

St. Paul's Faith Formation Program Handbook

Staff Contact Information

Director: Marie Fleisner
Location: Main Office St. Paul School

Mailing Address: St. Paul Faith Formation
404 High St.
Mosinee, WI 54455

Phone: 715 650-7751 **Weekdays except Wednesday**
715 693-2675 **Wednesdays**

Email: dre@stpaulmosinee.org

Welcome! Our vision at St. Paul parish is to work in partnership with families to offer the best learning/faith formation experience for your children. We believe that the first Church is the domestic Church found in each home. Parents, you are the first and foremost educators of your children. In fact, the Council of Vatican II, Document on Christian Education, no. 3 states that "Parents' role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it." What a wonderful (and intimidating) statement that is. Please read it again. We know the gifts our mothers and fathers have been for most of us, and how it can take one's whole life to overcome poor or absent parenting. So, we are full of praise for all the energy and action you are investing in the raising of your children ... and, particularly in your efforts to hand on your Catholic faith to them. We hope you will find the faith formation program of the St. Paul parish a great help in reinforcing and enriching what you are already doing. This handbook is meant as a guide and orientation to the expectations of the program.

We don't just live out our faith inside the walls of our churches and of our homes. We're not to be of the world, but we're to be in the world. We're citizens of an earthly kingdom as well as a heavenly one. Citizens participate in the culture, everything from what children are taught in school to what appears on TV screens. [Quote from US Council of Catholic Bishops conference on the family.]

For families who have their children enrolled in a Catholic school, involvement in the parish Faith Formation program will primarily be in working with your children in sacramental preparation (First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. Basic information on sacramental programs is found in this booklet and details will be shared at the sacramental parent meetings. For families whose children are enrolled in the public school system, those children must be enrolled in the Faith Formation program consistently beginning in First Grade. For families for whom our Wednesday evening schedule isn't practical, for Home Schooling families, or due to a child's special needs we will work with you to provide home-school faith formation materials and assistance, so that you can provide the appropriate catechetical component on your own. Again, however, except in very special situations, children sacramental prep cannot be done at home.

We ask parents to **please provide an email address** and cell phone number that we can use to communicate with you. We are now primarily using email for communication to provide you with updates about the program, although we will be transitioning to using Flocknote (which uses email and text) this year.

To encourage your children to form good Catholic practices, we suggest that you:

- **Attend Mass** together weekly as a family. Family participation at Mass is fundamental in the overall development of our Catholic faith. **A parish faith formation program cannot succeed if the central act of worship is ignored. Class attendance does not take the place of Mass.**
- **Pray regularly** as a family. Encourage your children to share prayer and actively participate in Mass. Special observances of the Church seasons make Jesus more alive in your family.
- Volunteer your time and talent. It takes the time, talent, and resources of our entire parish community to provide excellent religious education programs for our children. Please let your child's teacher know if you can help in the classroom.

Attendance Obviously, no learning can take place if a child is absent. Regular attendance is expected and demonstrates the desire of the parent as well as the child for formation of the faith. If a student must miss a class, we ask parents to call the Faith Formation Office at **715-693-2675**, email dre@stpaulmosinee.org, or text **715-650-7751** prior to **5:00 p.m.** on Wednesday of the absence. Once attendance is taken in the classroom, for reasons of safety, volunteers (as a courtesy) may call the parents of children who are missing without parental notice. If students must leave class early, we need the student to leave with the parent/guardian or provide a written permission to leave. Parents are responsible for contacting the catechist regarding the lesson missed and any homework assigned. Four (4) or more absences may result in repeating the grade level the following year.

Arrival/Departure Classes begin promptly at **6:00 p.m.** Children may **not** be dropped off earlier than 5:45 p.m. Children should report directly to **Tetzlaff Center Gym**. If a child is tardy, he/she must report to the office on the 1st floor to check in. Classes are dismissed at **7:00 p.m.** Children in grades 1 and 2 should be met at the by a parent or other authorized person.

To maintain safety, after reporting to the Tetzlaff Center gym, students will enter with their class through the side door (in the alley between the playground and the school- Door A). This is the only door that will be unlocked. All other doors will remain locked.

Students will exit through the doors on High Street. Parents of students in grades 1 and 2 will be allowed to wait inside until dismissal. Parents of students in all other grades are asked to wait outside or to instruct your child(ren) where/how to find you.

Visitors: We will be limiting visitors to the building. Anyone who needs to enter the building must first report to the office, and the visit must be for essential Faith formation business only.

Cancellation/Inclement Weather When the Mosinee Public School classes are cancelled due to bad weather or other emergency, Faith Formation sessions will also automatically be cancelled. If inclement weather develops later in the day, or for other instances, announcements will be made through the local radio and television stations (WRIG, WSAU), postings on MyParish, and an email blast to families.

Discipline Our expectations concerning discipline: For the sake of the learning environment, our expectations are that all children will arrive on time, bringing all their needed materials, remove hats and jackets in the building, turn off all mobile devices, refrain from eating, drinking, and gum chewing in the classrooms unless these are organized by the catechist, be generally respectful and cooperative, listen and share, and complete assigned work or makeup work before the next session, as directed by their catechists. If there are discipline concerns, the catechist will first speak with the child. If the behavior concerns continue, he/she will meet with the Director and the catechist together, and parents will be contacted to assist in finding a successful learning strategy. If concerns continue, the Director will

work with catechists, parents, and student to create a plan for student and to maintain a proper atmosphere in classes for all the participants. If it is not possible for the individual's needs to be met in the faith formation environment, alternatives for that year will be explored with the family. Of course, possession, sale or use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco products or weapons by students at St. Paul is strictly prohibited. Students involved with drugs, alcohol, weapons, or vandalism will be referred to the proper legal authorities, and parents will be contacted immediately.

Care of Facility We are blessed to have a beautiful school to hold our classes. We are all expected to honor the possessions of others and take pride in demonstrating our respect. Any deliberate damage to property will require the student/parent to make amends which may include clean up, cost of repair (including labor), and/or monetary reimbursement.

Communication Communication with parents will be done primarily through email, so it is very important that families provide an email address to the office. Soon we will also be using Flocknote. We also use the Sunday bulletin, MyParishApp, and notes sent home with students. Regular "snail mail" will almost never be used. Feel free to communicate any concerns or feedback about Faith Formation at St. Paul Parish using the phone number and email on the cover of this booklet.

Dress Code Dress in a manner that reflects respect for the sacredness of the body and our environment including no caps worn inside, no suggestive or offensive clothing. Shorts worn during warm weather are to be of an appropriate length. Tank tops, shoulder-less tops, and tops that show a bare midriff are not allowed. This expectation applies to all age levels.

Parish Registration

Generally, all families participating in Faith Formation at St. Paul's should be registered with St. Paul's. There may be special circumstances when this is not necessary. However, when a child is receiving a sacrament through St. Paul's, your family needs to be registered parishioners, unless they receive permission from the home parish priest to receive the sacrament through St. Paul's.

Fees/Registration Forms Required

The registration fee is meant to cover the cost of texts and materials; the overall fee is \$80.00 per student. If you have more than one child in the program, we ask for a minimum initial payment of \$80.00 at the time of registration, although, you may also choose to simply pay the total fees at the time of registration. We will send a reminder for any remaining balance in one month, and any final balance a month later. There is a separate fee for students preparing to receive a sacrament this year. No student will be excluded from the Faith Formation Program due to an inability to pay tuition fees. If you need confidential tuition assistance or an alternative payment plan, please contact the Director.

- Registration Form is required for all families. **Copy of Baptismal certificate** is required for all students new to the program who were not baptized at St. Paul.
- **\$20.00** sacramental fee for students in Grades 2nd and 10th.

Sacramental Preparation

Any Child wishing to receive a sacrament must have a *full year* of religious education sessions *prior* to the Sacramental year itself. [In other words, children must attend 1st grade to receive **First Holy Eucharist** in 2nd grade. Children must attend 8th **and** 9th grade to receive the **Sacrament of Confirmation** in the 10th grade.] The preparation is the bringing together of elements that allow us to celebrate the sacraments in community. Each sacrament has requirements that are meant to enrich the experience of receiving and celebrating that sacrament.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Children receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation (Confession) and First Eucharist (Communion) in 2nd Grade. Reconciliation takes place prior to First Holy Communion. We encourage you to participate as a family in the sacrament of Reconciliation at the parish. First Holy Communion takes place in the spring. Practice is held the Wednesday before the sacrament. To help prepare your child for their reception of First Holy Communion, we encourage you to attend weekly Mass with your child.

If you have a child in grades 3–9 who has not yet received First Reconciliation/First Communion, contact the Director of Religious Education (DRE). Parents will receive additional information about the Sacramental preparation.

Confirmation

In the Diocese of La Crosse, Confirmation for baptized Catholics typically takes place in tenth grade. Again, consistent involvement in faith formation in prior years is expected. Preparation for Confirmation takes place throughout 9th and 10th grade. If your child attends a Catholic high school, he/she must attend the confirmation prep program. The program generally consists of several small group sessions over the 2-year period, Mass attendance, service hours, and a retreat each year. Students will receive a separate handbook about the Confirmation Program.

Home Study for Grades 1-8

This home-based alternative to the traditional classroom-based learning format features you, the parent or guardian, as the teacher. We will be using a new computer-based resource called “My Catholic Faith Delivered.” This is a flexible option because you choose the day of the week and time that you will complete the faith formation studies with your child. It is also a wonderful way for the family to learn together and grow more in faith. Parents must meet with the Director to explore this option.

Home Study Requirements:

- Parents and students must be in frequent contact with the DRE.
- Students must complete and submit a finished project.
- Students are encouraged to attend Masses and other sacraments scheduled throughout the year.
- Parents who home school must complete the Diocesan Safe Environment training.

Note: For Second Grade, as well as Grades 9 & 10, because these grades are the sacramental preparation years, home schooling is not an option. Students in these grades are required to attend formal classes.

Prayers & Practices Lessons

Each grade has a prayer or practice they should master by the end of that year. It is recommended that these be said or reviewed each week in class and at home. If you have any questions on how to help your child learn these at home, please contact his/her teacher.

1st Grade: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

2nd Grade: Act of Contrition (in textbook), Grace Before Meals

3rd Grade: The Apostles’ & Nicene Creeds

4th Grade: Examination of Conscience & Corporal Works of Mercy

5th Grade: How to say the Rosary & its Mysteries

6th Grade: Spontaneous Prayer & 10 Commandments

7th Grade: Praying with Scripture, 7 Sacraments, & Beatitudes

8th Grade: Types of Prayer & 7 Gifts of the Spirit

Diocesan Program Policies

Safe Environment We believe in providing a safe and sacred space for our children and teens. In union with the Diocese of La Crosse, these policies are designed to provide a safe environment for your children. The Diocese of La Crosse requires that all staff and volunteers who work with youth have had a background check and have received Safe Environment training. The Diocese also requires that ALL students receive Safe Environment information. This training will take place during the year.

Parents can access the training at www.dioceseoflacrosse.com and then follow these directions: Click on Safe Environment. On left hand side, click on Safe Environment training and then Parents. Read/watch the materials and answer the questions when done. An email will be sent to the DRE's office indicating training completion. Parents are required to sign acknowledging that their child may receive the training. Those who refuse training will be contacted by the Diocesan office confirming the reason for denial of training. This permission is given on the registration form.

Code of Conduct

Learning and working together as a faith community committed to be disciples of Jesus Christ requires that we all strive for a positive and respectful environment. Each student/parent/guardian in our Faith Formation program will be required to follow the procedures and policies of our program as defined below.

Our catechists perform an invaluable service to the youth and parents of our parish by teaching the children, preparing them for the sacraments, and passing on their love of our Catholic faith to the young people of our parish. Theirs is a time-consuming and challenging task. They need to cover volumes of material in just over one hour a week, and they need to provide a good learning environment in order to do so. It is very important for all students to demonstrate the same positive behaviors and respect that is expected of them at home, at school during the day, or during Mass. It can be frustrating when students are disruptive. Your responsibility as non-teaching parents is to deliver and pick up your young person on time, to discuss with them the content covered in class, and to assure your student has consistent appropriate behavior. **Note: Please review, sign, and return the Code of Conduct form to your teacher.**

It is important that we create an environment of safety and respect that promotes learning and cooperation. We ask that the guidelines described in this handbook be followed to present an orderly, respectful, and welcoming religious education program.

- Regular attendance is both encouraged and expected.
- No food or drink should be brought into the classroom. Snacks may be provided at the catechist's discretion. No chewing gum or candy.
- No toys or games.
- Hats will not be worn in the building (unless there is a medical reason).
- Shirts will not have offensive words or pictures.
- Cell phones, iPad (or other tablets), or any other electronic devices are not allowed in the classroom. The catechist has the authority to take them away during class.
- No fidget spinners or other "fidget" devices are allowed in the classroom, unless the child has a medical reason (provided by the parent) for such device. Catechists have the authority to confiscate such devices.
- Please make every effort to pick your children up on time.

Respect

- An atmosphere of learning is built upon respect and concern.
- Boundaries will be set to promote learning and cooperation.

- Honor our catechists who share time, talent, and often their treasure with your children.
- Respect for all persons and property must be fostered.
- When attending Mass, we expect reverence, including blessing self when entering and exiting the church, genuflecting when entering and exiting the pew, and avoiding personal conversations while in the church.

Disruptive Behavior

To prevent disruptions in the classroom, or before or after class anywhere on Church grounds, the following code of conduct agreement will be in effect. Parents and students must sign an acknowledgement at the beginning of each academic year (September) stating they understand and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct Agreement.

Behaviors that will not be tolerated include but are not limited to:

- Talking out of turn
- Negative attitude
- Disruptions or outbursts of any kind
- Disrespect, teasing, or bullying shown to students or teachers
- Talking with others when all students should be listening to the teacher
- Using a cell phone during class time (see above)
- Unless there is a medical reason communicated by the parents to the teacher, only one bathroom/drink break is allowed for the one hour spent in the classroom. Constant requests to go to the bathroom or get a drink are disruptive. Students should take care of this before or after class.
- Students will leave the classroom in the same, or better, condition than when they arrived (throw away papers; put away pencils, glue, books; do not write on desks, etc.)
- Students will respect the church, classroom, and school facilities, and any property.
- Any other behavior or attitude infraction not listed above will be discussed between the teacher and the DRE and determined at their discretion to warrant the next level of discipline

1st offence: the student will be warned and a phone call or email to the parent(s) will follow to inform of the infraction.

2nd offence: the student and parent(s) will need to meet with the Director and/or Pastor to discuss the student's behavior in the classroom, and how the student will stop the disruptions and behaviors.

3rd offence: the student will be suspended from the "in-classroom" faith formation for a period of 12 months, and the parent(s) and student will need to use the "homeschool" curriculum during that time.

***Note:** It is not the intention of the Pastor, Director, or catechists to push students away from the faith, the sacraments, or the Catholic Church with this policy. Questions about this agreement should be directed to the Director at 715-693-2675 or email dre@stpaulmosinee.org

Medication

By law, catechists and other volunteers are not permitted to dispense medication of any kind. We will not administer aspirins or cold remedies. Students may **NOT** bring aspirins, cold remedies including cough drops, or any other over-the-counter medicines to class.

Acknowledgment of Code of Conduct Agreement St. Paul Parish

We acknowledge and agree to abide by the St. Paul Faith Formation Code of Conduct Agreement. We understand that disruptive behavior and attitudes cannot be tolerated and inhibits the learning of all students. We also understand and acknowledge the Pastor, Director of Religious Education, and all catechists want to teach the faith and not push individuals away from the faith, the sacraments, or the Catholic Church with this Code of Conduct Agreement.

Student I understand and agree to the Code of Behavior listed above and that I am responsible for my own behavior and class participation. I also understand that my parents or guardians will be notified at the time that I do not abide by the code of conduct following a verbal warning by Director of Religious Education.

Signature

Print name

Date

Parent(s) or Legal guardian I agree that my student(s) shall abide by the contract outlined above. I have reviewed it and discussed the contract with my child(ren) prior to signing this form. I agree that if my child(ren) fails to consistently abide by the Code or engages in a serious infraction of the Code, I will be notified immediately to choose from the options listed above.

1. _____ 2. _____
Signatures

1. _____ 2. _____
Printed names

Date

We may take photos of Faith Formation gatherings that may be used on our parish website. No names of minors will be used. Please sign below indicating your approval for us to use photos of your child(ren).

1. _____ 2. _____
Signature

1. _____ 2. _____
Printed names

Date