

FAMILY HANDBOOK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM



**SS. PETER & PAUL PARISH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTER
36 NORTH ELLSWORTH
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS 60540**

**(630) 357-2436
(630) 357-2458 (FAX)**

***Attendance Hotline
630-355-1139***

S.S. Peter and Paul Parish RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTER

This handbook is designed to assist in understanding the religious education program at SS. Peter and Paul Parish. It is the goal of all of the directors, office staff, catechists, leaders and all other volunteers to assist in the education of all of our parishioners. While the parish has educational programs that provide opportunities at every level, supporting parents in the education of the next generation of Catholics is an important aspect of catechesis. It is our job as ministers in the education of our young people augments and does not replace the duty of the parents.

“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents”.

--Catechism of the Catholic Church

We are grateful for the dedicated parishioners who have come forward to offer their talents to teach, assist, and safeguard our younger parishioners. We invite all of you to consider volunteering: Catechists, Assistants, Substitutes, Hall Greeters, Office Helpers, Child Care Helpers, and Crossing Guards are always needed. We pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit for all of us—parish priests, deacons, staff, catechists, all other program volunteers and all families.

All families are asked to subscribe to RE Email to receive calendars and updates. Please add your name or update your preferences to our e-mail directory through the parish web site www.sspeterandpaul.net. If you do not have access to email, you may come to the RE Office during regular hours and ask for your information. All emergency closing information will also be conveyed via RE Email, so please sign up now!

Protecting God’s Children

The safety of your child from all aspects is most important to us. We promise to provide a safe environment.

As required by the Joliet Diocese, all volunteers and paid staff in our program have had background checks and have attended the mandated program, ***Protecting God’s Children***. During the school year, we will offer ***Safe Environment/Safe Touch classes*** for all children and youth in the program. You will be notified before these classes are held and your permission will be required for your child to attend.

Because all volunteers are required to comply, we strongly recommend that you complete the course and have the background check done for yourself, in case you decide to volunteer within the program.

Your **Family Handbook** contains information about classes, sacrament preparation, calendars and curriculum for all programs. Read this handbook, especially the portions which apply to any program in which your family is registered. Calendar changes and additional information will continue to be shared through the email programs and the parish bulletin.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

THERESA PRATT	Director of Religious Education
JARED RUTNICKI	Associate Director of Religious Education
SHAWN DENNING-ROSS	REACH RE for Children & Young Adults with special needs
ANDREA YARGER	REACH RE for Adults with special needs
PEGGY PARTIPILO	RE Office Manager
DEBBIE MULAY	RE Office Administrative Assistant

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE HOURS

	DURING SCHOOL YEAR (SEPT. – APRIL)	MAY - AUGUST
MONDAY	7:30 AM – 3:00 PM	7:30 AM – 3:00 PM
TUESDAY	7:30 AM – 5:30 PM	7:30 AM – 3:00 PM
WEDNESDAY	7:30 AM – 8:30 PM	7:30 AM – 3:00 PM
THURSDAY	7:30 AM – 3:00 PM	7:30 AM – 3:00 PM
FRIDAY	7:30 AM – 1:30 PM	7:30 AM – 1:30 PM
SATURDAY	CLOSED	CLOSED
SUNDAY	CLOSED	CLOSED

To report an absence from class call [630-355-1139](tel:630-355-1139) and provide

Student's Name
Class day
Catechist's name
Reason for absence

GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The parish Religious Education programs follow the guidelines of the ***General Directory for Catechesis*** (GDC, 1997), an official statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for sharing the Catholic faith.

All programs are in conformity with the ***Catechism of the Catholic Church*** (CCC), a presentation of the truths of the Catholic Church. These include the teachings of Sacred Scripture, the Traditions of the Church, and the teachings of the magisterium of the Church.

The Religious Education Office of the Diocese of Joliet issues a policy handbook to coordinate the efforts of all parishes in the diocese. The GDC, the CCC and the diocesan policy handbook are available for review in the Religious Education Office.

Specific parish goals, guidelines and policies are established and reviewed by the Christian Education Commission, the Religious Education and Youth Ministry Boards. Please call the respective director for further information.

REGISTRATION

It is required that families are registered members of SS. Peter & Paul Parish before being able to register in the program.

Families new to the program should download registration material from the parish website, complete the information and bring the documents to the Religious Education Office.

Families currently enrolled may register for the following year by mail each Spring. Registration packets will be sent home with the students in March.

Baptismal Certificates are required when the child first enters the program.

FAMILY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

According to the promises made at a child's baptism, the parents are the primary teachers of the faith for their children. The parish program exists to assist the parents in carrying out this responsibility, especially in preparation for the reception of a sacrament.

Parents are responsible for training their children in the practice of the faith. As the domestic church, the Parents must provide a foundation for their child's Religious Education by:

- Teaching your child how to pray
- Attending Mass with your child every Saturday evening or Sunday
- Instilling a love for the Faith
- Being a model of active Christian service in the parish

We also ask that families be supportive of programs in the following ways:

- Attend a "Protecting God's Children" Class (1 class only)
- VOLUNTEER to assist in your child's program
- Instill habits of prompt and regular attendance
- Insure that necessary materials (books, Bibles, etc.) are brought to each session
- Maintain standards of good taste in dress for class and church (no short shorts, halter tops or T-shirts with inappropriate language)
- Attend all meetings and special liturgies

ATTENDANCE

- Families should choose the class day of the program that fits their child's schedule to eliminate the possibility of chronic absence or tardiness due to conflicting activities.
- Due to balancing of class sizes and necessary personnel needs, changes to class days after initial submission of a family's registration will not be allowed after the first of August until class lists are finalized in early October. If you need to change a class day after the August 1st date, you will need to submit a request online so that changes can be handled in the order they are received. If we are able to accommodate your request, a \$50.00 processing fee will be assessed.
- Excessive absences will impact the student's continuing in the program. **ATTENDANCE POLICY WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.** Diocesan policy requires a total of 30 hours of faith formation each school year. With 28 classes scheduled

per year, this allows for no more than four absences regardless of the reason. More than four absences in a level of sacrament preparation (typically 1st and 2nd grade, Confirmation I and II) may delay the reception of the sacrament. This applies to ALL absences for any reason. Extenuating circumstances regarding a serious illness or family emergency are to be discussed with the Director prior to them becoming an issue.

Absences for school concerts *will* be counted toward the maximum number allowed. Please keep this in mind when scheduling vacations or appointments on RE class days.

- Students are expected to be in the classroom before the bell rings and remain for the entire class. Habitual tardiness will be discussed with the parent or guardian. Early dismissals and late arrivals are to be avoided. Students arriving later than 20 minutes after class starts or leaving earlier than 20 minutes before the end of class are considered absent for that day.
- Diocesan requirements mandate that we keep accurate records of attendance. There have been instances where our attendance records have been subpoenaed for court cases, and during the most recent diocesan audit the lack of reported absences was called into question. Additionally, in case of emergency, it is imperative that we know which students are present during class times. **A parent or guardian MUST call in to the Attendance Line PRIOR to class if their child is going to be absent. Failure to do so will count as a double absence.**
- Continued attendance from year to year is expected. Students who have missed more than one year of religious education will be assessed to determine proper placement and may not be necessarily placed in their current public school grade level. Junior high students missing a year or more may not be placed in the Confirmation program pending assessment.

Children are never allowed to leave class early, even with a parent **unless an early dismissal form is completed in the office before pick up**. This is required to ensure your child's protection. A parent must check in with the Hall Monitor who will retrieve the child from the classroom and bring him/her to the parent.

Identification will always be required to ensure that we are releasing a child to a parent. Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent unless arrangements are made in advance with the Office.

For the safety of your children, there are no exceptions to this rule!!

Level 1 and 2 students are never permitted to leave the classroom on their own and must be signed out by a parent or older sibling.

COMMUNICATION

It is essential that we keep lines of communication open with all of our families. Communication is handled in several ways:

Electronically

We use Constant Contact as our primary communication tool. If you are not registered, please visit the religious education page and enter your_email address in the box provided and check the appropriate interest categories.

Notes from the Catechist

The catechist may use notes or phone calls whenever possible or as needed.

Bulletin Announcements

The parish weekly bulletin will contain important information Regarding special events, special notices and sacramental information.

Evaluations

Evaluations for students in Grades 1-8 will be sent home with the students in January and at the end of the school year.

DISCIPLINE STATEMENT

The Religious Education Staff is accountable as well as responsible to parents to provide an environment in which the catechetical process can take place.

The catechist's presence and the establishment of group guidelines work to assure that catechists will be better able to share the Good News. Discipline shall be developed in a positive manner. It is imperative that a Christian and cooperative attitude prevail for effective faith sharing to take place.

Any student causing a disturbance in class after correction by the Catechist will be escorted to the office to meet with the director. Any repeat violations will result in the parents being called to bring the child home. Children with repeat behavioral issues will not be allowed to return to class until the parents and director have discussed the issue. If serious behavior problems continue to occur, alternative arrangements will have to be made for the education of the child.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

SPECIAL NEEDS

Any special illness or needs your child may have, including: learning disabilities, attention deficit (ADD / ADHD), a recent death or separation, health problems such as diabetes, allergies to food, epilepsy, hearing or visual impairments, etc. must be noted at the time of registration or at the time the issue is discovered so that we can better serve your child. The registration form has a special place to note this, or you may call your child's Program Director to discuss this further.

MEDICATION

Medication is not dispensed by Religious Education Staff or catechists. If children require medication or an Epi-Pen, parents must have a permission form signed by the doctor and a written plan for administration on file with the R.E. Office.

CLASSROOM VISITORS AND LATE PICK UP

All visitors must come to the RE Office to sign in and receive a hall pass. Arrangements must be made both with the Catechist and RE Office *in advance* of the visit. Unregistered children will not be permitted in the classroom without special pre-arranged permission from the director.

Any children who are not picked up from the parish campus within 10 minutes of dismissal time will be escorted to the RE Office. We will ask children who are not picked up in a timely fashion to wait in the Ministry Center Building for their continued safety

If you are detained for any reason, please call the office immediately to alert us to the fact that you may be delayed in picking up your child.

SUPERVISION

Class times are noted below. NO SUPERVISION IS PROVIDED BEFORE OR AFTER THESE TIMES. Parents are expected to pick up Early Childhood, First and Second graders from their rooms or **INFORM THE CATECHIST IN WRITING WHEN AN OLDER SIBLING OR OTHER ADULT IS DESIGNATED TO DO THIS.** A parent who is delayed should come to the Religious Education Office to sign out and pick up their child. Students may not enter a class until a catechist or another designated adult is present

Tuesday Afternoon	4:15 PM until 5:30 PM
Wednesday Afternoon	4:15 PM until 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evening (CM)	6:15 PM until 7:30 PM
Wednesday Evening (JH)	7:15 PM until 8:30 PM

VISITORS

All visitors to the buildings must report to the RE office and show a picture ID to receive a visitor's pass.

Guest visitor arrangements should be made with the director well in advance of the date of visit.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE & TORNADO

Catechists have instructions for emergency procedures when programs are held on the premises. Catechists are required to review and explain these to their groups. The RE Office has an emergency weather radio to monitor dangerous weather conditions.

SNOW & OTHER PROBLEMS

DO NOT call the Parish Office or Religious Education Office for information about program closings. You will receive an e-mail or an automated phone call from S.S. Peter & Paul Religious Education if classes are cancelled.

Listen to the following stations which are designated to announce emergency closings:

AM RADIO: WGN (720) WBBM (78)

TV: FOX (32) CLTV CBS (2) NBC (5) ABC(7) WGN (9)

INTERNET: www.emergencyclosings.com (you can sign up here to receive an email notification from the website)

OR CALL 1-847-238-1234

TRAFFIC SAFETY GUIDELINES

When dropping off or picking up for any program, **IT IS ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN TO ALLOW YOUR PASSENGERS TO CROSS IN FRONT OF OR BEHIND YOUR VEHICLE OR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET. Crossing is to be made AT CORNERS ONLY!**

In order to provide for safe and organized drop-off and pick-up of children, Children's Ministry is using the plan shown below. Please read these diagrams and procedures carefully. **Safety of every child is a priority! Tuesday and Wednesday sessions generate dangerous traffic conditions. Respect Traffic Patrol volunteers, all signs and no parking places. You will be ticketed if parked illegally. Do not permit your child to cross in the middle of the street at any time.**

PARENT PARKING AREAS

Parking and leaving your parked vehicle is permitted in the far **South Lot** (corner of Benton and Ellsworth and center of the **North Lot (Next to the Elementary Building)**).

DROPPING OFF STUDENTS

Elementary Building: Enter the lot from Benton St. Using the circles, drop off students as close to the front door as possible. **Watch for walking students.** Students will enter from the Ellsworth St. entrance only. If you walk your child into the building, park in the **center of the Church Lot, facing north.**

Junior High Building: Drop off driving **north** on Ellsworth, either along the curb in designated parking areas or by utilizing the Junior High or Elementary parking lots. If you are driving south, students **must** cross with Traffic Patrol at the corner, **NOT** in the middle of the street!

Ministry Center Building: Catechists, parents and students will use main entrance.

PICKING UP STUDENTS

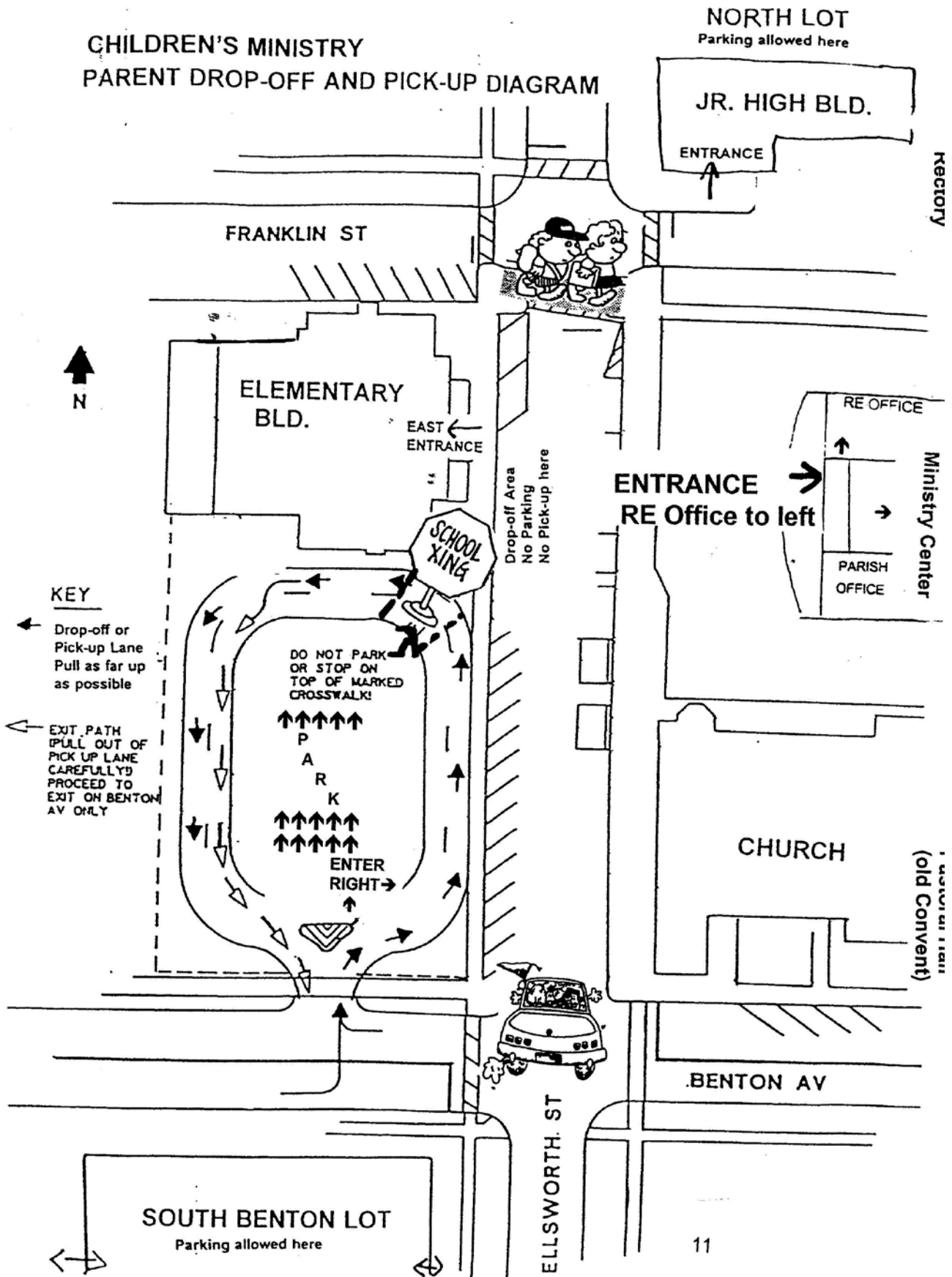
All First & Second Grade RE students must be SIGNED OUT & PICKED UP in their classrooms by a parent, older sibling or other designated adult. Therefore these parents must Park in the center of the Church Lot and not in the pick-up/drop-off lanes.

All traffic enters and exits the lot from Benton St. Only.

Parking is allowed in the center of the lot: all parking is gang style parking for parents who must enter building and for catechists who park there.

Pick-up/drop-off circle lanes: Drivers in these lanes cannot exit their vehicles. Stay in vehicle, pull up as far as possible all the way around to accommodate all the cars; Students load from the right passenger side of all these lanes. Pay attention to parking safety crew who will direct you when to move. Pull out carefully always watching for children. Exiting the lot is done only by making a right hand turn onto Benton St. Follow the directions of the parking lot attendants.

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
PARENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP DIAGRAM**



YOUR COOPERATION IN FOLLOWING THESE PROCEDURES WILL PROVIDE FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN. PLEASE BE PATIENT, CAUTIOUS AND COURTEOUS TO YOUR FELLOW PARISHIONERS AND VOLUNTEERS. WE NEED YOUR HELP! PLEASE CALL IF YOU CAN HELP WITH TRAFFIC PATROL DURING ARRIVAL OR DISMISSAL TIMES, EVEN FOR PART OF THE YEAR.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS

BAPTISM for older students must be discussed with the Director of Religious Education.

Preparation for **FIRST EUCHARIST (HOLY COMMUNION)** normally occurs in Level Two. Students enrolling in the program who have not received their first communion and are beyond the second grade in public school will be enrolled in sacrament class for two years. Children will receive First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in the second year of the sacrament preparation class. Parents are required to attend meetings and participate in their child's preparation.

RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION) is prepared for and celebrated in the first semester of Second Grade or the Sacrament II class. Parents are required to attend sacramental informational meetings and participate in their child's preparation.

CONFIRMATION - Confirmation is conferred in Level 8. Prerequisite for this sacrament during 8th grade requires regular attendance for one year prior to being placed in a sacramental class. Those preferring to be confirmed at a later time must contact the Director.

Unless otherwise requested by the parent, all 8th graders who fulfill the requirements of the Confirmation preparation program will receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the spring of their 8th grade year. Parents are required to attend sacramental informational meetings and participate in their child's preparation

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

REACH: SPECIAL EDUCATION

Saints Peter and Paul addresses the rights and needs of all persons with disabilities to develop their human, moral and spiritual qualities. Blind, deaf, mentally and physically challenged are invited to share faith and bring others peace and joy. Whenever possible, children with special needs are included in the regular programs. Children and adults with special needs will find the REACH programs are structured to the needs of individuals with emphasis on preparation for Liturgy and the sacraments. The Knights of Columbus financially supports these programs.

Children's REACH meets on Saturday mornings while Adult REACH meets on alternate Wednesday evenings.