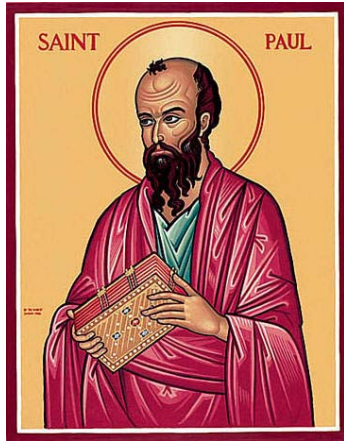


PARENT HANDBOOK



**St. Paul the Apostle and St. Rita of Cascia Middle School and High School
Youth Ministry**

2011-2012

**Youth Ministry Office
St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church
6400 Spring Street
Racine, WI 53406
(262)886-0530**

**jonathan.bator@gmail.com
jbator@stpaulracine.org**

www.credocatholicracine.com

www.stpaulracine.org

www.st-ritas.org

Christian Formation Staff

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Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are the primary religious educators of their children, and we thank you for allowing us to participate in your child's Christian formation. During youth ministry and Confirmation preparation we can only hope to spark an interest and enthusiasm, whereas at home you can develop and nourish the faith. Your child's attitude toward the Mass, the Sacraments, prayer, service, and Jesus Christ most fundamentally stems from the example of the parents, and therefore we ask that you:

1. Pray regularly as a family, and foster the habit of individual and communal prayer.
2. Encourage regular and prompt class attendance.
3. Be interested in what your child is learning or experiencing, and ask questions to encourage discussion.
4. Volunteer as a catechist or chaperone. Our program is dependent on the dedicated service of volunteer catechists and chaperones.

5. Communicate with me, the Youth Minister, if you have any questions, concerns, suggestions, or if your child will be absent for whatever reason. I will do my best to keep parents informed, well in advance, via letters, monthly newsletters, and a youth ministry website (credocatholicracine.com). My email is jbator@stpaulracine.org and my phone number is 886-0530.

Policy

1. Program Participation: All children of registered members of St. Paul the Apostle and St. Rita Parishes in grades K-12, who are not enrolled in Catholic school are expected to attend formal religious formation classes and related activities on a consistent basis. However, children who attend Catholic school are also more than welcome and encouraged to participate as well.

2. Mass Attendance: Mass attendance on Sunday is fundamental in the Christian formation of your child. Please attend Mass on Sunday as a family.

3. Class Attendance: Attendance is expected at ALL sessions, retreats, and parent meetings. If your child cannot attend class, please call the St. Paul office (886-0530), or email (jonathan.bator@gmail.com), and notify me of his or her absence. I would also suggest requiring your middle or high student to call or email me themselves, as this fosters growth in personal responsibility and maturity.

3a. Multiple Unexcused Absences (EDGE and CREDO Program): If your child shows an unexplained pattern of not showing up, I will make an effort to contact you to discern the reason. I will simply be looking for a reason, since sometimes there is a concern that can be easily put to rest or a problem that can be solved. *Please remember that, at the very least, **one year of Christian Formation is required prior to the Confirmation Prep year** (junior year of high school). Therefore it is important that your child attend the middle or high school program to responsibly prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation and life in general.*

3b. Multiple Absences (Confirmation Prep): After 3 absences, excused or unexcused, the Confirmation Candidate will be required to meet with me to discuss the reasons for his or her absences, as well as the candidate's intention to get Confirmed. After this first meeting, one additional absence will be tolerated until the Candidate's Sacramental preparation will be called into question. Since Confirmation is a Sacrament of the Catholic Church, it must be properly prepared for and protected from abuses. Therefore, please make Confirmation Preparation a Sunday afternoon priority.

Events like the Six Flags trip and Youth Conference are not required and will not count as an absence, however, the Confirmation Retreat and a yet to be planned service project are required.

4. Being Late: Please do not be late. Each session will begin on time, and your child might be excluded from a game in progress or miss some important information if they can not make it by the start time. You are welcome to drop off your child up to 20 min early if necessary, as long as you can confirm that I am present.

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 Wednesday evening Edge program will also be cancelled. For the Sunday programs, and if bad weather develops late in the day, we will rely on parent discretion. If you can not get here safely, then please stay home. Of course, no absences will be recorded on days with bad weather. Please listen to local radio, Milwaukee news channels or visit our websites (credocatholicracine.com, stpaulracine.org, st-ritas.org) for notice of cancellation.

6. Learning Disabilities or Special Needs: Information about learning disabilities, special needs or any other personal problems should be given to the Director of Youth Ministry for the purposes of increasing your child's well being and promoting his or her learning. This information will be kept in confidence and only disclosed to others with your permission.

7. Moving or Withdrawing from the Program: Let Jonathan at the Youth Ministry Office know if you are moving or withdrawing for any reason from the program.

8. Student Behavior and Discipline: Participants are expected to conduct themselves in a Christ like charitable manner at all times. If a participant acts inappropriately, swears, or is disruptive, he or she will be asked to sit out in the hall for the duration of the game, presentation or prayer. After an appropriate time, and after an apology to those involved and a promise not to do X again, he or she will be invited back into the group for the rest of the session, unless whatever was done or said is judged to be serious. If serious, the parents will be notified of what happened and asked to come pick up their child early.

If a pattern (2-3 instances) of inappropriate behavior is noticed, the parents will be notified of the situation. If the problem persists, a meeting will be scheduled with the participant and his or her parents to discuss reasons for the problem and intentions to continue in the program.

A student may be dismissed from the Youth Ministry Program due to serious misconduct at the discretion of the Director in consultation with the Pastors and parents. Participants are expected to show respect at all times to the director, all volunteers, the other participants, and the program as a whole.

9. Parish Property: Unless something is deemed an accident, destruction of parish property is considered vandalism, and restitution will be required.

10. Provided Materials: If a YOUCAT Youth Catechism or Bible is provided, it is expected that participants take care of them and not lose them. If a provided book is ruined or lost it is expected that the parents or participant buy a replacement.

11. Fees: Tuition is due at registration time. Installments may be paid in October, November, and December. 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. The registration fee covers the cost of materials and offsets the cost of retreats and trips.

12. Staying in bounds policy: Some games and activities will involve running around outside, or even to some extent inside. Therefore, before games and activities certain boundaries will be set up to ensure safety and control. It is expected that each participant will respect the boundaries for each game and activity, whether they be “stay upstairs and inside”, “stay in the hall,” or “stay on St. Rita/St. Paul property and away from the street.”

If there is a large group activity outside on Church grounds, or outside off-site, it is expected that teens stay with the group and stay within the preset boundaries. If a teen leaves the pre-set and clearly defined boundaries, it will be considered a serious offence.

13. Safety Rules: I will take all possible steps to ensure the safety of every participant, however, this requires the cooperation of everyone. Whenever a game or activity involves throwing things or running around, it is expected that the head is not aimed for and that there is no pushing, grabbing, or tackling. Every situation is different and will require a certain extent of prudent judgment from everyone involved.

For example, if we go outside for a snowball fight, it will be expected that chunks of ice and icicles not be thrown. Rules will always be clearly communicated before each game or activity to ensure maximum fun and safety.

14. Special Events: Periodically, we may offer a special event or field trip. This event may require a written/signed permission slip and an additional fee. All students who wish to participate must have parental written permission in order to participate.

15. Drop off and Pick up: For the Edge program, drop off and pick up will be at the front doors (not the ones leading to the parish office) of Cascia Hall. Please be sure to avoid parking in fire lanes. For the Credo Catholic high school program and Confirmation Prep, drop off and pick up will be at the west end doors (the ones by the offices).

Please be very careful in the parking lot and/or St. Rita road at pick up time. If possible, please avoid walking in the road or parking lot all together. It will likely be dark and there will be upwards of 40 cars, so please use caution. Please also drive slowly in and out of the Church parking lots.

16. Door Security Policy: At both sites, all people entering the building (teens, volunteers, and parents) must sign in with the hall monitor at the door. This will ensure that all people in the building are accounted for. If you plan on staying in the building during the sessions (just to talk, be there, or for whatever reason) we are happy to have you, but make sure to sign in at the door, so that we know you are in the building.

CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS

Edge Middle School Program: 6th-8th Grade

Wednesdays 6:15 –7:45pm at St. Rita in Cascia Hall

(please see schedule for special events and scheduled days off)

What is Edge?

“Edge is a radical new Catholic centered youth ministry aimed at young adolescents. Edge is designed to meet their educational, spiritual, emotional, and social needs. As part of the Catholic Church’s mission to evangelize and spread the gospel message of Jesus Christ, middle school youth are encouraged to go out and bring their friends to Edge.

Many parishes around the country follow the model of placing middle school youth in religious education classes at Church or in a catechist’s home with an approved textbook. They would meet once a week for an hour in a setting that felt a lot like school. Catechesis is an important component of ministering to middle school youth, but it is inadequate if it is the only component. The classroom approach does not meet the communal, spiritual, psychological, or social needs that a middle school youth ministry program would incorporate into its process. Edge solves this problem. It creates an environment where the youth are part of a community rather than isolated in a classroom.

Middle school and junior high youth have unique challenges that the Catholic Church must meet, or we run the risk of spiritually losing them. This stage is critical because young people in middle school are making decisions that will impact them for a lifetime. A solid middle school youth ministry allows for an easier transition to high school youth ministry, and by including sixth graders you create a strong foundation for their years in 7th and 8th grade” (Edge Handbook, 3).

Goals of Edge

1. To foster a transforming spiritual experience of Jesus through the liturgy which will allow early adolescents to experience the Word of God and the Eucharist in a deeper and more profound way.
2. To create a positive experience of the Catholic Church for early adolescents.
3. To assist middle school youth in gaining an understanding and appreciation of what the

Catholic Church teaches and believes.

4. To incorporate the Catholic Church's vision of social justice and peace into the spiritual life of early adolescents.
5. To develop an understanding in middle school youth that they are a vital and visible presence within the parish community.

Edge Curriculum

Fall 2011

This Fall we will be focusing on the Church. For example, (1) Why is there a Church? (2) Why do we have to go to Church? (3) Church History (4) The Magisterium (5) The Mass (6) The Four Marks of the Church (7) Evangelization (8) Etc.

General Edge Night Format

Large group game or activity, just for fun (20 min.)

Large group presentation (25 min.)

Small group discussion/activity (25 min.)

Large group prayer: Learning various prayers like the Rosary, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, etc. (20 min.)

CREDO Catholic High School Program—9th-12th Grade

Sundays 7:00-8:30pm at St. Paul in Fr. Cox Hall

(please see schedule for special events and scheduled days off)

What's with the name "CREDO Catholic"?



What's with the name? It sounds like cradle Catholic."

Well, it does. It's a play on words, however the new youth ministry name actually describes exactly what Youth Ministry at St. Paul and St. Rita is all about.

"Credo" is a Latin word that means "I believe" and if you read the [Apostles' Creed](#) or [Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed](#) (the creed we say at Sunday Mass) you'll notice right away that both start with the word "Credo". In English you'll remember that we start by saying, "I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth..." "Credo" is repeated throughout the creed to stress what we as Christians believe.

"...I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ...I believe in the Holy Spirit...I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church..."

So if you think about it, you actually say "Credo" and "Credo...Catholic" every Sunday!

Anyways, Credo Catholic is a fitting name because this year we will all be learning what a **Catholic believes** and how a **believing Catholic** lives. At the end of the year everyone will hopefully be able to more firmly say "Credo Catholic", that is, "I believe in what the Catholic Church teaches," which is what Christ Himself teaches. And what Christ Himself teaches is the saving Truth of Himself, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father" (John 1:14).

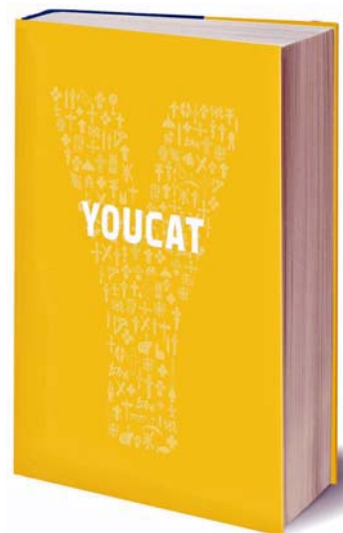
However, if one truly believes in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that God was made Incarnate in Jesus Christ, and that eternal life and forgiveness of sins is only found in Christ, then he or she will not stop at the mere intellectual level. A Catholic Christian will reorient his or her life to promote the saving Truth found in the Gospel and to love God and one's neighbor. But how exactly does a Christian love God and neighbor? How can one have a relationship with a God he or she cannot physically see or hear? Who is my neighbor and what should I be doing for him or her? Well, at CREDO Catholic, Edge, and Confirmation Prep, we will answer these questions by doing, in addition to sitting and learning. We will learn how a **believing Catholic** prays by actually praying. We will learn how a **believing Catholic** serves by serving. And we will learn how a **believing Catholic** lives by acting charitably when we meet together.

CREDO Catholic Materials

Everyone will be expected to bring their own Bible. We will also be using the new Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church called the "YOUCAT", which will be given out on the first night Sept. 18th.

YOUCAT stands for "Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church" and it is not as goofy as it sounds. The book has been in the works for awhile and has the endorsement of some pretty important people, like Pope Benedict XVI. It was even given out for free at this year's World Youth Day in Madrid. The Pope has even promoted the YOUCAT saying...

"Study this Catechism! This is my heartfelt desire. Study this Catechism with passion and perseverance. Study it in the quiet of your room; read it with a friend; form study groups and networks; share with each other on the internet" (YOUCAT, Foreword).



Therefore, we at St. Paul the Apostle and St. Rita are going to do just that, study it. The High School Youth Ministry Program will be organized around the YOUCAT and everyone will be expected to bring the copy they are given every week.

The YOUCAT has the standard Catechism name, however “it is something entirely new and exciting. It shows what the Catholic Church believes today and how one can with good reason believe.” It is pretty much your answer book (its in question and answer format!) with fundamental answers to questions like “Why did God create us?” and “Why does God not prevent evil?”. Go to <http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/youcat/> for more information.

CREDO Catholic Curriculum

The Big Picture

1. I believe in God - Why are we here on earth? How can we know that God exists? (YOUCAT, questions 1-6)
2. God approaches man (YOUCAT, 7-19)
3. Man responds to God (YOUCAT, 20-29)

Creation

4. I believe in God the Father (YOUCAT, 30-48)
5. If God is all-good, all-knowing, all-powerful, and created the world, then where is He now? - Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil (YOUCAT, 49-51 - note: we will discuss questions 52-55 later in the year)
6. Man the Creature: Why did God make man? (YOUCAT, 56-70)

Redemption

7. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God: Part I - Who is Jesus and why did he come? (YOUCAT, 71-79)
8. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God: Part II - Christ’s birth, his Mother Mary, and his life on earth (YOUCAT, 80-93)
9. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God: Part III - Christ’s death and resurrection (YOUCAT, 94-112)
10. I believe in the Holy Spirit (YOUCAT, 113-120)
11. I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church: Part I - Why a Church?(YOUCAT, 121-128)
12. I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church: Part II - The four marks of the Church and other religions (YOUCAT, 129-137)
13. I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church: Part III - Church structure and the Pope, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, consecrated religious (brothers and sisters), and lay people (YOUCAT, 138-145)
14. I believe in the Communion of Saints (YOUCAT, 146-149)
15. I believe in the Forgiveness of Sins (YOUCAT, 150-151)

16. I believe in the Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting: Part I - Individual Eschatology [Death, Particular Judgment, Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell] (YOUCAT, 152-165 and 52-55)
17. I believe in the Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting: Part II - Universal/Cosmic Eschatology [The Approach of the End of the World, the Resurrection of the Body, the General Judgment, and the Final Consummation of All Things] (YOUCAT, 152-165 and 52-55)

Confirmation Preparation—11th Grade

Sundays 1:00-2:30pm at St. Paul in Fr. Cox Hall

(please see schedule for special events and scheduled days off)

Confirmation Prep Curriculum

We will be using the YOUCAT (see previous page) and Bible for our standard texts. Everyone will get their own copy of the YOUCAT on the first day of Confirmation Prep. However, unlike the high school program we will focus on what Sacraments are (YOUCAT, 166-193), the Sacraments of Initiation (YOUCAT, 194-223), and our Life in Christ (YOUCAT, 279-366).

Confirmation Date, Location and Time

Confirmation will be on...

Friday, May 18, 2012 with Bishop Jerome E. ListECKi at 7:00pm @ St. Rita

All four of these Churches will be together (St. Paul the Apostle—Racine, St. Rita—Racine, St. Sebastian—Sturtevant, and St. Louis—Caledonia)