

**Do you hear  
GOD ASKING QUESTIONS?**

*Do you want to be MORE?*

*Do you want to give MORE?*

*Is your heart searching for MORE?*

*Do you have a desire to be with others  
who feel the same?*

*Do you believe we can do more together  
than alone?*



Participants in the U.S. Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph Novitiate Program



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**Are you ready for MORE?**

If, in your heart, you feel compelled to consider religious life . . . if the thoughts keep coming back and cause you to wonder... these may be signs that you're looking to share in the journey.

If you have a question or if you would like more information, please contact

Vocation Ministry  
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Connecting with God + Connecting with You

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*As Sisters of St. Joseph, we strive to embody a vision of all people united in one earth community of love, unity and reconciliation. We do this through collaborative programs, interaction, prayer and ministry. In our conflicted 21st century world, the Sisters of St. Joseph seek to bring our traditions and vision to life in a way that will speak to our contemporary society and be a positive influence for change.*



Connecting with God + Connecting with You

Connecting with God,  
Connecting with You.

**In Relationship With Each Other**

We choose to live in community in order to share faith, love and mission.\*



**In Relationship with God**

Personal and communal prayer is a sustaining and unifying force in our lives which leads us to a great love of God and neighbor.\*

**In Relationship with the PEOPLE of God**

Moving toward fullness of grace, the Sister of St. Joseph commits herself to constant response to the ever changing needs of the world.

We are part of a group of vowed women who have been serving the people of God, the "dear neighbor," since our founding in Le Puy-en-Velay, France in 1650. In 1836, our Sisters came to the United States and eventually found their way to Northwestern Pennsylvania in 1860. Since then, we have served in the 13 counties of the Erie, Pennsylvania Diocese and have ministered in numerous foreign lands. We remain an active presence today --within the Diocese and beyond --with some of our Sisters living and ministering in other parts of the United States.



*\*From the Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania.*

I'm ready for MORE ...  
What STEPS do I take?

**Pre-Entrance**

While living independently, you are introduced to our charism, prayer and ministries. Discerning your call to religious life, you explore where the Spirit may be leading you.

**Pre-Novitiate**

During this time, you will share community living and prayer with a group of Sisters for a period of nine months to two years while continuing to discern your call.

**Novitiate**

As a novice, you live in a formation house for two years. With direction, you continue to discern while growing in love of Scripture and the Gospel counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience and increasing your knowledge of our spirituality and history. You begin to integrate fully all aspects of SSJ community life and ministry. At the completion of your novitiate, you commit to vowed life for one year.



**Temporary Commitment**

During this time of deepening integration, you live inter-dependently in community, share faith and deepen your relationship with Jesus through prayer, study, and varied apostolic ministry experiences. This process continues for 3-6 years as you continue to discern and assess your ability to live as a vowed member of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Frequently asked  
QUESTIONS

**Q. Do you have to be Catholic to be a Sister?**

Yes, you must be a baptized Catholic in order to be a vowed member of a religious community.

**Q. How long does it take to become a Sister?**

There are three stages of initial formation; the entire process takes a minimum of six years. As Sisters of St. Joseph, we commit ourselves to a lifelong process of formation and learning.

**Q. What is the hardest thing about becoming a Sister?**

Probably the change in lifestyle. It's not easy to leave your home and possibly your place of employment to begin something new.

**Q. Do you go to school to become a Sister?**

You will attend workshops and participate in a common novitiate program with women from around the country who live together for a year to learn our charism, spirituality, prayer, history and other topics necessary for formation and growth.

**Q. Why don't you wear a habit?**

When we began in 1650 France, it was unacceptable for a woman to appear in public without a male escort unless she was a widow in mourning. In order to minister to the dear neighbor, our Sisters dressed as widows. Clothing customs changed over time, but our Sister's dress did not -- it became their habit. After extensive research into our roots, we discovered that we were to dress in the manner of the people we serve and so we do.

