

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**Saint Paul Religious Education Grades K-8**  
2017.18 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. 17, 2017. You may use the same registration form for sacramental preparation or faith education for children in grades K-8. The form allows you to include all ages and all programs, except high school. Submit the completed registration form, with a check for the total of tuition/fees, to the parish office via mail, or drop through the mail slot in the parish office door, or put the form and check in a sealed envelope in the collection basket at Mass (label the envelope `Religious Education'). 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)).

**Q2. Do we need to be parishioners at Saint Paul to participate in religious education?** There are many benefits to children receiving their religious instruction within the faith community in which they worship and interact with peers. And the parish's first obligation is to registered families. Thus, Saint Paul parish gives first priority enrollment to children of families who are already 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 should ask their pastor for a letter stating that he is aware that his parishioner is 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 Pastor.

**Q3. What programs does Saint Paul offer for elementary-aged children?**

**Option A. "Blest Are We" Program** (meets weekly onsite at Saint Paul parish)

Dedicated volunteer catechists and aides teach the students that God is 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.

**Option B. Atrium Program (Montessori)** (meets weekly onsite at Saint Paul parish)

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.

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**Option C. "Blest Are We" Home Study Program** (weekly, in the family home)

Parents serve as the religious educator 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 are expected to participate in all other group gatherings of their child's peer group (Mass, penance services, social events, etc...)

***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 retreat experiences 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 an avg. twice per month onsite at Saint Paul parish.)

The textbook series for Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation I is '*Alive in Christ*' published by Our Sunday Visitor ([www.aliveinchrist.osv.com](http://www.aliveinchrist.osv.com)). Confirmation II 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 meet as a *community* of mixed grades for prayer and fellowship. Parents are asked to serve as 'host family' at the session at least twice during the school year. In addition to the bi-monthly education session, youth participate in retreats, social justice projects and social activities provided through the curriculum.

**Option B. Atrium** (through age 12 only). See prior description.

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

For sixth 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 leader materials that help the parents guide their child through the lessons. Families are expected to participate in all other group gatherings of their child's peer group (Mass, penance services, social events, etc...) (Note: The Pastor must approve all home schooling for Confirmation preparation.)

***Sacrament of Confirmation*** follows two years of Confirmation preparation. Youth usually prepare for the in seventh grade (Confirmation I) and eighth grade (Confirmation II). 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?**

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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.

**Q7. On what day and times will the children/youth religious education sessions be offered in the 2016/17 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 July 21, 2017 and to please provide a 'first' and 'second' choice day/time option when registering.

<u>Level/program</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>How Often</u>
Middle school	Sundays	3:00-4:45 pm	Twice a month
Middle school	Thursdays	6:45-8:30 pm	Twice a month
Grades K-5	Mondays	7:00-8:15 pm	Weekly
Grades K-5	Thursdays	5:15-6:30 pm	Weekly
Atrium 3-6 yr. olds	Mondays	12:30 – 2:00PM	Weekly
Atrium 3-6 yr. olds	Mondays	4:30 – 6:00 PM	Weekly
Atrium 6-9 yrs.	Mondays	4:30 – 6:00 PM	Weekly
Atrium 6-9 yrs.	Tuesdays	6:05 – 7:45PM	Weekly
Atrium 9-12 yrs.	Mondays	6:30 – 8:15 PM	Weekly
Atrium 9-12 yrs.	Tuesdays	4:15 – 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** all areas of the form including current phone numbers and provide one primary family email address. Include a check payable to *Saint Paul Catholic Church*.
- √ **ELECTRONICALLY** submit the completed form to [czyzak@stpauldamascus.org](mailto:czyzak@stpauldamascus.org) **OR**
- √ **DROP OFF** the form and payment to:
  - the parish office M-F 9:00 – 4:00 **OR**
  - in the slot at the bottom of the office door after hours **OR**
  - Mail it to 9240 Damascus Road, Damascus, MD 20872 **OR**

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- Drop it in the Sunday collection basket in a sealed envelope labeled Religious Education
- √ 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!