



Summer Catechetical Mission 2026 Missionary Information

Diocese of Lansing
St. Joseph
Catholic Church



Goals of Totus Tuus

To provide solid catechetical instruction

The foundation of Totus Tuus is authentic catechesis. The catechesis provided by Totus Tuus is rooted in an orderly and systematic explanation of God's revelation of himself through the person of Jesus Christ. This revelation, stored in the depths of Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, is constantly handed on from one generation to the next.

To help young people develop their relationship with Jesus Christ

An intimate friendship with Jesus is essential so that he may lead young people to the love of the Father (cf. John 14:6-7). To accomplish this goal, the Totus Tuus Parish Mission emphasizes devotion and love for our Lord in the Eucharist and for Mary, our Mother.

To foster openness to vocations

Openness to our vocational call is accomplished by placing special emphasis on the importance and necessity of living a Christian life. One of the mission philosophies of Totus Tuus is that vocations, callings from God, can only be heard and responded to if one is living an authentic Christian life. The missionaries for Totus Tuus model this lifestyle by promising to be open to God's will for them and to actively discern God's call in their lives. Because missionaries are striving to live an authentic Christian life and are actively discerning their vocation, they can better help young people do the same.

Five Marks of Totus Tuus

1. Proclamation of the Gospel to arouse the faith.
2. Explanation and examination the reasons for our beliefs.
3. Christian Witness and experience of Christian living.
4. Celebration of the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist and Confession.
5. Active witness of the missionary nature of the Church.

Five Pillars of Totus Tuus

1. The Eucharist
2. Marian Devotion
3. Catechetical Instruction
4. Vocational Discernment
5. Fun

Getting Started

At Totus Tuus, we're committed to bringing kids closer to Christ through the sacraments, prayer, and fun. In this guide, you will find helpful information about planning for Totus Tuus at your parish and what the team needs in order to thrive. If you have questions that cannot be answered from this document, please contact the diocesan coordinator, Margie Sauter: margies@sjypsi.com or 734-461-6555. We will help you in any way we can!

Role of the Parish Coordinator

The parish coordinator may very well be the most important person involved in Totus Tuus. The success of a Totus Tuus Parish Program depends on you! We cannot thank you enough for your investment in the young people of our diocese.

While the team that visits your parish will have training specific to catechesis, classroom management and teamwork, for many of these college-aged students, this is their first job. It will be a great learning experience, and you'll help them grow professionally and personally. They will look to you for help with logistics at your parish, challenging behavior from kids and any scheduling issues that fall outside of their usual plan.

A Note for Father

Thank you for hosting Totus Tuus at your parish! We recognize the intense amount of time and resources this program requires. Time and time again, teams will tell us that the involvement of the priest was one of the most meaningful aspects of the summer. As these young people learn, grow, and discern, your witness is invaluable. We understand that your schedule may not allow you to be present all the time, but we warmly invite you to be a part of Totus Tuus in any way that you can.

Priest Schedule Totus Tuus				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
*Confession 10:45 am	*Confession 10:45 am	*Confession 10:45 am	*Church Tour 10:45 am	*Explain Vessel & Vestments 10:45 am
Mass 11:15 am	Mass 11:15 am	Mass 11:15 am	Mass 11:15 am	Mass 11:15 am
	Adoration & Confession		*Optional	
	**7:30 to 8:30 pm		** May need 2 priests	

Program Fee

Below is the cost to a parish for hosting a team and the maximum number of youth per team. Please understand that if your parish exceeded the number of youth served during the previous year of hosting Totus Tuus, you may be asked to host additional teams at your expense.

Number of Teams Max. Youth Served* Cost

1 team (4 missionaries) 75 youth \$2,00

2 teams** (8 missionaries) 150 youth \$4,000

**"Maximum youth served" applies only to those youth served through the Grade School Program.

We understand that turning kids away is not desirable, but please do not "overload" your team. It is challenging for the team and does not allow them to teach and connect with the kids as easily. Please close registration once you reach the maximum number of youth. If you are able to secure three or more adults in each of the three classrooms, you may increase to 90 students for the grade school program. There is no limit to the evening program. The evening program will run even with just one student registering.

Funding Tips

The amount the parish charges per attendee is entirely up to the parish. One option is to charge an amount per child with a cap for families of three or more which will cover the cost for hosting Totus Tuus missionaries. Throughout the years, many Knights of Columbus councils and parish men's groups have assisted in bringing the program to various parishes. Or we also recommend considering Totus Tuus as part of your parish mission and suggest the parish charge a nominal fee per student and per family.

Registration

Contact Margie Sauter, Diocese of Lansing Totus Tuus Coordinator to register at margies@sjypsi.com. Please provide three dates in the order of preference.

The Team

Each Totus Tuus team consists of two men and two women. These missionaries are selected based on their commitment to the Catholic Faith, desire to teach the Faith, love of children, energy, enthusiasm, and leadership abilities. In order to operate a week of Totus Tuus successfully, the missionaries adhere to a well-defined schedule, which has a structured prayer life as its foundation.

Arrival/Setup

The team leader will call you on Wednesday afternoon prior to your week of Totus Tuus, usually between 3-5 p.m. If you do not hear from your team, please call the diocesan coordinator.

The team arrives on Saturday afternoon or evening prior to the week of teaching. Plan on the team speaking at the Masses that weekend. Speaking at Mass is an excellent opportunity to publicize Totus Tuus and introduce the team. Often this brief presentation will help bring in more youth to participate in the week's program.

The team should meet with the parish coordinator and pastor (if available) for a formal meeting and touring of the facilities on Saturday. The team will set up the facilities on Sunday afternoon. Due to the early morning and late-night scheduling of events, some parishes have found it convenient to provide the team leader with a key to the facilities. If you choose to do this, please make sure the team leader knows who will have the facility keys for the week. An adult coordinator should be on site during the time youth are present.

Host Families

Since the missionaries are “out on the road” in this ministry, we ask that the parishes find host families to provide sleeping arrangements and a morning continental breakfast. The team needs two “host homes,” one for the men and one for the women. Men and women are to be housed separately. It is easier for the team and the parish if the host homes are close to each other and to the parish, but the team will be grateful for any housing.

The interaction at host homes is valuable for both the team members and the families. However, because of the team's schedule, it is important to stress that the team may occasionally be late getting home due to team meetings. Also, team members may not always be present at the host families' homes in the afternoons due to planning and setup. The teams are asked to return to host homes by 11 p.m. and practice courtesy as guests. Housing of team members takes place from their arrival Saturday afternoon/evening until their departure the following Friday evening or Saturday morning. Each team will provide their own transportation to and from the parish. It is helpful to give the team driver a list of the names, addresses, phone numbers and directions to the homes for housing and evening meals.

Meals

Please plan to provide all of the team's meals while the team is at your parish. The host family provides a continental style breakfast at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast does not need to be anything fancy or requiring effort. Cereal, fruit, granola bar or toast is sufficient. Sometimes all the team wants is coffee. Lunch for Saturday (if the team has arrived) and Sunday can be at the host families' homes. Please ask the host families not to plan any activities for the team on Sunday after Mass and/or lunch. This is "team time" and needs to be protected. The teams follow a demanding schedule each week for eight weeks. Like all of us, they require "down time." Honoring God's commandment to keep holy the Sabbath, Sunday afternoon is their time for rest, recreation, and team fellowship, as well as time to prepare for the coming week. Dinner on Saturday should be scheduled for as early after Mass as possible. It would be ideal if the parish coordinator could host dinner on Saturday evening, as that would give everyone a chance to meet. If this is not possible, please find a family who can host them for dinner.

Lunch on Monday through Friday should be provided by the parish or a volunteer at 12:00 p.m. and can be dropped off to the parish. Volunteers assisting in the kitchen can prepare the lunch, if needed. Buffet style works best, and whoever is providing the meal may want to bring extra food for the volunteers, priest, etc.

Dinner for the team from Sunday to Thursday should be provided by the families hosting the missionaries at their homes, if possible. If you choose instead to provide dinner for all the youth attending the evening program, they can either eat at the beginning of the night program or at the end. You can provide these meals in a variety of different ways. The need for dinner on Friday will be determined when the team leader calls the parish coordinator during the week before the program.

The Totus Tuus Curriculum

The Sacred Scriptures and the Catechism of the Catholic Church provide the foundation of the catechetical instruction of the Totus Tuus summer catechetical program.

Consequently, Totus Tuus has divided the four pillars of the Catechism into a six-year teaching cycle. To complement this six-year cycle, Totus Tuus follows a four-year cycle dedicated to the mysteries of the Rosary.

Year One: The Mystery of Salvation
Year Two: The Apostles' Creed
Year Three: The Sacraments
Year Four: The Commandments -- 2026
Year Five: The Virtues
Year Six: Prayer and the Our Father

The Joyful Mysteries
The Luminous Mysteries -- 2026
The Sorrowful Mysteries
The Glorious Mysteries

Daily Schedule

Team

6:30 Rise
7:00 Breakfast
7:30 Morning Prayer & Rosary

Grade School Mission

9:00 Introduction
9:15 Icebreaker
9:25 Class Period #1
9:50 Snack/Game
10:10 Music Preparation for Mass
10:20 Class Period #2
10:45 Mass Preparation/Confessions
11:15 Mass
12:00 Lunch/Recess
1:00 Water Break
1:10 Class Period #3
1:35 Skit
1:50 Class Period #4
2:15 Gather, Review, & Closing prayer
2:30 Dismissal

Team

2:30 Clean-Up / Set-up for Next Day/ Team Meeting
3:00 Prayer & Chaplet of Divine Mercy
3:30 Team Recreation
5:00 Dinner

Junior & High School Mission

6:30 p.m.	Introduction/Review
6:45 p.m.	Games
7:00 p.m.	Talk/Missionaries Personal Testimony
7:30 p.m.	Team Discussion Time
8:00 p.m.	Snack bread and/or Relational Ministry
8:15 p.m.	Night Prayer
8:30 p.m.	Dismissal

Team

9:00 Return to Host Family

Grade School Mission

The Grade school mission that *Totus Tuus* provides is designed for children going into first through sixth grades for the 2026-2027 school year. The missionaries lead the day by teaching four scheduled classes, helping with Mass preparations, teaching liturgical songs and responses, participating in games, icebreakers, skits, leading songs, participating in recess, teaching and leading prayer and countless other things that arise. The week finishes on Friday afternoon with a water fight and other fun activities.

2026 Grade School Curriculum – will be updated by December 2025

Theme: The Ten Commandments

Mysteries: Luminous Mysteries

Monday

- Session #1 The Annunciation
- Session #2 Introduction to the Sacraments
- Session #3 Baptism: Out with the Old, in with the New
- Session #4 Confirmation: Sealed with the Holy Spirit

Tuesday

- Session #1 The Visitation
- Session #2 The Holy Eucharist: Our Source and Summit
- Session #3 The Holy Eucharist: Festive Joy and Inexhaustible Riches
- Session #4 Anointing of the Sick: Christ's Touch of Compassion

Wednesday

- Session #1 The Nativity
- Session #2 Anointing of the Sick: Christ's Touch of Compassion
- Session #3 Ocean of Mercy: The Effects of Reconciliation
- Session #4 Marriage: Mirror of the Trinity

Thursday

- Session #1 The Presentation
- Session #2 Holy Orders: In Persona Christi
- Session #3 Successors to the Apostles: The Pope and Bishops
- Session #4 Saints and Sacraments: Living the Catholic Faith

Friday

- Session #1 Finding of Jesus in the Temple
- Session #2 Our Mission to Serve: Stewardship and Vocations

Grade School Program

The Totus Tuus Grade School Program is designed for children entering first through sixth grades in the upcoming school year. The Grade School program begins on Monday and concludes on Friday.

Facilities

The team requests one large hall or room for their main assemblies. (This same room can be used as a lunchroom, if necessary.) It is helpful to provide a microphone for the team. All participants will begin in this room each morning and will conclude here each afternoon. You may want to obtain a large tent to have lunch and snack outside.

The size of the student body and number of teams assigned to each parish will determine how many classrooms are needed. For one team, this will mean having four classrooms available for use; for two teams, up to eight classrooms, etc. The team will generally use one of these as a “teacher’s space” for their supplies and afternoon meetings. Each classroom should have a chalkboard or a dry-erase board. For the 1st and 2nd grade classroom, it is ideal to have a large enough room to have some empty space near the board for the children to gather on the floor, as well as tables set up with chairs for their activities. Team members will set up the rooms. Younger children need crayons and/or markers, dry erase markers, paper, and cardstock. It is very important that the church be available for Mass and confession every day.

Lunch/Snacks/Recess

Totus Tuus infuses catechetical instruction with authenticity and fun! We balance time inside and outside of a “classroom setting.” Therefore, we have a short bathroom break in the morning, recess and “cool down” after lunch, and a snack break in the morning. We ask the parish to provide drinks throughout the day. Water is a necessity, but we also encourage other drinks such as lemonade or Kool-Aid. The children will need drinks set out for them three times during the day: during snack break (9:50 a.m.), at lunch (12:00 p.m.), and after recess (1:15 p.m.). We ask that volunteers have the snacks and drinks ready five minutes before each break.

We also ask that the parish provide snacks (crackers, fruit, veggies, granola bars, trail mix) for the snack break. The children should be asked to bring sack lunches, but drinks may need to be prepared. Some parishes choose to provide lunch for the children, especially on Friday afternoon. The choice is yours, but please be clear so parents know what to expect. Recess follows lunch. The team will participate in recess with the children but may choose to take lunchtime away from the children. Volunteers are needed to supervise recess.

Mass and Confession

It is in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works most fully for the redemption and sanctification of all mankind. We realize that Totus Tuus asks a lot of our priests

who are already very busy, and for their presence and participation in the program, we are extremely grateful. We have found over the years that celebrating and participating in the sacraments on such an intimate level has a tremendous impact on children. We strive to help the children participate fully and actively in the liturgy and consider this an integral part of our program. It is the responsibility of the parish coordinator to arrange the liturgical and sacramental events with the priest.

Since the Eucharist is the source and the summit of the Christian life, Totus Tuus encourages the daily celebration of Holy Mass at 11:15 a.m. We also suggest that opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation be made available before Mass, beginning at 10:45 am, but this is optional. This schedule can be adapted if necessary to meet the needs and special circumstances of your parish. If you would like to discuss alternative schedules, please work with your team.

The youth will participate at Mass by serving, bringing up the offertory gifts and proclaiming the readings and petitions. Totus Tuus team members will lead the children in a few songs during Mass; therefore, it is not necessary to ask the music director or choristers to be there.

The team will prepare the children for Mass and Confession, and they will practice the songs as well. The children will be expected to behave during Mass and at all times during the week. Their Friday afternoon fun depends on it! Please provide a list of Prayers of the Faithful for each daily Mass. These can be generic or specific to the Totus Tuus week. If a priest is unable to preside at and/or secure a replacement for the Mass at any point during the week, the team will take the children to church to pray the Rosary, Mid-day Prayer, or the Stations of the Cross.

Friday Afternoon

On Friday, the usual schedule is followed through lunch, but then it is modified to allow for “fun time” in the afternoon. Students still bring their lunches, or some parishes like to take this opportunity to have a “cook out” (usually hot dogs and chips). After lunch there will be no formal classes.

Friday afternoon’s festivities can be held in a nearby park or recreation area, or just in a large, open area on your church grounds. (Please keep in mind that water events held in a parking lot or another hard, paved surface, may increase the risk of children getting hurt). During these water games will be a water-balloon toss and a “water fight” for which students can bring water guns, squirt bottles, buckets, etc. The team may provide the water balloons, but plan to purchase additional easy fill, self-sealing balloons. By about 2:20 p.m., the water fight ends and students help the team clean up the area.

We encourage all parishes to create a “human sundae” where the children select their favorite missionary and then pour sundae toppings on him or her. The parish is asked to provide water hoses and wading pools or a tubs to hold water. Parishes may also choose to provide popsicles, ice cream, or other treats at the conclusion of Friday afternoon. Some parishes ask the local fire department to send a truck and join in the water fight. This adds a considerable amount of water (and fun) but is completely optional. Parents should be warned that children will be wet and possibly dirty when they are picked up. Please recommend that the students come wearing something that can get messy; they will not be allowed to change clothes. The team will talk to

the children about Friday afternoon at the close of the day on Thursday, giving them the rules of the day, what to bring for the water games, and what to wear. The day is closed, as is every day, with song and prayer.

Suggested Volunteers

Position	Day	Time	# Volunteers	Notes
Host Families	Sat-Sat	All day	2	1 for females; 1 for males; Friday night may or may not be needed; best if hand-picked by Fr or staff
Coordinator	Sun-Fri	Entire time children on site	1	One person needs to be present during all of Totus Tuus, leading the
Registration	Monday	8:15-9:15 am	1-2	Coordinator may need help with eve registration Sunday @ 6:15 to 7:15
Check in/Check out - Eve	Sun-Thurs	6:45 pm and 9:00 pm	1	Responsible adult must check in students and check them out -- missionaries are not responsible for this! Good job for coordinator
Check-in/Check-out - Day	Mon-Fri	8:45 am and 2:30 pm	1	See note for eve check-in/check-out
Classroom Support	Mon-Fri	8:45 am - 2:45 pm	3-6	1/classroom; Obtain 2/classroom if >25 children or if any children present need 1 on 1
Serve Snack & Clean up	Mon-Fri	9:30-10:15 am	1	
Assist w/ lunch & Recess	Mon-Fri	11:45 am - 1 pm	1-2	
Provide lunch for missionaries	Sun-Fri	11:45 am - 12 pm	1	Bring four lunches to parish ready to eat at 12
Provide dinner for missionaries	Sun-Fri	5-6:30 pm	1	Encouraged to invite missionaries to volunteer home
Grill and Serve Lunch	Friday	11:30 am - 12:30 pm	2	Optional
Water Balloon	Friday	lunchtime ish	1	Fill hundreds of water balloons -- store in tubs
Friday Fun	Friday	12:45 - 2:30 pm	2	Help with various afternoon activities
Total Needed			15-20	

Classroom support volunteers will need to plan to help with classroom management and behavior. It is important to create an environment in which the missionaries are empowered to teach and present their materials. It is challenging for the young missionaries to also manage classroom behavior. Also, it may be tempting for experienced adult volunteers to want to help 'teach,' but they should leave that solely to the missionaries, unless asked for assistance.

Totus Tuus Junior and Senior High School Mission

Totus Tuus offers evening instruction for junior and senior high school youth (grades 7-12). The *Totus Tuus* High School Mission includes instruction, small group discussions, quiet meditation, prayer, and fellowship. The team teaches in such a way as to continually offer a dialogue - in which each person feels respected in his or her most basic dignity.

2026 High School Curriculum – will be updated by December 2025

DOL Totus Tuus Evening Program Schedule

Sunday

6:30 PM Welcome/Divide Into Teams/Team Names/Explain Points
6:45 PM Games
7:00 PM Talk: “Be Open.”
7:30 PM Team Discussion Time
8:00 PM (Snack break and/or relational ministry)
8:15 PM Night Prayer (Compline)
8:30 PM Depart

Monday

6:30 PM Welcome
6:45 PM Games
7:00 PM Talk: “Rules or Relationship?”
7:55 PM Team Discussion Time
8:00 PM (Snack break and/or relational ministry)
8:15 PM Night Prayer (Compline)
8:30 PM Depart

Tuesday

6:30 PM Welcome
6:45 PM Talk: “Encountering Jesus.” (Confession and Adoration)
7:00 PM Adoration and Confession
7:30 PM Commitment Invitation at

Adoration/Benediction

7:45 PM Team Discussion Time
8:00 PM (Snack break and/or relational ministry)
8:15 PM Night Prayer (Compline)
8:30 PM Depart

Wednesday

6:30 PM Welcome
6:45 PM Talk: “God’s Life and Yours: Grace and the Sacraments”
7:00 PM Team Discussion Time
7:30 PM Final Team Games/Obstacle Course/(Awards)
8:00 PM (Snack break and/or relational ministry)
8:15 PM Night Prayer (Compline)
8:30 PM Depart

Thursday

6:30 PM Welcome/Drive to Offsite Activity/Prepare for On/site Activity (Chosen by the parish)
6:30 PM Have FUN (Dinner included)
8:15 PM Night Prayer (Compline)
8:30 PM Depart

The evening mission runs from 6:30 pm-8:30 pm Sunday through Thursday. On Tuesday evening, the youth experience adoring Christ face to face during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. During the same time, each youth is afforded the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

Thursday evening is designated for fun and relational ministry. The missionaries are prepared to lead fun games. Some examples for Thursday night fun are Pillow Hockey, Gaga-ball tournament, Jeopardy or Trivia, and Shaving Cream Whiffle Ball. Some parishes make prior arrangements for Thursday evening activities to take place at an alternative location. Note regarding Off Site Events: Any off-site event (if desired by the parish) requires prior planning with, and notification to, the Totus Tuus representative and missionaries prior to the dates of the program. All off-site events require parental consent permission slips, the appropriate number of qualified chaperone (1 adult per 8 student ratio), and transportation which must be arranged by the parish coordinator. Totus Tuus representatives and missionaries will not drive participants. The parish coordinator will ensure that all chaperones are VIRTUS certified and are at least 21 years of age. Appropriate transportation will be arranged by the parish coordinator and includes cars, mini-vans, or buses; 11-15 passenger vans are not allowed. The parish coordinator will see to it that drivers are at least 25 years of age and have good driving records and current insurance coverage.

Facilities

Similar to the Grade School Program, the team needs one large hall or room for their main assemblies and outdoor space for fun games. If the group is large, it would be helpful to provide a microphone for the team. If this is a smaller group, a youth room is fine. The size of the student body and number of missionaries assigned to each parish will determine how much classroom space is needed. Generally, the team will need two classrooms available for use. The church needs to be available for Adoration and Confessions one evening of the week, preferably Tuesday. This is flexible based on the availability of your priest.

Promotion

Adequate promotion is necessary for a successful week. Consider using your parish's website, bulletin and social media to let parents and children know when Totus Tuus will be at your parish.

Use of Logo and Theme Art

We're happy to send you files of our Totus Tuus Marian logo to use on your website, in your bulletin, and in any other promotions for Totus Tuus. To obtain JPEGs or Adobe Illustrator files, please email Margie Sauter at margies@sjypsi.com. All we ask is that you do not alter the logos/art in any way.

Poster

Margie Sauter can also provide a generic poster design for all parishes to edit and print on their own. You can add your parish's date and local information and print as many as you want.

Volunteer Sign Up Genius

If you would like to receive a volunteer sign up Genius from St. Joseph, please contact Margie Sauter margies@sjypsi.com and we will be happy to share with you our version. You will then be able to alter it as needed for your parish.

Google Sign Up

We can also share with you our version of an online registration form. We use a google form for registration. Just be sure to make a copy before you edit the form.

T-Shirts

We will not selling t-shirts this year for the diocese. We encourage your parish to provide t-shirts for your participants which can be a unifying experience for those attending as well as good advertisement for our program. We (St Joseph Catholic Church) will be designing a t-shirt for the 2026 TT theme of the 10 Commandments and Luminous Mysteries. We would be happy to share our artwork with you (available by January of 2026).

Parish Involvement

The focus of the Totus Tuus program is obviously on the youth of your parish; however, the entire parish can be involved. We have already mentioned the need for volunteers to help during the day program and host families to house and feed the team(s) during the week. *See list below of the specific volunteer needs.

Intercessors

While the team is at your parish, and even before they arrive, we recommend recruiting intercessors to pray for and provide spiritual assistance to the team, the youth, the coordinators and volunteers, and the pastor of your parish. This is a great way to involve parishioners who don't have school-aged children attending Totus Tuus.

Ask the regular Adorers, daily Mass goers, members of the Altar Society, the Knights of Columbus, or the Rosary Guild—really anyone you can think of—to commit to daily or weekly prayer for the team, the participants, and the program. They can pray in whatever way they like: offer Masses, Holy hours, Rosaries, Chaplets; intercede with petitionary prayer; recite the traditional memorized prayers; offer a day of fasting—the possibilities are as numerous as your parishioners.

