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Religious Education Mission Statement

As we minister to the families of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, it is the mission of the Religious Education Department to support and assist parents in the formation of their children in their Catholic Faith along with striving to instill an abiding love of God and neighbor, using our Blessed Mother Mary as our model and guide.

We strive to impart to each child the doctrines of our faith in its fullness, as both knowledge to be learned and a life to be lived.

About our Pastor

Father Fasano was born on November 14, 1949 in Brooklyn, NY. He attended Brooklyn public schools before graduating from Fort Hamilton High School in 1966. He received a bachelor's in philosophy from St. Stephen's College in Dover, Mass in 1971. He completed his seminary studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, NY in 1975 and was ordained on May 7, 1977 by former Arlington Bishop Thomas J. Welsh. Prior to ordination, he spent his diaconate year at St. Ambrose Parish in Annandale. He was parochial vicar at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Winchester, 1977-79. St. Michael Parish, Annandale, 1979-85 and St. John Parish, McLean, 1985-89. He was pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Great Falls, 1989-97, and pastor of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, Clifton, 1997-2007.

A Note From Our Pastor

Dear Parents,

Salus animarum suprema lex! — The salvation of souls is the supreme law.

As you raise your children, this should be your primary concern, i.e. to assist your children, as far as you are able, to get to Heaven! As the primary educators of your children in matters of Catholic Faith and Morals, it is your grave duty to see to it that your sons and daughters receive a thorough and in-depth understanding of the teachings of Christ and his Church, as well as developing an active prayer life which leads them to a frequent reception of the Sacraments.

The parish stands ready to assist (but never replace) parents in their vital role as religious educators. Each family, as a “domestic church”, needs to take very seriously its obligation to impart the fullness of Catholic Faith to a new generation of Catholics.

In doing this, the setting of good example is of paramount importance! Our parish program of religious education is an outstanding resource and supplement for parents. We encourage all of you to allow us to assist you in this important mission by enrolling your children in our parish program, especially in the years of sacramental preparation (i.e. First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation). We are very proud of the program we have developed at

St. John's . It reinforces and completes what each parent should begin to impart at home. Since the salvation of your child takes precedence over every other consideration, we hope you avail yourselves of our assistance, remain supportive of our program and do your best to see to it that your children faithfully attend weekly instruction as well as regularly participate in the liturgical life of our parish. Their salvation (and yours) depends upon it!

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Jerome Fasano

Religious Education Registration

The Religious Education Program is open to all parish children from preschool through twelfth grade. Registration forms are available in the parish office or online at sjtbre.org. During the month of August, forms are available in the gathering area of the church. All children grades K-12 should register, even if you intend to homeschool.

Children who wish to attend Kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before September 30. Please contact the Coordinator of Religious Education if you would like to request an exception; exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.

Occasionally, we have enough catechists and students to be able to offer a preschool program for children who will be 4 years of age on or before September 30.

Parents should fill out and sign one registration form per student and return the form, along with any required fees, to the parish office, or place it in the collection plate at Mass. *Registration forms for grades two and eight must have attached a copy of the child's baptismal certificate, or the registration will not be accepted, thus delaying sacramental preparation. If your child will receive First Holy Communion or Confirmation next year, he or she must be registered in our program this year, even if you are planning to homeschool for religious education.*

While the parish covers most of the expense of the Religious Education Program, a nominal registration fee is required to help defray costs. Checks should be made out to St. John's Church and should accompany the registration form. Fees apply to students attending classes at church and all students in the second year Confirmation Class. Fees are as follows:

Early Bird Fees

Available to those who register on or before August 31

Confirmation Prep: \$40

All Other Classes: \$25

Standard Registration

For those who register on or after September 1

Confirmation Prep: \$50

All Other Classes: \$35

No one is turned away because they are unable to pay. Any parent who finds the registration fee to be a hardship should contact the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Class Sessions and Locations

Fr. Ruehl Hall is the lower level of the Church. Padre Pio Hall is located at 131 West Main St., the brick building across West Main Street from the church.

Preschool + Grades K-7: A choice of sessions is offered for these grades. The Sunday session is offered from 12:00-1:00pm. The Tuesday session is offered from 4:30-5:30pm. Generally, classes for grades 2 and under are held in Padre Pio Hall. Classes for grades 3-7 are held in Fr. Ruehl Hall. Classes are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis and space is limited. Please register early to be sure of getting the session you request.

Grade 8 (second year Confirmation Prep): Two sections are offered, one for boys and one for girls. Both are offered on Sundays from 12:00-1:00pm and are held in Fr. Ruehl Hall.

Grades 9-12: The High School Youth Program is offered on Wednesday evenings from 7:15-8:30pm in Fr. Ruehl Hall, following the 6:30pm Mass.

Religious Education Offices

During class hours, the Religious Education office located in Fr. Ruehl Hall and the reception area of Padre Pio Hall are staffed. Please feel free to stop by during regular Religious Education hours to visit, ask questions, or make suggestions. At other times, please drop by the parish office. Check the church bulletin for parish office hours.

The principle of subsidiarity requires that all complaints should be addressed first to the catechist, then to the Coordinator, prior to bringing them to the parish office.

Absence/Tardiness

Students are expected to attend classes each week and to arrive for class on time. Attendance will be taken in each class. If your child must be absent due to illness, you must send a written note on the next class day explaining the situation and your child will be given an excused absence. Please do not send a sick child to class. Students in the sacrament classes - that is, first, second, seventh, and eighth grade - are expected to have no more than five unexcused absences per academic year. Excessive absences in these years may result in a delay in receiving the sacraments.

Arrival and Dismissal

Be sure that your child is aware that they are not to leave the church property unless accompanied by a parent. Any requests for exceptions must be made in writing to the CRE.

Padre Pio Hall: A parent must escort each child to his or her classroom. Please make sure class is in session and a teacher is present before leaving your child in the building. In an effort

to improve the safety of your children, the Hand-in-Hand for Safety Program is in place for all Padre Pio Hall students. These children will be dismissed from their classrooms and will not be permitted to leave their classroom until a parent takes them by the hand.

Fr. Ruehl Hall: Parents who are dropping off or picking up their children by vehicle must use the turn-about on the Luray Avenue side of the church. When dropping off a child, make sure a teacher is on duty on the church porch, thus assuring that your child arrives safely in the building and that class is in session. Students who attend classes in Fr. Ruehl Hall will be dismissed after class to the Church entrance porch. Parents who walk to the church to pick up their children may do so on the Jenkins Hall side of the church. For safety reasons, no child will be allowed to get into a vehicle on the Jenkins Hall side of the Church.

Please be on time. If you are not there to pick up your child at dismissal time, your child will be taken to the Religious Education Office in Fr. Ruehl Hall to wait until a parent arrives.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to attend classes faithfully each week and to complete all homework assignments. Homework will sometimes be assigned and is designed to reinforce material taught in class. Catechists are here to support and assist parents and are not expected to do the whole job themselves. Making sure your child completes homework assignments is one way you can help your child's teacher maximize valuable class time and, more importantly, it is an opportunity to share your faith with your child.

Catechists have the option of sending report cards home. If your child's catechist chooses to do this, please use this assessment to identify possible areas of weakness and have your child study accordingly.

Students are expected to treat adults, peers and Church property with respect and Christian charity. Our goals of teaching the Faith and inspiring love of God and neighbor call everyone to practice what is being taught. Catechists will work to instruct your child if discipline becomes a problem. If a problem persists, parents will be required to attend class with the child.

Please review church rules with your child, making sure they understand that they should refrain from skateboarding, roller-skating, or bicycling on church property. Children are not permitted to climb on the railings or trees, run through the mulched areas, or smoke on church property. Snacks, drinks and gum are not permitted in the classrooms. *Under no circumstances should a student in grades K-8 leave the church property prior to dismissal without first reporting to the Religious Education Office.* Make sure your child understands dismissal procedures and *always* uses the crosswalk when crossing the street.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are the primary educators of their children. The Religious Education Department at St. John's intends to work in partnership with parents in order to assist them in living their vocations as educators of their children. Our program is intended to complement, not replace,

the catechesis children should receive in the home.

As we strive to inspire our students to practice their Faith in daily life and to form sound habits that will serve them for the rest of their lives, please remember that Catholics are obliged to attend Mass each Sunday (or Saturday vigil) and each Holy Day. This is not an option. Your frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist and frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance will serve as an example for your children. Involvement in the parish community is also encouraged as a way to demonstrate to your child what is important in your life.

Pray daily with your child. Morning and night time prayers, grace before and after meals, and family rosary are suggested. Please review and reinforce your child's weekly lessons and make sure any assigned homework is completed. We cannot properly educate your child in the faith without your help. Your interest and assistance is vital.

Please remember that we are partners in this endeavor. You are welcome to visit your child's class at any time and you are encouraged to get to know your child's catechist.

Dress Code

Catechists work to instill in their students a love for Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and our Religious Education classes will make frequent visits to the church. Students must dress in attire appropriate to a visit to the church. Our efforts to teach reverence for God and each other include guiding students in how to best present themselves modestly and respectfully. Please refrain from tight-fitting clothing, short shorts or skirts, halter tops, tank tops, midriff shirts, or spaghetti straps. Pants should be worn at the waist. Articles of clothing which depict themes of drugs, alcohol, profanity, weapons, and innuendo are forbidden.

Class Cancellations

1. If public school classes in Warren County are cancelled or dismissed early due to inclement weather, there will be no Religious Education classes that day.
2. Class cancellations are listed on the Religious Education website at: www.sjtbre.org
3. You may listen to a recorded message by calling the Parish Office at any time, at 635-3780. If you get the general parish recording, dial extension 404 during the general recording. You will then be transferred to the Religious Education recorded message.

Catholic School or Home Schooling

If your child attends Catholic School or is being home schooled in academic subjects, you may choose not to have your child attend classes at church. Students who wish to receive First Holy Communion, but do not attend classes at the church, may be required to take all second grade tests in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the subject matter. Students who

wish to receive Confirmation, but do not attend classes at the church, will be required to pass all eighth grade tests and hand in all seventh and eighth grade assignments. This will be further explained at the required parent meetings.

Home schoolers and those attending Catholic schools are welcome and encouraged to attend all Religious Education functions and parents are expected to attend all required parents meetings for the sacrament classes. Students who are in the Confirmation years are strongly urged to attend classes at church.

Students in Catholic Schools

Students who will be making their First Holy Communion or Confirmation at St. John's and are attending one of the following programs must observe these requirements. Included programs are: John XXIII Montessori Children's Center, Seton Home Study School, Chelsea Academy or Seton School in Manassas. Other Catholic programs maintaining student records may also be considered upon request.

The requirements are as follows:

1. Students must be registered with and live within the boundaries of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, or have a letter of permission to Father Fasano from the pastor of the church where they are registered and/or within whose boundaries they reside. While those who do not live within our parish boundaries are welcome to register with us, they may not receive the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, or Confirmation without written permission from the pastor of the parish where they reside.

2. Parents must register their child with our Religious Education program at the beginning of the school year, attaching a copy of their Baptismal Certificate to the registration form. Parents must read the *Religious Education Parent Handbook*. Registration forms and handbooks are always available in our parish office. You can also find the Handbook on our website at www.sjtbre.org. Click on Resources → Printable Resources and click the form to open and print it. Forms may be handed in at the parish office, placed in the collection basket, or mailed to us at:

St. John's Church
120 West Main Street
Front Royal, VA 22630

3. Parents of students expecting to make their First Holy Communion are expected to request a copy of *First Holy Communion at St. John's*. This handbook is available in the parish office and contains valuable information and basic requirements which apply to all First Holy Communion/First Penance students. Please note that this is different from this *Religious Education Parent Handbook*.

4. During the first two weeks of April, parents must submit a written transcript with a passing grade in second grade religion or a recommendation from the director of their child's program. The recommendation should be written, emailed, or given by phone, and should attest that the

student has been attending the school and is prepared for his or her First Holy Communion or Confirmation. This recommendation will exempt First Holy Communion students from an interview/test given by the Coordinator of Religious Education. All Confirmation students, however, must sit for an interview to assure that they are well prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. More information will be given at the required First Holy Communion or Confirmation Parents Meetings

5. Students attending Catholic Schools are welcome to attend all St. John's Religious Education functions. Parents are expected to attend all required parents' meetings for the Sacrament classes.

Sacramental Preparation

First Holy Communion and Confirmation preparation are each two year programs. Students prepare for their First Penance and First Holy Communion in the first and second grades and receive the sacraments at the end of the second grade. A student must be enrolled in the first grade if they expect to enroll in the second grade. Tests may be given in both years to prove each student's knowledge. Homeschoolers are expected to take and pass any tests that are given.

Students are required to have reached the age of seven by September 30 in order to register for the second grade. All First Holy Communion students must be seven years old by the time they make their First Holy Communion. Exceptions must be approved by the Pastor and are rarely given.

Preparation for Confirmation begins in the seventh grade and Confirmation is received at the end of eighth grade. All students, including those who are home schooled, are strongly encouraged to attend all classes. You must be enrolled in seventh grade if you intend to receive Confirmation the following year. Except for students who are attending a Catholic school, all other students, including those who are home schooled, are strongly encouraged to attend classes at Church. If you choose to home school for Confirmation preparation instead of attending class at the church, you will be required to complete all assignments and to demonstrate your knowledge by taking all tests prior to Confirmation.

A full explanation of our program will be given during the required parents meeting at the beginning of the year. Check the religious education column of the Church bulletin for the exact day and time of this meeting.

Curriculum

Students use the following books in our program: *St. Joseph First Communion Catechism, Faith and Life* series from Ignatius Press, *The New St. Joseph Baltimore Catechism* and our Confirmation Workbook. The Confirmation Workbook will be given out in class and is available online at www.sjtbre.org.

A partial list of the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines is available on the following pages. Please visit ww.arlingtondiocese.com for the complete Religious Education

Curriculum Guidelines. If you do not have internet service you may request a hard copy of the detailed guidelines for your child's grade.

The Arlington Diocese has implemented the *You Matter* video program for high school religious education students. You can find details about this video on the diocesan website: Go to www.ArlingtonDiocese.org and click Education → Child Protection → Training Programs → You Matter. We show this video each year during class time on the third Wednesday in October with a make-up day the following week for those who were absent.

All Catholic schools and religious education programs in the Diocese of Arlington must include a program of Formation in Christian Chastity, a mandatory program designed for children in 1st-8th grades. The Office of Child Protection and Safety for the Diocese of Arlington provides this program to ensure a safe environment for children within the community of the Church. Our Religious Education Website contains direct links to free parent resources. These resources are designed to assist parents in the formation of their children in the virtue of chastity. Those who do not have internet access can request a hard copy of the curriculum and resources from the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Although this is a parent-centered program, there are classroom components as well. These components are always taught on the third Sunday, and Tuesday in October with a make-up day for those who were absent the following week. Please see the religious education column in the church bulletin for exact dates.

If you would like to request that your child not attend either of these programs, opt-out forms will be available in the parish office. Handing in this form will ensure that your child will not be marked absent and will not be given the program on the make-up day. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Coordinator of Religious Education or the Youth Director for High School information.

Curriculum Guidelines

Pre-K and Kindergarten Instructional Objectives

- Old and New Testament stories
- The Life of Christ and the Holy Family
- The Ten Commandments
- Virtues: prayer, thankfulness, obedience, wonder and reverence for God's Creation, praising God, respect/courtesy, helpfulness

Prayers To Memorize: Sign of the Cross; Our Father; Hail Mary; Genuflection; Grace Before Meals

Grade 1 Instructional Objectives

- Original Sin
- Mary, Mother of God
- The Church as established by Jesus Christ
- Virtues: faith and trust in God's Providence

Prayers to Memorize: the above plus Glory Be

Grade 2 Instructional Objectives

- God's plan of redemption and forgiveness of sins
 - Apostolic succession
 - Detailed study of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance
 - Virtues: charity, generosity, sincerity
- Prayers to Memorize:* the above plus Guardian Angel Prayer; Act of Contrition; Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love (simple forms); Morning Offering (any form)

Grade 3 Instructional Objectives

- Incarnation and Redemption of Jesus
 - The Immaculate Conception and the Assumption
 - The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ
 - Virtues: justice, fortitude
- Prayers to Memorize:* the above plus the Rosary; the Apostles' Creed; the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary

Grade 4 Instructional Objectives

- Mary as chosen by God to be the Mother of the Savior
 - Covenant established by God with his Chosen People
 - Mary and the Saints teach us to pray and are our intercessors
 - Virtues: hope, simplicity, friendship, patience
- Prayers To Memorize:* The above plus Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love (standard forms); Praying the Rosary; Ten Commandments; Two Com-mandments of Love; Parts of the Mass; Examination of Conscience; Spiritual & Corporal Works of Mercy

Grade 5 Instructional Objectives

- Details about the Three Persons of the Trinity
 - Mary as a powerful intercessor
 - The Seven Sacraments
 - Virtues: cheerfulness, perseverance, industriousness, orderliness
- Prayers to Memorize:* The above plus Divine Praises; Eucharistic Expo-sition and Benediction; Hail Holy Queen (Salve Regina); Memorare

Grade 6 Instructional Objectives

- Mass as the source and summit of Christian life
 - Transubstantiation
 - Devotional life as a way to grow in prayer
 - Virtues: sociability, presence of God, understanding, audacity
- Prayers to Memorize:* The above plus planning prayer service; Stations of the Cross; idea of Christian service as an Act of Charity

Grade 7 Instructional Objectives

- Detailed understanding of the parts of the Mass
 - Recognize the damages of sin
 - Different types of prayer (contemplative, vocal, liturgical, etc.)
 - Virtues: humility, moderation, modesty, respect for others
- Prayers to Memorize:* The above plus Prayer to the Holy Spirit; Angelus; Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi; Regina Coeli

Grade 8 Instructional Objectives

- Characteristics of the early Church
- The Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell
- Confirmation preparation
- Virtues: prudence, integrity, loyalty, optimism

Prayers to Memorize: The above plus understanding of the Psalms and personal petitions for liturgical use.

Please see Youth Director for High School information.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Religious Education Program and Youth Program cannot function without the generous support of its volunteers, including catechists, catechist aids, student catechists, substitute teachers and parent volunteers. Other volunteers are needed to assist with special events throughout the year, especially the Epiphany Pageant, Sacrament receptions, May Crowning, crossing guards, etc. Please be generous enough to help when asked.

The Diocese of Arlington mandates a program of safe-environment and abuse awareness training to ensure protection for children in parish-sponsored activities. Volunteers in parish programs must attend a Virtus training seminar for which you must register in advance and online at www.virtus.org. You must also submit a packet of forms, available from the parish office, which includes a background check. Fingerprinting is no longer required. For more information, please contact the Coordinator of Religious Education or Youth Director. Upcoming Virtus classes will be announced in the Religious Education column of the church bulletin.

Post-Sacrament Receptions

After the First Holy Communion and Confirmation a reception/party is usually planned for the children and their families. In order to provide the reception for children receiving these sacrament without placing a burden on their parents, we have a system in place wherein the parents of Confirmation students host the First Communion reception and the parents of First Communion students host the Confirmation party. Hosting is voluntary but important. The parents of children preparing to receive First Communion will be responsible for the party following the Confirmation Mass; the parents of the children preparing for Confirmation will be responsible for the party following the First Communion Mass. In this way, no parent will have to volunteer for their own child's sacramental party. Only one parent per family is asked to assist. If one of the children has a parent in the Knights of Columbus and this father assists with the clean-up, the mother is exempt from helping. If a family has a child in both the First Holy Communion class and the Confirmation class, they would also not be asked to help. Please note that in years where two First Holy Communions are offered, there will be no reception.

Religious Education Bulletin Column

The Religious Education Bulletin Column is the main source of information for our religious education program. In order to stay informed about religious education events, required parent meetings, and sacrament preparation practice dates, please read the Religious Education Bulletin Column and/or Youth Ministry Column on a weekly basis. It also includes contact information for the Coordinator of Religious Education, the Youth Director and Parish Office. This bulletin is also available online at www.sjtb.org.

Photos and Press Releases

From time to time, photos or videos may be taken of special events or in the classroom setting which may include your child. These pictures, which will include the First Holy Communion pictures, the Confirmation pictures, and the May Crowning pictures, will be made available to our parishioners and their families for a nominal fee. They may also be used by the church on our website, on flyers, or to accompany possible newspaper articles. Please notify the Coordinator of Religious Education at the beginning of each school year if this is not acceptable to you and we will comply with your request.

Religious Education Website

For those with internet access, please check out our Religious Education website at www.sjtbre.org and the Youth Ministry website at www.stjohnsteens.com.

Throughout the year, valuable information and announcements will be posted. The websites includes fun and valuable resources such as:

- Religious Education calendar
- Free printable Catholic coloring pages
- Current Announcements from the Religious Education department and Youth Ministry
- Printable Religious Education registration form and various handbooks/booklets
- Photos from past Religious Education events
- Prayers that students are required to know

You can also look at our site to find information from the Office of Child Protection for the Diocese of Arlington. This office provides programs to ensure a safe environment for children within the community of the Church. The St. John's Religious Education website now has direct links to these resources, which are part of the mandatory diocesan program, *Formation in Christian Chastity*, designed for children in grades 1-8. Hard copies of these resources may be requested from the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Please note that the bulletin columns are the main source of information and should be

read weekly.

High School Program

The Youth Director is the Coordinator of the High School program. High school classes will be held on Wednesday evening from 7:15-8:30, following the 6:30pm Mass.

As Catholics, we believe that Confirmation is not the end of a spiritual journey, but rather, only the beginning! Now that your teen has embarked down the path of Christ, continue to allow the Church to provide signposts that point The Way.

The High School Religious Education Program is excited to begin a new year, with involvement from Fr. Fasano and Fr. Carr. They will provide their knowledge and faith to the teens' catechesis, along with our regular catechists who will be providing in-depth analysis and teachings. Scripture, Church History, Moral Teachings, along with many other topics of interest will be touched on for our high school youth. This will provide an effective and thorough supplement to family education.

The Religious Education Program will take on the format of the youth group. It will begin with ice-breakers and socializing, then transition into a brief meditation by Fr. Fasano or Fr. Carr. After their talk, a 5 minute intermission will take place in order for teens to grab snacks and drinks, before heading to their respective classrooms for a 30 minute, in-depth lecture. The evening will conclude with 5-10 minutes spent in prayer in the chapel, during which time, adults are encouraged to join their children. In this way, we hope to deepen your teen's understanding of the Catholic faith within the comfort of a youth group setting.

Contact Information

Religious Education Department
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
120 West Main Street
Front Royal, Virginia 22630
Phone: 540 636-1489 ext. 404
Fax: 540 635-2683

Pastor, and Director of Religious Education: Fr. Jerome Fasano
Parochial Vicar: Fr. Richard Carr

Coordinator of Religious Education, Grades K-8: Julie Luckey
Rel. Ed. Email: sjtbre@gmail.com
Rel.Ed. Website: www.sjtbre.org

Youth Director/High School Coordinator, Jeremiah Witherow
Youth Email: stjohnsteens@gmail.com
Youth Website: www.stjohnsteens.com