

ST. PAUL CATHOLIC CHURCH

# Religious Education

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## Home Study Program Handbook

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## **Guidelines for the Home Study Program**

The St. Paul Religious Education Department is dedicated to helping those parents that choose to educate their children in the ways of the faith at home. As an alternative to traditional faith formation which involves study in a classroom setting, St. Paul Parish recognizes that some families may have special circumstances that effects their ability to have their child (ren) attend traditional religious education classes in a classroom setting. This may require that this method of catechizing be overridden.

### **Philosophy**

It is the understanding of the St. Paul Religious Education Program that all Religious Education opportunities for children are intended to complement the religious formation done by parents who are the primary educators of their children. St. Paul Religious Education recognizes God's love for us and that we should return that love to God sacramentally and by modeling service to the community and the Church. Supported by the parish community that catechizes by its lifestyle, liturgy, service, and hospitality; children grow spiritually through the formal and informal sharing of God's Word. The goal is to provide the children who are catechized with a real sense of belonging to the community.

### **Admission**

It is the policy of St. Paul Parish that all requests to enter the Home Study program be made in writing to the Director of Religious Education. The Director of Religious Education will review the request and meet with the Pastor or his designee with the recommendation. The Pastor will contact the family usually within a week of his decision. St. Paul Parish Religious Education will provide resources, guidance, and support to make this experience beneficial for everyone.

### **Program**

Those who wish to catechize their children at home are required to contact the Pastor or Director of Religious Education program for approval. Upon the family's request, the process for admission described in the **"Admissions"** section under the **"Philosophy, Policies, and Procedures"** section of the **Parent Policy Handbook** will be initiated.

Families that enter the St. Paul Home Study program are to register their children through the Religious Education office according to the regulations and policy procedures established by the parish.

Parents/guardians who enter the St. Paul Home Study program will utilize the approved catechetical text and supplementary catechetical resources to catechize their children in at home. Parents/guardians and their children will meet with the Director of Education to review each child's progress of their catechetical efforts

periodically. Currently, the St. Paul Religious Education Program uses "We Believe" published by Sadlier as its texts for grades K- 8.

### **Fees**

The Family and book Fees for St. Paul Home Study program is the same as regular Religious Education classes in a classroom setting. A deposit for the rental of each Catechist manual that parents/guardians need for home study will be assessed. The current fee rates are available in the Religious Education office. Deposits will be refunded when Catechist's manuals are returned to the St. Paul Religious Education office.

### **Continuing Education**

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend the Catechist Formation sessions and in-services. Catechist training and in-services are listed in the church bulletin and on the Religious Education website. Call the Religious Education office to register for any session.

### **Sacraments**

The General Directory for Catechesis has this to say about Sacramental preparation:

"Sacramental catechesis '*is an essentially ecclesial act*' [78] and therefore '*not an action which can be realized in the community on a private basis or by purely personal initiative*' [219.b]. Sacramental catechesis, therefore, takes place in a parish-based program."

The proper context for the celebration of the sacraments is the parish community. "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebration belonging to the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity.'" [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy #26]

Parents/guardians who are enrolled in the Home Study program together with their children are required to participate in all dimensions of the parish program for sacramental catechesis: catechetical, ritual, service, spiritual (retreats, etc.), and any other requirements for sacramental preparation as determined by the parish.

In addition, children/youth who participate in the Home Study program are to celebrate the sacraments and the immediate preparation for the sacrament in the parish at the time that has been determined for those in the classroom-based program to prepare for the sacrament. Those who choose to catechize their children at home are required to fully participate in all aspects of the parish-based program for sacramental preparation. Specific information regarding Sacramental Preparation can be found in The "Sacrament Preparation Program" section of the Parent Policy Handbook.

## **Communication With Home and Religious Education Office**

After being admitted to the Home Study Program, each family is responsible for obtaining materials specific to the Program. This may include a current Home Study Calendar, Program Information Letter, textbook, and other teaching materials. Families can accomplish this by calling the Religious Education office to schedule a meeting with the director.

Assignments must be completed in a timely manner and either sent by fax or email to the Religious Education office. This information is available on the title page of this handbook. Students are required to complete an assessment when they finish each unit of the text. This should coincide with the schedule of those who attend traditional classes on-site at St. Paul Education Center. Parents must contact the Religious Education office at 219-464-8502 to schedule a time for this assessment to be completed. To help the student be successful in achieving a respectable score on an assessment, parents/guardians will be given the same lesson plan that classroom catechists receive. "We Believe" is composed of four (4) units which contain six (6) chapters within them. Students must complete all four (4) unit assessments in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Only one grade level may be completed during a school year. Failure to complete this process will result in the student needing to repeat the grade level.

Home Study students are encouraged to participate in prayer service; such as the Fall Marian Prayer Service and Posada. It is mandatory that they attend any prayer or liturgical service that students who are enrolled in on-site classes are required to attend. Any corresponding assignments intended to be completed at home must be turned into the RE office as well. An example of this is the "**Lenten Observance Week**." Further information will be sent home as the time of the event approaches.

The safety of all children who participate in worship, classes, and other activities at St. Paul parish is important. The Church provides educational opportunities for all children at St. Paul through the **Protecting God's Children** training. This is offered during the regular on-site classes. Home Study students should complete this training also. All Home Study students are welcome to attend any one of these training offered through the RE Program on-site. Parents should contact the director to schedule a time for their student(s) to attend.