

St. Joseph Church | 5050 St. Joseph's Road, Coopersburg, PA 18036 | 610.965.2877 | www.stjoescoopersburg.org

Parish Religious Education Program (P.R.E.P.) Info Packet for Grades 1 through 8

Contents: *Welcome & Information Letter; Arrival & Dismissal Information; "Circle of Grace" Letter & Opt-Out Form; 2026-2027 Calendar; and a Book Pickup and Teacher Meet & Greet Flyer. Registration forms can be found separate.*

Welcome to the St. Joseph Church PREP Family! Our volunteer staff at St. Joseph Church looks forward to another year of sharing the teachings of Christ with the children of our Parish Family through our Parish Religious Education Program. Please read through this letter carefully for important information regarding the 2026-2027 school year. PREP Registration forms should be returned to the Rectory as soon as possible, no later than August 30th. **This year, we are asking each family to fill out one registration form per child, to make sure that our parish & sacramental records are up-to-date. Please do not omit any of the information.**

All grades will be meeting in-person on Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:45AM Please see the attached calendar for specific dates. Families may arrive at the Parish Center no earlier than 9:40 AM. Please read through the "Arrival & Dismissal" notice for additional information, including a new traffic pattern.

Workbooks & supplemental books will be provided, and should accompany your child to each class, along with any specific items requested by your child's teacher. We will provide writing utensils and other craft items as needed. Your child is welcome to bring a water bottle, clearly marked with his or her name. Please, no food or snacks due to potential allergies.

As always, we are counting on the parents/guardians of our students to have a successful school year. Parents/guardians should anticipate that they may be required to complete lessons or assignments along with their child, especially with our younger students. The main source of communication between parents and teachers will be via email, as well as the class webpages located on our Parish website: <https://www.stjoescoopersburg.org/prep-news/> Grades 1-7 will have the opportunity to meet your child(ren)'s teacher(s) at our new & improved Book Pickup and Teacher Meet & Greet on September 13th! See the enclosed flyer for further info.

Attendance will be taken each week. Absences should be reported to your child's teacher prior to the scheduled session, and all homework should be submitted as requested/expected. Parents should work with their student(s) on any missed assignments.

We are aware that the schedule for PREP courses may require families to adjust their activity planning, and our PREP teachers will work with students & families to make accommodations wherever possible. However, regular PREP attendance is still required for your child(ren). Absences may result in students being held back and/or not receiving sacraments when expected. Students in sacramental preparation years must be in regular attendance at all PREP classes and keep up with assigned work in order to receive the anticipated sacrament this school year. If you are concerned this PREP schedule will not work for your family, you do have the option of searching for a PREP program within the Diocese of Allentown that would work better for your family. Please contact Mrs. O'Donnell for more information, if you wish to pursue this option. Please note that a "homeschool" curriculum is not an acceptable option.

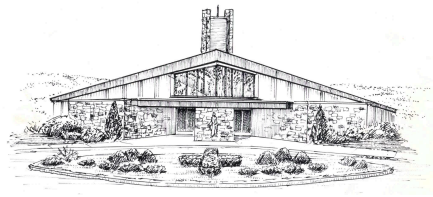
Regular Mass attendance is also an essential part of your child(ren)'s PREP experience. We go to Mass not simply because it is an obligation, but rather because it is our loving response to the God Who has loved us first. It is an active choice of the will to give of our time, treasure, and talent – knowing full well it will never amount to the sacrifice endured by our Savior. We want the children of our Parish Family to know that they have ownership in the celebration of the Mass, whether they have been fully initiated or not, and will once again be hosting Masses throughout the school year. Each grade will have the opportunity to participate in the Mass, as well as sit together as a class. Your child(ren)'s teacher(s) will provide more information on these special events.

On behalf of Fr. Buckley, our volunteer catechists, and all of our Parish Family, I wish you many blessings in these fleeting summer moments! May the new school year bring us many moments of laughter, love & learning.

Sincerely,

Janessa O'Donnell

PREP Administrator janessa.odonnell@stjoescoopersburg.org



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Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

In the continued interest of safety for our students and volunteers, we ask that you please look over the following information as well as the attached image depicting the new traffic pattern for all those coming to and from the church grounds on Sunday mornings.

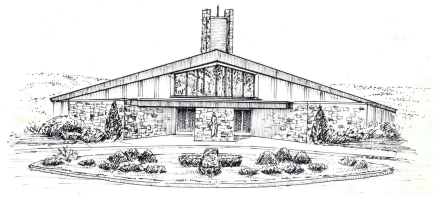
Arrival Info

- **PREP begins at 9:45AM. We respectfully ask that the students be on time.** Families will be admitted to the Parish Center no earlier than 9:40 AM.
- All students should be brought by their parent/guardian to the gym upon arrival. **Please do not allow your child(ren) to walk by themselves to the gym from the church.** We will have volunteers helping to direct traffic, but still need cooperation of the pedestrians in this matter due to the volume of cars leaving the 9AM Mass, as well as arriving for PREP at this time.
- Students will meet in the gym, and are to sit/stand in their class lines according to their grade. Teachers will meet their students in the gym, and they will proceed to the classroom together. Latecomers will be escorted to class by a PREP volunteer.
- **Parents are not permitted to wait in the hallways during the PREP session.** The cafeteria will be open to all parents while the students are in class. Main entrance will be locked from approx. 10AM-10:40AM.

Dismissal Info

- PREP Dismissal for all grades is 10:45AM, unless otherwise instructed.
- Students are not permitted to leave class early to go to the 11:00 AM Mass, unless prior arrangements have been made with your child's teacher.
- **Parents must wait in the Parish Center for their students.** The teacher or aide will accompany students to the Parish Center for dismissal.
- No student or parent may enter or exit the building from any area but the main entrance Parish Center doors.
- Students in all grades **are not permitted** to walk to the parking lot themselves. **Please do not allow your child(ren) to walk by themselves from the gym or from the church. No child in Grades 1-5 will be allowed to exit the building unattended by an adult.**
- We will have volunteers helping to direct traffic, but still need cooperation of the pedestrians in this matter due to the volume of cars arriving for the 11AM Mass, as well as leaving PREP at this time.
- If a child is to be dismissed early for some reason, they must have a note from the parent and the PREP office must be notified of the early dismissal.
- If a child is to be dismissed with anyone not listed on the emergency form submitted with your registration, you must provide a written note to the teacher at the beginning of class.

Additional Reminders: Please email Mrs. O'Donnell and your child's PREP teacher to report absences. Weather or other emergency cancellations of PREP will be announced via email, on our website and/or on WFMZ. **Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our students safe! Questions/concerns should be addressed with Janessa O'Donnell - Rectory Phone: (610) 965-2877, or email: janessa.odonnell@stjoescoopersburg.org.**

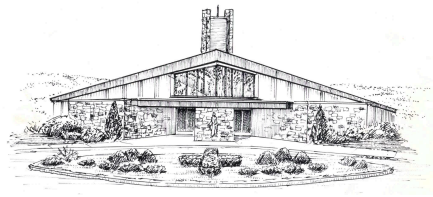


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NEW TRAFFIC PATTERN FOR SUNDAY MORNING MASSES & PREP

- **ALL VEHICLE TRAFFIC** must follow the **green area** outlined on the map above when entering and exiting the grounds.
- **NO VEHICLES** are permitted within the **red zones** highlighted above.
- **Pedestrian Traffic** must follow the **blue lines** both into and out of the main entrance of the building.
- **We recommend all families park in the church lot, as a crossing guard will be available in this area.**
- If you choose to park in the lot on St. Joseph Rd., **please use extreme caution** when crossing the street. Traffic will be very heavy both coming and going on St. Joseph Rd. A crossing guard may not be present at this lot.



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Parish Religious Education Program (P.R.E.P.) REGISTRATION FORM for the 2026-2027 School Year
NEW & RETURNING STUDENTS - Please fill out one form per student.

Child's Full Name _____ School grade in September 2026 _____

DOB _____ Birth City & State _____

SACRAMENTS RECEIVED (circle all that apply): *BAPTISM RECONCILIATION EUCHARIST CONFIRMATION*

BAPTISM Date _____ BAPTISM Church, City & State _____

EUCHARIST Date _____ EUCHARIST Church, City & State _____

CONFIRMATION Date _____ CONFIRMATION Church, City & State _____

Mailing Address _____

Address City State Zip

Parent/Guardian 1 First and Last Name _____

Relationship to Student _____ Phone _____ e-mail _____

Parent/Guardian 2 First and Last Name _____

Relationship to Student _____ Phone _____ e-mail _____

If parents are separated or divorced, child lives with: _____

Does your child have special needs of which we should be aware? If so, please list his/her need here (e.g., emergency medication*, vision/hearing loss, mobility impairment, etc.).

**If your child requires emergency medication, a parent/guardian must remain in the cafeteria with the medication for the duration of the PREP session.*

***** All First Grade Students AND New Registrants Must Submit a Copy of the Child's Baptismal Certificate, if they were not baptized at St. Joseph Church.*****

2026-2027 PREP FEES

Make checks payable to: St. Joseph Church

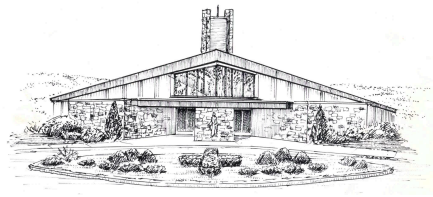
1 Child = \$100.00

2 Children = \$150.00

3 or More Children = \$185.00

PREP registration deadline: August 30, 2026

Please submit payment with registration. If financial assistance or a payment plan is needed, contact the Rectory at 610-965-2877, or janessa.odonnell@stjoescoopersburg.org. **Return form & payment via the collection basket at any Mass, or mail to: St. Joseph Church Rectory, 5050 St. Joseph's Road, Coopersburg, PA 18036**



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Diocese of Allentown "Circle of Grace" Program – Grades 1-8 – 2026-2027 PREP School Year

August 1, 2026

Dear Families of St. Joseph Church PREP,

The Diocese of Allentown has once again directed all schools & parish religious education programs to present the "Circle of Grace Program". The program, developed by a team of educators and youth protection professionals in the Archdiocese of Omaha, is rooted in the Catholic faith and emphasizes dignity and respect for one's body, appropriate boundaries, and awareness of child protection topics, including online safety and grooming. Grade-appropriate modules are designed for K - 12 students and include information and resources for parents. If you wish to see what is covered in the modules, please feel free to reach out to me to be sent materials via email.

The PREP teachers will be reviewing the materials in a specified class in late fall 2026 or early winter 2027. **If any parent does NOT want their child(ren) to participate in the grade-appropriate lesson, please sign and return the bottom of this form to the Rectory no later than August 30, 2026.** Your child's teacher will let you know when the lesson will be taught, and provide your child with an alternative assignment. Completed forms may be placed in the collection basket at any Mass (folded and marked PREP); emailed to the Rectory at the address above; or, PDF versions may be emailed to Mrs. O'Donnell at the email listed below (PDFs MUST contain a signature). The parent opt-out is required to be reported to the Diocese of Allentown.

We thank you for continuing to place your trust in us as we work with you and your child in partnership. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the email listed below. You are also welcome to contact Katie Albright, Director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Allentown, at kalbright@allentowndiocese.org if you have any questions about the Circle of Grace program or child protection catechesis in the Diocese of Allentown. The safety of our students is always our priority, and we hope you will take advantage of and share the parental resources included with the curriculum.

God Bless,

Janessa O'Donnell

PREP Administrator, Parish Safe Environment Coordinator

janessa.odonnell@stjoescoopersburg.org

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**ONLY fill out & return if you do NOT want your child(ren) to participate in the Circle of Grace program in class.
Return to the Rectory no later than August 30, 2026.**

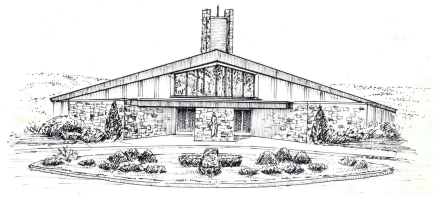
☐ **We do NOT want our child(ren) to participate in the Circle of Grace Program.**

Name of Family: _____

Name of Child(ren) & Grade(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____



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Parish Religious Education Program (P.R.E.P)

Grades 1 through 8 Combined Schedules

Fall 2026 - Spring 2027

All classes will be held on Sunday mornings 9:45-10:45AM

Please note: ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

September 2026

- **13th - Book Pick Up and Meet & Greet with the Teachers for Grades 1-7** - Parents remain with the students. Sign up for a session between 10-10:45AM to meet the teacher & pick up books. See flyer for more info. Light refreshments will be provided.
- **13th - Gr. 8/Confirmation Students ONLY** - Special Mass with Fr. Buckley in the Parish Center & Parent Meeting to follow - 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. More info will be sent to families.
- **27th** - First Class - All Grades

October 2026

- **4th** - In-person Class - All Grades
- **7th - Living Rosary Prayer Service - 6PM in the Church** - All PREP families & the parish community are welcome! Classes will sit together and students will have the opportunity to participate as readers. Parents/Guardians should accompany their students to the prayer service. More info to come.
- **11th** - No Class - Holiday Weekend
- **11th, 12th, 13th** - Forty Hours of Devotion - *All are welcome to spend time with the Lord in this special way - The church will be open for private adoration during the day, with Benediction at 7:00 PM each night.*
- **18th** - In-person Class - All Grades
- **18th - Confirmation Investiture Mass at 11AM** *Gr. 8/Confirmation Students will sit together in the pews down front.*
- **25th** - In-person Class - All Grades
 - *ALL FAMILIES - Join us at Fr. Buckley's Fall Family Festival from 3PM-5PM!*

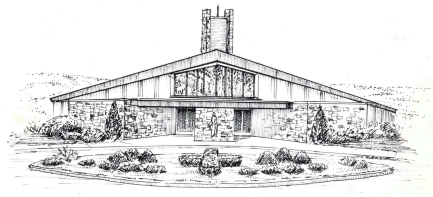
November 2026

- **1st - Class Mass at 9:00AM** *Grade 7 will sit together, and students will have the opportunity to participate in the Mass.*
 - In-person Class - All Grades
- **8th** - In-person Class - All Grades
- **15th** - In-person Class - All Grades
- **22nd - Class Mass at 9:00AM** *Grade 6 will sit together, and students will have the opportunity to participate in the Mass.*
 - In-person Class - All Grades
- **29th** - No Class - Holiday Weekend

December 2026

- **6th - Class Mass at 9:00AM** *Grade 5 will sit together, and students will have the opportunity to participate in the Mass.*
 - In-person Class - All Grades
- **13th** - In-person Class - All Grades
 - *ALL FAMILIES - Join us at our Gaudete Sunday Parish Family Celebration - 12PM-3PM*
- **20th** - In-person Class - All Grades
- **27th** - No Class - Winter Break

January 2027



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- **3rd - Class Mass at 9:00AM** **Grade 4 will sit together, and students will have the opportunity to participate in the Mass.**
 - In-person Class - All Grades
- **10th** - In-person Class - All Grades
- **17th** - No Class - Holiday Weekend
- **24th - Class Mass at 9:00AM** **Grade 3 will sit together, and students will have the opportunity to participate in the Mass.**
 - In-person Class - All Grades
- **31st** - In-person Class - All Grades

February 2027

- **7th** - In-person Class - All Grades
 - **Mardi Gras Charity Carnival** - 10:45AM-12PM - All PREP families & the parish community are welcome! Drop-in after class – Parents/Guardians should accompany their students. More info to come.
- **10th - Ash Wednesday - All Classes attend 7PM Mass**
- **14th** - No Class - Holiday Weekend
- **21st - Class Mass at 9:00AM** **Grade 1 will sit together, and students will have the opportunity to participate in the Mass.*
 - In-person Class - All Grades
- **28th** - In-person Class - All Grades

Fridays During Lent

- Students in Grades 4-7 are invited to attend Confessions during a designated time, just for them (begins at 5:45PM), followed by the opportunity to attend Stations of the Cross (7PM). Families will sign up for a date & time online after the new year.
- Dates you will have to choose from: February 12th, 19th & 26th; March 12th & 19th..

March 2027

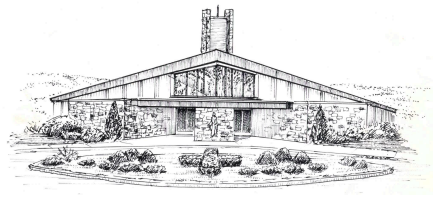
- **6th - First Reconciliation** (Gr. 2/FR Students Only) - 10AM
- **7th - Children's Mass at 9AM** - **Grade 2/Reconciliation Students will sit together up front with their teachers & classmates. (PREP and St. Mike's)**
 - In-person Class - All Grades
- **14th** - In-person Class - Grades 1-7
- **14th - Confirmation Retreat - 11AM-4PM**
- **16th - Confirmation - 4:30PM**
- **20th** - **ALL FAMILIES - Join us for Fr. Buckley's Annual Easter Egg Hunt - 11AM Sharp!**
- **21st & 28th** - No Class - Palm Sunday & Easter Sunday

April 2027

- **4th** - In-person Class - All Grades
- **11th** - In-person Class - Grades 1-7
- **18th** - In-person Class - Grades 1-7
- **24th - First Eucharist Retreat** (Gr. 3/FE Students only) - 9AM
- **25th - Last Class** - Grades 1-7 - *Light refreshments & fellowship will follow in the gym - please join us!*

May 2027

- **1st - First Eucharist** (Gr. 3/FE Students only) - 10:00AM
- **2nd - Children's Mass at 9:00AM** - May Crowning & Honoring of First Communicants. **First Communicants will sit together in the pews down front. (PREP and St. Mike's*



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St. Joseph Church Parish Religious Education Program



Grades 1-7 Book Pickup and

Teacher Meet & Greet

Sunday, September 13, 2026

NEW THIS YEAR - Sign up for a time frame between 10-10:45AM - Visit the classroom to meet the teacher, pick up your books, and hear what to expect for the new year! **Parent/Guardian must accompany the student and remain for the duration of the event.**

Light refreshments will be available for your enjoyment in the Parish Center, either before or after you visit the classrooms.

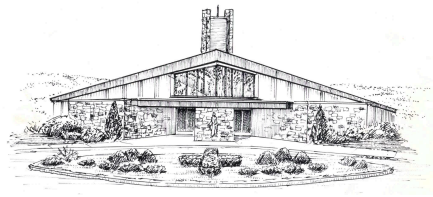
Sign Up Online Today! Scan the QR code or visit:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0C48ADAD22A0FC1-64999222-stjoes>

8th Grade/Confirmation students will get their books at the special Mass that evening; they do not need to attend the morning session.

Questions? Email janessa.odonnell@stjoescoopersburg.org





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A decorative border for the poster featuring a string of blue beads with several larger gold beads. The string is shaped into a large cross, with the vertical part on the left and the horizontal part at the top. The background of the poster is decorated with a pattern of yellow sunflowers and green leaves.A blue line drawing of the Virgin Mary, shown from the chest up, with her hands clasped in prayer and a halo around her head.

St. Joe's PREP invites you to pray with us a

Living Rosary

**Wednesday, October 7, 2026
6:00PM in the Church**

All Are Welcome!

Bring your rosary beads and join us.
Our PREP students & volunteers will be leading us
in a special evening of prayer.
Questions can be sent to
janessa.odonnell@stjoescoopersburg.org