**St. Joseph Parish – Galloway**

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Hello Religious Ed Families! January 5, 2022

Welcome 2022! Happy New Year to all of you! I pray you all had a joyous Christmas and blessed New Year. The Christmas season officially ends this Sunday with the Baptism of our Lord. For Catholics, Christmas is not just over and done with on December 25. It’s only just begun! At a time when many are taking down their decorations and throwing their Christmas tree to the curb, Catholics should be celebrating.

**Christmastide** is the name given to the Christmas season in the liturgical calendar. It begins on Christmas Eve and ends on the Sunday celebrating the Baptism of the Lord. This usually gives us a **Christmas season of around 20 days** or so.

Of special note is that the Christmas season kicks off with a gift - seven special days other than December 25th, designed to extend our focus on the mystery of Christ’s birth. During these days, we’re to take in all the joys and graces associated with such a momentous event.

These days are called the “Octave of Christmas,” and you can remember their timing because the Octave starts and ends with solemnities - the Nativity of the Lord on December 25, and Mary, Mother of God on January 1st. Both are Holy Days of Obligation.

Ultimately, while all these details of the season can get a bit confusing at times, the major conclusion to draw is this: our Christmas celebrations are often way too short, and end far too early! So don’t miss out on the opportunity to stay in a holy, holiday spirit by celebrating for the *entire* Christmas season this year. Excerpts taken from <https://slmedia.org/blog/how-long-does-christmas-actually-last>

First Reconciliation was cancelled on December 15th due to inclement weather. It has been rescheduled to March 9th, when Father will be back from Ghana. Please mark your calendars if this affects your child.

A reminder to the 2nd grade parents as well as any other parent with children in older grades that will be receiving their First Holy Communion on May 1st, we will be meeting on January 19th for a mandatory parent meeting before the sacrament. Your child will attend class as usual, and we will meet in the foyer.

We continue to meet after Sunday morning Mass at 9:30 am in the social hall as we meet Jesus in the Gospel of John. We still have 4 weeks left and welcome everyone. You can catch up by watching the other videos on your own with the link provided to you when you sign up for the class. We look forward to seeing you!

Please see the schedule of important dates below. Lent will be here before we know it!

Lastly, thank you to all of you for allowing us the opportunity to have your child(ren) for a short time each week. The catechists and I are grateful we get to spend a little time with them each week. We look forward to seeing all of them at Mass each week as well to continue what we do here on Wednesdays, which is to gently light a spark that we hope you will help your child to continue to burn it brightly each day. May God bless each of you on your parenting journey!!

Any questions, you can contact me at 715-454-7060 (home), 715-573-0430 (cell), Facebook (messenger) or stjoseph4faith@gmail.com.

God’s Blessings, Mary Uttecht

**IMPORTANT DATES**

January 12 Class

January 19 Class - **2nd Grade Parents meet at 6:15 pm**

January 26 Class

February 2 Class

February 9 Class

February 16 Class

February 23 Class

March 2 Class – Ash Wednesday, Mass 7 pm

March 9 Class – First Reconciliation - Stations of the Cross

March 16 Class – Stations of the Cross

March 19 – St. Joseph Feast Day - 6 pm Mass

March 23 **NO CLASS**, Spring Break

March 30 Class – Stations of the Cross

April 6 Class – Stations of the Cross

April 9 – **Retreat for 2nd grade students and parents, 9 am**

April 13 **NO CLASS**, Holy Week

April 17 – Easter Sunday Mass 8:30 am

April 20 Class - **1st grade parents meet at 6:15 pm**

April 27 Class - **First Communion Rehearsal 6:15 pm**

May 1 – **First Communion Mass 8:30 am**

May 8 – **May Crowning Mass 8:30 am**

