

PARENT PARISH COVENANT

The Catholic Church takes most seriously the role parents play in the education and formation of their children in the ways of the faith. The Second Vatican Council addressed the role of parents in documents such as, The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People #11 where we read that parents “*are the first to pass on the faith to their children and to educate them in it. By word and example they form them.*” The Church again reiterates this idea in another Council document, The Declaration on Christian Education # 3 which states, “*Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators.*”

This is why in the Code of Canon Law # 226 we read, “*Because they have given life to their children, parents have a most serious obligation and enjoy the right to educate them; therefore Christian parents are especially to care for the Christian education of their children according to the teaching handed on by the Church.*” And in Canon # 774.2 we read, “*Parents above others are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example.*”

And so, when you presented your child for Baptism, the priest read from the Rite of Baptism, “*you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us.*” Simply put, children first learn the practice of the Catholic faith at home by the example of their parents. At the appropriate time the Church teaches that the parish should assist the parents by providing a more formal catechetical program that helps to educate and form their children in the Catholic Faith.

Canons # 773 – 777 state that it is the responsibility of the pastor to oversee the catechesis and faith formation of his parishioners. It is also his responsibility to make sure that children and adults are properly prepared for reception of the sacraments.

In no way does the Church envision that the parish is to take over the role of parents and become the primary teacher of children in the ways of faith. In other words, the parents must continue to practice the faith in word and deed. Minimally, practicing the faith means to faithfully attend Mass each Sunday and on Holydays and not to live a life that is contrary to the teachings of the Church. A Catholic school or parish religious education program exists to support and enhance what the parents do in their role as mentioned above. However, when the parents fail to do this, the partnership that should exist between the parish and the parents breaks down. The children are then taught two sets of standards, one by the parish and the other by the parents. Not only is this unfair to the children but confusing and abusive to the moral and spiritual development of the child. In no way should a parish be partner to this unfortunate situation, either through the Catholic school or the religious education program.

Therefore, parents who enroll their children in St. John the Evangelist School or Religious Education & Formation Program are required to sign an affidavit stating that they intend to practice the Catholic faith by regularly attending Mass at St. John the Evangelist, with

their child, each Sunday and Holyday and that they will live a life in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Parents who do not sign this affidavit or who fail to fulfill this faith responsibility will be asked to remove their children from the school or religious education & formation program. The parish cannot fulfill its responsibility alone but only in partnership with the parents.

PARISH PARENT COVENANT

I request that St. John the Evangelist Parish be a partner with me in the education and formation of my child (children) in the Catholic Faith. I fully understand and accept my responsibility to practice the Catholic Faith with my child by regularly attending Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation here at St. John the Evangelist, to attend the bi-annual Penance Service, and to live a life in accordance with the teachings of the Church as evidenced by the use of the weekly envelopes. I understand that envelope usage will be one of the means by which the parish will use in determining whether I am living in accord with this covenant.

I understand that the parish can only be a partner with me as long as I fulfill the above-mentioned responsibilities so that the parish and family may work together to accomplish the same goal.

I further understand that, as a parent, I must support what my child (children) is taught by the parish school/religious education program regarding matters of Catholic faith and morals as found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and as interpreted by the Bishop of the Diocese of Gary.

Lastly, I understand that my child's (children's) continued enrollment in St. John the Evangelist School/Religious Education & Formation Program is contingent upon my acceptance and practice of the teachings of the Catholic Church as mentioned above. In the event that I cannot fulfill these responsibilities, the partnership that I now request of the parish cannot exist.

I PROMISE BEFORE GOD TO FULFILL MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PARENT BY PRACTICING THE CATHOLIC FAITH WITH MY CHILD (CHILDREN). I UNDERSTAND 'PRACTICING THE FAITH' TO MEAN REGULARLY ATTENDING MASS AT ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST EACH SUNDAY AND HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION AND OTHERWISE LIVING MY LIFE IN ACCORD WITH THE TEACHINGS OF OUR HOLY CHURCH.

Family name - Please print

Catholic Parent Signature

Date