St. Rita Site—Child Ministry Office
4433 Douglas Ave.
Racine, WI 53402
Phone: 639-6280
Audra Radke               Olga Rodriguez
Director                   Secretary
radkea@archmil.org          rodriguezo@st-ritas.org

St. Paul the Apostle Site –
Youth Ministry Office
6400 Spring Street.
Racine, WI 53406
Phone: 886-0530
Lety Gutierrez-Kenny       Jennifer Wiseman
Director                  Administrative Asst.
kennyl@st-ritas.org        jwiseman@stpaulracine.org

Sowing the Seeds: Collaborative Christian Formation
St. Paul the Apostle Parish
St. Rita of Cascia Parish

http://www.stpaulracine.org/child_ministry.html
http://st-ritas.org/parish/
Parents’ Responsibilities

“God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May He bless the fathers of these children. With their wives, they will be the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do…”

Rite of Baptism for Children

Dear Parents,

Thank you for enrolling your child in the Sowing the Seeds: Collaborative Christian Formation Program for St. Paul the Apostle & St. Rita Parishes. We are grateful that you allow us to help you in forming your child in the Catholic Faith. While we can only hope to spark an interest of the faith in your child, our program will help you, their first teacher of the faith, in developing and nourishing their Catholic Faith. The attitudes that your child develops toward Mass, the sacraments, prayer, service and commitment to Jesus grows out of what they experience as a family and the example that you, the parents offer.

Because we are limited in what we can teach and experience in an hour of weekly class time, we ask that you:

Foster the development of Prayer: Pray regularly as a family, work with your younger children on knowing the basic prayers (the Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles’ Creed, and the Glory Be to the Father). Encourage them to share personal prayers with you.

Attend Mass Regularly: Encourage your child to actively participate in the Mass. Special Observances of the Church Seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent & Easter and Holy Days) help to make Jesus more alive in your family.

Encourage regular and prompt class attendance. Our time in the classroom is precious so please take note the start time of class on the calendar. Call our office as soon as possible if your child will be absent.

Encourage the development of responsibility. Many times communications do not reach home. Please ask your child for any letters and/or notices. Check their folders weekly and show an interest in what they are learning. Ask them about their class.

*It is understood that in specific cases a low grade or a low grade point average may represent reasonable progress for a child. In such cases, no action will be considered.

3. Behavior - Students must show respect for the policies and procedures for this parish program. In the following cases, the student may lose eligibility for activities:
   - Any student suspended from school for behavior reasons
   - Students who consistently disrupt Christian Formation sessions/events
   - Any student who misuses or damages any material or property relating to any parish or school program.
   - Any student who establishes a pattern of refusal to relay communication from the Christian Formation program to home, so that it compromises the learning situation.

4. Attitude and Effort: - Students must have a good attitude toward parish facilities, volunteers and required student work. The student may lose eligibility for activities if:
   - the student in the Christian Formation program consistently lags in doing the required work.
   - the student attitude toward adults, whether staff, volunteers or parents, is consistently very poor and is witnessed in the parish community.

5. Attendance - Students should be on time for the Christian Formation program and classes. Students should not take absences from the Christian Formation program lightly. Students will lose their eligibility for activities if:
   - The student is tardy for, or misses more than 4 Religious Education classes.

If a student does not comply with these policies, the follow procedure will be followed:
   - A probation will be issued for a two-week period. If the behavior or grades do not improve, a suspension from the activities will be issued for another two-week period.
COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Communication** - Parent letters and notices are sent home with your child/ren, email and/or through U.S. mail. Always check your child/children’s folders for any newsletters, notices or homework that may be sent home. If you have any questions or concerns about the communication, please feel free to call the office at 639-6280.

   Information is available on the parish websites. For St. Rita website (www.st-ritas.org) click on Parish Life and follow the link Life Long Faith Formation and then Child Ministry. For St. Paul website (www.stpaulracine.org) follow the link of Life Long Formation then Child Ministry.

ST. RITA ATHLETICS

1. **Athletic Policy** - Based on the policy set by the Archdiocese and St. Rita School, the Christian Formation program will adopt this policy for students in grades 5-8 wishing to participate in parish sport teams:

   Extracurricular activities are ways that the parish children can build community with one another. It is important that students, parents, catechists, coaches, and other leaders agree that education is a high priority. Several considerations will be taken into account in determining a student’s eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities and athletics:
   - Report cards and grade point averages
   - Behavior
   - Attitude, effort for student work
   - Attendance

2. **Report Card and Grade Point averages**: All athletes registered in the Religious Education Program will be expected to submit a copy of their report card/progress reports to the DRE in order to review a student’s eligibility for activities. Students will be expected to achieve grades that reflect their individual ability*. Students will be suspended from the activity if:
   - the grade point average for all subjects combined falls below 2.0
   - a student achieves below a “D” in any subject

Read, and if necessary, respond to all communications sent by the Child Ministry Office in a timely fashion. Letters are one way of letting you know what your child is learning and what you can do to reinforce the lesson. It may also contain important information about the program, schedule changes or offerings.

Finally, volunteer your services. Our program is dependant on the dedicated service of volunteers. Please consider being a catechist (one who shares their faith by teaching children & youth), an office helper or a hall monitor. Children benefit more from caring adults who share their faith and of themselves than what any book or film could offer. Won’t you consider committing your talents for one year to visibly profess the Catholic faith?

Please use this handbook as a guide for you to help your child grow in the faith. All of the policies for our program is to help your child continue to grow and mature in their Catholic Faith. If you ever have a concern about anything, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

God’s Blessings to you & your family,

Audra Radke
Director of Child Ministry
CURRICULUM

Kindergarten: Lessons are formatted at a level that makes learning and understanding the Scripture fun. Through the use of the Loyola series the children will hear the Word, complete projects and activities that foster readiness.

Grade 1: First graders are introduced to personal ways that the Trinity is found in their lives. They explore God’s love for us in Jesus and in the gifts of creation, life and the church.

Grade 2: Second graders are prepared for Reconciliation and First Eucharist by fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the liturgy, God’s love & mercy, and the life and teachings of Jesus.

Grade 3: Third graders learn about the Church as a loving community of believers. They become aware of the beginnings of the Church, the community of followers of Jesus and the mission we have as People of God.

Grade 4: Fourth graders are led to a growth in Christian moral life through the study of the commandments and the understanding of the Beatitudes.

Grade 5: Fifth graders develop a deeper understanding of our religious beliefs and traditions. They study the seven sacraments.

* St. Rita Site (K thru 5th) - Parents must drop off and pick up the child/ren - in the gym. Please enter the school through the east doors. DO NOT park/block circle drive.

* St. Paul the Apostle Site - Parent/s should escort their child/ren to and from the child’s classroom. Please enter the church through the east doors. DO NOT stop/park in fire lane.

2. Visitors – Parents who wish to observe a child’s class may do so by calling our office beforehand. Students may bring a friend to class, but it must be pre-arranged one week in advance with the catechists.

3. Class Treats - Class treats will be allowed in designated areas with the approval of the DRE and classroom teacher. We have several students with very severe peanut, nuts and latex allergies. So please keep this in mind when sending treats or party favors.

4. Early Dismissal – If a student MUST leave a class early, the requirements are as follows:
   - A parent/guardian note must be given to the catechist and it will be forwarded to the office with the attendance sheet, so that we will know who is leaving.
   - Parent/guardian needs to sign out his or her child with the Director.
   - When the parent/guardian comes in to pick-up the student and the child is not in our office, an office helper will assist the parent to the classroom. Verification is necessary.

5. Door Security Policy -(This is for the safety of our children)

   At St. Rita - The east entrance door to the building will be locked at 6:25 and will remain locked until dismissal time. All persons coming in during class time will need to be let in by a hall monitor or the office personnel. There is a button on the right side of the door that you need to press so that we are aware someone needs to be let in. All people that are in the building need to be accounted for. If you plan on staying in the building (to just wait for students or walk around the building for exercise - we are happy to have you here), we will have a sign in sheet that you will need to sign. Again this is all for the safety of our children.
weather conditions, the decision to attend class rests on the parents.
For the Sunday options, we will rely on parent discretion.

STUDENT CONDUCT/ RESPONSIBILITY

1. **Student Behavior/Discipline** – Students are expected to conduct themselves in a Christian manner at all times. If a student is disruptive, he/she will be sent to the office. If a student is sent to the office for a second time, the Director will call the parents/guardians. If a student is sent to the office for a third offense, a meeting with parents and/or guardians will be scheduled. Any very serious concern will be dealt with immediately by calling the parents/guardians.

   A student may be dismissed from the Christian Formation program due to serious misconduct at the discretion of the Director in consultation with the Pastors and parents. Students are expected to show respect at all times to the teacher, other students, and the program as a whole.

2. **School/Parish Property** – Destruction of school property is considered vandalism. Restitution will be required. This includes articles that belong to this collaborative program.

3. **Homework** – Sometimes homework is necessary as a part of any student’s education. Homework will be given according to the catechist. We expect that such assignments will be completed to the best of the student’s ability.

4. **Information about Learning Disabilities** - Information about learning disabilities, special needs or any other personal issues should be given to the Director of Child Ministry. This information will only be disclosed to the catechist (teacher) as necessary. This information will be kept in confidence and intended to help with your child’s well being and promote learning.

STUDENT SAFETY/SECURITY

1. **Arrivals/ Departures** – Parents are responsible for their child/ren's safety and the safety of others during arrival and dismissal times. Please bring your child no sooner than ten minutes before each session and pick up promptly at dismissal time. Earlier arrivals make it difficult to address preparations we need to attend to before each session.

SACRAMENTS

**First Reconciliation/ First Eucharist**

(The two Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are usually celebrated in the second grade. Reconciliation is celebrated in the winter and Eucharist is celebrated in the spring. Parents that would rather have their child receive only one sacrament this year, will need to prepare for and have their child receive Reconciliation this year and Eucharist the following year.)

A truly Christian preparation for these sacraments begins at home in the early childhood and continues to develop throughout life. Parents are expected to be active in their faith practice. This means attending weekly liturgy and participating in the parent meetings.

This preparation is an important time for the children and youth of our parish, but it is also a time for the parents and the faith community to consider the deeper meaning of these sacraments in our lives.

A progressive catechesis of forgiveness is essential to the formation program and curriculum for preparing for Reconciliation. The Sacrament of Eucharist is a parish-based celebration and experience.

Each family has its own unique experience, its own relationship. This preparation provides the opportunity to reflect on these unique experiences and relate them to this sacrament.

Parents are assisted in their part of the preparation process through meetings. These meetings are mandatory for the parents in order to get the information needed to help prepare their child/ren.

Parents are also required to participate, with their child/ren, in the special workshops. If you are unable to attend the meeting and/or workshops with your child/ren and do not make arrangements with the director, you will be asked to wait a year to have your child receive the sacrament(s).
RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) Adapted for Children:

This class has been especially developed for those students in grades 3 and up that have not had any type of Christian Formation previously. Students in this class learn basic prayers, what it means to belong to a community, and begin to explore God’s love for us in Jesus and in the gift of creation, life and the church. Children will prepare for the sacraments of Baptism (if needed) and Confirmation, Reconciliation and Eucharist. These sessions meet weekly for 90 minutes on Wednesday evening. Please understand that this class is not the end but the beginning their life long formation in the Catholic Faith.

POLICIES

REGISTRATION & FEES:

1. All students must have a completed registration form turned in before they are allowed into the program. We cannot allow a child into the classroom that has not been registered.

2. Tuition is due at registration time. Installments may be paid in August 30, September 30, and November 30. If there is a problem, an extension of time may be given. If you are in need of financial aid, please request a Financial Assistance Application form.

   There is a fee for Eucharist and Reconciliation to cover the cost of books and other materials. This fee is due at the parent meetings if not already paid with the regular registration fee.

ATTENDANCE:

1. All children of registered members of St. Paul the Apostle and St. Rita Parishes in Grades Kindergarten through 12 who are not enrolled in Catholic day school are expected to attend formal religious formation classes and related activities on a consistent basis.

2. **MASS ATTENDANCE** - Family participation in our parish

   Mass celebration is fundamental in the overall Christian Formation education of our Catholic faith. Please celebrate weekly as a family.

3. **Class Attendance**: Attendance is expected at ALL sessions, days of reflection, retreats and parent meetings. If a student cannot attend class, please call the office and notify us of his/her absence. If the student is absent without previous notification, you will be getting a call. Please try to make every effort to notify us of any absences.

   Two (2) unexcused absences per semester will require the student to make up the assignments. **It will be the responsibility of the parent to contact the catechist to make the necessary arrangement for their child to make up these assignments.** If there is an excessive number of absences during the year, a conference with the parent and Director will be called to determine the cause the absences and to either rectify the situation or decide whether a student should continue in the program.

   Our Program is about formation and helping build community; there is no way we can duplicate what actually takes place in a session.

   During Sacramental preparation (First Communion and First Reconciliation), attendance is necessary at all preparation sessions. If for some serious reason a parent is unable to attend a parent meeting, **YOU must contact the Director to make arrangements to get this information.** **If a child misses more than 6 regular classes, that child may be asked to postpone receiving a sacrament until the next year.**

   Parents are required to attend meetings/workshops relating to sacrament preparation. If you do not attend these meetings and do not contact the director of child ministry within a week of the meetings, you will be asked to postpone receiving sacraments until next year.

4. **Moving or Withdrawing from Program** - Please inform the Christian Formation office promptly if you are moving or withdrawing for any reason from the program.

5. **Weather Cancellations** – Families safety on the road is our primary concern in periods of inclement weather. If Racine Unified School System is closed/cancelled for the day due to weather conditions, the evening class will also be cancelled. Should storming weather develop late in the day, check out the TV **weather report on either channel 4, 6 or 12** and radio station **WRJN 1400** for announcements regarding a session cancellation. During other questionable