

## Community Outreach

An integral part of religious education is understanding how to put our faith into practice. Through our community outreach programs we hope that our children will begin to both identify with their faith community as well as to recognize and utilize their God-given gifts to help others.

GRADE 1 - St. Paul's Church

GRADE 2 - St. Paul's Church

GRADE 3 - Town of Blackstone

GRADE 4 - Military Abroad

GRADE 5 - Refugee Apostolate

GRADE 6 - Blackstone/Millville Food Pantry

GRADE 7 - Medway Family Shelter

GRADE 8 - Haven of Grace: Women's Shelter.



GO IN PEACE TO LOVE AND SERVE  
THE LORD AND ONE ANOTHER

# Church of St. Paul Religious Education Handbook

*Revised Summer 2009*

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**Church of St. Paul Contact Info:**

**48 St. Paul Street**

**Blackstone, MA 01504**

- **Religious Ed Phone: 508-883-2590**
- **Religious Ed Email: [religioused@stpaulblackstone.org](mailto:religioused@stpaulblackstone.org)**
- **Rectory Phone: 508-883-6726**
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## Religious Education Mission Statement & Program Information

The goal of St. Paul's Religious Education is to provide support to all who seek to grow in their knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. We firmly believe that God created us to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him and others in this world and to be happy with Him in the world to come. It is through God's love and our love for Him that we can grow into a true disciple of Christ.

St. Paul's Religious Education Programs are designed to provide a foundation for strong discipleship in each individual. We emphasize the four pillars of prayer, study, morality and Christian action which support a vibrant faith. It is our hope that through education, we may enable people to live joyfully; confident of the presence of Jesus in their life.

For Children Enrolled in our School Year Program:

Our elementary education program supports parents in the faith formation of their children. We hope to provide an enriching class experience which will give our children the knowledge of the Roman Catholic faith in order to participate fully at the holy sacrifice of Mass and appreciate the presence of God in their daily life. Our Confirmation program focuses on preparing our young adults for the Sacrament of Confirmation and to develop their role as active members of the parish community.

For any individual who wishes to explore or return to the Catholic Faith:

We will assist you on your journey to discover Christ and help to prepare you to receive the sacraments. We will do our best to accommodate your work or family schedule. Please contact the rectory at 508-883-6726 for more information.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students are expected to attend all Religious Ed classes and Outreach Projects except for illness and family crises. Parents are expected to call in student absences to the Religious Education Office at 508-883-2590 prior to class time. Excessive absence without any effort to make up work may result in class repetition the following year. In the event of a school conflict, please contact the religious education coordinator in order that work may be completed at home.

### HOMEWORK:

Homework will be assigned at the discretion of the teacher. Homework is not intended to overburden children, but to reinforce a class concept or more often to begin a discussion as a family.

### MAKE-UP WORK POLICY:

If a student is absent from Religious Education, any missed classwork and homework must be made up and returned to their teacher in a timely fashion. Failure to complete missed assignments may result in repeating a year of religious education. If unusual circumstances arise which affect your child's ability to attend or participate in religious education, please contact the coordinator as soon as possible.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY:

All students are expected to conduct themselves as they would in any other academic classroom while attending Religious Education classes. Excessive talking, disrespectful language or behavior, disrupting the class or refusal to participate in regular classroom work is not considered acceptable behavior.

If a student repeatedly misbehaves, the Religious Education teacher may call on the Coordinator to intervene. If it is deemed necessary, the family will be contacted and a course of action will be determined by the Coordinator with the input of the family, the teacher and/or the student.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE:**

St. Paul's Religious Education Office is located on the first level of the Parish Center in Classroom 1. The coordinator is available during class times or by appointment and may be reached at 508-883-2590 or at [religioused@stpaulblackstone.org](mailto:religioused@stpaulblackstone.org).

### **REGISTRATION:**

- Registration occurs annually during the months of April and May for the following September. Students who are currently enrolled in classes will be able to register during class times.
- For students entering grade 1 or entering our program for the first time, registration forms are available in the back of the church.
- For students in Grade 2 or students entering the Confirmation Program who were not baptized at St. Paul's, a copy of the baptismal certificate is required with registration.

### **REGISTRATION FEES:**

- The fee is \$30 per child for families who register before the May deadline. A fee of \$40 per child will be charged to families who register after the May deadline.
- The maximum family fee is \$100.
- For those who are experiencing financial hardship, please contact the religious education coordinator directly to discuss either a payment plan or fee waiver.
- There is no Registration Fee for those parents who volunteer as Religious Education Teachers. This is to show our deep appreciation for all those who give generously of their time and talents to share their faith in Christ with our students.

### **CLASS CANCELLATION:**

If there is no Public School due to inclement weather, there will be no religious education classes that day or evening. In the event of inclement weather during the weekend, there will be a message on the religious ed voicemail at 508-883-2590 and families will receive a phone call at home.

## **Textbook Information**

Our textbook is the Faith First Series – Legacy Edition. The textbook is split into four units: Unit 1 We Believe (Creed), Unit 2 We Worship (Liturgy & Sacraments), Unit 3 We Live (Christian Morality) and Unit 4 We Pray (Prayer).

The textbook uses a spiral learning system which means that the children will explore the same subjects in increasing depth as is age appropriate during a particular cycle of years. Cycles are composed of the following years:

- Grades 1, 2, & 3
- Grades 4, 5 & 6
- Grades 7 & 8

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## **Guidelines for Conduct**

1. Parents of children in Grades 1-5 are to escort children both to and from the Parish Center at the beginning and ending of each class. This is to prevent any accidents from occurring in the Parking Lot.
2. Upon arrival and departure, parents of children in grades 1-5 are expected to sign their children in and out of religious education. Teachers will be waiting for their students in the Parish Center at the beginning of class.
3. If a child arrives late to religious education, it is their parent's responsibility to ensure that their child arrives safely to their classroom if no aides or teachers remain in the Lower Hall.
4. Students are expected to respect one another and parish property while on the church grounds. This includes addressing parish staff and volunteers politely, not throwing or breaking objects, not striking another person or object, listening when spoken to and walking through the parish center. Profanity is not permitted and is cause for disciplinary action.
5. Smoking and substance abuse on parish premises is strictly prohibited.

## Curriculum Overview

Grade 1: The main focus of Grade 1 is the premise that God loves us. From this premise, children will learn about God as creator, as a loving father and as the person of Jesus. From Jesus, children will learn the basics of the church as a community.

Grade 2: Children will explore their personal relationship with God, the significance of the Eucharist, and their role in our church community. These themes will play an important role in sacramental preparation as children will receive both First Reconciliation and First Communion this year.

Grade 3: Our focus is to reinforce the creed concepts introduced in Grades 1&2 so as to nurture each child's relationship with Jesus and the church community as well as to further their understanding of the Mass. Special attention will be paid to God as our Father, the church as our faith community and the events of the Paschal Mystery; the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

Grade 4: The major focus of this year's work is living the faith, making choices and understanding consequences through a study of the 10 Commandments, the celebration of the Sacraments and the Beatitudes.

Grade 5: Students will explore the idea of covenant with God in the Bible and the Bible as Sacred Scripture. We will use the Bible to learn about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the significance of the liturgical year.

Grade 6: Students will focus on discipleship and the importance of bringing the knowledge of their faith into practice in their daily life. We will look at Jesus as our role model and explore the significance of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

## Home Schooling

For students who have a schedule conflict with religious education classes or for families who prefer to solely foster their child's faith, home schooling is available. Please contact the religious education office for additional information.

HOME SCHOOLING IS NOT AN OPTION FOR GRADE 2 OR FOR THE CONFIRMATION PROGRAM.

### Student Requirements

- Written unit reviews for each of the four units must be submitted.
- Attendance at a children's Mass
- Participation in any community service projects for their grade
- An annual interview with the religious education coordinator.

### Parent Expectations

- Parents are expected to attend Mass regularly as a family to the best of their abilities.
- Parents are expected to responsibly and faithfully instruct their children in religious education.
- Please be advised, the written unit reviews are used primarily as a record of your child's work rather than for grading purposes. However, if there seems to be continual poor effort or a consistent lack of understanding on your child's behalf, the option to home school may be revoked. Such an action would be a last resort and the religious education coordinator would be expected to reach out to the family and the child in question before any such decision was made.

## Confirmation Program

### The Sacrament of Confirmation

When students receive the sacrament of Confirmation, their soul receives a second mark from the Holy Spirit. Catholics receive their first mark of the Holy Spirit at Baptism. The sacrament of Confirmation celebrates a maturing of our love for Jesus and “confirms” our faith in Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, students are able to share the Good News of Christ with others and are able to go forth to love and serve the Lord to the best of their God-given abilities.

### Student Expectations

- Submit a “Letter of Intention to Receive the Sacrament of Confirmation”
- Submit a copy of Baptismal Certificate if not baptized at St. Paul’s
- Participate in the Enrollment Ceremony Mass
- Responsible and Faithful class attendance
- Weekly attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Sunday
- Schedule a regular time to pray in your life
- 5 hours of parish community service
- Schedule a personal interview with the Pastor
- Participate in the Confirmation Retreat
- Carefully choose a Confirmation Sponsor and submit a sponsor certificate
- Be a sincere Catholic Christian known for faith, good works and living in model of Christ



## Curriculum Overview cont.

Grades 7 & 8: During grades 7 & 8, students will use their knowledge of the faith from the elementary grades and begin to personalize their beliefs as they prepare for the Confirmation program. The question “What would Jesus Do?” is frequently explored. Grade 7 focuses on the nature of God and knowing God in our life. In addition, grade 7 students will study how we celebrate our faith through the Church and significance of the Sacraments. In Grade 8, an emphasis is placed on moral decision-making and a study of the 10 Commandments. Students in grade 8 will also study each of the four Gospels and their relevance to daily life.

Confirmation Program: This is a two year program structured from a variety of sources by the pastor. The goal of the program is to help students explore the gifts of the Holy Spirit and understand how they can use their gifts from God to live a Christian life and ultimately to “Go forth to love and serve the Lord”.

## Parent Expectations

Parents are expected to enable their children to attend religious education classes and to use their best efforts to attend Mass regularly as a family. Parents are also expected to enable their children to attend a children’s Mass for their grade and when possible to help them to attend any community service events for their class.

Parents are expected to attend scheduled Parent Meetings. There is typically one at the start of each session and an additional parent meeting for children preparing to receive sacraments.

Parents are expected to enroll their children in religious education each year until they receive the sacrament of Confirmation. This ongoing faith formation helps to ensure that students will receive sufficient knowledge of their faith in order to receive the sacraments. More importantly, we hope that through the ten years of religious education students will come to understand the love God has for each of us and begin to understand how to live the Gospel.

## 1st Reconciliation

### Curriculum Goals

- To make the children comfortable with the idea of Reconciliation
  - To introduce the idea that rules are a vehicle of love
  - That the 10 Commandments are God's special rules of love
  - To help the children form the concepts of sin and conscience
- Sin is deliberately choosing to go against God's rules of love, the 10 Commandments. Conscience is that inner voice that helps us to know the difference between right and wrong.
- Emphasis is placed on helping children understand the difference between actively choosing to do wrong and accidentally doing wrong.
  - To present the overwhelming love and mercy of God
  - To present the need to repent and seek forgiveness
- Just as if a child has hurt a friend's feelings or broken a family rule, they feel better once they've apologized and made things "right" with their friend or family, the same is true for their relationship with God.
- To familiarize the children with the steps in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

### Student Expectations

Attend Mass regularly

Attend religious education classes.

Learn the "Act of Contrition" and be able to understand sorrow for sin.

### Act of Contrition

My God,

I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.

In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,

I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above all things.

I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance,  
to sin no more,

and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Savior Jesus Christ  
Suffered and died for us.

In his name, my God, have mercy.

## 1st Communion

### Curriculum Goals

- To help children understand that through their Baptism they are part of the church community
- The celebration of the Mass is the central celebration of the Catholic faith
- To help children to show age-appropriate reverence while listening to readings from the Bible and participating in Mass
- To foster the teaching that when we are at Mass, we worship God as the source of all goodness and blessings and that God always loves and cares for us.
- Children will begin to know the responses and prayers of the Mass; in particular the Our Father.
- Children will know that Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist at the Last Supper
- Before receiving First Communion, children must know that the bread and wine present in Mass have become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ - that Jesus is truly and really present in the Eucharist.
- Children should be able to demonstrate age-appropriate reverence and devotion while receiving the Eucharist.

### Student Expectations

Attend Mass regularly

Attend religious education classes.

Complete all necessary assignments.

Participate in scheduled rehearsals.

If there are excessive unexcused absences and incomplete assignments, your child may be unable to receive the sacrament with their class.

