



**St. Paul the Apostle  
Parish  
Religious Education  
Family Handbook**

***Grades K-8***

## Introduction

As parents/guardians, you have the awesome responsibility of teaching your child many things in life. This is especially true for the ways of the Catholic faith. Remember the promise you agreed to at your child's Baptism, "You are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the 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." This is further supported in the Catechism, "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* - #2223). As well, it is offered that "Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years" (Catechism - #2226). They have a unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators, or catechists. They catechize primarily by the witness of the Christian lives and by their love for the faith" (*National Directory for Catechesis*, pg. 234).

As a parent, you catechize your child primarily through your lived experiences of the faith that he or she witnesses and through conversations often brought about by specific occasions. By providing a structured presentation of the basics of Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic faith, the parish Religious Education program helps to support you in your role as the primary catechists of your household, especially your children. When your child experiences times of lived faith in the home, it supports what he/she is learning at St. Paul's and it becomes deeply meaningful and lasts a lifetime.

The systematic presentation of the faith in a community setting necessitates certain policies and guidelines to ensure a smooth program operation. St. Paul the Apostle Parish's policies and guidelines are contained in these few pages. Please read them over and use them as a reference throughout the catechetical year.

## **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's participation in our program, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss your questions or concerns.

## **Parish Office Hours**

Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

### **Personnel**

Mr. Al Pompeo  
CRE

330-542-3466  
[albert.pompeo@gmail.com](mailto:albert.pompeo@gmail.com)

Mrs. Joann Yaskulka  
Religious Education Sec.

330-542-3824  
[joanny@zoominternet.net](mailto:joanny@zoominternet.net)

### **Social Media**

Facebook: St Paul the Apostle Church

**Website:** [www.stpaulnewmiddletown.org](http://www.stpaulnewmiddletown.org)

## **Hours**

Our TRE classes are from 9:15 to 10:45 am on scheduled Sundays. Throughout the year, there will be **six** parent sessions that you are to attend at the same class time as your child. Please consult the TRE schedule for specific class times for children and adults. Class times are designed to allow you the flexibility to attend TRE after the 8:00 am Mass or before the 11:00 am Mass.

### **During Religious Education Hours**

If you have an emergency, please use the Religious Education extension on the school phone line (330-542-3824).

## **Communications Regarding Religious Education**

### **Website**

**[www.stpaulnewmiddletown.org](http://www.stpaulnewmiddletown.org)**. This is a new website to our parish. We are working on updated information and availability of forms that are easy for you to use. Come back often to see what new information is on our website.

## **Parish Bulletin**

Weekly parish bulletins are an important source of information about our Religious Education programs for children and youth. A calendar of events for the upcoming month is included as a flier in a bulletin near the end of the present month.

## **Calendar**

A yearly Religious Education calendar is distributed to each family at the beginning of the catechetical year in September and will also be available on the parish website. Updates and information about special events will be sent home as needed. Please keep the calendar for reference throughout the year.

## **Emergencies**

In the case of emergencies, please call the TRE office. Call the rectory if you know of any emergencies prior to Sunday classes.



## Curriculum

### **Purpose and Guidelines**

The goal and purpose of all catechesis is to support parents in their task of forming their children into disciples of Jesus Christ and life-long active members of His Church. The Religious Education program of the parish attempts to propose the beliefs of the Catholic faith in a comprehensive and systematic way by following the Diocese of Youngstown's "Curriculum for Catechesis," which is available upon request for parental review by contacting the Coordinator of Religious Education at 330-542-3466.

### **Textbooks**

Students in Kindergarten through Eighth Grade use the "*We Believe*" series published by Sadlier, a division of William H. Sadlier, Inc.

## Sacrament Years and Records

### **Baptismal Certificates**

If your child was not Baptized at St. Paul's, please contact the parish of Baptism and have a current copy mailed to the parish or deliver it directly when you register your child for our TRE classes. Also, if your child has completed First Communion at another parish, then a current certificate from the church where he/she received First Communion should be submitted to our parish. Students in Sacramental years may not receive their next Sacrament until St. Paul the Apostle Parish can verify their reception of the previous Sacrament. Please keep in mind that all

Sacramental records are kept on file at the parish where your child was Baptized as well as the parish where the Sacrament was received. If the parish where one or more of these Sacraments were received has closed or merged, please contact the Chancellor at the diocese at 330-744-8451 where the Sacraments were received to verify where the Sacramental record is located.

### **First Reconciliation and First Communion**

Second grade is the usual grade for children to receive these Sacraments. Children must attend Religious Education in First and Second grade in order to receive these Sacraments. ***Parent meetings, home preparation, and regular attendance at Religious Education are required.*** If your child was not Baptized in the Catholic Church, please inform us immediately so that we can facilitate his/her reception of these Sacraments with his/her class.

### **Confirmation**

Eighth grade is the usual grade for children to receive this Sacrament. Children must regularly attend Religious Education from first through eighth grades. Confirmation preparation will take place during scheduled Religious Education classes along with special sessions scheduled during the school year. Parents and sponsors will also be responsible for some of the child's Confirmation preparation.

### **Celebration of Sacraments**

Please remember to keep the Sacrament as the center of your celebration. As your child receives First Reconciliation and First Communion or Confirmation,

remember that receiving the Sacraments of the Church is entirely about your child's growth in faith and the relationship he/she shares with Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. Please keep these special days in the life of your son and daughter holy by showing reverence to the Sacrament being received. If you feel your child is not ready to receive a Sacrament, please call us. Families will receive information on meetings, home preparation, dress requirements, etc. ***Full and Active Participation*** is expected for Sacramental preparation programs. **Each child must be actively involved with their Faith formation through our TRE Program** (or another like programs at another Catholic Church) **for two full years before Sacraments can be administered.**

## **Program Policies and Guidelines**

### **General Policies and Guidelines**

#### **Sunday Worship**

Sunday Mass is a vital component of every Catholic's formation, whether they are children or adults. Weekly Mass attendance as a family is critical for effective faith development and community building. During religious education sessions, the children are being taught the importance of participating in the liturgy and need to have an opportunity to do this. **Our TRE classes are designed for families to attend either the 8:00 am Mass or the 11:00 am Mass after TRE.**



## **Home-based Catechesis**

Home-based Catechesis is offered for Grades 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, but only in cases of extreme circumstance. Opting for home-based catechesis as an option to allow your child to be able to participate in sporting, dance, or recreational types of events on a consistent basis is **NOT** allowable. Their faith education should come first before all else. Please contact the Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss if this is a viable option.

## **Child Protection Policy**

The Diocese of Youngstown and St. Paul the Apostle Parish take your child's safety seriously. The Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation screen each Catechist and Volunteer prior to beginning their ministry. As well, each of these individuals is required to attend the ***Diocesan Child Protection Class, "Virtus."*** Annually, a review of this policy is presented to our Catechists and Volunteers. If you would like a copy of the policy, visit [www.doy.org](http://www.doy.org) and click on "Child Protection Policy" in the purple box marked "Other Diocesan Pages."

## **Attendance**

Children are required to attend all sessions. Thank you in advance for your efforts to prioritize Religious Education amidst busy family schedules. When planning family trips, please check the calendar to see when classes are not in session.

## **Absences**

Occasionally, a child will be unable to attend due to sickness or for other reasons. If your child is absent

from Religious Education class, we will assume that you, as a parent, have determined that your child(ren) is/are unable to attend for a valid reason; you must call the Director with a reason. Such reason is to be called into the Religious Education office as soon as you are aware that your child(ren) will not be in attendance. Students are responsible for covering the material that they miss with their parents. Homework will be given to you to complete with your child. Completed homework is to be turned in to the Coordinator at the next class attended by the child. The Coordinator, not the teacher, will check and approve all homework. There should be no more than **four (4)** absences during the catechetical year. ***Because of the importance of our religious education, the child will not graduate to the next grade level after four unexcused absences.*** It will be your responsibility to communicate with the CRE and validate the absence.

### **Illness or Injury Outside of Religious Education**

If your child has an illness that could be contagious to his/her classmates or others, please do not send him or her to Religious Education. If your child will not be in attendance at Religious Education for an extended time due to illness or injury, please contact the Coordinator as soon as possible, and we will make arrangements for your child to remain current with his/her class. Homework will be given to you to complete with your child and should be returned as agreed upon with the Coordinator.

### **Medical**

Please notify the Coordinator of Religious Education about any special medical needs your child may have. This information will be made available to our TRE Secretary as well as the catechists.

## **Other**

Please notify the Coordinator of Religious Education of any other special needs or family emergencies for your child(ren) that we need to be aware of during TRE.

## **During Religious Education Classes**

### **Attire**

We ask that all children in grades K-8 come to Religious Education with clothing appropriate for a church setting. Specifically, no exposed midriffs or shoulders and no offensive t-shirts. Any type of "cleat" footwear or "heelys" (shoes with rollers on the bottom) are not permitted. These are not safe indoor shoes. A first conduct notice will be issued if your child attends Religious Education with the above footwear or clothing. Please remind your son or daughter to be respectful of the space we are using, whether it is the school, Church, parish hall, or grounds.

### **Arrival**

Please do not bring your children to class before 9:00 am. The majority of our catechists have jobs and families that prohibit them from arriving before the scheduled time. When arriving, parents with children in grades K-5 should walk their children to the classroom.

### **Tardy Arrival and Building Security**

Please make every effort for your child to arrive on time as tardiness is disruptive and causes the student to miss

important announcements. If your child arrives after TRE has begun, the building will be locked, and you will need to contact the Religious Education office to have him/her admitted.

### **Illness or Injury During Religious Education**

If your child is hurt or becomes ill, you or the emergency contact you have provided will be notified. For minor scrapes or cuts, we will give the child the necessary items to clean the wound and offer an adhesive strip. All injuries or illnesses will be documented. **Please inform us of changes in health or emergency contacts as soon as possible.**

### **Behavior and the Code of Conduct**

We expect all of the children in attendance to behave in a respectful manner toward all other students and toward all adults. It is understood that all parents and students have read and agree to the Code of Conduct for TRE, which details our discipline policy. Parents/guardians must sign a form that you have read and agreed that you and your child will abide by the Code of Conduct.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

All students' cell phones must be turned off (not merely put on silent) and put away during Total Religious Education classes, unless the catechists are using cell phones for research. The catechists are equipped to make a telephone call if there is an emergency. After classes are dismissed at the end of class, they may take out their cell phones, turn them on, and use them.

## **Early Dismissal**

If your child must leave early, a dated and signed note must be brought in that day. Your child may not leave the building until you come to the office to sign her or him out with our Religious Education Secretary. Children **will not** be permitted to wait in the parking lot for early dismissal.

## **Regular Dismissal**

For dismissal, each catechist will release their students at 10:45 am. There may be several times that the catechists will hold the students for a few minutes. It is necessary for parents and legal guardians to pick up their children in grades K-5 inside the school.

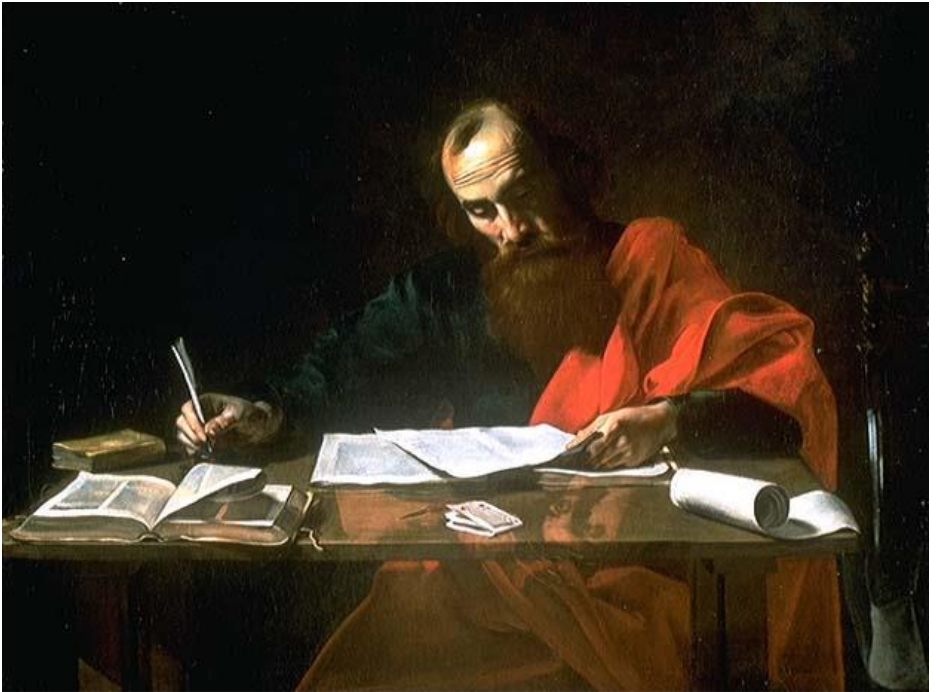
***Students will not be allowed to leave the building to meet a parent at a car.*** If you would like a student in grades K-5 to be dismissed with an older sibling, please send in a note explaining this.

## **Cancellation**

Please refer to WKBN and WFMJ websites to determine if classes will be cancelled due to inclement weather.

## **Conclusion**

We exist to help you catechize your family. Please do not hesitate to contact the Coordinator if you need resources or support, or if you have any questions or concerns. May all our families become holy families!



Valentin de Boulogne o Nicolas Tournier, S. Paolo scrive le sue lettere, 1620 circa, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

*St. Paul writing a letter*

## **FAMILY PRAYER**

LOVING AND MERCIFUL God, we pray for the many needs of families: for abundant love, for forgiveness and reconciliation, for a living faith to face the challenges of each day. Jesus, you were born into a human family and became our brother. You know well what families need to nourish both children and parents in long-lasting bonds of love and respect. Help families of all shapes and sizes turn to you as their source of life. May your Spirit encourage us all as members of the human family. Give us all eyes to appreciate one another and to be grateful for the gift of families. Amen

**St. Paul...pray for us!**

**Jesus, Mary, and Joseph...pray for us!**

