

# Parish of St. Paul – St. Ann

## Parish Religious Education Program



## PARENT HANDBOOK

School Office in the St. Paul Rectory  
82 Lake Road West / Congers, New York 10920 (845)  
268-5442/Fax: (845) 268-6790

Pastor: Fr. Vladimir Chripko,

### Contact Information:

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### Parish Mass Schedule

St. Paul / Saturday 5:00 pm/ Sunday 7:30 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm & 6:00 pm

Confessions: Saturday 4:00-4:45 pm

St. Ann/ Saturday 5:30 pm/ Sunday 8:45 am, 10:10 Children's Mass & 11:30 am

Confessions: Saturday 4:30 — 5:15

## **MISSION OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The Goal and Mission of the St. Paul – St. Ann PREP program is to help families grow in their relationship with God and build a faith community centered on the Eucharist.

### **FAMILIES**

The Religious Education Program is designed to assist families in their sacred responsibility to educate their children in the faith. Children first experience God through the loving care of their parents. Parents serve as models by being committed Christians, worshipping regularly with family, nurturing children in faith, attending meetings and participating in activities and prayer services. The family's regular celebration of Mass and the Sacraments, along with daily prayer and practiced Christian values and beliefs are the foundation on which the Religious Education program is built. Christian education should be a positive learning experience for your children and we look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

### **STUDENTS**

All students are expected to attend Religious Education classes weekly. Children should come to our program with eagerness and a positive attitude towards learning. The students should live a moral life that reflects the values and teachings of Jesus Christ.

### **MASS ATTENDANCE**

The Catholic faith is taught, expressed and fulfilled in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Religious Education is incomplete without attendance at Mass and on Holy Days of Obligation. We really want to see and greet your family at Mass! During the beginning of the school year our religious education catechists will instruct each class on how our Mass attendance policy will be implemented. Students will receive mass attendance cards which will be handed out the first day of classes. These cards should be submitted to a Priest or Deacon at the end of mass. These cards are to be used yearly so please don't throw them away. If for any reason a student attends Sunday Mass at a different Church, they must get that Church's bulletin, have it **signed by the Priest at that Church, bring it to class and hand it in to their teacher. Please make sure they write their name on bulletin to receive credit for mass attendance.**

Your help and cooperation with this regulation is very much appreciated.

### **CATECHISTS**

Catechists teach our faith as volunteers. They have the task of creating the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit to bring about growth in faith among believers. They foster students grown in personal faith and spirituality; initiate them into the faith community and its life, worship, symbols and practices in the classroom and in the community.

### **SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

We are fully committed to providing and monitoring a Safe Environment Program. Every person, without exception, who has regular contact with our children must have an Archdiocesan background check and complete the Safer Spaces training.

## REGISTRATION

Registration will be on a first come, first served basis. Because of the size of our Program and space available, we may not always be able to accommodate parents on their choice of session, although we will make every effort to do so. New Students If your child was not baptized at St. Paul – St. Ann, you are required to bring a copy of their Baptismal certificate when registering for the first time. If you do not have one, you may obtain one by calling the Church of Baptism. No students will be registered without this document. We do not accept registrations on the first day of classes. Also, any registrations received after August 26<sup>th</sup> will not be processed until after September 8<sup>th</sup>. We need time to put classes together and make sure all is in order.

### Transferring Students

Any student who is transferring to the Program must also supply a copy of the permanent record card or a transcript from their previous Program. You must also supply Sacramental information and documentation for Penance and Communion if applicable. This will help determine the child's placement in our Program.

### REGISTRATION FEES (EARLY BIRD SPECIAL)

#### After 8/20 rates will be:

One student	\$195	\$ 245
Two students	\$295	\$ 345
Three+ students	\$345	\$ 395

Sacramental fees are as follows:

First Holy Communion	\$55	Confirmation	\$100
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### FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

**IN ORDER FOR A CHILD TO BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, THE STUDENT MUST COMPLETE TWO YEARS of the prep program (grades 1 & 2).**

### SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

**All children are required to attend the parish religious program for eight consecutive years (1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>). Any child who drops out of the catechetical program is required to complete the grade level or levels missed upon reentering the program.** The preparation for Confirmation is a continuous preparation and must be taken seriously. Skipping a grade level or several levels will require the student to repeat those grades before being accepted in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade program. Parents are encouraged to participate in the preparation of their children for Confirmation.

A **Confirmation** packet will be given to parents at the Confirmation Parent meeting which will be held in October.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time and remain for the entire class. Participating in sports or after-school activities should not conflict with class time; they do not constitute a justifiable absence from class. Parents are asked to call the office when they know their child will miss class for any reason. Please follow up with the catechist to make sure that the missed work is completed. After excessive lateness and/or absences, the parent/guardian will be required to meet with the Coordinator and Pastor.

Attendance will be monitored closely. If your child is ill, please notify us. Your child is allowed **4 absences** per academic year. This is in accordance with the Archdiocese of New York Guidelines.

**Please note that students cannot make up absences. The student is expected to make up the missed work. Absences or lateness due to sports will not be EXCUSED.**

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

For students with special medical needs, we cannot administer any medications to the child during the catechetical session. Parents or legal guardians must make all preparations prior to the child coming to class.

## **ARRIVAL**

Your assistance is needed to have children arrive on time for class. Please walk into the school and drop off your child to the classroom assigned or cafeteria.

## **DISMISSAL**

Please pick up your child in the same room where you dropped them off. A note must be sent to the coordinator when someone other than the parent/guardian will pick up your child. If you need to pick up your child early, please either call the office or send in a note. You must also sign your child out.

## **CALENDAR**

A program calendar will be E-mailed to you along with class assignment. The calendar can also be viewed on our website.

## **COMMUNICATION**

All communication is sent via email or sent home with the student. Please be sure that the office always has up to date address and telephone information for your family.

## COURSE WORK

**An essential part of learning about our faith is the personal experiences of prayer and the Sacraments.**

Families are the primary and principle educators in their children's Catholic formation in faith, prayer and preparation of the Sacraments.

**Textbooks are mandatory at each and every class. If you child misplaces their textbook, there will be an additional fee to replace.**

**We ask parents to ensure that their child comes to class properly prepared weekly. Students should bring in a Book bag, notebook, folder, pen/pencil, and textbook.**

## FAMILY CATECHESIS

The Archdioceses of New York mandates that every parish incorporated into the PREP program a total of five hours of Family Catechesis each year. Please check your calendars for the dates available for Family Catechist. All families are required to attend. If you wish to help, please contact our office.

## TESTING

**The main objective of prep is to foster a love of God.** Love of God will in turn help us foster the love for our families, neighbors, and love for the Catholic Church. **To love God and His Church, we must first study and learn everything there is to know about Him and our Catholic faith.** Assessments are necessary in order to determine if the children are indeed learning and understanding the Catholic faith. Tests and Quizzes are some of the assessment tools used to measure the children's level of understanding.

**Quizzes are given at the discretion of each teacher.** These quizzes are usually quite simple and short. If a student is absent from class, it is his/her responsibility to ask the catechist for the lessons he/she missed prior to coming to the next class. The student must take the quiz with everyone else on the day it is given.

**Unit Exams will be given to grades 4 through 8 after the completion of each unit in their textbooks.**

The content of these exams and how often they are given is at the teacher's discretion.

If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to get the notes from a classmate before coming to the next class. The student should study their notes carefully since the content of the quizzes and Unit Exams rely heavily, but not entirely, on these notes and their textbook pages. Additionally each student will be asked to recite their prayers. For your convenience the inside covers of the textbook has all the prayers the student should know. Please make every effort to recite the prayers every night.

## DRESS CODE

**Reverence to God comes in many forms, one of which is wearing the proper attire in God's house.** Since the goal of prep is the formation of the faith, it is our responsibility to teach the children the virtue of modesty. **Part of our religious instructions take place in the Church, the importance of wearing appropriate attire is absolutely necessary.**

We reserve the right to send any student home who does not adhere to our dress code. The Pastor and the coordinator of prep reserve the right to decide what is considered acceptable and unacceptable if an outfit is questionable.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES

**It is forbidden for students to use their cell phones, iPods, video games, and all other electronic devices in the classrooms and in the Church. Cell phones must be kept out of sight once the catechist takes attendance.**

**All catechist have been instructed to confiscate these devices if they are exposed for any reason in the classroom or Church.** After class these devices will be handed over directly to the parents.

## DISCIPLINE & REMOVAL OF STUDENTS

The prep sessions take place in an atmosphere of learning with a Christian setting. **Each student is expected to be respectful of the teacher, of other students, and of parish property. Bullying and cruelty towards others will not be tolerated.**

Minor discipline problems will be handled by the coordinator. Extremely disruptive behavior will result in that student being warned and temporarily removed from class.

**Students may be temporarily removed from the class when:**

- 1. The student has been given 3 warnings, the behavior has not improved, and he/she continues to disrupt the class.**
- 2. It is to the student's benefit that he/she is placed in a smaller group situation.**
- 3. The student needs special attention that the teacher cannot provide.**

Temporary removal of a student is used as a disciplinary measure for serious, disruptive, and persistent misbehavior.

**If the student is removed from class a second time, then the coordinator will contact the parent or the legal guardian.** It is important that we have the current cell phone numbers of all parents. It is also equally important that the parent or legal guardian be available to pick up their child at a moment's notice.

Parents contacted by the coordinator will be asked to do either one of the following:

1. Pick up the child and speak to him/her in the privacy of their home.
2. Sit in the class with their child until the behavior of the child becomes acceptable.

If the child's behavior is extreme and shows no improvement, then the coordinator and the Pastor reserve the right to permanently remove the child from our program.

### **CUSTODIAL RIGHTS OF PARENTS**

The coordinator should be informed by the custodial parent in writing of any changes regarding the rights of noncustodial parent as these rights pertain to the child's participation in the program, as well as release from the program. The parish is not responsible for the release of a child to a noncustodial parent if no written request has been provided by the custodial parent in advance.

### **VISITORS**

No unauthorized persons are allowed in the Church, in the hallways, and in the classrooms while the catechetical sessions are taking place. Parents and other visitors are not allowed in the building unless the coordinator has invited them in for a specific purpose. It is considered unsafe and a fire hazard for parents and siblings to wait in the building blocking the hallways in the event of an emergency.

### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

When there are class cancellations we send out emails. When possible we also leave a message on the office voicemail. When the Clarkstown and Nyack school districts close due to inclement weather, the Parish religious education program is closed.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

For detailed announcements and reminders, please visit our Church's website at [www.spasaparish.org](http://www.spasaparish.org). Information on upcoming events will be posted on our website. Information is also sent through FLOCKNOTES.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Attending a **Safer Spaces class** and submitting a **Background Check form** are both requirements for any person volunteering for PREP. The information provided is sent to and verified by the Archdiocese. These background checks are strictly confidential and will not be released by the Archdiocese of New York to any **personnel other than the Pastor and the coordinator of the parish**. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the coordinator for more information.

## PARISH ACTIVITIES

It is highly encouraged that parents/guardians become active participant in our parish life. There are a number of ministries available for parents to become involved. Please see our bulletin for any special faith based events or activities you may be interest in participating.

One final word, please remember that we are here to provide a safe place for our child to learn about the beauty of faith. We need your help in ensuring that faith formation continues at home. Bring them to Mass on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation. Practice our faith all day, every day. Pray together, bring the unity of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit to your homes and your hearts.

Loving God,  
You are the giver of all we possess,  
the source of all of our blessings.  
We thank and praise you.

Thank you for the gift of our children.

Help us to set boundaries for them,  
and yet encourage them to explore.  
Give us the strength and courage to treat  
each day as a fresh start.

May our children come to know you, the one true God,  
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

May your Holy Spirit help them to grow  
in faith, hope, and love,  
so they may know peace, truth, and goodness.

May their ears hear your voice.  
May their eyes see your presence in all things.  
May their lips proclaim your word.  
May their hearts be your dwelling place.  
May their hands do works of charity.  
May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ,  
your Son and our Lord.

Amen.