

Parent-Student Handbook 2026-2027

St. Paul Catholic Church Children's Faith Formation Program

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The Children's Faith Formation Office is located the Family Life Center, Room #107.

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* This handbook uses the term “parent” or “parents”. We are aware others may have legal custody of a child. In such cases, the term “parent” includes those who have legal custody.

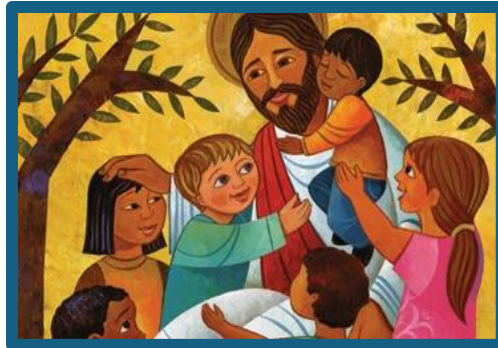
St. Paul's Catholic Church

Religious Education Calendar

2026-2027

SEP

16- **Classes Begin**
23- Class
30- Class



MAR

3- Stations
10- Class
17- NO CLASS
24- NO CLASS
31- Class

OCT

7- Class
14- Class
21- Class
28- Class

Classes meet on
Wednesday
4:30–5:45 pm
6:30–7:45 pm

Class Cancellation:
Classes will be cancelled if
DUVAL County Schools
cancel school or after-
school activities due to

APR

7- Class
14- Class
21- Class
28- Class

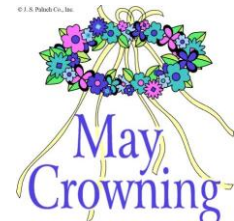
NOV

4- Class
11- **NO CLASS**
18- Class
25- NO CLASS

JAN

6- Class
13- Class
20- Class
27- Class

May 5

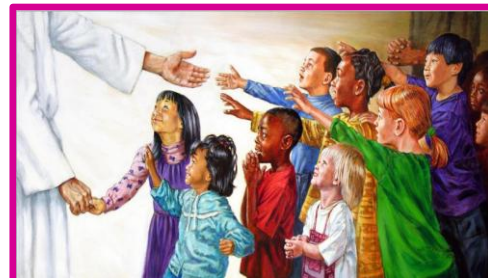


DEC

2- Class
9- Class
16- Class
23- NO CLASS
30- NO CLASS

FEB

3 -Class
10- Class
Ash Wednesday
Masses@ 4:30 & 6:30
17- Class
24- Class



As of May 2026

Role of Parents in Faith Formation

Parents are the first teachers of their child in the ways of the faith.

Children's faith formation at St. Paul's partners with families in their responsibility to raise children to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ according to the teachings of the Gospel and the Catholic Church. Parents are the most significant spiritual influence in the lives of their children. A child's Catholic identity is rooted in the day-to-day religious practices of the family and the way parents model and share their faith. There is no more urgent task for the Church today than strengthening parental and family faith and practice. We work with parents knowing they are the primary community where the Catholic faith is nurtured & practiced.

As your child's primary religion teacher, here are some important ways you can teach your child about Jesus and your Catholic faith:

- ❖ Attend Sunday Mass together weekly. Weekend Mass times at St. Paul's are Saturday at 5:30 PM, Sunday at 8:00 AM, 10:30 AM, & 5:30 PM. Sunday Mass at St. Peter's is at 9:30 AM.
- ❖ Pray daily with your child (i.e. before each meal, at bedtime).
- ❖ Read the Bible together or watch Bible stories together online.
- ❖ Have family conversations about faith (during a meal or riding in a car).
- ❖ Ensure your child participates in regular & ongoing faith formation by attending weekly faith formation classes, sacramental preparation gatherings, retreats, and community service opportunities.
- ❖ Take an active interest in what your child is learning in his/her religion class. (i.e. ask what class was about, what they learned, recite prayers.)
- ❖ Discuss questions and doubts your child may have about their faith.
- ❖ Communicate special needs, life events, or concerns that may affect your child's faith formation experiences to the DRE.

“Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home. Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to grow in faith.” ~Pope Francis

Role of Catechists in Faith Formation

“The catechist is a Christian who receives a particular calling from God that, when accepted in faith, empowers him for the service of the transmission of faith and for the task of initiating others into the Christian life.”

Directory for Catechesis, 2020, #112

The catechist is:

- ❖ A Christian role model, a witness to the Gospel, and a sign of hope for others
- ❖ A teacher who introduces others to God’s plan of salvation revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ
- ❖ A traveling companion helping others grow in their Christian life and journey toward God

Catechists are to:

- ❖ Support parents in their responsibility to raise their children in the faith
- ❖ Prepare and teach a curriculum approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
- ❖ Participate in professional faith development opportunities
- ❖ Communicate regularly with parents
- ❖ Provide a Christian atmosphere that enables children to grow in faith and knowledge
- ❖ Respect children, parents, volunteers, and staff

*“Faith formation is more than
a subject to be taught –
it is an invitation to
a way of life.”*
Joe Paprocki



Registration Information

Children's faith formation is provided for grades K-8

Registration forms are available online at
<https://stpaulsjaxbeach.org/church/about/religious-education/>
Or contact the Children's Faith Formation office.

All families must be registered in St. Paul's parish. You can do this by going to
<https://stpaulsjaxbeach.org/church/about/registration/>

Registration forms may be mailed or turned in at the parish rectory located at 224 N 5th Street, Jax Beach, FL 32250. Rectory hours are Mon.-Thur., 8:00 – 4:00, Fridays 8:00-1:00.

Fees must be included with registration forms (cash & checks only).

Each child registering for the first time must include a Baptismal certificate and a letter of transfer from a previous parish when requested.

Registration Fees:

1 Child - \$75 2 Children - \$140 Maximum fee per family - \$200

OCIA class for children – No Fee

Additional materials fee for Sacraments:

Reconciliation & First Communion - \$75

(An additional fee for Confirmation students is due with a separate registration.)

If for some reason you are unable to pay the full fee at the time of registration, please contact our office & we will be glad to work with you.

Class Times, Options, & Policies

All regular classes are held on Wednesday evening.

<u>Early Session</u>	Kindergarten & First Grade	4:30-5:30 PM
	Grades 2-5	4:30-5:45 PM
<u>Late Session</u>	Kindergarten & First Grade	6:30-7:30 PM
	Grades 2-8 & OCIA	6:30-7:45 PM

Parents may select either the early or late session for grades K-5. Grades 6-8 are late session only. If a class is full, it may be necessary to change to the other session. Parents will be notified as soon as possible if the requested session is full.

Arrival Time

Students should *arrive no more than 10 minutes early*. The outside doors will not be unlocked before this time because teachers are setting up their classrooms.

Late arrivals can be very disruptive to a class. Because of this *the doors will be locked 10 minutes after class is scheduled to begin*. At that time no one will be available to let children in and escort them to their classrooms. If you are late, please make sure the doors are still open before you drive away. If the doors are locked, please return home with your child.

Early Release

Requests for on-going early release times have become a problem in the past few years. This is also very disruptive to the students and teachers since class must stop to make sure one child is prepared to leave. Also, we do not always have volunteer adults available to escort children to their parents. Therefore, *children must remain for the entire class time unless there is a one-time, unique situation*.

Class Cancellation

For various reasons, such as weather, it may be necessary to cancel classes.

Note: If Duval County Schools cancel classes or afterschool activities, religion classes will also be canceled.

Since our primary means of communication is email, please check your email before leaving home. (If your email address changes, please let us know ASAP.) Always use your best judgment regarding bad weather and conditions in your area.

Curriculum

- Kindergarten – *Allelu!* Publisher: Our Sunday Visitor
- 1st – 8th Grade – *Alive In Christ*, Publisher: Our Sunday Visitor
- First Reconciliation & First Communion – Our Sunday Visitor
- Confirmation – *Gifted with the Spirit*, Pflaum / Bayard Publishers
- OCIA – Various Publishers & resources

The curriculum used for St. Paul's Religious Education program
is approved by the USCCB.

"Let us make best use of the fleeting moments. They will not return."

~St. Marianne Cope, OSF

Sacraments

The Diocese of St. Augustine requires all students be enrolled in Faith Formation for two, full consecutive years prior to celebrating a sacrament (or have attended Catholic school for two years).

Reconciliation & First Eucharist

Under normal circumstances, children in 2nd grade celebrate the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (Communion). This means they must have completed grade one and be enrolled in grade two before they can begin immediate preparation for these sacraments. It is not unusual for a child to be a year behind in receiving these sacraments.

Confirmation

At St. Paul's, children in 8th grade normally celebrate Confirmation before Easter each year. Students preparing for Confirmation must have completed grade seven and be enrolled in grade eight. Because Confirmation is celebrated before the end of the 8th grade, it is expected that students complete their 8th grade religion class. It is not unusual for a student to be a year behind for celebrating Confirmation.

Wednesday night class attendance during the two years of sacramental preparation is of great importance. Missing more than two (2) classes per year without a professional's note will result in either repeating the same grade level the next year or delaying celebrating the sacrament. If a student is absent from religion class, the work will need to be completed prior to the next class and turned into the catechist. If your child is unable to attend class, please contact the director prior to the absence.

Note: *All children over the age of 7 who are unbaptized &/or have had no previous Catholic faith formation* will be required to attend one year of faith formation at their grade level and the following year prepare to receive the sacraments by attending classes for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA – adapted for children). This class is on Wednesday evenings during the late session (6:30-7:45 PM). Children completing the OCIA class will celebrate the sacraments at the Easter Vigil Mass (Saturday night Mass before Easter Sunday).

The Sacraments are the manifestation of the Father's tenderness and love toward each of us.

~Pope Francis

Sacrament Dates 2026-2027

First Reconciliation – Saturday, January 9, 2027

Family Gathering #1	Sun. Oct. 18, 3:15-5:15 PM <i>OR</i> Sun. Oct. 25, 3:15 – 5:15 PM
Family Gathering #2	Sun. Nov. 15, 3:15-5:15 PM <i>OR</i> Sun. Dec. 13, 3:15-5:15 PM
<u>Sacrament of Reconciliation</u>	Sat. Jan. 9, 10:30 AM

First Eucharist – May 1 & 2 at all Masses

Family Gathering	Sun. Feb. 21, 3:15 – 5: 15 PM <i>OR</i> Sun. Mar. 7, 3:15-5:15 PM
Family Retreat	Sun. April 11, 2:15-5:15 PM <i>OR</i> Sun. April 18, 2:15-5:15 PM
Confessions prior to First Communion	Rel. Ed. Wed., April 21, During Class School – TBD by School
Rehearsal	Week of April 26-May 1 (TBD)

Due to limited space, each gathering is limited to 50 families (child + one parent). *Attendance is mandatory*, as required by the Diocese. A child who misses a Family Gathering or the retreat will need to participate in a retreat at a different parish.

More details and how to sign up for specific events will be included in the information packets received in the mail.



*"I am the bread of life,
whoever comes to me will never hunger,
and whoever believes in me will never thirst."*

*~Jesus of Nazareth
John 6:35*

Confirmation – March 12, 2027

All regular sessions are held once a month on Sundays, 3:30-6:30 PM in the Family Life Center.

All candidates attending the Sunday sessions must attend 5:30 Sunday Mass.

A candidate is only allowed to miss one session (which must be made-up prior to Confirmation). Whenever possible, please contact the DRE prior to missing a class.

There will be assignments to be completed between sessions.

Regular Session Dates:

Oct. 4 *One parent must attend with candidate*

Nov. 1

Dec. 6

Jan. 10

Feb. 7

Feb. 28 **Retreat, 1:30-6:30 PM**

The retreat is mandatory for students only.

Any candidate unable to attend will be required to attend a retreat at a different parish prior to Confirmation. No make-up retreat or take-home materials will be available.

This is a diocesan requirement. No exceptions.

Rehearsal Wednesday, March 10, 6:45-7:45 PM for candidates & sponsors

Confirmation Mass Friday, March 12 at 5:30 PM

More details will be included in the registration information packets received in the mail.

“Be who you were created to be, and you will set the world on fire.”

~St Catherine of Siena



Arrival & Dismissal Policy

Note: Parents are not allowed to enter the buildings at any time without prior permission from the Director of Children's Faith Formation. This is done in accordance with diocesan policy.

Early Session

Arrival-

Children in the early session are to be dropped off at the main school entrance at 428 N 2nd Ave. The door will be unlocked at 4:20. Do not arrive more than 10 minutes early. *Before you leave make sure your child has entered the building.* The doors will be locked at 4:40, and no one will be present to let children in the building.

Dismissal-

All children in the early session are released through the doors on the west side of the school building (N 5th St. fenced yard). Children cannot leave the building until the catechist has identified the parent or authorized person picking up the child. Please come *into* the gate area to meet your child. Children cannot leave building until the catechist has made direct contact with the authorized person picking them up.

Late Session

Arrival-

Children attending the late session are to be dropped off at the middle school entrance on N 1st Avenue beside the historic church. The doors will be unlocked at 6:20. Do not arrive more than 10 minutes early. Before you leave, make sure your child has entered the building. The doors will be locked at 6:40.

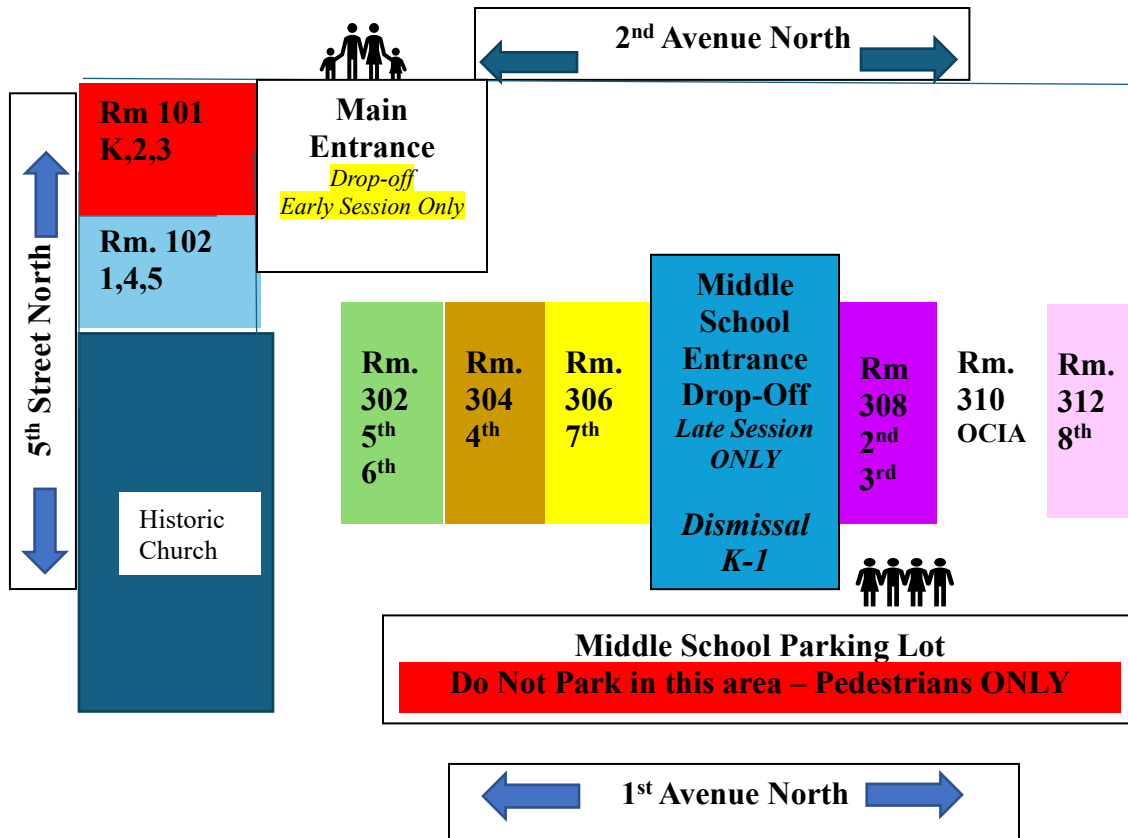
Dismissal-

All children in the late session are released from the outside classroom doors to either side of the middle school main entrance (see diagram). Children cannot leave the building until the catechist has identified the parent or other authorized person picking up the child. We cannot let children out of the building until we identify the person picking them up is at the door.

Important: Who can pick up a child

Only parents & those previously identified on the registration form will be able to pick up a child. If the catechist does not recognize a person, they will ask for a photo ID. If someone other than those identified at the time of registration will be picking up a child, the Children's Faith Formation office must have prior notice. Without direct notification prior to the start of class we will not release any child to an unauthorized person, including grandparents, siblings, etc.

DISMISSAL MAP



GRADE	EARLY SESSION DISMISSAL CLASSROOM	LATE SESSION DISMISSAL CLASSROOM
Kindergarten	101 (at 5:30 PM)	Middle School Entry (at 7:30 PM)
1 st Grade	102 (at 5:30 PM)	Middle School Entry (at 7:30 PM)
2 nd Grade	101	308
3 rd Grade	101	308
4 th Grade	102	304
5 th Grade	102	302
6 th Grade	N/A	302
7 th Grade	N/A	306
8 th Grade	N/A	312
OCIA	N/A	310

Attendance Policy

Since faith formation is done by building upon prior knowledge that the children have received at each grade level and class, weekly attendance and registering for class each year is very important. **Missing more than 2 classes in one year may result in a child having to repeat a grade level.** This is especially important during the years a child is preparing for sacraments (grades 1,2,7, & 8). When a child misses a class, he/she will have to make up the work online before the next class.

Please try your best to schedule activities outside of class time. We cannot adjust classes and class times to fit everyone's personal schedules. This means children are not allowed to arrive late or leave early on a regular basis.

If your child is ill and unable to attend class, please notify the Children's Faith Formation office at 904-249-2660 (leave a message if no one answers) or email cburns@stpaulsjaxbeach.org or dmckay@stpaulsjaxbeach.org prior to class.

Communication

Our faith formation program primarily uses email to contact families. We use *Constant Contact* to send emails to large distribution lists. Please check your junk folder from time to time to make sure email from *Constant Contact* has not gone there. We also advise checking your email on Wednesdays before class. If class is cancelled, we will do our best to send out an email as soon as possible.

When registering for First Reconciliation & First Communion Family Gatherings, retreats and First Communion Mass we use *SignUpGenius*. If you are not familiar with *SignUpGenius*, don't worry. It's easy, just a few clicks & you're signed up.

Medication

Faith formation staff and volunteers are not permitted to distribute medication to students. We can administer basic first aid if necessary. If your child is sick or has a fever, do not attend class. Children who appear sick after arriving will be taken to the director and the parents will be called.

*Go forth in peace, for you have followed the good road. Go forth without fear,
for he who created you has made you holy, has always protected you,
and loves you as a mother. Blessed be you, my God, for having created me.*
~St. Clare of Assisi

Special Needs Students

Because most of our volunteer catechists do not have the training or experience necessary to teach students with special needs, it is necessary for students with special needs to be mainstreamed in our regular classes. We respectfully ask parents to identify any special needs your child may have to the director and the child's catechist. We will do our best to work out a plan that fits your child's needs while at the same time respecting the needs of the other children in the class. In certain cases, it may be necessary for a parent to attend class with a child or even consider home school options. Working together we will strive to provide your child with the best faith formation program possible.

Classroom Behavior

At times a child's behavior may become disruptive to the catechist and other students. If this occurs, the child will be asked to end the behavior and reminded about acceptable classroom behavior and any consequences that will result if the unacceptable behavior continues. A second reminder will result in a child being separated from his/her classmates within the classroom. Continued unacceptable behavior will result in the child being brought to the director who will, after speaking with the child, assess the situation, speak to the parents, and together determine how the child can apologize to the teacher and class the following week. It is important to know that if it is necessary to remove a child from the classroom, they will remain with the director until the end of class. Hopefully these actions will produce a positive outcome for all. However, if unacceptable behavior is a continuous problem, it may be necessary for the parent to attend class with the child or for the child to be taught at home for an agreed upon time.

Cell phones are not to be used during class time. It is best not to bring cell phones to class. Any cell phone used during class will be taken by the catechist and returned to the parents at the end of class.

To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each is to become, in a special way, the servant of the others.
~St. John Paul II



Code of Conduct for Students

For young people to be made aware of acceptable and unacceptable behavior and the consequences associated with unacceptable behavior, it is best to clearly outline what is expected of them. St. Paul's has developed the following *Code of Conduct* in accord with existing local and diocesan policies, protocols, and other guidelines. Our goal is to work with families in their primary role of forming good moral consciences in children.

Student Expectation:

- Always behave as a Christian
- Attend Sunday Mass weekly
- Pray daily
- Attend class weekly
- Complete all class assignments
- Respect others – Parents, teachers/catechists, classmates, volunteers
- Respect the facilities (worship space, classroom, bathrooms, etc.)
- Follow directions
- Co-operate with others
- Maintain self-control
- Do not leave the building without an adult

Unacceptable behavior:

- Disrespect for adults and peers – includes constant interrupting, speaking out of turn, disturbing others at work, intentionally not following directions
- Use of vulgar language, gestures, or racial slurs
- Possession of weapons, possession &/or use of alcohol or drugs
- Damaging property
- Running &/or yelling inside the building
- Cheating
- Fighting or intentionally hurting others
- Bullying (harassing or physically or emotionally hurting others, threatening to physically hurt others or ruin their reputation)
- Touching another student or adult
- Bringing food or drinks to class
- Bringing disruptive toys or technology to class

I would rather die than do something which I know to be a sin, or to be against God's will.
~ St. Joan of Arc