

Immaculate Conception BVM Parish Religious Education Handbook

2019-2020



O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

Immaculate Conception Religious Education
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I. Mission Statement & Catechetical Plan

Philosophy of Catechesis

The ministry of catechesis (Religious Education) naturally flows from the Great Commission given by Christ to go into the whole world and teach the Good News (Mt. 28:18-20). The Bride of Christ (the Church) has throughout time initiated and developed systems to proclaim Christ's message, to foster Christian community, to call people to worship and service in their lives.

Mission Statement

Our catechetical mission is to disciple young Christians into future Saints through consistent age-appropriate catechesis as guided by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Scriptures, the teachings of Holy Mother Church in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and with the support of the parish community.

Aim of Catechesis

Catechesis (Religious Education) is about the conversion of the whole person to God, Jesus Christ, and His Church. It is living and learning in the midst of a Christian community that shares, nurtures, and strengthens the faith of the individuals who make up the Church. The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ, Who alone can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit.

II. Faith Formation Team

Director of Religious Education	Mr. Jesse Read
Grades K-1 Catechist	Mrs. Michelle Hoover
Grade 2 Catechist	Mrs. Pat Reichart
Grade 3-4 Catechist	Mrs. Chris O'Brien
Grade 3-4 Catechist	Miss Katie Zumbrum
Grade 5-6 Catechist	Mrs. Teresa Seamans
Grade 5-6 Catechist	Mrs. Lisa Myers
Grade 7 Catechist	Mrs. Linda Brown
Grade 8 Catechist	Mr. Dominic Rodriguez

III. Curriculum

Immaculate Conception BVM Parish utilizes Loyola Press' *Christ Our Life* series K-8. Supplementals include a few Catholic Bible translations (primarily the New American Bible as it is the basis of our liturgy), and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC).

IV. Sacraments

Grade 2 - **THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND HOLY EUCHARIST** (Diocesan Guidelines)

Parents bear the primary responsibility for the Religious Education of their children, including their introduction to the Sacraments which they discharge in a thoughtful and informed manner.

- a. Parental involvement in the sacramental preparation of their children is of the greatest importance. The Congregation is particularly pleased to note the growing insistence that the parents of the children be involved in and helped with religious instruction of their children and especially the preparation for these important sacraments (Letter from Sacred Congregation of the Clergy).
- b. The most important element in preparation for the Sacrament of Penance is the experience of being forgiven in the home. Parents must provide this experience for them in the home if the child is to understand the meaning of forgiveness. A like experience of forgiveness must be provided in the religion classes.
- c. The parents' own use and attitude toward the Sacraments as a means of spiritual growth is a powerful incentive for the Sacrament of Penance. If parents neglect the make sure of this Sacrament properly, the child's approach will be tainted by a drudging attitude. "In the family children learn to believe what their parents' words and example teach about God, and the parents enrich their faith by participating in the formal religious education of their children, for example, by preparing them to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation..." (To Teach As Jesus Did, 25).
- d. The catechesis for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist "seeks to strengthen the child's awareness of the Father's love of the call to participate in Christ's sacrifice and the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Children must have a clear understanding that "the Holy Eucharist is the REAL Body and Blood of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and what appears to be bread and wine are actually His living Body" (CCC #1406-1419).

These guidelines touch only the FIRST PENANCE & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION and indicate a deep and loving concern for the child. They presume that all understand that the catechesis on the Sacraments only begins with the child's first reception. This is only the first phase of a catechesis which MUST CONTINUE through the family influence into adult life. This will insure

that a person's understanding and use of the Sacraments matures as the person matures. The teachers will be available for parental assistance.

Grade 8 - **THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION** (Diocesan Guidelines)

- a. The period of remote preparation involves religious education programs provided by either parochial school or the parish catechetical program.
- b. A person NOT RECEIVING regular religious instruction should have AT LEAST ONE FULL YEAR of regular attendance in the religious education program of the parish before being admitted to the IMMEDIATE PREPARATION PROGRAM for Confirmation.
- c. Two years before Confirmation is administered, the candidates should be made aware that they are approaching that stage of preparation which will ready them to receive Confirmation, marking the BEGINNING OF THEIR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH.
- d. Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation addresses the components of message, worship, and service in a balanced process of prayer, liturgical celebrations, support from the adult faith community, and involvement in service.
 "...the candidates are required to be grounded in the basic fundamentals of the spiritual life and Christian teaching" (RCIA #15).

CONFIRMATION is a serious commitment for the parent, sponsor, and student. Each needs to be a responsible witness to their faith through service and good example the practice of their faith. Each needs to attend the required preparation sessions.

CONFIRMATION IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO GRADUATION. One never thinks of "graduating" from an initiatory community. Confirmation is only the beginning of living a fully committed life of loving God above all things and one's neighbor as one's self. Therefore, one's religious education does not stop with Confirmation. We see it be on-going throughout a Catholic's life. For this reason, the parish offers on-going religious enrichment opportunities.

V. Policies

A. Registration (certificates/emergency forms/sacramental records/fees/class placement)

1. Non-Parishioners enrolling for the first time must provide a certificate of Baptism. If newly enrolled for Confirmation, a certificate for First Communion must also be provided.
2. Emergency Forms must be completed by all parents/guardians of children enrolling each school year. A re-registration is issued each May upon the completion of the religious education year: on this form will be the request for any change in information so that the emergency form is kept most up-to-date on file.

3. Sacramental Records are kept in the parish office. For requests for certificates or information, contact the parish's main office.
4. The annual fee for parishioners is \$50. The annual fee for non-parishioners is \$60.
5. Catechumens are placed in classes based primarily upon the age of the child. Special circumstances are taken into consideration for children receiving Sacraments of Initiation who are at different ages than that designated by the Bishop of Harrisburg. For example, a new catechumen enrolls who is in 3rd Grade, but the preparation class for First Communion is 2nd Grade; after speaking with the catechumen's parent/guardian, the decision would be made to place the child in the 2nd Grade class or to give separate instruction.

B. Attendance

Catechesis is vital to the sacramental and spiritual formation of young Christians. Sunday Religious Education classes should be a priority for enrolled families. Emergencies and extenuating circumstances do occur, though. Three absences per catechetical year are permissible until make-up time for instruction would be required.

C. Arrival and Dismissal

The main entrance to use for both arrival and dismissal is entrance #3, the far corner doors where Eagle Street intersects with Golden Lane (this is the alley between the parish and the parish center).

Arrival: Doors open at 9:15 a.m. Sunday mornings. Drivers dropping children off must enter Eagle Street from Berlin Road and exit onto Golden Lane. The driver is responsible for the child(ren) until he/she has entered the parish center. Drivers must not leave before seeing their child(ren) enter the parish center.

Dismissal: Doors open for dismissal no later than 10:30 a.m. Drivers must enter and exit the same way as when arriving. Catechumens will pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet beginning at 10:20 a.m. Parents/Guardians are invited to join their child(ren) in prayer together at the close of the morning session. After prayer, they may leave with their child(ren) once the DRE or catechist is notified.

D. Communication

Main communication to families will be via email from the DRE. Other forms will be through the weekly bulletin as well as sent home.

E. Emergency Class Cancellation

In the event of inclement weather, etc., class cancellation will be announced via <https://www.wgal.com/weather/closings>. Unless otherwise prevented, the cancellation will be posted no later than 8 a.m. Sunday morning.

G. Health Concerns/Medication

Catechists and other personnel should not dispense or administer medication to students. However, in cases of great need, arrangements can be made by discussing with the Pastor or DRE before class(es). Any special medication needs and/or physical, mental, or emotional concerns must be provided on the registration form and brought to the DRE during registration. All information is kept confidential. Parents/Guardians should know that:

1. The child's needs must be recorded on the registration sheet. Since children are with us such a short time, we expect all medications to be administered before/after class.
2. However, it is understandable that there may be a need, such as the need to use an inhaler, which would warrant medication to be brought to class. A confidential appointment with the DRE and/or Pastor must be made to discuss special medical needs.
3. If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition after registration, inform the DRE and catechist as soon as possible.

H. Child Abuse

Child abuse is of serious concern. Consistent with diocesan policy and local legal codes, parish catechetical staff has a moral and legal duty to comply with the law to ensure the welfare of a child. Common policy is that any staff member or catechist who suspects a child to be a victim of child abuse will notify the DRE who will then notify the Pastor. The professional staff will then relieve the catechist of further investigative responsibility and initiate follow through. "Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will also follow diocesan policy on such matters."

VI. Expectations

A. Parent

1. Ensure that child(ren) attend classes regularly and on time.
2. Communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect child(ren) in the classroom.

3. Be an active part of child(ren)'s catechesis. Attend retreats and be involved during class at the catechist's request.

B. Student

For a well-ordered and educationally conducive environment we ask that students abide by the following regulations:

- No catechumen will be permitted to be disruptive before, during, or after class or perform an other inappropriate conduct.
- When a discipline problem arises in the classroom, the student will be taken to the RE office.
- If a catechumen is repeatedly taken to the office, the DRE will meet with the parent and the catechumen to arrange for alternative instruction.
- Food may not be brought into the parish center. This includes gum, drinks, candy, etc. specific permission must be obtained from the catechist or DRE for any exceptions.
- The students are required to come to class properly dressed and have a positive attitude to learn and grow in their Faith as a means of preparing for a happy future life on earth as they journey with Jesus and Mary to the Father.

C. Catechists & Volunteers

PERSONNEL 4111 RE

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND RETENTION OF CATECHETICAL PERSONNEL

For programs under the jurisdiction of the parish, the recruitment and selection of volunteers shall primarily be the responsibility of the Pastor and C/DRE. In addition, others may be requested to assist in the interview process.

Only those individuals grounded in faith, willing to support Gospel values and Catholic teaching, and willing to inspire students through their word and example may be selected or retained as volunteers in the Diocese of Harrisburg.

Volunteers are expected to maintain the quality of their faith commitment and their willingness to uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church. Volunteers who espouse, by word or action, practices contrary to the teachings of the Catholic faith will be dismissed.

Catechetical volunteers are expected to fulfill the Sunday liturgical obligations and otherwise participate fully in the life of their Catholic parish.

All parish catechists must be committed to on-going personal religious education and formation. They are to complete the requirements for the Basic Catechetical Certificate, and are encouraged to further their formation with additional certificates and certification available through the diocesan programs for catechists.

Reciprocity may be extended to those catechists holding certification from other dioceses with similar requirements. The Diocesan Director of Religious Education will make the necessary determination.

The Diocese of Harrisburg requires catechists and other volunteers to have the Pennsylvania State Police (and FBI Background check if applicable) and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare Background check.

Age requirements for volunteers and catechists:

Catechist for Elementary Students (pre-school to grade 8) Catechists are to be at least 21 years old. (In exceptional cases, a catechist may be a High School graduate and a minimum of 18 years old. Catechists between 18 and 21 may only supervise students in the parish educational building, under the general supervision of the C/DRE.) Catechist for Secondary Students (grades 9-12) Must be at least 21 years old.

Catechist or Chaperone for off-campus trips Must be at least 21 years old to drive students or to serve as a chaperone for students on trips away from the parish property, or for any over-night retreats or other activities.

Student Volunteers High School students are permitted to serve as volunteer assistants in the parish religious education programs. They must assist an adult catechist (21 years old), and may never be responsible for supervising children alone. As minor students, they must be considered to be always under the direct care or supervision of an adult, as with any other younger student.

Policy Revised: September 1, 2008

KCR/Bishop of Harrisburg

VII. Right to Amend

This handbook is primarily a means of communication. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information on how we intend to go about our work. Immaculate Conception RE reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified if any changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.

IX. Parent Acknowledgement Form

This is to acknowledge that I/we have received the Immaculate Conception Parish RE handbook. We understand and agree to cooperate with the parish policies set forth in the handbook. **This form must be signed and returned no later than Sunday, September 22, 2019.**

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Signature of Catechumen Grade

Ave Maris Stella

(Hail, Star of the Sea)



Hail, bright star of ocean,
God's own Mother blest,
Ever sinless Virgin,
Gate of heavenly rest.

Virgin all excelling,
Mildest of the mild,
Freed from guilt, preserve us,
Pure and undefiled.

Taking that sweet Ave
Which from Gabriel came,
Peace confirm within us,
Changing Eva's name.

Keep our life all spotless,
Make our way secure,
Till we find in Jesus
Joy forevermore.

Break the captives' fetters,
Light on blindness pour,
All our ills expelling,
Every bliss implore

Through the highest heaven
To the Almighty Three,
Father, Son, and Spirit,
One same Glory be.

Show thyself a Mother;
May the Word Divine,
Born for us thy Infant,
Hear our prayers through thine.

Amen.