



**Our Lady of Joy Religious Education
(Catechesis of the Good Shepherd,
Sacramental Preparation, Spark) & Edge
Age 3 – 8th Grade**

36811 North Pima Road
P.O. Box 1359
Carefree, AZ 85377

2021-2022

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Religious Education Office/Parish Office (480) 488-2229

www.oloj.org

Our Lady of Joy Mission Statement

Our mission is to build a community of missionary disciples through the sacraments, prayer, acts of charity, and evangelization and catechesis based on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Our Lady of Joy Religious Education Philosophy

"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ. All evangelizing activity is understood as promoting communion with Jesus Christ. Starting with the 'initial' conversion of a person to the Lord, moved by the Holy Spirit through the primary proclamation of the Gospel, catechesis seeks to solidify and mature this first adherence. It proposes to help those who have just converted 'to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know his mystery, the kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and comments contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him.'" General Directory for Catechesis, 80

Our Lady of Joy religious education seeks to lead students to **encounter Jesus Christ** and make a **personal decision to become His disciple, opening their heart to the Holy Spirit**, and understanding their **identity as children of our loving and provident Father**.

As children encounter Christ and entrust their lives to Him, they are given catechesis to "solidify and mature this first adherence".

All of this takes place **in partnership with parents**, who the Church say are the **primary educators of their children in the Faith**. Therefore, we seek to communicate with parents for the purpose of encouraging and helping them to form their children gradually in the Catholic Faith. We seek also to reach parents who may not have encountered Christ or made that personal commitment to follow Him, in order to offer parents that all-important invitation.

We encourage and exhort children and their families to **enter fully into the life of Christ and His Church**, so as to have the abundant life that Jesus offers them. *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* Jn 10:10

We trust the Holy Spirit as the "principle agent of evangelization" (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI, #75) and believe in the primacy of grace, knowing that God always takes the initiative when it comes to our salvation, growth and fidelity to the Faith. We seek to discern the action of the Holy Spirit in each child and family, in order to adapt our teaching and methods to the needs of each, "seconding" (trying to follow) the action of grace.

Director's/Coordinator's Right to Amend

This Handbook is developed with the parish and staff and will be reviewed and revised, at least annually, in efforts to keep parents clearly informed of Diocesan and Religious education policies and procedures. It is the intent of Our Lady of Joy parish staff to abide by all Federal and State laws. The Director/Coordinator has the right to amend, at any time, this living document. Revisions that are made during the school year will be communicated as they are made to all parents, guardians, catechists, and staff members. The Handbook is a guide, but not necessarily an all-inclusive one. Situations may arise which are not specifically named or covered in the Handbook.

Student Learning Expectations

Our Lady of Joy Catholic Religious education/Edge students will strive to be:

Active Catholics who:

- Actively participate in Mass and Religious education class/Edge to grow in faith, hope, and love
- Show respect for God's creation, self, family, and others
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior and positive leadership
- See the dignity of each person, serving others through love
- Tell the truth and follow the rules
- Develop an age-appropriate prayer life and relationship with God. This includes learning and praying our traditional Catholic prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, etc.)

General Information

Our Lady of Joy Office Hours

The office is open Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. – 4:30p.m; Friday 9am-3pm. Our address is 36811 North Pima Road, Carefree, AZ 85377. Mailing address is PO BOX 1359 Carefree, AZ 85377. 480-488-2229.

Classes Offered

We offer Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for ages 3-6, Sacramental Preparation for 2nd – 3rd grades, Spark a faith club for 4th – 5th grades from 5:50pm-7pm the first Wednesdays of every month from September – April and the 3rd Wednesday of every month September, October, January – April. Edge faith formation for grades 6-8 Every Wednesday from 5:30pm-7:00pm during the school year. High schoolers are encouraged to participate in Life Teen.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

Parents/Guardians of age 3-5th grade are expected to sign-in their child upon arrival and sign-out their child upon departure. There are sign in/out sheets by each classroom.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for maintaining custody of younger children, as well as Religious education children, at all times. For their safety, parents/guardians will see that all children obey the rules of the Religious education program and are supervised at all times.

Custodial Parents

Recognizing the educational needs of the children and the unique circumstances related to legal custodial situations, the following requirements have been established to assist all parties concerned.

In situations where a student's custody is legally defined, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the Religious education office with legal documentation stipulating all custody provisions (i.e. joint vs. sole custody.) If requested in advance, custodial parents may each receive separate copies of Religious education communication documents.

In situations where one parent has sole custody, the custodial parent shall provide the Religious education office with written and signed guidelines to be followed between the non-custodial parent and Our Lady of Joy Religious education program. These guidelines must be reviewed and updated annually prior to the first day of classes for each school year and will remain in effect until one of the following occurs: 1) the end of the Religious education year, 2) revised and/or updated in writing by the custodial parent, or 3) a written statement is received from the custodial parent revoking the guidelines.

Visitors on Campus

All parents or other visitors to the buildings used for Religious education must sign in and wear a visitor badge. All visitors to a classroom must have permission in advance from the teacher. **Parents are welcome at any time to visit our programs.** Because of the nature of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (method we use for 3-6 year olds), we ask that parents contact the catechist for information on observing an atrium (the sacred space prepared for the children) and to plan your visit with them in advance.

Volunteers

Our Lady of Joy Catholic Religious Education welcomes and relies upon volunteers to help provide quality religious education to our children. Our volunteers include parents, members of our area parishes, and members of the greater community. All volunteers must fulfill the safe environment guidelines and training through the Diocese of Phoenix. <http://safeenvironmenttraining.org/index.php>

Catechist Helper/Edge volunteer Guidelines

All volunteer Catechist helpers /Edge volunteers are expected to do the following:

- Complete Mandatory of Safe Environment Training through the Diocese of Phoenix
- Obtain permission from the teacher (primary Catechist K-8 class) or Youth Ministry Coordinator (Edge) for a day and time to volunteer
- Check in with the Religious Education Coordinator, Director, or Youth Minister
- Ask the teacher/youth minister for specific directions/plans for the day
- Maintain the utmost level of confidentiality and professionalism while on the parish grounds

General Religious Education Policies

Attendance

Wednesday Religious education classes/Edge begin at 5:30 pm and ends at 7:00 pm. Doors to the buildings are unlocked by 5:00pm. At least 1 parent or legal guardian must attend the Adult Formation offered during the child's class time.

Withdrawal from Religious Education/Edge

Parents/Guardians are asked to notify the Religious education office when withdrawing a child from the program. Any refund of the \$75 per child suggested fee (or \$40 for Catholic school/home school Sacramental prep only) will depend on the date of withdrawal. Contact the Religious Education or Youth Ministry Office regarding this information.

At the discretion of the Director or Coordinator, a child may be removed from the religious education program/Edge in the rare case it is deemed appropriate and necessary. Situations may include, but are not limited to, inability to meet the needs of the child, in consideration of the best interests of the child, other children in the classroom, or as a result of a student's serious and repeated behavior infractions.

Registration Requirements

At the time of registration, parents/guardians should present the following:

- Completed and signed registration forms (one for each child)
- Copy of child's baptism certificate (unless they were baptized at Our Lady of Joy or are preparing for baptism)
- Signed photo/media release form
- Signed Covid-19 Waiver
- Signed Safe Environment Training release
- Suggested registration fee of \$75 per child; or \$40 for Catholic school/Home school Sacramental prep only.

Communication with Families

Our Lady of Joy Catholic Religious education/Edge believes it is essential to have good communication between parents, catechists, and Our Lady of Joy staff. This communication is accomplished through:

- Emails sent to parents/guardians
- Texts to parents/guardians
- Our Lady of Joy church bulletin
- Parent Meetings
- Written discipline notes/signed by parents
- Parental involvement in the classroom
- Posted reminders and notices
- Our Lady of Joy website and official social media

Social Media Use by Adults

The use of social media by staff, parents, volunteers and other associated persons is for the sole purpose of communicating religious education/Edge events and accomplishments. When religious education or Edge staff, parents, volunteers or associated persons engage in any social media, on either personal or parish accounts, they are held to the general standards of conduct outlined in *The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Phoenix Catholic Schools Office Policies and Procedures*.

Discipline

Student Discipline

Discipline at Our Lady of Joy Religious education program/Edge is to be considered as an aspect of moral guidance. The purposes of discipline are: to provide a classroom situation conducive to learning, to promote character training, to cultivate the virtues that ensure moral living and to redirect misguided behavior, and to develop self-discipline.

Our policy concerning unacceptable behavior, defined as a behavior that physically, emotionally, or verbally hurts another child or teacher, is to treat the child with respect and dignity while confronting him/her.

Student Conduct

Our Lady of Joy Catholic Religious education/Edge seeks to maintain an environment which is conducive to learning, protective of the safety and welfare of all students and staff, and free from unnecessary disruption.

- Students are expected to behave in such a way that their presence does not detract from their own education or the education of others.
- Students shall treat teachers, administrators, employees, volunteers, other campus visitors and fellow students with dignity and respect and shall behave in such a manner that their presence will contribute to a productive educational environment.
- While on Our Lady of Joy grounds or participating in any Religious education/Edge-sponsored activity/event, students shall comply with all policies and regulations pertaining to student conduct.
- Students shall maintain high personal standards of courtesy, decency, morality, and honesty in their relationships with others.
- Students are expected to be regular and punctual in attendance.
- No student shall engage in or encourage behavior which disrupts or poses a clear and convincing threat of disruption of Our Lady of Joy Religious education/Edge operations or interference with the rights of others or with the ability of the program to provide educational opportunities to other students.
- No student shall engage in activity which is in violation of criminal law.
- No student shall engage in or encourage behavior which is detrimental to the welfare or safety of students, teachers, administrators, employees, volunteers, or other campus visitors on or off parish grounds, or at Religious education/Edge activities or sanctioned events.
- No student shall engage in bullying behavior in the building where Religious education/Edge is conducted, on Our Lady of Joy grounds or at Our Lady of Joy activities or sanctioned events. Bullying is defined as any repeated written or verbal expression, or physical act or gesture, intended to cause distress upon one or more students in the preschool environment. The severity and pattern of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

Any of the following actions may be taken depending on the severity and frequency of the behaviors:

- Teachers will treat each unacceptable behavior individually. A student may lose a classroom privilege or be asked to take some quiet time until they are ready to return to the classroom activity and make appropriate and respectful choices. The teacher is not required to notify the parents at this level.
- If the behavior is not modified after incorporating the above methods, the teacher will send written notice home describing the behavior.
- The teacher will contact the parent/guardian to describe the behavior and request a conference.
- The student will be sent to the Coordinator or Director, and the parents/guardians will be contacted and requested to pick up their child immediately.
- Unacceptable behavior will result in a conference with parents, teacher, Coordinator or Director, and/or Pastor to resolve the problem and create a plan of action or the student may be asked to withdraw from the program.

Parental Expectations

Parental support of the authority of teachers and Religious education/Edge staff members is expected to implement the discipline program successfully. All students are expected to follow the behaviors outlined in this handbook while on Our Lady of Joy grounds or while attending any Religious education/Edge sponsored functions. When clarification of a disciplinary action is necessary, the administration asks that the parent(s)/guardian(s) should first consult with the teacher, and if further clarification is needed please contact the Coordinator or Director.

Conflict Resolution Procedures

The staff at Our Lady of Joy Catholic Religious education is dedicated to the well-being and development of each of our students, and wants to work hand-in-hand with parents to provide a positive experience. However, human nature and emotion often dictate how we perceive certain situations, and there may come a time when a situation may become stressful or uncomfortable. In an attempt to keep lines of communication open and relationships moving in a forward and productive manner, we ask that parents/guardians adhere to the following procedures:

- When there is a concern, pertaining to the religious education classroom (K-5), contact the teacher to set up a meeting. The teacher may ask an aide or another teacher to also be present.
- If a solution cannot be found or the participants need additional assistance, the Coordinator or Director should be contacted.
- For Edge, the first point of contact should be the Coordinator of Youth Ministry.

- Situations that are not rectified to the satisfaction of those involved will then be brought to the Pastor.

Harassment and Bullying

Our Lady of Joy Catholic Religious education believes that all persons have a God-given right to be treated with dignity and respect. In light of this belief, any form of harassment by students, employees, parents and volunteers will not be tolerated.

The aim and goal of the Religious education harassment policy is as follows:

- To promote a Catholic educational environment in which harassment is not tolerated.
- To take positive action to prevent harassment from occurring through a well-communicated and clear policy.
- To inform students, parents, staff, of the Religious education program's expectations and to foster a productive partnership which helps maintain a positive church environment.

Harassment Defined

Harassment is unwanted, repeated, harmful behavior that is directed at an individual or group on the basis of race, sex, or national origin. It is about intimidation, control, misuse of power, and the attempt to deny the victim equality.

Harassment can occur any time during Religious education/Edge or during Religious education/Edge-related activities/events. Harassment can occur whether the intended victim is present or not. It includes, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- Verbal harassment
- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, imitations or comments
- Visual harassment
- Visual contact such as derogatory and/or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures
- Physical harassment
- Physical contact such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movements or interfering with work, study or play
- Sexual harassment – threats and demands to submit to sexual requests for certain benefits, unwelcome sexual advances

Harassment can be blatant or subtle. General guidelines for determining whether actions constitute harassment include the severity, pervasiveness, or persistence of the behavior. Certain egregious behaviors need only to occur one time to be considered harassment.

The student is responsible for conducting himself/herself in a manner that fosters a positive church environment. He or she should refrain from behavior that may be considered discriminatory, intimidating or harassing. If a student has been warned of harassing behavior, he or she should cease the discriminatory, intimidating, harassing, or unwelcome behavior.

All allegations of harassment should be reported in writing directly to the Coordinator or Director. Allegations will be taken seriously and will be promptly investigated in a confidential manner. A charge of harassment does not in itself presuppose wrongdoing. Students found to have filed false and frivolous charges will also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Our Lady of Joy Catholic Religious education/Edge strongly opposes and prohibits all forms of harassment (e.g. harassment based on an individual's race, color, age, religion, sex, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, and disability,) whether verbal, physical, or environmental. Any person who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including required withdrawal for students.

Safety

Child Abuse Reporting

Arizona law requires the reporting by Religious education personnel of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services and local law enforcement.

Release of Student Information

Written permission from parents/guardians is required before a student's name or likeness can be used for any promotional purposes involving the Diocese, parish, or Religious education/Edge program, news or feature stories in any media, or other purpose whatsoever. This includes still-photos, motion pictures, audio or video

takes, photographs and/or other reproduction, including voice and features with or without name.

Safe Environment Training

Safe Environment Training is a requirement of all Our Lady of Joy Religious education/Edge volunteers. We can all be part of the solution – together we can prevent child abuse. All priests, deacons, employees, volunteers are required to take Safe Environment Training annually.

In the Diocese of Phoenix all volunteers must complete the approved Safe Environment foundation course. The course is a 2 hour program which will teach steps that can be taken to prevent child sexual abuse and as a component of the training everyone is required to complete a volunteer application and Code of Ethics. Three references and a personal interview are required. A criminal background check is conducted by a third party security company retained by the Diocese.

A renewal Training is offered for all subsequent years. This training is offered online.

Student Health and Wellness

Medication Administration

The staff will not administer any medications to a child enrolled in Religious Education/Edge, prescription or other. The only exception to this is an emergency situation such as treatment for an asthma attack or the use of an Epi-Pen for a severe allergic reaction.

For trips or retreats, a separate permission form will be required stating the medication policy for that event.

Urgent Care Procedures

In the event a child is injured or becomes ill at Religious education, parents/guardians will be contacted.

If a child suffers a medical emergency, the Religious education staff will call 911 and the child will be transported to the nearest medical facility as determined by the emergency personnel. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

Covid-19 Policy

We follow CDC and Diocesan Guidelines on Covid-19 precautions. A copy of the Covid-19 Waiver attached to the end of this handbook.

**General Waiver for Parish Participation
Our Lady of Joy Parish**

**Parish Participation
In Person Retreat**

I give permission for _____ to attend Our Lady of Joy parish sacrament retreat, realizing that there is some potential for injury and illness inherent in such all Parish activities. I acknowledge that Parish is using in good faith, reasonable efforts to implement the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Arizona Department of Education, and state and local health authorities in light of the unique needs and circumstances of the Parish community, and in order to allow for in-person learning while protecting students, teachers, administrators, and staff and helping slow the spread of COVID-19. While the CDC states that these efforts help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread during parish sessions and activities, they cannot eliminate all risk of exposure and transmission, and Parish cannot ensure my child's complete safety.

By allowing my child to attend the Parish in person, therefore, I specifically acknowledge and assume the risks and hazards associated with my child's participation in all parish activities, but not limited to, the risks associated with the novel COVID-19 virus. I understand that my child will be associating with, teachers, administrators, staff and other children and may contract COVID-19, and other viruses and diseases, through my child's participation in activities at parish. I understand and voluntarily assume the risk that my child may acquire COVID-19, and that COVID-19 may subsequently be transmitted from my child to me, my family, and members of my household.

I certify that my child is in good health and has no current issues that make it unsafe for my child to participate in Parish activities, which may not have a medical professional on staff. I will notify the Parish and not send my child to Parish or Parish functions if my child develops a fever or other symptoms of illness or tests positive for COVID-19. Furthermore, I will not send my child to Parish or Parish functions if my child is sick, has COVID-19 symptoms, or has been in close contact with someone who shows symptoms of or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 until after a 14 day exposure period has been exhausted for my child with no symptoms. I further agree that I will follow, and will take reasonable steps to ensure that my child will follow, all rules, policies and guidelines of Parish in order to protect other students, teachers, administrators, and staff and help slow the spread of COVID-19.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, I hereby agree to waive, release, and discharge any and all claims, causes of action, damages, and rights of any kind against the Parish, the Diocese of Phoenix, their insurers, and all of their respective employees, agents, representatives, and volunteers (the "Released Parties") arising from or relating in any way to any injury or illness, including those related to COVID-19, that may occur to my child, me, or my household members due to my child's participation in the Parish activity.

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____