

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church

**Religious Education Handbook
2026—2027**

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MISSION STATEMENT

St. Paul the Apostle Parish School of Religious Education strives to provide a Catholic environment of learning and conversion so that children, youth, young adults, adults, families and members of the parish will grow in the spirit of discipleship of Jesus Christ.

As parents, the responsibility of their children lies on them. Parents must therefore be recognized as being primarily and principally responsible for their children's education.

VISION STATEMENT

The Parish School of Religious Education will strive to bring the knowledge of the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to the children, youth, young adults, adults, and families of St. Paul the Apostle Parish.

As catechists, we will do all we can to :

- Teach the Catholic faith through scripture and traditions and uphold the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.
- Promote a deep love for Jesus Christ in the Eucharist by encouraging weekly family participation in class, Sunday Masses, Holy Days of Obligation, and other Eucharistic devotions.
- Encourage the children, youth, young adults, families and members of the parish to live the Catholic faith as it is witnessed to them by their parents, catechists and members of the faith community.

REGISTRATION

Registration for the 2026 – 2027 school year will be held in August and September for students and will continue throughout the year to accommodate newly registered families. Registration fee is \$20.00 for one child and \$10.00 for each additional child in the same family. Fees are due at registration. If financial assistance is needed, please call the Pastor or the Director of Religious Education.

SUNDAY MASS

The Eucharist is central to our Catholic faith and weekly participation in the Mass is critical to your child's faith formation. Faith must be lived and one way is by attending Mass as a family. This is an important part of your child's religious education.

CLASS SCHEDULES

Classes for pre-kindergarten (PK) through eleventh (11th) and adults will be held on Sundays 9:00 a.m.—10:15 a.m.

ATTENDANCE and POLICY ON ABSENTEES

Students are expected to be present for all classes. Children are allowed two (2) excused absences. Parents should make arrangements for students to make up their assignments. Excused absences must be of a serious nature, preceded by a phone call and followed with a note from a parent for documentation.

Excessive absences and frequent tardies will be discussed with the student and his/her parents. More than three (3) unexcused absences may be grounds for the student to repeat the current level of Catechism standards. Examples of excused absences include death in the family, illness, etc. Sports or extra curricular activities do **NOT** fall into the category of excused absences.

CHILD PROTECTION CLASS

The child protection class entitled “Circles of Grace” is a requirement of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. All students are required to participate unless a parent signs an “Opt Out” letter. You can view the lesson at www.dioabr.org. Click on “Child Protection” and then click “Safe Environment Curriculum.” Scroll through the lessons to find the age-appropriate lesson for your child. If you choose to “Opt Out”, still send your child on the day we have the Circles of Grace lesson. They will be moved to a different location and given a separate lesson. Once the Circles of Grace lesson is finished, the young people will return to class.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Students should demonstrate respect for themselves and others. They are to respect parish property. They should exhibit proper behavior during prayer time in groups as well as in church. No interference in the faith development process will be tolerated. If a student is removed from a class and sent to the office as a result of misbehavior, time out of class is counted as absence time.

CONSEQUENCES

First infraction	conference with the DRE
Second infraction	15 minutes and parents are notified.
Third infraction	An appointment must be made with the pastor, director and teacher to re-enter the program.

DRESS CODE

All students' attire should be modest and not draw attention to or cause distractions in class.

Shirt, shorts or pants and shoes must be worn at all times.

Clothing that is prohibited:

Yoga pants, skin tight pants, short shorts or skirts that come above mid thigh, spaghetti strap tops, low cut tops, t-shirts with graphic, or offensive language or scenes.

First offence, student with inappropriate clothing will be asked to call home for suitable clothing to be brought.

Second offence, students will be sent to the office where the parent will be called to pick them up.

Third offence, parent, student and administrator will have discussion with pastor before being allowed to attend class again.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The Dioceses of Baton Rouge has mandated that all adult staff and volunteers, youth, and vulnerable adults must be trained on the Safe Environment and Child Protection Policy. St. Paul Parish follows the policy of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Volunteers and staff are mandated to attend a two hour Diocesan Child Protection Workshop, consent to a criminal background check, and attend a yearly Child Protection Policy refresher course.

SAFETY PRACTICES

The safety of our children is important. The Director and his/her designee will be in the Parish Center to begin receiving students at 8:45 a.m. Please do not drop off your child or children in the rear of the Parish Center. It is unsafe and the catechists are not in their classrooms before 9:00 a.m.

We ask that parents park their vehicles and walk to the entrance of the Parish Center to drop off and/or pick up their children. Any students remaining after 10:15 a.m. will be walked to the church for 10:30 a.m. mass.

Please let your child know that they cannot wait for you in front of the center when all adults have walked to church. Students may be picked up at the church.

Students may not enter a classroom unless there is a Religious Education adult volunteer present. If the teacher is not present, students will return to the center for instructions from the DRE.

Students will not be allowed to leave their classrooms or supervised areas unless they are in pairs or accompanied by an adult.

EMERGENCY AND CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church is committed to the safety and security of students, catechists and staff on its campus.

If we must evacuate we will go to the parking lot near the church and each teacher will have a roster with emergency phone numbers, in order to contact a parent.

SERVICE HOURS

All students must complete service hours as a part of their religion education for their grade level. A service hour form will be sent home with each student and must be returned with signatures by March 7 2027.

1st—5th—2 hours

6th—5 hours

7th— 9th — 10 hours

Service is not:

- A project to be done and then crossed off a list
- A list of hours to be recorded and reported
- A requirement for Religious Education that has no relationship to the rest of our lives

Christian Service is:

- A response to others' needs
- A response in love

- A sign that we are committed to following the example of Christ

Think about your attitude toward service.

- Are you willing to help when help is needed?
- Do you put others before yourself?
- Do you share your time and talents generously?
- Do you see your response to those in need as a response to Jesus Himself?

Listed below are some of the possibilities in each area. These are suggestions only.

CHURCH:

Activities not related to our ministries

Examples of ministries: altar serving, usher etc.

COMMUNITY (If safe)

Tutoring a student

Doing grocery shopping and cleaning for an elderly neighbor

Helping with a school fundraiser

Helping with a neighborhood clean up project

Visiting a church member in the hospital

FAMILY

There is no need to offer suggestions here. Mom or Dad will probably have lots of ideas!

When you list projects done at home, it is necessary for one of your parents to sign the form.

“Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love.”

Saint Therese of Lisieux.

ACCIDENT POLICY

If a child sustains an injury while participating in a Religious Education class or other activity, parents will be called immediately. If parents cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contact person. It is very important that the phone number of your designated emergency contact person be accurate. The personnel and volunteers in the Religious Education programs can only dispense ice packs and bandages to children and youth. In the event of a serious accident, a Diocesan Student Injury Accident Report will be completed.

MEDICATION

The Catechists, PSRE Assistants or the Director will not dispense prescription or over-the-

counter medications to students. If warranted, such medications will be confiscated from students and given to parents at the end of the class session. Parents are encouraged to administer all medications before or after class sessions.

DRUGS/ALCOHOL/WEAPONS

Drugs, alcohol, and weapons are not permitted on the premises. If a student is found to be in possession of these articles or substances, parents will be notified and he/she will be detained until the police are notified. Likewise, a student will not be sent home with any adult who appears visibly impaired or seems to pose a threat to the safety of the student.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

If a catechist or the Director suspects that a child has been abused, he or she is required by Louisiana State statutes to notify the Division of Youth and Family Services. The Diocese of Baton Rouge supports state statutes.

CUSTODIAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is the responsibility of the parents to notify the PSRE in writing of the Custodial status and any restrictions concerning the non-custodial parent.

CARE OF PROPERTY

Our parish property belongs to all of us. We are responsible for good stewardship. A student who damages property is expected to pay the cost of replacement or repair.

CELLULAR TELEPHONES

Cellular telephones may be used only in an emergency, and definitely not for taking photos. An office telephone is available to Catechists, students and parents in the event of an emergency.

COMMUNICATION

Use 225-636-7612, or marthad34@yahoo.com, to communicate concerns, questions, or messages about the Religious Education Program.

CELEBRATIONS/PARTIES

The time allotted for instruction is at a premium. Therefore, we ask that no food be served during class time.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The Diocesan Guideline for Sacramental Preparation reminds us that parents are the primary educators of their children in matters of faith.

The religious education and sacramental preparation are two separate entities. Therefore parochial school students and public school students must participate in sacramental preparation.

Students who are eligible **for the sacramental preparation** programs and attend a parochial school **must prepare for and receive** the sacraments in their own church parish and not the parochial school they attend.

The First Communion teacher and Confirmation Coordinator will meet with parents early in the year when their children will receive the sacraments and discuss requirements.

Students preparing for the Sacraments of First Eucharist and First Reconciliation are involved in a two-year preparation program. The Confirmation program is a three-year process beginning in the fall of the 4th grade year.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge has made a decision that students will be Confirmed in the 7th grade. This policy will go into effect by each parish within the next 5 years,

St. Paul will Confirm 7th, 8th and 9th grade students at the end of the 2027 school year.

7th grade students will be Confirmed at the end of the 2028 school year and every year after.

Parents and sponsors are expected to participate in the preparation of children for sacraments.

Parents are also expected to keep their youth connected to the church after Confirmation by ensuring their involvement with ministries and organizations at St. Paul.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Since the fundamental building block of Church and Parish life is the family, it is expected that parents will participate in their children's formal religious education. During the course of the year, parents will be presented with opportunities to engage in support of PSRE and further their effectiveness as the primary religious educators of their children. Parents and students are expected to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Advent and Lenten Communal Service. Parents and students are expected to participate regularly in Sunday Masses. Sharing of the Eucharist is the most important sacramental sign of our life in Christ and the Christian Community.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH LITURGY OF THE WORD

All children of the parish (minimum age of 7) are welcome to take part in the Children and Youth's Liturgy of the Word and General Intercessions. The Children and Youth's Liturgy of the Word will resume in October. The children and youth participating in the Parish School of Education will be expected to participate in proclaiming the Liturgy of the Word and General Intercession during the **10:30 a.m. mass every second Sunday of the month.** The order of class participation is as follows:

October	7, 8 & 9th Graders	10/11/26
November	6th Graders	11/15/26 (3rd Sunday)
December	5th Graders	12/13/26
January	7, 5, & 9th Graders	1/10/27
February	4th Graders	2/14/27
March	3rd Graders	3/14/27
April	7, 8, & 9th Graders	4/11/27
April	7, 8, & 9th Graders	4/15/27

(Confirmation)

April	2nd Graders	4/18/27
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(First Communion)

May	Confirmation Class	5/9/27
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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

Martha Davis Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Tasha Anthony Youth Readers

Reginald Green— Confirmation Coordinator/OCIA

Vera Dunbar Safe Environment Coordinator

Kamille Watson Pre-K/K/1

Edmonia Joseph Pre-K/K/1

Melonie Stewart 2

Marva Carrier 2

Avoughn Roberts (assist 2)

Tejuana Garner 3

Terrell Carter 3

Andrea Perry 4

Mary Davis 4

Gigi Mathis 5

Leslie Bradford 5

Amanda Skinner 6

Angela Guilbeau 6

Erin Anthony—7, 8 & 9th Confirmation

Kirsten Raby— 7, 8 & 9th Confirmation

Ta’Rhonda Chube—Adult Faith Formation

Nancy Ball—Administration

Rose Malveaux Administration

Johnny Rogers Set Up

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always , until the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20

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