

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**Saint Paul Religious Education Grades K-8**  
2019/20 School Year

**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 Sept. 23, 2019. 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](http://www.stpauldamascus.org). Click on the link to the Youth Group's website ([www.stpyg.weebly.com](http://www.stpyg.weebly.com)).

(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, drop it in a sealed envelope through the mail slot in the parish office door, or place it in the collection basket at Mass (please make sure that the envelope is labelled '*Attn: Religious Education Office*'). A check for the total of tuition & fees should be submitted to the parish office within 10 days of registration to reserve a spot for the student. Checks should be payable to Saint Paul Catholic Church.

**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 in which they worship and interact with peers. 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 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.

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**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 at least two family formation events at the parish. )

Parents serve as the religious educator (teacher) of their child by teaching their child at home, using the *Blest Are We* student workbook. Parent 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 their child's peer group (Mass, penance services, social events, etc...). Additionally, parents are required to attend a detailed 'train-the-trainer' session and participate in 2-3 intergenerational family formation events to be held at the parish. Parents will manage their child's learning portfolio and provide designated educational results to the parish Office of Catechesis.

***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. 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 weekly 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](http://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](http://www.ascensionpress.com)).

Middle Schoolers are separated by levels for faith education lessons, but periodically meet as a *community* of mixed grades for prayer and fellowship. In addition to the weekly education session, youth should plan to participate in offered retreats, social justice projects and social activities which are an integral part of the curriculum design and sponsored by the parish.

**Option B. Atrium** (through gr. 6 only). See prior description.

**Option C. – "Alive in Christ" Home Study Program** (weekly, in the family home.)

For sixth and seventh graders only. Parents serve as the religious educator of their child by teaching their child, at home, using the *Alive in Christ* workbook and online resources. Parent also receive online materials that help the parents guide their child through the lessons. Families should plan to participate in all other group gatherings of their child's peer group (Mass, penance services, social

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events, etc...). Additionally, parents are required to attend a detailed 'train-the-trainer' session and participate in 2-3 intergenerational family formation events to be held at the parish. Parents will manage their child's learning portfolio and provide designated educational results to the parish Office of Catechesis. (Important Note: Home schooling for Confirmation preparation in the eighth grade year is ordinarily allowed only with the approval of the pastor).

**Sacrament of Confirmation** follows two years of Confirmation preparation. Focused preparation occurs in grades 7 (Confirmation I) and 8 (Confirmation II.) At our parish, youth are typically confirmed in the Fall of their ninth grade year. However, our parish is able to prepare youth and adults of all ages to receive this sacrament.

**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 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 2019/20 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 Aug. 10, 2019 and to please provide a 'first' and 'second' choice day/time option when registering.

<b><u>Level/program</u></b>	<b><u>Day</u></b>	<b><u>Time</u></b>	<b><u>How Often</u></b>
<b>Middle school</b>	Mondays	5:30pm – 6:45pm	Weekly
<b>Middle school</b>	Thursdays	7:00pm – 8:15 pm	Weekly
<b>Grades K-5</b>	Mondays	7:00pm -8:15 pm	Weekly
<b>Grades K-5</b>	Thursdays	5:30pm-6:45 pm	Weekly
<b>Atrium 3-6 yr. olds</b>	Mondays	12:30pm – 2:00pm	Weekly
<b>Atrium 3-6 yr. olds</b>	Mondays	4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Weekly

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<b>Atrium 6-9 yrs.</b>	Mondays	4:30 pm – 6:00 pm	Weekly
<b>Atrium 6-9 yrs.</b>	Tuesdays	6:00pm – 7:45pm	Weekly
<b>Atrium 9-12 yrs.</b>	Tuesdays	4:15pm – 6:15pm	Weekly
<b>Atrium 9-12 yrs.</b>	Wednesdays	4:15pm – 6:15pm	Weekly

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

- ✓ **DETERMINE** which program(s) meets your schedule and family faith goals.
- ✓ **COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM (including the permissions sections).** You may download, complete and print a paper form. Or, register directly via the parish website at [www.stpauldamascus.org](http://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 9:00 – 4:00 **OR**
  - **DELIVER** the check in a sealed envelope through the slot at the bottom of the parish office door after hours **OR**
  - Mail it to 9240 Damascus Road, Damascus, MD 20872 **OR**
  - Drop it in the Sunday collection basket in a sealed envelope labeled Religious Education Office

CHECKS SHOULD BE PAYABLE TO 'SAINT PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH'

- ✓ 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!