SAINTS PETER & PAUL Religious Education

G.I.F.T.

GROWING In Faith TOGETHER

FAMILY HANDBOOK

SS. Peter & Paul Parish Religious Education
36 North Ellsworth Street
Naperville, Illinois 60540

(630) 357-2436

Rev. 08072024

This handbook is designed to assist in understanding the religious education program at SS. Peter and Paul Parish. It is the goal of all to assist in the education of all our parishioners. While the parish has educational programs that provide opportunities at every level, supporting parents in the education of the next generation of Catholics is an important aspect of catechesis. Our job as ministers in the education of our young people augments, and does not replace, the duty of the parents.

"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents".
--Catechism of the Catholic Church

When you register your child for religious education at Saints Peter and Paul, you are giving them the **G.I.F.T.** of a faith-filled experience with their peers. **G**rowing **I**n **F**aith **T**ogether provides the groundwork needed for a life centered on a relationship with Jesus.

We are grateful for the dedicated parishioners who have come forward to offer their talents to teach, assist, and safeguard our younger parishioners. We invite all of you to consider volunteering: Catechists, Assistants, Safety Monitors, and Child Care Helpers are always needed. We pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit for all of us—parish priests, deacons, staff, catechists, all other program volunteers, and all families.

Protecting God's Children

The safety of your child from all aspects is most important to us. We promise to provide a safe environment.

As required by the Joliet Diocese, all volunteers and paid staff in our program have had background checks and have completed the mandated program, "*Protecting God's Children",* as well as the State of Illinois *"Mandated Reporter"* training.

Families are expected to be familiar with the following Diocesan documents regarding child safety: these documents are available on the RE page of the parish website. https://www.sspeterandpaul.net/religious-ed

Standards of Behavior for those Working with Minors – updated 2021
Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors – updated 2021
Internet Safety Guide
Understanding and Preventing Child Sexual Abuse
Diocese of Joliet Anti-Bullying Policy

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE HOURS

	DURING SCHOOL YEAR (SEPT. – APRIL)	MAY - AUGUST
MONDAY	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
TUESDAY	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
WEDNESDAY	8:30 AM – 8:45 PM	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
THURSDAY	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM	8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
FRIDAY	8:30 AM – 12:00 PM	8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
SATURDAY	CLOSED	CLOSED
SUNDAY	CLOSED	CLOSED

To report an absence, email dmulay@sspeterandpaul.net prior to the start of class and provide:

Student's Name
Class session
Catechist's name
Reason for absence

GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The parish Religious Education programs follow the guidelines of the ***General Directory for Catechesis*** (GDC, 1997), an official statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for sharing the Catholic faith.
All programs are in conformity with the ***Catechism of the Catholic Church*** (CCC), a presentation of the truths of the Catholic Church. These include the teachings of Sacred Scripture, the Traditions of the Church, and the teachings of the magisterium of the Church.
The Religious Education Office of the Diocese of Joliet issues a policy handbook to coordinate the efforts of all parishes in the diocese. The GDC, the CCC and the diocesan policy handbook are available for review in the Religious Education Office.

REGISTRATION

It is preferred that families are registered members of SS. Peter & Paul Parish before being able to register in the program. Non-parishioners will be assessed an additional $125 fee per family.
Families new to the program should download registration material from the parish website, complete the information and bring the documents to the Religious Education Office.
Families currently enrolled may register for the following year each spring. Registration packets will be sent home with the students in April.
Baptismal Certificates are required when the child first enters the program.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS



Parents are required to attend sacramental informational meetings and participate in their child's preparation for all sacraments. In accordance with Diocesan requirements, two years of formation are required prior to the reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.

Children will receive First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in the second year of preparation (typically second grade). Preparation for sacraments for older students must be discussed with the Director of Religious Education.

Students typically begin preparing for Confirmation in 6th grade. Confirmation is conferred at the successful conclusion of Confirmation II. Confirmation II students who fulfill the requirements of the Confirmation preparation program will receive the sacrament of Confirmation in November of that year.

REACH SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMS

Saints Peter and Paul addresses the rights and needs of all persons with disabilities to develop their human, moral and spiritual qualities. Whenever possible, children with handicaps are included in the standard program. For those challenged students who function best in an alternate setting, there is the REACH program. Children and adults with special needs will find the REACH programs are structured to the needs of individuals with emphasis on preparation for Liturgy and the sacraments. The Knights of Columbus financially supports these programs.

Children's REACH meets on alternate Saturday mornings while Adult REACH meets on alternate Wednesday evenings. Please check the online calendar for specific dates.

FAMILY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

According to the promises made at a child's baptism, the parents are the primary teachers of the faith for their children. The parish program exists to assist the parents in carrying out this responsibility, especially in preparation for the reception of a sacrament.

Parents are responsible for training their children in the practice of the faith. As the domestic church, the parents must provide a foundation for their child's religious formation by:

- Teaching your child how to pray
- Attending Mass with your child every Saturday evening or Sunday
- Instilling a love for the Faith
- Being a model of active Christian service in the parish

We also ask that families be supportive of programs in the following ways:

- VOLUNTEER to assist in your child's program
- Instill habits of prompt and regular attendance
- Ensure that necessary materials (books, Bibles, etc.) are brought to each session
- Assure that your child maintains standards of good taste in dress for class and church (no short shorts, halter tops or T-shirts with inappropriate language). ***Cleats are not permitted in the school or parish buildings.***
- Attend all meetings and special liturgies

SUPPLIES



Students are provided with a drawstring bag to carry necessary materials to class. **In addition to their textbook, each student should always be prepared with a two-pocket folder, a pen or pencil and a New American Bible (grades 3-8).** Bibles can be ordered during registration or purchased from the RE Office for $12.

RELIGION TEXTBOOKS ARE ISSUED ON A LOAN BASIS. Students will be issued a book at the beginning of classes and will be expected to return it with only normal wear and tear at the end of the school year. Any books with excessive wear or otherwise deemed unsuitable for re-use will be replaced at the family's expense.

ATTENDANCE



- Families should choose the class session that fits their child's schedule to eliminate the possibility of chronic absence or tardiness due to conflicting activities.

- Due to balancing of class sizes and necessary personnel needs, request to change class sessions after initial submission of a family's registration must be done using the online change request form, available on the RE page of the parish website. Changes will be accommodated if space permits. After August 1st a $50.00 processing fee will be assessed if we are able to accommodate your request.

- Excessive absences will impact the student's continuing in the program. Diocesan policy requires a total of 30 hours of faith formation each school year. With fewer than 28 classes scheduled per year, this allows for *no more than four absences* regardless of the reason. More than four absences in a level of sacrament preparation (Eucharist I and II,

Confirmation I and II) may delay the reception of the sacrament. This applies to ALL absences for any reason. Extenuating circumstances regarding a serious illness or family emergency are to be discussed with the Director prior to them becoming an issue.

Absences for school concerts *will* be counted toward the maximum number allowed. Please keep this in mind when scheduling vacations or appointments on RE class days.

- Students are expected to be in the classroom before the bell rings and remain for the entire class. Habitual tardiness will be discussed with the parent or guardian. Early dismissals and late arrivals are to be avoided. Students arriving later than 20 minutes after class starts or leaving earlier than 20 minutes before the end of class are considered absent for that day.

- Diocesan requirements mandate that we keep accurate records of attendance. There have been instances where our attendance records have been subpoenaed for court cases, and during past diocesan audits the lack of reported absences was called into question. Additionally, in case of emergency, it is imperative that we know which students are present during class times. **A parent or guardian MUST call in to the Attendance Line PRIOR to class if their child is going to be absent.**



- Continued attendance from year to year is expected. Students who have missed more than one year of religious education will be assessed to determine proper placement and may not be necessarily placed in their current public-school grade level. Junior high students missing a year or more may not be placed in the Confirmation program pending assessment.

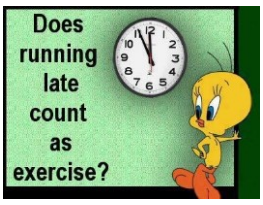
Children are never allowed to leave class early, even with a parent **unless an early dismissal form is completed in the office before pick-up. A photo ID is required when filling out the form.** This is required to ensure your child's protection. A parent must check in with the Hall Monitor who will retrieve the child from the classroom and bring him/her to the parent.

Identification will always be required to ensure that we are releasing a child to a parent. Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent unless arrangements are made in advance with the Office. **For the safety of your children, there are no exceptions to this rule!!**

Eucharist I (Grade 1) and II (Grade 2) students must be signed out of their classrooms by a parent or designated guardian at the end of the session. *If an older sibling (4th grade and above) or other adult will be picking up your child, permission must be given to the catechist in writing*.

LATE PICK UP

If you are detained for any reason, please call the office immediately to alert us to the fact that you may be delayed in picking up your child. **Any children who are not picked up from the parish campus within 10 minutes of dismissal time will be escorted to the RE Office**. If this occurs, you will need to come in to the RE office to pick up your child.



COMMUNICATION

It is essential that we keep lines of communication open with all our families. Communication is handled in several ways:

We use Constant Contact as our primary communication tool. Please use an email address that you check on a regular basis so you can receive weekly updates. If you do not see regular emails from the RE office (usually on Thursday or Friday the week we have class), please let us know so that we can fix the problem.

The parish weekly bulletin will contain important information regarding special events, special notices and sacramental information.

Evaluations for students in Grades 1-8 will be sent home with the students in January and at the end of the school year.

DISCIPLINE

The Religious Education Staff is accountable, as well as responsible, to parents to provide an environment in which the catechetical process can take place.

The catechist's presence and the establishment of group guidelines work to assure that catechists will be better able to share the Good News. Discipline shall be developed in a positive manner. It is imperative that a Christian and cooperative attitude prevail for effective faith sharing to take place.

Any student causing a disturbance in class after correction by the Catechist will be escorted to the office to meet with the director. Any repeat violations will result in the parents being called to bring the child home. Children with repeat behavioral issues will not be allowed to return to class until the parents and director have discussed the issue. If serious behavior problems continue to occur, alternative arrangements will have to be made for the education of the child.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Any special illness or needs your child may have including learning disabilities, attention deficit (ADD / ADHD), a recent death or separation, health problems such as diabetes, allergies to food, epilepsy, hearing or visual impairments, etc. must be noted at the time of registration or at the time the issue is discovered so that we can better serve your child. The registration form has a special place to note this, or you may call the Program Director to discuss further. You will be asked to fill out an Accommodated Student Info Form to help us provide your child with the best experience possible while accommodating his/her needs.

MEDICATION

Medication is not dispensed by Religious Education Staff or catechists. If children require medication or an Epi-Pen, parents must have a permission form signed by the doctor and a written plan for administration on file with the R.E. Office.

CLASSROOM VISITORS

All visitors must come reception office of the Junior High building to sign in and receive a hall pass. Arrangements must be made both with the Catechist and RE Office *in advance* of the visit. Unregistered children will not be permitted in the classroom without pre-arranged permission from the director.

SUPERVISION

Class times are noted below. NO SUPERVISION IS PROVIDED BEFORE OR AFTER THESE TIMES. You are responsible for the safety of your child until class begins. Students are not permitted in the building unless a hall monitor is present. **Please be aware that students may need to wait outside the building until a volunteer hall monitor arrives. Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather in the event they will be waiting outside**. Students may not enter a classroom until a catechist or another designated adult is present.

Wednesday Afternoon	4:15 PM - 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evening (CM)	6:00 PM - 7:15 PM
Wednesday Evening (JH)	7:30 PM - 8:45 PM



We rely on volunteers to help keep children safe on their way to and from class, particularly when crossing between buildings. In the event of an insufficient number of safety monitors, parents may be required to sign their children in and out of class, regardless of age.

VISITORS

All visitors to the buildings must report to the RE office and show a picture ID to receive a visitor's pass. Guest visitor arrangements should be made with the director in advance of the date of visit.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE & TORNADO

Catechists have instructions for emergency procedures when programs are held on the premises. Catechists are required to review and explain these to their groups.

SNOW & OTHER PROBLEMS

Please do **NOT** call the Parish Office or Religious Education Office for information about program closings. You will receive an e-mail from Religious Education as soon as any decision is made to cancel classes.

TRAFFIC SAFETY GUIDELINES



When dropping off or picking up for any program, IT **IS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN (AND VERY DANGEROUS) TO ALLOW YOUR PASSENGERS TO CROSS IN FRONT OF OR BEHIND YOUR VEHICLE, OR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET. Crossing is to be made AT CORNERS ONLY!**

In order to provide for safe and organized drop-off and pick-up of children, we will be using the plan shown on the last page. Please read these diagrams and procedures carefully. **Safety of every child is a priority! Wednesday sessions generate dangerous traffic conditions. Respect volunteers, all signs and designated "No Parking" places. You will be ticketed if parked illegally. Do not permit your child to cross in the middle of the street at any time.**

PARENT PARKING AREAS

Parking and leaving your parked vehicle is permitted in the far **South Lot** (corner of Benton and Ellsworth and **center** of the **North Lot (Next to the Elementary Building).**

DROPPING OFF STUDENTS

Elementary Building: Enter the lot from Benton St. Using the circles, drop off students as close to the front door as possible. **Watch for walking students**. Students will enter from the Ellsworth St. entrance only. If you walk your child into the building, park in the **center of the Church Lot, facing north**.

Junior High Building: Drop off driving **north** on Ellsworth, either along the curb in designated parking areas or by utilizing the Junior High or Elementary parking lots. If you are driving south, students **must** cross with Traffic Patrol at the corner, **NOT** in the middle of the street!

PICKING UP STUDENTS

All Eucharist 1 & 2 students must be SIGNED OUT & PICKED UP in their classrooms by a parent, older sibling (grade 4 or above) or other designated adult. Therefore, these parents must park in the center of the Church Lot and not in the pick-up/drop-off lanes.

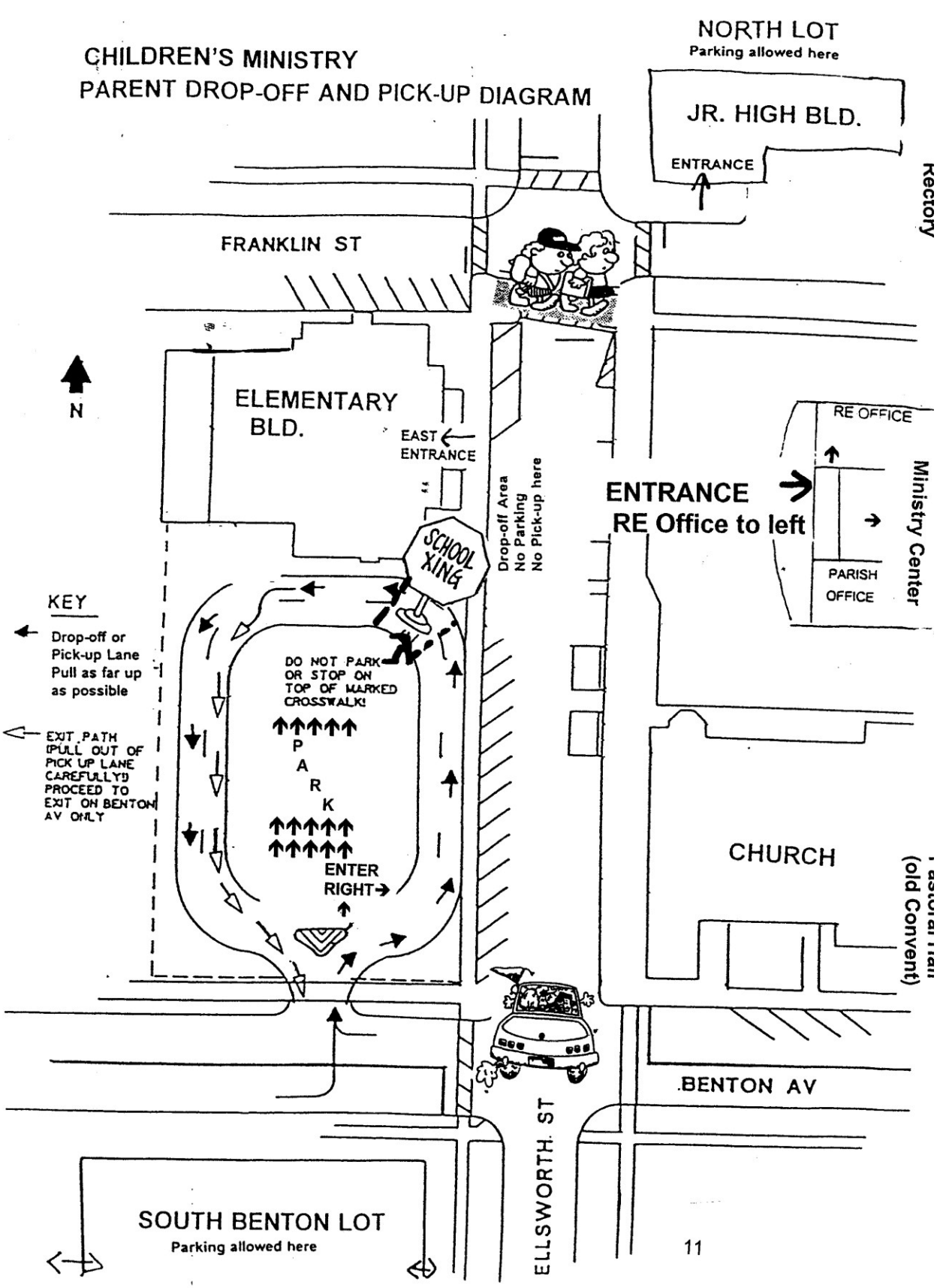
All traffic enters and exits the lot from Benton St. only.

Parking is allowed in the center of the lot. All parking is gang style parking for parents who must enter building and for catechists who park there.

Pick-up/drop-off circle lanes: Drivers in these lanes cannot exit their vehicles. Stay in vehicle, pull up as far as possible all the way around to accommodate all the cars; students load from the right passenger side of all these lanes. **Pull out carefully always watching for children.** Exiting the lot is done only by making a right-hand turn onto Benton St.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Videotaping and still photos might be taken during the RE year. Registering constitutes permission for possible participating in the video and/or still photographs. These may be used for future promotional efforts. If you do not wish photos of your child to be used, please email tpratt@sspeterandpaul.net with your request.



Your cooperation in following these procedures will provide for the safety of all children. Please be patient, cautious and courteous to your fellow parishioners and volunteers. **We need your help!** Please call if you can help during arrival or dismissal times, even for part of the year.