



Weekend Mass Childcare Guidelines

We are excited to launch this pilot program to provide childcare services during select Mass times at our St. Peter of Alcantara Church Campus. Please review this information to become familiar with our guidelines and FAQs.

General Information

- Childcare will be offered free of charge to registered members of St. John XXIII Congregation during Sunday 5PM Mass at St. Peter of Alcantara Church
- All childcare staff/volunteers are certified by the Milwaukee Archdiocese Safe Environment program
- Spaces are limited based on available staff resources. Our childcare team can care for children as young as 6 months through kindergarten. Our room is primarily geared to preschool age and younger
- Caregiver to child ratios for appropriate coverage is based on children's ages. 1:4 for pre-walking children and 1:6 for walking children. This is why we ask you to list the ages of your children when you sign up for childcare
- Currently, the maximum capacity for Mass childcare services is 10 children
- To offer childcare during Mass, we must have at least 3 children or 2 families signed up 72 hours (about 3 days) in advance. Signup is available online through our parish wide calendar
- Childcare will not be offered during the following holidays: New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve

Registration

- The signup form is available on our website and through our online calendar. If you need any help or if you experience issues with signing up, please reach out to our childcare team or the parish office
- Parents must register for childcare services by 8:00PM Thursday prior to the weekend Mass desired to reserve a spot. Our coordinator will follow up on the submission to confirm your reservation
- Walk-ins will be accepted if we have enough caregivers present and if we have not met our nursery limit through pre-registration. Open spots will also be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis
- Parents need to provide at least 1 mobile number to be used as our pager system. We don't anticipate any issues. However, if we need you to return to the childcare room prior to the end of Mass, then we will use this mobile number to send you a text message

Drop off and pick up procedure

- Those dropping off children must attend Mass
- Enter St. Peter's Church through the main church doors and turn left in the narthex. Enter the school through the double doors located to the right of the elevator, then follow the signs posted. You will turn right at the first main hallway and follow it all the way down past the school lobby on to the second hallway. Turn left into the second hallway and the entrance to the childcare room is the first room on the left.
- One of our volunteers will check you in and confirm we have your contact details
- Drop off will be no sooner than 15 minutes prior to Mass (*for Sunday 5:00PM Mass, Parent/Child check-in is between 4:45 – 5:00*)
- Food and drinks are not permitted. Children should be fed and changed prior to drop off
- Children should also be symptom-free
- You must provide a change of clothes and diaper/pull-up for those not yet fully potty trained
- We are confident your child will enjoy their time with our team. In the event your child becomes upset and remains inconsolable beyond 15 minutes, we will send you a text to come pick them up
- Pickup should be no later than 15 minutes after Mass (*for Sunday 5:00PM Mass – pickup by 6:15*)

Frequently Asked Questions

What activities are planned for the children during childcare?

Our childcare services are geared to preschool age and younger. We have toys, games, light crafts and books to entertain the kids during Mass. This service is separate from our Children's Liturgy of the Word program where the kids engage with the instructor on the Gospel reading.

Is Weekend Mass Childcare connected to Children's Liturgy of the Word?

Not directly. They are separate services with a similar goal. We want parents of younger children to be able to participate fully during mass. Our youngest parishioners may not be ready to attend our child focused liturgy services. For those children, we are offering this general childcare during the full hour of Mass.

If you want your child to attend Children's Liturgy of Word, have them remain with you during Mass. Participants will be called forth before the first reading and gather in the library to listen to the word at their level returning to Mass with their families during the offertory. This service is offered the first and third Sundays during the 5:00 Mass at our St. Peter of Alcantara campus.

Are children of all ages welcome at Mass?

Absolutely! We are excited to offer a variety of options for parents of young children and that includes keeping them with you throughout the entire service. Our parish community wants your family to feel welcome and supported.

Is Weekend Mass Childcare connected to our SJXXIII School Early Childhood Program (Pre-3, K4, K5)?

No. They are separate.

Can I sign up for childcare in person during the check in time?

Since this Weekend Mass Childcare service is new, we want to use pre-registration online to gauge parents' need for these services and manage staffing resources. We will accept walk-ins. However, we strongly encourage you to sign up through our website by 8PM the preceding Thursday.

Will childcare be offered during our other Masses and at other church campuses?

Our initial plan is to offer childcare during Sunday 5:00PM Mass January through March to get a sense of demand and availability of staff and volunteers. If this pilot program is successful and demand increases, we do have plans to extend services to the Saturday 4:30PM Mass.

We will only be able to offer childcare at our St. Peter of Alcantara campus. We have a dedicated childcare room at this location. Our St. Mary and Immaculate Conception campuses do not have these facilities and the safety and comfort of your children is a top priority.

Does Weekend Mass Childcare run all year?

Our pilot program will offer childcare during Sunday 5:00PM Mass January through March to get a sense of demand and availability of staff and volunteers. If successful and demand increases, we have plans to extend services through May to align with the general school year. We do not have plans to date to run this service during the summer months.

Are you accepting new volunteers?

We always welcome new volunteers who love working with children. All adult childcare staff (18 years or older) must be safe environment certified through the archdiocese, including a background check. Please contact our childcare coordinator, Sandra Pessaro, our Director of Administrative Services, Bill Henkle, or our parish office to find out more and get started. If you are already trained, let us know.

Teen volunteers are welcome to serve when their parents are volunteering their time for Weekend Mass Childcare. It is especially helpful if you have attended Babysitting and Childcare Courses with the American Red Cross. As our new program grows and develops, we will look for more ways to include our teen volunteers.