



# SAINT PAUL

## PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION

**FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026-2027**



**Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church**

**Parish School of Religion**

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Paul's Religious Education Program for the 2026-2027 school year. We are looking forward to a successful and exciting year! Our goal each year is to provide our students with an enriching religious education experience ... one they can carry forward and share with others in their daily lives. This handbook includes guidelines designed to make this a rewarding year for you as parents, for us as educators, and most importantly, for your children. Your support is vital to the success of this program, and it is appreciated! We can work together to share our faith with the future of our Church - our children!

God Bless You!

St. Paul Parish School of Religion Staff

## **ST. PAUL PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION**

Saint Paul the Apostle Parish School of Religion (PSR) provides religious instruction (catechesis), formation, and sacramental preparation for children attending public or non-Catholic private schools. With the help of adult and teen volunteers, we serve more than 400 children each year. Our materials, methods, and practices follow the Graded Course of Study issued by the Diocese of Columbus and approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

By the promises you made as parents at your children's Baptism, you are the primary religious educators in your families. In the rite of Baptism, parents receive a call from God to evangelize their children, as summarized: "You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so, you accept the responsibility of training him (her) in practicing faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us by loving God and our neighbor...You will be your child's first teacher in the ways of the faith. May you also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what you say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord." The Church understands the home to be the domestic Church. In the intimate environment of the family, parents are, by word and example, the first teachers of the faith for their children. This environment is enhanced and deepened by the parish, which is at the heart of families' spiritual life. PSR exists to support you in this vital work, and we are privileged to partner with you and your family.

With the support of others, we provide the children and youth of our parish with a nurturing environment where they can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ and as missionary disciples. A student's attitude toward Mass, the Sacraments, prayer, community service, and commitment to Jesus grows from your example and everyday family experiences. In the few hours we have at PSR, we hope to spark interest and enthusiasm that you can further develop and nourish at home. As members of the parish community, families are asked to:

1. Attend Mass and pray regularly as a family.
2. Encourage prompt and regular attendance at each PSR Session.
3. Share faith experiences with your child/ren.
4. Actively participate in your child(ren)'s formal religious education.
5. Review what your son or daughter is learning in their PSR class.
6. Attend planned parent functions related to the Religious Education Program and sacramental preparation.
7. Volunteer your services if possible. Our volunteer Catechists recognize Jesus Christ as central to their lives and value the community experience of faith.

This Family Handbook outlines the policies, guidelines, and procedures designed to help us achieve our goal of providing quality religious education in a safe environment. By registering for PSR, you acknowledge these policies and, by understanding them, help us in our ongoing ministry to our students and their families.

## **Religious Education as a Priority**

PSR helps parents fulfill their Baptismal responsibility as “first educators” of their children in the Catholic faith. This includes parents who choose extracurricular programs for their children that may occasionally conflict with PSR class sessions. Parents are strongly urged to review our Attendance Policy and exercise sound judgment when planning their children’s schedules.

If outside activities will create a known conflict, parents are encouraged to contact the PSR Office to discuss options for completing PSR for the current year at St. Paul. A family should never feel they must leave their parish to have their religious education needs met, and, if possible, a mutually beneficial solution will be sought.

## **Child/Parent PSR Activities**

At times, there will be child/parent or child/sacramental sponsor activities, prayer opportunities, and more – particularly if your child will be involved in sacramental preparation for First Communion or Confirmation during the year. These sessions are part of the PSR program, and attendance is expected. Information about these activities will appear in the PSR weekly newsletter and/or in flyers sent home. As much as possible, these events will also be included in the PSR schedule at the start of each school year.

## **General Expectations**

- Each family becomes actively involved in the St. Paul Religious Education Program and Parish to model a living, conscious, and active Christian faith.
- The family reinforces the values and beliefs of the Catholic faith through regular attendance at a weekend Mass.
- The parent agrees to do all they can to encourage their children to act in accordance with Gospel values.
- Appropriate behavior and common respect are expected of each child.

## **PSR CLASSES**

Parents register their child(ren) for one of the following class sessions for the school year:

- Wednesday 4:45pm-6:00pm for Grades K-8
- Wednesday 6:45pm-8:00pm for Grades K-8, First Communion Sacrament Prep Class
- Wednesday 7:00pm-7:45pm for Special Needs Parent/Child Class
- Sunday 3:30pm-4:45pm for Grades 7 & 8 only
- Home Study Weekly lessons completed at home for Grades 1 and 3-6 only

PSR for younger students incorporates a variety of learning styles, including classroom prayer, discussion, hands-on activities and games, and music (both formal and informal). PSR for older students incorporates a community-building approach to learning, including small-group prayer and discussion, service opportunities, guest speakers, and clergy involvement.

We are committed to partnering with parents and guardians to build households where faith is shared and lived with vigor. Our goal is to provide a place where our students learn to live and understand their faith, experience Catholic identity, integrate Catholic values, and express Catholic beliefs.

At-home activities and assignments may be required of students at various times throughout the year. These activities will help the child and parents internalize the religious education they have received, so it becomes “faith formation.” The parent is expected to ensure that the child completes each at-home assignment and brings it to the Religious Education session.

## **PSR for Students with Special Needs**

**Wednesdays: 7:00pm-7:45pm, multi-age**

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) stated in 1995, “By reason of their baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity in the sight of God and have the same divine calling.” We strive to provide appropriate classroom-based religious education for all students, regardless of abilities or needs, and to work with families to place all students in our classes.

A Special Needs class for children is available during the Wednesday session. A parent/guardian or other relative accompanies the student at class. This is a multi-age class for students who need more one on one support than can be provided in our typical PSR classes of 15-20 students. A variety of materials and resources are included, and accommodations are made for the students as needed. Please contact the PSR Staff with any questions about the Special Needs Class PSR classes for those with a current IEP (Individual Education Plan) in their school system.

## **PSR Home Study Program**

**Grades 1 and 3-6**

A home study option is available to students in grades 1 and 3-6. Students will complete lessons at home and submit assignments when required. Students opting for home study may also have additional activities for families to complete throughout the year. During the year, students will be invited to attend special activities such as Masses, reconciliation, service opportunities, Stations of the Cross, and prayer services.

## **Sacramental Preparation**

### ***First Reconciliation and First Communion in Grade 2***

- A child must complete 2 consecutive years of religious education in grades one and two before receiving the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in grade two.
- If a child has completed the first year of preparation at a Catholic school or other Catholic religious education program, a letter of verification from the school or parish is required.
- A parent must participate in all required activities related to sacramental preparation during the preparation year.

### ***First Reconciliation and First Communion after Grade 2***

- Students who are baptized but have not yet received First Communion by Grade 3 will be enrolled in a class that focuses intensively on the Sacraments, Church history, and the Saints.
- This class is recommended for students who have never received formal religious formation, as well as those converting from another faith tradition.
- A parent must participate in all required activities related to sacramental preparation during the preparation year.

## **Confirmation**

- Students must have received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion.
- Seventh and eighth graders will prepare for and be confirmed during the 2026-2027 school year.
- The consecutive 2 year religious education requirement for Confirmation is being waived for the 2026-2027 school year.
- High school students during the 2026-2027 school year wanting to receive the Sacrament must register for and attend an eighth-grade Confirmation preparation class.

Students preparing for a Sacrament must attend classes regularly, complete all assignments, and participate fully in the program. For students with excessive absences or missing assignments, a conference among the director, catechist, parent, and child, as appropriate, will be required to assess the student's readiness to receive the Sacrament. Parent involvement is integral to the success of sacramental preparation programs.

There will be formal parent meetings each sacramental year; one parent must attend, and both parents are strongly encouraged to attend. The parent meetings will provide more detailed guidelines and expectations for students preparing for First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.

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## **Registration**

Families may register for PSR by accessing the online registration site at <https://stpaccpsr.faitheenroll.net/>

### **Tuition Rate per Student**

- Before June 5, 2026: **\$200**
- On or after June 5, 2026: **\$225**
- Additional Sacrament Fee for Grades 2, 7, 8 and Sacrament Prep Class: **\$20**

*There is a family cap of \$600.00, which does not include the Sacramental Preparation fee for grades 2, 7, 8 and the First Communion Sacrament Prep class.*

### **Deadline for registration is September 1, 2026.**

No family will be denied participation in PSR classes due to financial reasons. Contact the PSR office to arrange payment or request financial assistance.

Volunteers who commit to serving weekly as catechists (teachers) and childcare workers have their tuition waived. Classroom aides, hall monitors, and flex volunteers will pay \$80 per student.

Prompt registration for classes is critical to secure a desired session and ensure we have sufficient volunteers. Registration is first-come, first-served.

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## **Food Allergy/Sensitivity Issues**

PSR students' known or diagnosed food allergies and/or dietary restrictions should be noted in the Medical Section of the student's PSR Registration Form.

Due to allergies and food safety concerns, food is not permitted in our classrooms. Many students with life-threatening allergies use these classrooms throughout the day; for this reason, we ask that you not bring any treats or snacks. Occasionally, food may be served in other locations on the St. Paul campus.

If a PSR student preparing for a Sacrament has a food allergy and/or there are concerns about contact with the physical components of Sacraments (water, wine, unleavened whole wheat bread, perfumed oil), the PSR Office should be notified as soon as possible. PSR staff will work with parents to accommodate a student's needs. Severe allergies may warrant receiving the Sacraments in an acceptable alternative format or at an alternative date/time.

## **Attendance Policy**

Our parish allows children to attend PSR each year to support the Baptismal responsibility parents bear as first teachers of the Catholic Faith to their children. Because our curriculum uses a spiral scope and sequence, students engage in age-appropriate coursework each year as part of their ongoing Religious Education. In classes that prepare for the reception of Sacraments (Grades 2 and 8), regular attendance ensures the success of class-based communication, group discussion, reflection, and community-focused action. Most of our students make this progress year after year, and the benefits testify to the faith lives of the families in our parish community.

If a student must be absent from PSR class, parents are asked to email the PSR Office at [PSRattendance@gmail.com](mailto:PSRattendance@gmail.com) with the student's name, grade, classroom number, and reason for the absence. The student should then submit the work covered in the missed class before the next scheduled class ends. Each student receives a Class Syllabus at the beginning of the school year to track topics, complete missing assignments at home, and assess progress throughout the year.

## **Assignments and Homework**

Students may be asked periodically to complete an activity or assignment outside of class to help them grow in faith. Please help ensure these assignments are completed and support their learning by reviewing the assignments with them whenever possible.

## **Cell Phones**

The child's use of cell phones and other electronic devices is not permitted during PSR unless directed by the Catechist as part of the educational process. Cell phones brought into the Religious Education session should be turned off. Children who need to contact a parent must ask the Catechist's permission to go to the school office to place the call.

## **Dress Code**

Dress during PSR classes should be appropriate and respectful. When students go to church, they should wear proper clothing. Students should not wear low-cut blouses, midriff-baring tops, short shorts, or shirts with inappropriate words or graphics, nor should they wear hoods or hats.

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# **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES, GRADES K - 8**

## **Parking**

Parking lots are across the street from the School on Moss Road, by Miller Hall in front of the Parish Office, and on the west side of the school building near the Church.

To provide the safest environment possible for our families, we ask the following:

- Please note that handicapped parking is assigned in these areas. Do not park in these designated spots unless you have a state-issued permit and display the permit placard when parking.
- Local fire regulations prohibit parking in the road in front of the School. Traffic must be kept moving on these roads during dismissals.
- **Parking along any part of Moss Road, on Thompson Road, or in the Rectory driveway is prohibited during PSR classes.**

## **Entrances and Exits to the School Building**

- The front door (by the flagpole)
- The doors in the glass hallway between Miller Hall and the school building
- The west door of the school by the Rectory

These doors will open 15 minutes before class begins. The doors at the west bus loop, leading to the Klinger Center, are for students or parents with mobility issues only.

## **Arrival**

Students enter through the doors listed above. Please check in with the Hall Monitor at the central table (between the School Office and the Gym) if you arrive after the start of class.

## **Dismissal**

To maintain a safe flow of traffic for children and families, all students must be picked up from their assigned classrooms by a parent or another authorized adult. Please park your car and enter the School building through the doors listed above.

Catechists and Classroom Aides will monitor when each student leaves a classroom. Each student must have an authorized adult sign them out after each class. Authorized adults can be listed on the student's registration.

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## **Inclement Weather/Cancellation of Classes**

If St. Paul School has cancelled or dismissed early for the day due to weather, all PSR classes will be cancelled. A text message and email message will be sent when classes are canceled. In the unlikely event that classes must be canceled for any other reason (electricity, plumbing, etc.), text messages and emails will be sent to parents. Always check messages before the start of class.

## **School Safety**

St. Paul PSR seeks to provide a safe learning environment for all students. We strive to create an environment where students can learn, and our catechists can teach safely and effectively. Volunteers are trained, and preparatory drills are conducted during PSR class time throughout the year. Parents can expect that when their child is in PSR class, students will be treated with respect and care. Our goal as a Catholic community is to reflect Gospel values.

## **Student Conduct**

Catechists encourage students by setting a Christian example and using positive reinforcement. No catechist volunteer is expected to handle behavior that is un-Christian or not conducive to learning. Please help us by discussing the importance of a positive, Christian learning environment.

If a student exhibits a behavioral problem (e.g., excessive talking, off-task behavior, inappropriate comments or actions), the catechist will address it in the classroom. If the problem persists, the PSR Office will contact the student's parents. If the behavior continues to disrupt the classroom, a meeting with the parents and the Director of Religious Education will be scheduled.

If a student exhibits a significant behavioral problem (e.g., bullying, verbal or mental abuse), the PSR Office will notify the student's parents immediately. Depending on the severity, a plan to address the behavior, including a meeting or removal from the classroom, will be established.

Basic and effective classroom rules also exist in the PSR classroom:

1. This classroom/activity is a safe place. Violence/bullying is never tolerated.
2. When a Catechist or Classroom Aide speaks, everyone listens.
3. Respect is shown to everyone.
4. Inappropriate language is never tolerated.

## **Transferring from/to Another Parish**

Students who have attended another Catholic parish program and registered for PSR at St. Paul must provide documentation from their former parish to verify prior religious education, which will be credited to them. Those permitted to transfer into PSR during the year will have their tuition prorated.

Religious Education credit will be granted only for work that follows a Graded Course of Study (a curriculum recognized by the student's former diocese, the Diocese of Columbus, and the student's former parish). PSR cannot accept prior work that does not meet the standards of the Diocese of Columbus Department of Religious Education and Catechesis. Students registering at another PSR may request documentation from this Office for prior work, which will be sent to that program's Director.

## **Diocese of Columbus Harassment Policy**

1. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any parish activity, and/or can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or even at programs sponsored by the parish at other locations. It does not include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability or other protected characteristics.
2. It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a spiritually enriching environment in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No participant, volunteer adult leader, or parish staff member – male or female – should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical.
3. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions;
  - b. Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender-based nature;
  - c. Explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his or her appearance;
  - d. The display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures or objects;
  - e. Any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex;
  - f. Graffiti of a sexual nature;
  - g. Fondling oneself sexually or talking about sexual activity in front of others;
  - h. Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.
- i. Sexual harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature – it also includes harassment that is based on gender. Gender-based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex-based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or behaviors which are based upon race, color, age, religion, disability, or national origin. In short, working relationships between employees and volunteers must be based on mutual respect.
- j. Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or other action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission to unwelcome sexual activity will have any effect on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, program evaluation, participation in parish programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or achievement.
- k. Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a coach hugging a student after an accomplishment, a youth minister consoling an adolescent with an injury or physical conduct during athletic events would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.
4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a parish employee, volunteer, youth participant, or visitor to the parish activity.
  5. Any person who believes that he/she is subject to unlawful harassment or intimidation must contact the (a) program administrator (b) pastor, or (c) diocesan director of religious education. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a director of religious education, or a pastor, the individual may file the complaint with the diocesan director of religious education. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.
  6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any program administrator, volunteer, or staff engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of services.
  7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. The Diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

# ST PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH CAMPUS MAP

← Parish Athletic Fields  
(located a few hundred feet west  
of the parish on Moss Road)

