



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Saint Paul Religious Education Grades K-8 2021/22 School Year

Update: June 4, 2021

Welcome! Please read the following FAQ sheet thoroughly. We are excited to announce that the current Covid situation seems to be favorable to allowing Saint Paul parish to once again be able to offer in-person instruction! Our programs will make whatever modifications may be needed based on state, county and Archdiocesan guidelines. This is indeed good news!

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, 2021. 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. Click on the link to the youth group website (www.stpyg.weebly.com), or reach out to Megan McQuin at mmcquin@stpauldamascus.org.

(For grades PK-8) Submit the completed registration form to the parish office via email, OR print the completed form and deliver it via USPS mail, OR drop it in a sealed envelope through the mail slot in the parish office door. A check for the total of tuition & fees should be submitted to the parish office (online through VANCO is also an option) within 10 days of registration to reserve a spot for the student. Checks should be payable to Saint Paul Catholic Church. Please put RE Tuition in the memo line!

Click below to access the parish secure online giving page on the parish website:

[St. Paul parish secure ONLINE Giving page](#)



https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=AhGu-tz3uYk4Jew8E7Dxa6qla26L05ZihSNlhZlCMMcoaLIQlj9iwXf2OZKa_Z2t3Tgur6H2LFWlfoSynSFHR2xp6_jmBe3USVNEEL-IFNC_7udN8rts48vKB4_td6R2T7cXh6vyc8iEUCzy03Wka-95JntHwd_kKfDhEiZ_js=&ver=3

Q2. 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.

Q3. What faith education options are available at Saint Paul parish for elementary-aged children?

Option A. “Blest Are We” Program (meets weekly 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) 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) 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.

Q4. What is offered for middle-school aged children?

Option A. Middle School Religious Ed Program (meets 2x/month at Saint Paul parish; Sept – May)

The curriculum for Pre-Confirmation (grade 6 welcome) and Confirmation I (grade 7 welcome) includes the *Encounter* Bible Study from Ascension press (www.ascensionpress.com) and OSV's Guidebooks for Adolescents, based on the *Alive in Christ* materials (www.aliveinchrist.osv.com). Confirmation II (typically grade 8 students who have completed AT LEAST Confirmation I) uses a DVD-based program entitled '*Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation*,' published by Ascension press (www.ascensionpress.com).

Middle school students are separated by grade levels for faith education lessons, but



also meet as a *community* of mixed grades for prayer and fellowship. In addition to the twice-a-month education sessions, youth should plan to participate in retreats, social justice projects and social activities which are an integral part of the program.

Option B. Atrium (grade 6 only). See prior description.

Option C. Middle School Home study Program (through grade 7 only) (weekly, in the home)

For sixth and seventh grade level only. Parents serve as the religious educator of the child by teaching the child at home, using the resources provided for in-class sessions. 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 Typically occurs after two years of Confirmation preparation. Focused preparation typically occurs in grades 7 (Confirmation I) and 8 (Confirmation II) grades. At our parish, youth are typically 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 Megan McQuin (mmcquin@stpauldamascus.org).

Q5. 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.

Q6. 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 serious financial



hardship may contact our Director of Religious Education to request an installment payment plan. We typically ask for a 50% down good-will payment of tuition so that we may order materials.

Q7. On what day and times will the children/youth religious education sessions be offered in the 2021/22 school year? We are excited to announce that we will be returning to in-person instruction with modifications based on local and Archdiocesan guidelines! 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 21, 2021** – and to please provide a ‘first’ and ‘second’ choice day/time option when registering.

Level/program	Day	Time	Frequency
Grade K-5	Mondays	6:45pm-8:00pm	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	Tuesdays	6:30pm-8:15pm	2x/month
Middle School (8 th only)	Thursdays	5:30pm-7:15pm	2x/month
Grade K-5	HOMESTUDY	Per family schedule	Weekly at home lessons; periodic in-person family gatherings at parish

Q8. How do I submit the registration form and fees?

DETERMINE which program(s) meet your schedule and family faith goals.



COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM (including the permission sections). You may download, complete and print a paper form. Or, register directly via the parish website at www.stpauldamascus.org.

PAY TUITION & FEES within 10 days of registration to reserve a slot for your child.

DROP OFF the payment to the parish office, M-F 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. **OR**

Use **VANCO**, the online giving option on the Saint Paul website (www.stpauldamascus.org). Be sure to select the Religious Education designation for this transaction, so your payment may be properly credited. **OR**

DELIVER the check in a sealed envelope through the slot at the bottom of the parish office door after hours **OR**

Mail it in 9240 Damascus Road, Damascus, MD 20872 **OR**

CHECKS SHOULD BE PAYABLE TO 'SAINT PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH'. Please put Religious Education tuition in the memo line.

If the child is NEW to our program, please include a copy of your child's baptismal certificate.

Call us if you have any questions. We are happy to assist you!

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

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