Faith Formation
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2018-2019
Immaculate Heart of Mary  
1040 Alameda de las Pulgas  
Belmont CA  94002  
650-593-6157

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WELCOME!

Dear Faith Formation families,
Welcome to the new catechetical year!

As we journey together, the catechists and I understand that your role as parents/guardians is vital to passing on the faith to your children. No classroom or textbook can provide what you must provide in order to nurture your child’s faith.

The Faith Formation programs and catechists of Immaculate Heart of Mary are here to support you in helping your children grow to love God with their whole heart, mind and soul and to love their neighbors as themselves through learning and living the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Thank you for sharing your faith and your love of God with your children and the parish community!
In peace-
Mrs. Robyn Lang
REGISTRATION/FEES

Faith Formation Sessions

1. Faith Formation has an open registration policy throughout the year.
2. Classes are held from 10:45 am – 12:00 pm (noon) on Sunday mornings September to May.
3. If Sacraments will be received this year, a copy of the Baptismal certificate must be provided at the time of registration, if not already on file.
4. One form per family is needed. Registration for all programs can be done with the one form.
5. Families are asked to help in the program or parish. A volunteer sheet will be included with the registration packet.
6. Families who wish to enroll children in Faith Formation are encouraged to register as parishioners (registration cards available in the church and in the parish office.)

Faith Formation Fees

Tuition fees are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registration received:</th>
<th>04/15/18 – 06/30/18:</th>
<th>07/01/18 – 12/31/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06/30/18:</td>
<td>$135 one child</td>
<td>$185 two or more children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$150 one child</td>
<td>$200 two or more children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fee pays for the books and supplies and offsets the cost of the teachers’ manuals, resources, Catechist training and Catechist Safe Environment screening.
SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism

0-6 years  Contact the Parish Office for regarding the scheduling of Baptism. (650-593-6157)

7-17 years  Contact the Director of Faith Formation. Students will be part of the RCIA, Adapted for Children. rlang@ihmschool.org

18+ years  Contact the Parish Office for more information regarding RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). (650-593-6157)

The process of Sacrament Preparation at IHM is consistent with the guidelines established by the Archdiocese of San Francisco. For those in First grade and older, preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation is a two (2) year process. Placement in all Sacrament Preparation processes is based on the following criteria in accordance with archdiocesan guidelines.

First Reconciliation/First Eucharist/Confirmation

1. Families with children First Grade or older who have not received First Reconciliation/First Eucharist are eligible to enroll for Sacrament Preparation.

2. Families with children in the ninth grade or older who have not received Confirmation are eligible to enroll for Confirmation preparation.

3. Proof of Baptism must be provided at the time of enrollment in the Sacrament Preparation process.

4. For all sacraments, preparation is a minimum of two years. For First Reconciliation/First Eucharist: Children must have completed one year of faithful participation in Faith Formation sessions or Catholic Parochial School immediately prior to final preparation. Concurrent enrollment in a Catholic Parochial School or Parish Faith Formation session is required.

For Confirmation: All students in grades 9-12 are welcome to participate in this two –year process.
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Mass Attendance

At Baptism, parents accept the responsibility of raising their children in the practice of the faith, teaching them to follow Jesus and to love God and neighbor. With that comes the responsibility of attending Mass with your child regularly.

Faith Formation sessions do not give your child all the knowledge they need; they need the knowledge and grace that is received from Mass. “The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God.” CCC 1074

Mass times at IHM are:

Saturday 5:00 pm
Sunday 7:30 am
           9:30 am
           11:30 am
Attendance at Faith Formation for Grades PreK - High School

Our schedule takes into consideration holiday weekends which allows for family time. In the event of an absence, parents should check with the catechist to see what was missed.

1. Attendance records are in keeping with diocesan policies and help determine eligibility for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.

2. Faithful attendance to all scheduled sessions is expected. For Sacramental Programs, regular attendance is required for successful completion of the process.

3. Children and families are expected to make up any missed work due to absences.

4. To ensure your child receives the full benefit of the gatherings, please arrive on time. Late arrivals can be a distraction for both the group gathered and the students arriving late.

5. All absences require either a written notice prior to the absence or a phone call to the Faith Formation Office.

6. In a non-sacramental year, four absences or more are considered excessive. If a child misses four consecutive sessions without prior notice, he or she will be considered withdrawn from the program unless parents notify us otherwise.

Attendance during Sacramental and Preparation Years

Regular attendance is expected for all grade levels, whether or not the student is preparing to receive a sacrament.

*Children who do not regularly attend sessions during Sacrament Preparation years will not have successfully completed the preparation and will be advised to begin the preparation process at a later time when they can make a commitment necessary to be well prepared to celebrate the sacraments. A maximum of 2 absences per year during the preparation years will be allowed. Please contact the director with any questions or concerns.*
Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival
Preschool to grade 8:
Students gather by 10:45 am outside between the school building and the Parish Center. Classes are held in the school building. Please arrive no sooner than 15 minutes prior to class.

Confirmation:
Candidates gather at St Michael Hall at 10:45 am. Please arrive no sooner than 15 minutes prior to class.

Please make every effort to have your student stay for the entire session (except in cases of emergency). In the event your student must leave early, please advise catechist in writing. Please check in with the Director or appointed staff person for pick up and sign your student out in the log book. The staff person will retrieve your student from the classroom. No student shall be released early from a class unless permission has been given by a supervising staff member. All students are required to be signed out by the parent/guardian or authorized adult.

Dismissal
All students should be picked up from the outside gathering area (between school and Parish Center for Religious Education; St. Michael Hall for Confirmation) no later than 15 minutes after the end of class.

If someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up a child, written notice must be issued to the Faith Formation Office from the parent/guardian granting permission for release from the classroom to the adult.

No child will be permitted to walk to the parking lot unattended.

Any child who is not picked up by 15 minutes after dismissal time will wait with the Director for his/her parent/guardian. In order to help our fellow parishioners who volunteer their time and talent as catechists and classroom aides, we ask that all parents pick up their children on time.
Behavior/Discipline Policy

All students are expected to treat themselves and others with respect, and to share whole-heartedly and cooperatively in the learning experiences offered by their catechists.

The following are some guidelines for behavior based upon these simple principles:

a. Keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself.

b. Talk respectfully, no name calling, teasing, cursing, etc.

c. Follow directions the first time.

d. Be prepared for class by bringing required materials, supplies and completed assignments to each session.

Registration in Faith Formation at Immaculate Heart of Mary indicates that its rules and guidelines have been read by parents/guardians, have been reviewed with the child(ren) by the parents/guardians and have been accepted by the parents/guardians and children.

1. It is understood by the parents/guardians and children that severe disruptive behavior by a child will result in disciplinary action. Severe disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

a. Refusal to obey directions of catechists or other staff members.

b. An established pattern of behavior which is disruptive to the learning environment of the session.

c. Threats, assault, battery or physical injury to other children and/or staff members.

d. Use of profane or abusive language. Behavior or language that intimidates, belittles, harasses (including harassment of a sexual nature), inappropriate references of physical harm to oneself or others.

e. Possession or distribution of obscene pictures, magazines, books, music.

f. Theft, damage or misuse of IHM property

g. False fire alarms.

h. Possession or use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or narcotics.
In the event a student’s behavior disrupts the learning process for himself/herself or others, any or all of the following steps may occur:
   a. The catechist will issue a verbal warning to the student.
   b. The parent/guardian will be contacted.
   c. Meeting between parents and catechist and Director of Faith Formation.
   d. Removal of child from Faith Formation process. The Director will discuss continued formation options with the family.

2. The Director of Faith Formation is responsible for ensuring that all disciplinary actions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner by the Faith Formation Office and the volunteer staff.

3. In the event that a parent/guardian is not satisfied with the action taken by a catechist, they may contact the Director of Faith Formation.

4. If the parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the Director of Faith Formation’s action, the matter may be taken to the Pastor for resolution.

**Safe Environment**

The Archdiocese of San Francisco and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish are committed to ensuring the personal safety of everyone in the Faith Formation programs. All parish and Faith Formation staff have a moral and legal obligation to report any suspected child abuse to authorities to ensure the welfare of everyone, especially the students.

All parish staff, catechists and volunteers are required to:

- Complete an information form
- Acknowledge receipt of and compliance with the Archdiocesan Policy Regarding Conduct with Minors
- Complete the Virtus *Protecting God’s Children* training
- Be fingerprinted for the Archdiocese.

Each year, the Faith Formation programs provide Safe Environment curriculum for the students. The curriculum is chosen and provided to us by the Archdiocese. These sessions will take place in early spring. Parents can view materials prior to the sessions. They also have the option to exempt their child from the training by completing the Opt-out form available in the Faith Formation Office.
Information Policy

1. The Faith Formation Office keeps records of a confidential nature and abides by the Privacy Act. Personal information will not be disclosed to third parties without written permission from the persons involved. Parents and/or guardians have a right to review any records kept by the Faith Formation Office pertaining to their child for any reason.

2. Catechists are provided limited access to personal information as is necessary for them to perform their ministry. Such information would include: last grade completed, phone number, emergency contacts, medical or learning issues and other information when it is appropriate.

3. The Faith Formation Office abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will provide the non-custodial parent with unofficial copies of records when requested. If there is a court order specifying that no information is to be given, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide the Director with an official copy of the court order.
The Faith Formation Office will use email as the **PRIMARY** means of communication. To ensure delivery of emails to your Inbox, please add us to your Safe Senders List or Address Book. Additional communication options are USPS mail and phone.

The Faith Formation office, along with the Church Universal, strives to maintain open communication with all who participate in Faith Formation sessions. We also encourage catechists and parents to keep each other informed of a child's progress through informal contact at the beginning and end of each session.

From time to time, it may be necessary for parents to discuss issues of concern with the catechist or the Director. Issues of concern should be resolved at the lowest possible level whenever possible. Parents/guardians should attempt to resolve any issues with the catechist first. Additional meetings with Director will be scheduled as needed.
Safety

The safety of children is most important to all involved in the Faith Formation sessions. Please cooperate with the following procedures:

1. Fire Safety
   a. Fire drills will be conducted once a year. All students, and adults will depart the facility.
   b. In case of a real emergency, students will be taken to a prearranged evacuation area.
   c. There is a map posted in each room with the preferred exit route and gathering place outside the building.

2. Natural disasters

In the event of a natural disaster (earthquake, etc.), catechists will direct students in appropriate safety procedures. Evacuation procedures will be followed as necessary.

Pick-up procedures will be in place and families will be contacted if early dismissal is necessary or if classes will be cancelled. Please make sure your contact information is kept current.
**Photos/Videos**

During various activities, the students in the Faith Formation Program may have their photo taken. The registration form included the Permission release for the use of photos or videos and must be initialed by a parent/guardian for each student. There is also a format the end of this handbook. As always, the parent/guardian has the right to opt-out of his/her child’s photo being used. If you choose to opt-out, please provide the Faith Formation Office with a recent head shot of each child for the sole purpose of identifying by our editing staff which individuals are to be excluded from any photo placed in the bulletin, the parish website or other media.

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**Prayers to Know/Learn**

Students of every grade level in Faith Formation at Immaculate Heart of Mary are taught the importance of developing an active, daily prayer life. They are taught to pray both formally, informally and to pray always.

Formal prayers which have already been learned should be prayed frequently and parents/guardians should help their child(ren) to learn new prayers by praying with their child(ren). Parents/guardians should also help their child(ren) to understand the meaning of the words to these prayers and to know what it means to **pray from the heart.**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Prayers and Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PreK-4</td>
<td>Sign of the Cross, Simple Meal Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinder</td>
<td>Hail Mary, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer, Blessing with Holy Water (and all of the above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Our Father, Simple Meal Prayer, Genuflection and ritual, Begin to learn Mass responses (and all of the above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Ritual and Mass Prayers, Act of Contrition, Sacraments – Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation (and all of the above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Apostles’ Creed, Begin learning the ritual and process of the Rosary, Simple litany responses (and all of the above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>The Ten Commandments &amp; Beatitudes, The Rosary, Ritual of Stations of the Cross (and all of the above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Prayer of St. Francis, Ritual and prayers of celebrating the Sacraments (Eucharist &amp; Reconciliation), Prayer to the Holy Spirit (and all of the above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Rituals and prayers for each of the seven Sacraments, Praying the various form of prayer including Christian Meditation (and all of the above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th &amp; 8th</td>
<td>Nicene Creed, Lectio Divina, Christian Meditation, Leading simple prayer celebrations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ROLE OF THE CATECHIST

Our catechists are volunteers who share their time, talents and treasures with our faith community in order to partner with the parish and the families in our Faith Formation programs. The role of our volunteer catechists is central to the ongoing life of our church. To catechize means “to echo or resound.” Our catechists are members of our faith community who have experienced God’s revelation and have responded to His call to see life through the eyes of faith. As members of our faith community, parents/guardians are invited (and encouraged!) to offer assistance to our catechists and/or the Faith Formation Office. Please come and join this awesome ministry of loving and serving the Lord and His people!

Ongoing training and mentorship is available.

*A Catechist is faith, hope and love attached to arms, legs, aches and pains, family duties and not enough time.*

*A Catechist is an ordinary person who is extraordinary because he or she teaches as Jesus did.*

*A Catechist is faithful to the past, open to the future, but especially dedicated to deepening the faith of the present generation.*

~ from the poem, “A Catechist Is” by Monsignor John Francis Murphy
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 ministry. IHM Faith Formation Program reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified in writing if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.
ANNUAL PHOTO RELEASE
2018-2019

From time to time, photos are used in the parish bulletin and website as well as in newspapers, television and other media used to portray events occurring at our parish. These may or may not be accompanied by photos or videotape of students. The releases may be prepared by Sacred Heart Church or a media representative.

☐ I do give permission for my student’s name and likeness to be included in such publicity releases.

☐ I do NOT give permission for my student’s name and likeness to be included in such publicity releases.

Parent’s Name (Printed)

Parent’s Signature

Date

Child’s Name                      Grade

Child’s Name                      Grade

Child’s Name                      Grade

Child’s Name                      Grade