

## St. Paul's Faith Formation Program Handbook

### Staff Contact Information

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**Welcome!** Our vision at St. Paul parish is to work in partnership with families to offer the best learning/faith formation experience for your children. We believe that the first Church is the domestic Church found in each home. Parents, you are integral in the role you play in your children's faith development, and you serve as the primary teaches and role models. Our catechists and volunteers give their time, talents, and energy in our Faith Formation Programs to teach and assist you and your children into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. We look forward to getting to know you better in our partnership of faith.

We don't just live out our faith inside the walls of our churches and of our homes. We're not to be of the world, but we're to be in the world. We're citizens of an earthly kingdom as well as a heavenly one. Citizens participate in the culture, everything from what children are taught in school to what appears on TV screens.

## **Fees/Registration Forms Required**

- Registration Form is required for all families. A **Copy of Baptismal certificate** is required for all students new to the program that were not baptized at St. Paul Parish.
- \$80.00 registration fee per child plus a \$20.00 sacramental fee for students in Grades 2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Make checks payable to St. Paul Parish.

## **Sacramental Preparation**

Any Child wishing to receive a sacrament must have a *full year* of religious education sessions *prior* to the Sacramental year itself.

\*Children must attend 1st grade to receive **First Holy Eucharist** in 2nd grade. \*

\*Children must attend 8th **and** 9th grade to receive the **Sacrament of Confirmation** in the 10th grade. \*

The preparation is the bringing together of elements that allow us to celebrate the sacraments in community. Each sacrament has requirements that are meant to enrich the family and child experience of receiving and celebrating that sacrament.

Parents in Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation will receive a packet specific for child's Sacramental Prep.

## **First Reconciliation and First Eucharist**

Children receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation (Confession) and First Eucharist (Communion) in 2nd Grade. Reconciliation takes place prior to First Holy Communion. We encourage you to participate as a family in the sacrament of Reconciliation at the parish. First Holy Communion takes place in the spring Practice is held the Wednesday before the sacrament. To help prepare your child for their reception of First Holy Communion, we encourage you to attend weekly Mass with your child.

If you have a child in grades 3–9 who has not yet received First Reconciliation/First Communion, contact the Director of Religious Education (DRE). Parents will receive additional information about the Sacramental preparation.

## **Confirmation**

Confirmation is celebrated in the spring of the student's sophomore year of high school. Preparation for Confirmation takes place throughout 9th and 10th grade. If your child attends a Catholic high school, please talk with the Director or Religious Education about specific parish requirements.

## **Requirements**

- Attendance at least 90% of the regularly scheduled formation sessions
- Attendance at an annual Confirmation retreat
- Performance/completion of at least 12 hours of service, some of which must be conducted in the parish
- Selection of a sponsor; completion of the sponsor/candidate booklet
- Selection of a saint name, along with a written report on the saint
- A mandatory interview with the pastor and/or the DRE to determine spiritual readiness to receive the Sacrament

If there are any conflicts throughout the year with scheduling or completing any of the assigned work, the *student* is to take responsibility for calling/meeting with the DRE to make other arrangements.

***Please do not wait until the last minute!***

The following criteria will be used to determine the readiness of a student for Confirmation. Failure to meet these could lead to a recommendation to delay the sacrament until such a time when the student is prepared to make this commitment. The candidate for confirmation should:

- be a baptized Catholic and have received Reconciliation and First Holy Communion
- attend Mass on a regular (every weekend) basis
- have met all the requirements of the program
- be able to articulate the role of the Holy Spirit in his/her life
- acknowledge that he/she is committed to continuing life as a Catholic Christian
- demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of basic doctrines of the Catholic Church
- have the recommendation of a sponsor as witness to his/her faith life
- show signs of a growing relationship with God

**We ask that you:**

- **Attend Mass** together weekly as a family. Family participation at Mass is fundamental in the overall development of our Catholic faith. **A parish faith formation program cannot succeed if the central act of worship is ignored. Class attendance does not take the place of Mass.**
- Pray regularly as a family. Encourage your children to share prayer and actively participate in Mass. Special observances of the Church seasons make Jesus more alive in your family.
- Volunteer your time and talent. It takes the time, talent, and resources of our entire parish community to provide excellent religious education programs for our children. We are asking each parent to volunteer one hour each semester in your child's classroom to help. Each teacher will have a sign-up sheet for you to indicate your preference.
- We ask parents to please provide an email address and cell phone that we can use to communicate with you. We are now primarily using Flock note for communication. We will use this program to text or email you with ministry updates through Flock note.

**Note:** If a parent does not have an email address, please contact the office so that a paper copy of announcements can be provided. The youngest child in the family then will be given a copy of the announcement. Announcements are also made in the parish bulletin.

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is expected and demonstrates the desire of the parent as well as the child for formation of the faith. If a child is to be absent, please call **715-693-4030, email [dre@stpaulmosinee.org](mailto:dre@stpaulmosinee.org), prior to 5:00 p.m.** on Wednesday of the absence. Parents are responsible for contacting the catechist regarding the lesson missed and any homework assigned. Four (4) or more absences may result in repeating the grade level the following year.

### **Arrival/Departure**

Classes begin promptly at **6:00 p.m.** Children may not be dropped off earlier than 5:50 p.m. Children should report directly to the classroom. If a child is tardy, he/she must report to the office on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor to check in. Classes are dismissed at **7:00 p.m.** If a class is in church, students may be dismissed a little later. Catechists will give direction regarding pick-up location on these evenings. Children in grades 1 and 2 are to be walked to and picked up in their classroom by an authorized person. **In an effort to maintain safety, the doors of the school will be locked after 6:10 p.m. The side door will be opened again at 6:55p.m. All other doors will remain locked.**

### **Cancellation/Inclement Weather**

If school is canceled or dismissed early because of weather, classes will not be held. If classes are to be canceled because of impending bad weather we will send out an email or a text message on Flock Note. Please check your email or cell phone. The school district does not announce cancellations for us.

### **Care of Facility**

We are blessed to have a beautiful school to hold our classes. We are all expected to honor the possessions of others and take pride in demonstrating our respect towards them. Any deliberate accidental, or misuse damages to property will require the student/parent to make amends which may include clean up, cost of repair (including labor), and/or monetary reimbursement.

**Discipline** All students and parents are required to sign the discipline compliance form upon registration. Policy found on the back page of the handbook.

**Dress Code** Dress in a manner that reflects respect for the sacredness of the body and our environment including no caps, no suggestive or offensive clothing. Shorts during warm weather are to be of an appropriate length. Tank tops, and shoulderless tops are not allowed. This expectation applies to all age levels.

### **Home Study for Grades 1-8**

This home-based alternative to the traditional classroom-based learning format features you, the parent or guardian, as the teacher. We will be using a new computer-based resource called “My Catholic Faith Delivered.” This is a flexible option because you choose the day of the week and time that you will complete the faith formation studies with your child. It is also a wonderful way for the family to learn together and grow more in faith.

#### **Home Study Requirements:**

- Parents and students must be in frequent contact with the DRE.
- Students must complete and submit a finished project.
- Students are encouraged to attend Masses and other sacraments scheduled throughout the year.
- Parents who homeschool must complete the Diocesan Safe Environment training.

**Note:** For Second Grade, as well as Grades 9 & 10, since these grades are the sacramental preparation years, home schooling is not an option. Students in these grades are required to attend formal classes.

## **Diocesan Program Policies**

### **Safe Environment**

In union with the Diocese of La Crosse, these policies are designed to provide a safe environment for your children. The Diocese of La Crosse requires that all staff and volunteers who work with youth have had a background check and have received Safe Environment training. The Diocese also requires that ALL students receive Safe Environment information. This training will take place during the year.

Parents can access the training at [www.dioceseoflacrosse.com](http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com) and then follow these directions: Click on Safe Environment. On the left-hand side, click on Safe Environment training and then Parents. Read/watch the materials and answer the questions when done. An email will be sent to the DRE's office indicating training completion. Parents are required to sign acknowledging that their child may receive the training. Those who refuse training will be contacted by the Diocesan office confirming the reason for denial of training. This permission is given on the registration form.

### **Code of Conduct**

Learning and working together as a faith community committed to be disciples of Jesus Christ requires that we all strive for a positive and respectful environment. Each student/parent/guardian in our Faith Formation program will be required to follow the procedures and policies of our program as defined below.

Our catechists perform an invaluable service to the youth and parents of our parish by teaching the children, preparing them for the sacraments, and passing on their love of our Catholic faith to the young people of our parish. Theirs is a time-consuming and challenging task. They need to cover volumes of material in just over one hour a week, and they need to provide a good learning environment to do so. It is very important for all students to demonstrate the same positive behaviors and respect that is expected of them at home, at school during the day, or during Mass. It can be frustrating when students are disruptive. Your responsibility as non-teaching parents is to deliver and pick up your young person on time, to discuss with them the content covered in class, and to assure your student has consistent appropriate behavior.

**It is important that we create an environment of safety and respect that promotes learning and cooperation. We ask that the following guidelines be followed to present an orderly, respectful, and welcoming religious education program.**

- Regular attendance is both encouraged and expected. If your child will be absent, please let his/her catechist know.
- If your child misses two classes without notification, we will call you.
- If your child has four consecutive absences, we will contact you to discuss whether your child will remain in the program.
- No food or drink should be brought into the classroom. Snacks will be provided at the catechist's discretion. No chewing gum or candy.
- No toys or games.
- Hats will not be worn in the building. (unless there is a medical reason)
- Shirts will not have offensive words or pictures.

- Cell phones, iPad (or other tablets), or any other electronic devices are not allowed in the classroom. They must be completely stowed in a backpack, or placed in a basket during the class period. The catechist has the authority to take them away during class.
- No fidget spinners or other “fidget” devices are allowed in the classroom, unless the child has a medical reason (provided by the parent) for such device. Catechists have the authority to confiscate such devices.
- Please make every effort to pick your children up on time. After class, children are to remain inside the building or in the parking lot until their transportation arrives.

## **Respect**

- An atmosphere of learning is built upon respect and concern.
- Boundaries will be set to promote learning and cooperation.
- Honor our catechists who share time, talent, and often their treasure with your children.
- Respect for all persons and property must be fostered.
- When attending Mass, we expect reverence, including blessing self when entering and exiting the church, genuflecting when entering and exiting the pew, and avoiding personal conversations while in the church.

## **Disruptive Behavior**

To prevent disruptions in the classroom, or before or after class anywhere on Church grounds, the following code of conduct agreement will be in effect. Parents and students must sign an acknowledgement at the beginning of each academic year (September) stating they understand and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct Agreement.

Behaviors that will not be tolerated include but are not limited to:

### Talking out of turn

- Negative attitude
- Disruptions or outbursts of any kind
- Disrespect, teasing, or bullying shown to students or teachers
- Talking with others when all students should be listening to the teacher
- Using a cell phone during class time
- Cell phones should be left at home. If a child needs to contact their parent for any reason, he/she may use the phone in the office. If a parent must contact their child during that hour, they may call the office at 715-693-2675.
- Unless there is a medical reason communicated by the parents to the teacher, only one bathroom/drink break is allowed for the one hour spent in the classroom. Constant requests to go to the bathroom or get a drink are obvious the student is trying to skip out. Students agree to take care of this before or after class room time.
- Students will leave the classroom in the same condition it was, or better, when they arrived (throw away wrappers, papers, put away pencils, bibles etc.)
- Students will respect the church, classroom, and school facilities, and any property (desks, chairs, books, etc.)

- Any other behavior or attitude infraction not listed above will be discussed between the teacher and the DRE and determined at their discretion to warrant the next level of discipline

**1<sup>st</sup> offence:** the student will be warned and a phone call or email to the parent(s) will follow to inform of the infraction.

**2<sup>nd</sup> offence:** the student and parent(s) will need to meet with the DRE to discuss the student's behavior in the classroom, and how the student will stop the disruptions and behaviors.

**3<sup>rd</sup> offence:** the student will be suspended from the "in-classroom" faith formation for a period of 12 months, and the parent(s) and student will need to use the "homeschool" curriculum during that time.

**\*Note:** It is not the intention of the Pastor, DRE, or catechists to push students away from the faith, the sacraments, or the Catholic Church with this policy. Questions about this agreement should be directed to the DRE at 715-693-2675 or email [dre@stpaulmosinee.org](mailto:dre@stpaulmosinee.org)

### ***Medication***

By law, catechists and other volunteers are not permitted to dispense medication of any kind. We will not administer aspirins or cold remedies. Students may **NOT** bring aspirins, cold remedies including cough drops, or any other over-the-counter medicines to class.

**St. Paul Parish**

**Acknowledgment of Code of Conduct Agreement**

We acknowledge and agree to abide by the St. Paul Faith Formation Code of Conduct Agreement. We understand that disruptive behavior and attitudes cannot be tolerated and inhibit the learning of all students. We also understand and acknowledge the Pastor, Director of Religious Education, and all catechists want to teach the faith and not push individuals away from the faith, the sacraments, or the Catholic Church with this Code of Conduct Agreement.

**Student**

I understand and agree to the Code of Behavior listed above and that I am responsible for my own behavior and class participation. I also understand that my parents or guardians will be notified at the time that I do not abide by the code of conduct following a verbal warning by the Director of Religious Education.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

Printed Name/Grade

Date

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

Printed Name/Grade

Date

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

Printed Name/Grade

Date

**Parent(s) or Legal guardian** I agree that my student(s) shall abide by the contract outlined above. I have reviewed it and discussed the contract with my child(ren) prior to signing this form. I agree that if my child(ren) fails to consistently abide by the Code or engages in a serious infraction of the Code, I will be notified immediately to choose from the options listed above.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

Print Name

Date

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature

Print Name

Date

**Note:** Please review, sign, and return the Code of Conduct form with your registration.