitted to sacraments in a sacramental year – Second grade for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, Tenth or Eleventh grade for Confirmation – if the child could have, but did not take part in our program in previous years. Further, if a child misses a significant number of classes during a sacramental year then, at the discretion of the catechist, director of catechesis, and pastor, the child will be asked to postpone his/her reception of the sacrament until the following year.

It shall be the policy of St. Joseph Parish that children who receive their religious education instruction at home rather than through the parish, may receive the sacraments with their peers if:

1. They have met with the pastor and director of catechesis in advance and discussed how they will be preparing their child for the sacrament they desire their child to celebrate.
2. Upon questioning by the pastor and/or director of catechesis, the child shows adequate preparation for and knowledge of the sacrament they desire to celebrate.

**Questions or Concerns:** Please feel free to contact the parish office at 515-462-1083 or [hhonkomp@gmail.com](mailto:hhonkomp@gmail.com).