Religious Education Website

For those with internet access, please check out the Religious Education page of the church website at www.sjtb.org. Throughout the year, valuable information and announcements will be posted. The website includes fun and valuable resources such as:

- Religious Education calendar
- Free printable Catholic coloring pages
- Current Announcements from the Religious Education department
- Printable Religious Education registration form and various handbooks/booklets
- Photos from past Religious Education events

You can also check out the Arlington Diocese website at www.arlingtondiocese.org which has useful information including information from the Office of Child Protection. This office provides programs to ensure a safe environment for children within the community of the Church. These resources are part of the mandatory diocesan program, *Formation in Christian Chastity*, designed for children in grades 1—8. Hard copies of their resources may be requested from the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Please note that the bulletin column is the main source of information and it should be read weekly. It is also available online at sjtb.org

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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 on a weekly basis. It also includes contact information for the Coordinator of Religious Education, the Youth Minister 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 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.
**Volunteer Opportunities**

The Religious Education Program cannot function without the generous support of its volunteers, including catechists, catechists’ aids, and substitute teachers. Other volunteers are needed to assist with special events throughout the year, especially the Epiphany Pageant, Sacrament receptions, and the May Crowning. 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 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. Upcoming Virtus classes will be announced in the Religious Education column of the church bulletin.

**Post-Sacrament Receptions**

After First Holy Communion and Confirmation, a reception is usually planned for the children and their families. In order to provide the reception for children receiving these sacraments 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. 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.

**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.
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. Father came to St. John’s in 2007.

### About our Pastor

**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 for 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.

**WE ARE NOT on Warren County Schedule**

Please note that we do not follow the Warren County Public School schedule. There are many days that the County school children have off, i.e., teacher workdays, when we will be holding R.E. classes. We do follow Warren County for school closures due to inclement weather.

1. If public school classes in Warren County are cancelled, dismissed early, or if afternoon activities are cancelled due to inclement weather, there will be no Religious Education classes that day.

2. Class cancellations are listed on the home page of the church website at: www.sjtb.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.

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Ice and snow, bless the Lord!!
Absence/Tardiness K—8

Students are expected to attend classes each week and to arrive for class on time. If your child must be absent due to illness, please email us or 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. Children should be fever free for 24 hours prior to returning to class. If your child has had vomiting or diarrhea due to illness in the last 48 hours please do not send them to class. Please note that we do not give excused absences for sports events.

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. All students with excessive absence will be asked to take a final comprehensive exam to prove their knowledge level.

Excessive absences are not fair to your child who will be behind in class, and it is not fair to our dedicated volunteer catechists who put so much time and love into preparing and teaching your child’s class. It is also not fair to the other children in the class who must sit through duplicate lessons as material must be repeated for those who have missed class.

We understand the difficulty for many of our families who are balancing school, school activities and family obligations. However, passing on your Catholic Faith to your children is your most important obligation.

Arrival and Dismissal

A parent must escort each child to class, making 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 the younger children attending classes in Padre Pio Hall, you will be required to sign your child out at the front desk at the end of each class day. Children will not be permitted to leave their classroom until a parent has signed the child out and takes their child by the hand.

Fr. Ruehl Hall students will be dismissed after class and parents may pick them up by the upstairs elevator lobby or outside on the church steps. Please make sure your child is aware that they are not to go into the parking lots or leave the church property unless accompanied by a parent.

If another adult or older child has your permission to pick up your child, please note that on the registration form in the space provided. Other requests for this may also be made in writing to the Coordinator of Religious Education. Please pick up your child 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 to pick up the child.

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 Kindergarten 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.

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 children registering for grades two and eight who expect to receive First Holy Communion and Confirmation 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.

Our deadline for sacrament class registration is October 1.

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 Preparation Class.

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.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to attend classes faithfully each week and to complete all homework assignments. At times, homework may be assigned and is designed to reinforce material taught in class. Teachers 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 also 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 teacher 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 teachers, 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 solve any discipline problems which may arise. If a problem persists, however, your child’s catechist may ask a parent 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 leave the church property prior to dismissal without a note from a parent and without first reporting to the Religious Education Office. Make sure your child understands dismissal procedures and always uses the crosswalk when crossing the street.

Absolutely no guns, knives, fireworks or weapons of any kind are permitted on Church property. Alcohol and illegal drugs are also forbidden. Such offenses may result in suspension or expulsion.
Homeschooling

If your child is being homeschooled 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. Homeschooled students who wish to receive Confirmation, are requested to attend classes at the church for their eighth grade year. We have an extensive two year Confirmation program which does not lend itself well to homeschooling. Homeschoolers and Catholic school children are required to get an 85% on the seventh grade final prior to admission into eighth grade.

Homeschoolers and those attending Catholic schools should understand that they are welcome and encouraged to attend all Religious Education functions and parents are expected to attend all required parents meetings for the sacrament classes.

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 and worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist and frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance will serve as an example for your children. Your involvement in the parish community is also encouraged as a way to demonstrate to your child what is important in your life.

Pray with your child every day. 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 are 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 teacher.

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 and two doors up from Maddox Funeral Home. On occasion, in the nice weather, teachers may hold classes outside on the Church property. If this is not alright with you, please contact the R.E. office and we will honor your request.

Grades K—12: A choice of sessions is usually offered for grades K—8. High school grades, 9—12 meet only during the Sunday session. The Sunday session is offered from 12:00 noon —1:00 am. The Tuesday session is offered from 4:30—5:30. Classes for grades 3 and under are usually held in Padre Pio Hall and classes for grades 4—7 are held in Fr. Ruehl Hall. Watch for signs on the first day of class giving the exact location for each class. 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.

Special Needs: We also have a program for our special needs children which meets each Sunday afternoon in Padre Pio Hall. Please call the parish office if you would like more information on this program.

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 teacher, and next to the Coordinator, prior to bringing them to the parish office.
Curriculum

Students will 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.sjtb.org.

The Arlington Diocese has implemented safe environment program for high school religious education students. You can find details about this program on the diocesan website: Go to www.arlingtondiocese.org and click Education → Child Protection → Training Programs. We will be teaching this program during class time on the third Sunday in October with a make up day the following Sunday.

All Catholic schools and religious education programs in the Diocese of Arlington must include a safe environment program. This is a mandatory program. Formation in Christian Chastity is for K—8, and Called to Protect is for high school students. The Office of Child Protection and Safety for the Diocese of Arlington provides these programs to ensure a safe environment for children within the community of the Church. Resources are available for download on the Arlington Diocese website. They 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 curriculums and resources from the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Although Formation in Christian Chastity is a parent-centered program, there are classroom components as well. These components are always taught on the third Sunday, and the third Tuesday in October, with make-up dates on the following weeks. Please see the religious education column in the church bulletin for exact dates.

If you would like to request that your child not attend 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 on the day of the program and for the following make-up week.

Please visit www.arlingtondiocese.com for the complete Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines. If you do not have internet service and would like a hard copy of the detailed guidelines for your child’s grade, or if you have any other questions or concerns please contact the Coordinator of Religious Education.

4. Parents of First Holy Communion students are expected to read the First Holy Communion at St. John’s handbook. This handbook will be available at the required parents meeting and contains valuable information and basic requirements which apply to all of our First Holy Communion students. Please note that this is different from this Religious Education Parent Handbook.
5. Students in first year Confirmation Prep (seventh grade) who do not attend class at Church must sit for the seventh grade final exam prior to being admitted into the eighth grade class. The passing grade is 85%. This applies to homeschooled students and Catholic School students. Tests will be administered by the Religious Education Department prior to a student being admitted to the eighth grade. John XXIII and Divinum Auxilium may administer this test to their students.
6. Parents of Confirmation Students will be given a copy of the Confirmation Workbook for their child at the required parents meeting. These are also available online on the Religious Education page of the parish website. Confirmation students are expected to hand in all required assignments, attend the required Confirmation retreat, and are expected to sign up for an interview with the Confirmation Coordinator. Watch the bulletins for dates and times.
7. Students attending Catholic Schools should know that they are welcome to attend all St. John’s Religious Education functions. Parents are expected to attend all required parents meetings for the Sacrament classes. Confirmation students are expected to hand in all required assignments, attend the required Confirmation retreat, and are expected to sign up for an interview with the Confirmation Team Leader. Watch the bulletins for dates, times and deadlines.

Blessed Imelda Lambertini
Patroness of
First Communicants
**Students in Catholic Schools**

Students who will be making their First Holy Communion or Confirmation at St. John’s and are attending a Catholic school, for example, John XXIII Montessori Children’s Center, Seton Home Study School, Chelsea Academy, Divinum Auxilium Academy or Seton School in Manassas are asked to observe these requirements.

The requirements are as follows:

1. Students must be registered with and live within the parish boundaries of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, or have a letter of permission addressed 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.sjtb.org. Forms may be handed in at the parish office, placed in the collection basket at Mass, or mailed to us at:

   **St. John’s Church**  
   **Religious Education Department**  
   **120 West Main Street**  
   **Front Royal, VA 22630**

3. At least one parent must attend any parents meetings required for the sacrament classes. These dates will be printed in the Religious Education column of the parish bulletin. John XXIII and Divinum Auxilium students do not need to attend our parents meetings for our First Holy Communion as they hold their own meetings. However, at least one parent must attend our Confirmation Parents Meeting. This is required. If you miss this meeting, you must contact the Confirmation Coordinator to schedule a private meeting.

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**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. Preparation for Confirmation begins in the seventh grade and Confirmation is received in the fall of ninth grade. You must be enrolled in seventh and eighth grade if you intend to receive Confirmation in the fall of the following year.

Students are expected to have no more than five unexcused absences for each of the sacrament years, i.e. first, second, seventh and eighth grades.

In order to receive the sacraments at St. John’s, students must be registered with and live within the parish boundaries of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, or have a letter of permission addressed 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.

**First Holy Communion**: 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 have been enrolled in the first grade if they expect to receive in the second grade. Tests may be given in both years to prove each student’s knowledge. Homeschoolers may be asked to take and pass any tests that are given.

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.

**Required Parents Meeting**: There will be a required parents meeting
at the beginning of the school year. At least one parent must attend. You will be given a copy of our handbook, *First Holy Communion at St. John’s* at that time and the program will be explained. Please watch the parish bulletin for the day and time. **The Interview:** All First Holy Communion students will be asked to sit for an interview with one of our priests. Interviews are only given to those students who are registered with the R.E. program and who have handed in a copy of their baptismal certificate or a Baptized at St. John’s Form which is available in the parish office. A “Pink Slip” stating that all paperwork has been completed will be available in the parish office and must be handed to the priest at the time of the interview. No interview will be given without this proof that all paperwork has been completed. Students who are in class at church will be interviewed during class time; no appointment is necessary. Students who are homeschooled will be interviewed after the First Penance walk-through. Other times will be available by appointment.

**Private First Holy Communions:** Occasionally, parents request that their child receive their First Holy Communion outside of the regular parish First Holy Communions, that is, privately. This is discouraged and these Holy Communions will not be recorded in the parish registry. Our parish First Holy Communion Mass is a special day for our children and for our parish community and we hope that all our children will participate.

**Confirmation:** Preparation for Confirmation begins in the seventh grade and Confirmation is received in the fall of ninth grade. All students, including those who are homeschooled, are strongly encouraged to attend classes at church. You must be enrolled in seventh and eighth grade if you intend to receive Confirmation in the fall of the following year. If you choose to homeschool 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. Homeschooled students must make an 85% on the seventh grade final exam prior to being admitted to the eighth grade. All test questions will be taken from the Arlington Diocese Religious Education Guidelines, available on the diocesan website.

**Required Confirmation Parents Meeting:** A full explanation of our program will be given during the required parents meeting at the beginning of the year. A copy of our Confirmation Workbook will be given to each student at that time. Check the religious education column of the Church bulletin for the exact day and time of this meeting and for testing and assignment deadlines.

**Confirmation Interview:** All second year Confirmation students must sit for an interview with the Confirmation Team Leader. All assignments and required paperwork must be completed at that time. All assignments, required paperwork and interviews must be completed by June 1. Watch the bulletin for information.

**The Fall of Confirmation Year:** In the fall of your child’s Confirmation year, there will be several required classes to attend. A required Confirmation Retreat will be offered in the fall at our Church. Those who are unable to attend will be asked to find another church offering a Confirmation Retreat.