

Frequently Asked Questions for School Groups

What is the Saint John Paul II National Shrine?

- A Catholic Shrine that seeks to promote the teachings of Saint John Paul II, to encourage each visitor to respond to the universal call to holiness, and to foster spiritual devotion to this great saint.
- The Catholic bishops of the United States designated it a national shrine on April 27, 2014.

When is the Shrine open for visitors and pilgrims?

- The Shrine is open every day of the year, including holidays.
- Hours are 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM daily.

What makes the Saint John Paul II National Shrine a unique field trip or retreat location?

- ***A Gift of Love: The Life of Saint John Paul II:*** A stunning array of photos, quotes, short films, personal artifacts, and interactive displays in 10 galleries allows students to get to know Saint John Paul II, the gospel message of love to which he dedicated his life, and world history in an engaging way.
- **Sacred Art:** Brilliantly colored mosaics decorate both the Redemptor Hominis Church and Luminous Mysteries Chapel. Sacred art tours are available to help students reflect on salvation history and the merciful love of the Savior, which is depicted in these spaces.
- **Prayer and the Sacraments:** The church, where Mass is celebrated daily, seats 500 and the smaller chapel includes a first-class relic of Saint John Paul II available for veneration by pilgrims. These prayerful spaces speak of the Catholic faith on their very walls and can help students encounter God through reflection, the Eucharist, and Reconciliation.

What grade-levels, subject areas and educational objectives does a visit to the Shrine especially complement?

- **Grade Levels:** *A Gift of Love: The Life of Saint John Paul II* is most appropriate for students in grades 8 – 12, and for younger grades with advance preparation by the teacher and/or Shrine staff.
- **Subject Areas and Topics:** Preparation for First Communion and Confirmation; 20th century world history; ethics; vocations; art/art history; religion and theology; language arts
- **Educational Objectives:** The exhibit, sacred art, and opportunities for prayer at the Shrine provide an unrivaled integration of spiritual and intellectual formation across several disciplines, especially history, world studies, art, and religion.

What liturgical activities could my field-trip or retreat include?

- **Mass:** Monday through Saturday at noon and Sunday at 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM.
- **Veneration:** A first-class blood relic of Saint John Paul II is available for veneration in our Luminous Mysteries Chapel during most times of the day.
- **Penance and Reconciliation:** The sacrament of confession is available for individuals Monday through Friday at 11:30 AM before noon Mass.
- Groups can contact our sacristan for special Mass requests and to arrange for visiting priests to celebrate or concelebrate Mass or to hear confessions.

What amenities are available at the Shrine?

- **Parking:** The Shrine has ample free parking for automobiles and buses.
- **Food Service:** Seating is available for groups to bring their lunch and eat inside. Groups can also eat picnic-style on our expansive front lawn.
- **Gift Shop:** A small gift shop is open 7 days a week 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Accessibility:** All areas of the Shrine are accessible. The entrances include access ramps, and public elevators are available inside.

How do I contact the Shrine with questions or secure a date for our visit?

- Phone: (202) 635-5400
- Email: VisitorServices@jp2shrine.org
- Website: jp2shrine.org
- Main Contact: Kim Calinger, Pilgrimage and Visitor Services Specialist