FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Saint Paul Religious Education Grades K-8

2022/23 School Year

Updated June 7, 2022

# Welcome! Please read the following FAQ sheet thoroughly. Please contact Lisa Nueslein or Cindy Mengle at the parish office if you need assistance. (301.253.2027) The registration period is from June 7 – August 15, 2022.

FAQs…

# Q1. How do I register my child to participate in parish faith formation or sacramental preparation programs? When do the programs begin?

# Sessions are scheduled to begin the week of September 19, 2022. You may use the same registration form for students in grades PK-8 seeking sacramental preparation OR ongoing faith education. The form allows you to include all ages and all programs, except high school. There is a separate enrollment process for high school students. Information about our high school program may be found at www.stpauldamascus.org .

# (For grades PK-8) Submit the completed registration form to the Religious Education office via one these methods:

# Email the completed form to [cmengle@stpauldamascus.org](mailto:cmengle@stpauldamascus.org). Be sure that you saved the pdf-fillable form so that the fields remain populated with date. OR

# print the completed form and mail it to us via USPS mail, OR

# drop it in a sealed envelope through the mail slot in the bottom of the parish office door. This may be done 24/7, any day of the week. (Need to locate the parish office? Click here: <https://stpauldamascus.org/directions>

# IMPORTANT NOTE: A check for the total of tuition & fees should be submitted to the parish office ~ or online through VANCO ~within 10 days of registration to reserve a spot for the student. Checks should be payable to ‘*Saint Paul Catholic Church’*. Please write REd Tuition on the memo line!

# Q2. How do I pay the fees electronically?

# You may access the secure online giving page of the parish website by clicking on the link below. Then locate the ‘Religious Education’ section of the webpage. Enter the amount of payment AND the student names. Failure to include the student name may cause your digital payment to be credited to your ‘parish offertory’ account vs. being applied as a tuition payment.

# <https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=AhGu-tz3uYk4Jew8E7Dxa6qIa26L05ZihSNlhzlCMMcoaLlQIj9iwXf2OZKa_Z2t3Tgur6H2LFWlfoSynSFlHR2xp6_jmBe3USVNEEL-lFNC_7udN8rts48vKB4_td6R2T7cXh6vyc8iEUCzy03WkA-95JntHWd_kKfDhEiZ_js=&ver=3>

**Q3. What is ‘Vanco’? How do I learn more about its level of online security?**

VANCO is an online Payment Processing Solutions vendor who works with churches and non-profit organizations.

From its website: ‘Vanco complies with PCI Level 1 standards, the highest standard of security in the payment processing industry.’ Read more: <https://www.vancopayments.com/security>

**Q4. Do we need to be parishioners at Saint Paul to participate in a religious education program?** There are many benefits to children receiving their religious instruction within the faith community where they worship. Saint Paul parish gives first priority enrollment to children of families who are active, registered members of the Saint Paul faith community. We also give priority enrollment to families who are new to this geographic area. Out-of-parish registrants may be considered after all in-parish registrants are placed in class.

Out-of-parish families will be asked to provide a letter from their pastor, stating that he is aware, and does not object, to his parishioner receiving faith education from another parish. Because the Saint Paul program is financially subsidized by the contributions of the registered members of the parish community, *out-of-parish* registrants may be assessed a higher tuition rate, at the discretion of the current pastor.

**Q5. What faith education options are available at Saint Paul parish for elementary- aged children?**

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| **Option A. “Blest Are We” Program (meets weekly on Thursdays at Saint Paul parish; Sept-May)** |
| Dedicated volunteer catechists and aides teach the students that God is fully revealed in Jesus Christ and that as a Church we continue to make present the Body of Christ here on Earth. The text book series ([www.blestarewe.com](http://www.blestarewe.com/)) is approved by the Archdiocese of Washington and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. Our program is guided by the curriculum standards of the Archdiocese of Washington. The *Blest Are We* textbook is based on the Catholic *faith tradition* and its foundational elements and is organized according to the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. At-home family activities are highlighted in each chapter and parents are empowered to guide their children and family in these activities so that the faith becomes a *lived*  experience. |
| **Option B. Atrium Program (Montessori) (meets weekly at Saint Paul parish; Sept-**  **May)** |
| The *‘Catechesis of the Good Shepherd’* ([www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org/)) is a Montessori-based  approach to the religious formation of children. The curriculum is rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori.  Children gather in a room prepared for them (an ‘atrium’) which contains simple yet beautiful materials they use to help them absorb the most essential proclamations of  the Christian faith. |
| **Option C. “Blest are We” Family Formation Program (weekly, in the family home,**  **PLUS regular touchpoints throughout the year.)** |
| Parents serve as the religious educator (teacher) of the child by teaching at home, using the *Blest are We* student workbook. Parents also receive leader materials that help the parents guide their child through the lessons. Families should plan to participate in all other group gatherings of the child’s peer group (Mass, penance services, social events, etc…). Additionally, parents will attend a detailed ‘train-the- trainer’ session and there will be quarterly family and student classes to ensure comprehension and enrich the family faith experience. Parents will manage the  child’s learning portfolio and provide designated educational results to the parish  Religious Education office. |
| ***First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion*** are typically celebrated in the second grade. However, we are also ready to work with older children or children with special learning needs. All programs above include preparation for these sacraments at the appointed time. The parish also provides parent education, retreat experiences for the student and parent, and at-home materials to further guide the child towards  readiness for these sacraments. |

**Q6. What is offered for middle-school aged children?**

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| **Option A. Middle School Religious Ed Program**  **(meets weekly, on Wednesdays, at Saint Paul parish; Sept. – May)** |
| The textbook series for Pre-Confirmation (gr. 6) and Confirmation I (gr. 7) is ‘*Alive in Christ’* published by Our Sunday Visitor (www.aliveinchrist.osv.com). Confirmation II (gr. 8) uses a DVD- based program entitled ‘*Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation,’* published by Ascension Press (www.ascensionpress.com).  Middle School students are grouped by grade level for the formal faith education lessons, but periodically meet as a *community* of mixed grades for prayer and fellowship. In addition to the scheduled education session, youth should plan to participate in offered retreats, social justice projects and fellowship activities which are an integral part of the curriculum design and sponsored by the parish. |
| **Option B. Atrium (grade 6 only). See prior description of the atrium format.** |
| **Option C. Middle School Home- study Program: offered for grade 6 and 7 students only. Meets weekly in the home.** |
| For sixth and seventh grade level only. Parents serve as the primary religious educator of the child by teaching the child at home, using the resources provided for in-class sessions.  The Alive in Christ textbook is the primary resource. But, parents also receive online materials to facilitate in-home learning. Families should plan to participate in all other group gatherings of the child’s peer group (Mass, penance services, social events, etc…). Additionally, parents will attend a detailed ‘train-the-trainer’ session and there will be periodic touchpoints/gatherings to ensure comprehension and enrich the family faith experience. Parents will manage the child’s learning portfolio and provide designated educational results to the parish Religious Education office. |
| ***Sacrament of Confirmation* –** The focused instruction for this sacrament typically requires two years of formal preparation. Focused preparation typically occurs in grades 7 (Confirmation I) and 8 (Confirmation II) grades. At our parish, youth are ordinarily confirmed in the fall of their 9th grade year. Our parish IS able to prepare youth (above 8th grade) and adults of all ages to receive this sacrament. Confirmation inquiries should be directed to Lisa Nueslein, the parish Director of Religious Education by calling the parish office or sending an email to LNueslein@stpauldamascus.org |

**Q7. May children with special needs and disabilities receive the sacraments?**

Absolutely! Yes! All children are welcome to enter into preparation for sacraments, including those with certain developmental/learning needs. Preparation may be adjusted to accommodate the child’s specific needs and abilities. Parents should expect to be involved in their child’s faith education experience and are encouraged to contact Lisa Nueslein, Director of Religious Education, to arrange for appropriate religious instruction for their child.

**Q8. Can tuition be paid in installments?**

Most materials are purchased prior to the start of the school year. Therefore, we ask that each family make every effort to submit the full tuition at the time of registration. However, anyone experiencing burdensome financial *hardship* may contact our Director of Religious Education to request an installment payment plan. We typically ask for a 50% good-will down payment to reserve a slot in the class. This partial payment of tuition is helpful towards the initial order of study materials.

**Q9. On what day and times will the children/youth religious education sessions be offered in the 2022/23 school year?** The following schedule was developed based on our estimate of enrollment for the upcoming school year. As always, we will make every attempt to accommodate your first choice day/times, while maintaining the integrity of the learning experience for all students. We encourage you to submit your registration requests no later than August 15, 2022 – and to please provide a ‘first’ and ‘second’

choice day/time option when registering.

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| ***Level/program*** | ***Day*** | ***Time*** | ***Frequency*** |
| Grade K-5 | Thursdays | 6:30pm-7:45pm | Weekly |
| Atrium 3-6 years | Mondays | 12:30pm-2:00pm | Weekly |
| Atrium 3-6 years | Mondays | 4:30pm-6:00pm | Weekly |
| Atrium 6-9 years | Mondays | 4:30pm-6:00pm | Weekly |
| Atrium 6-9 years | Tuesdays | 6:15pm-7:45pm | Weekly |
| Atrium 9-12 years | Tuesdays | 4:15pm-6:15pm | Weekly |
| Atrium 9-12 years | Wednesdays | 4:15pm-6:15pm | Weekly |
| Middle School | Wednesdays | 6:30pm-8:00pm | 3x/month |
| Grade K-7 | HOMESTUDY | Per family schedule | Weekly at home lessons; periodic in- person family  gatherings at parish |

**Q10. My child is new to the parish religious education program. Is there anything else that I should provide?**

Yes. Please submit a copy of the child’s baptismal certificate with your registration form. And be sure to identify any allergies, medical issues or learning needs that are unique to your child (there’s a section on the registration form for this).

**Q11. Who should I contact if I have questions?**

**Lisa A. Nueslein** Director, Religious Education/Adult Faith Formation [LNueslein@stpauldamascus.org](mailto:LNueslein@stpauldamascus.org)

**Cindy Mengle** Administrative Assistant [CMengle@stpauldamascus.org](mailto:CMengle@stpauldamascus.org)

Or, call us at the Parish Office

telephone #: 301.253.2027