

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK



Dear Parents,

I, and all the teaching staff, at Immaculate Conception Church, warmly welcome you to our Religious Education Program. We are looking forward to the start of our classes shortly, and ask God's blessing for a successful school year.

For a better understanding of the Immaculate Conception Religious Education Program requirements, and philosophy, it is necessary that you read thoroughly your copy of the Parent/Student handbook. This Parent/Student Handbook is to be kept in your possession for future reference. **PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THE SLIP BELOW, WITH YOUR REGISTRATION.** Failure to sign or return the receipt form will have no effect on the application or enforcement of the handbook provisions.

Sincerely,
Religious Education / Faith Formation

DETACH AND RETURN WITH REGISTRATION

I have read the Parent-Student Handbook, and I do accept the rules and regulations printed in it.

Date: _____

Parent(s) Guardian(s) Signature

Child or Children's Name (please print)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH PHILOSOPHY

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

We believe that through the power of the Holy Spirit, God has created every human being in His own image of love. This means that God, through the salvation of Jesus Christ, has given everyone the ability and the responsibility to develop good values of love, service, and concern toward each other.

We also believe that Jesus Christ gave us the teachings of the Church to aid us in developing this image of love.

It is our goal here at Immaculate Conception Parish that all those involved with the Department of Religious Education instill in the students a deep sense and awareness of God's love for them. Through our example and our positive attitude toward them, we affirm that each child is a unique gift created by God. It is also our goal that we present to them the Good News of Jesus Christ, namely, the teachings of the Church, which will enable them to openly live and practice their faith in today's world.

We strive to keep open all channels of communication between teachers, parents and all members of this community.

We continually evaluate our progress in living out this philosophy, making changes or improvements when necessary.

We believe if we live out this philosophy all those touched by it will be beacons of God's light in today's world, and be the future and hope for the world of tomorrow.

ADMISSION

Students will be admitted to Immaculate Conception Religious Education Program according to the following:

1. Registered families in the parish who
 - presently have children in religious education
 - have a record of conscientious support of the parish, or an area parish
 - meet the registration guidelines
2. Families registered who have not previously attended Immaculate Conception
3. NO child shall be denied admittance because of race, nationality, ethnic origin, or cost.

Being a "registered" parishioner means both physical and consistent weekly financial support of Immaculate Conception parish.

ATTENDANCE

As members of the Catholic Church, parents have the sole responsibility to ensure their child receives sufficient training in religious education.

The diocese considers the habit of good attendance as an important part of a child's religious education for the following reasons. First, the learning process is progressive and builds upon itself...it is difficult for a child to learn if they are not consistently in class. Secondly, attendance is directly related to educational success. Religious Education classes meet for only 75 Minutes each week so our lessons are planned to give as much subject matter in the most effective and efficient manner as possible. A student who misses a class misses a valuable lesson that can't be entirely recovered.

Weekly attendance at Mass is the most important gift a Catholic parent can give their child. Praying the Mass together as a family delivers the graces needed for a family to live as good Christians with high morals. Celebrating the Mass together, unifies a family, and can instill a strong Catholic foundation on which to build. Many class lessons and discussions revolve around the Mass, so when Religious Education is coupled with the celebration of the Mass, a student has an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of his/her faith.

ABSENCES FROM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

Excused absences

1. Illness of the student with notification by parent, either by phone or written statement
2. Funerals
3. Family vacations--it is strongly recommended that families take their vacations during regularly scheduled Religious Education breaks. If a student does miss class due to a vacation, the days will be excused if:
 - a. Notification in writing is made at least 2 weeks in advance
 - b. The student is accompanied by his/her parent during vacation

ATTENDANCE FOR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION CLASS

Grade 2 First Reconciliation and First Communion

Grade 8 Confirmation

We, at Immaculate Conception Parish are very serious about adequate preparation for our students who receive Christ's gift to us, the Holy Sacraments. We believe that through the sacraments, we are united

with Jesus Christ, and through His presence in us, He guides us and strengthens us to grow more fruitfully in the divine life. Because we want to instill in your child the beauty and the importance of these precious gifts, for a lifetime of grace and understanding of them, we require regular weekly attendance, not only for the grade the sacrament is received, but for the previous year as well, to ensure the student will have had adequate religion classes to build upon. That will encompass grade seven and eight for Confirmation and grade one and two for First Communion and Reconciliation. Regular weekly attendance is required for the child to be eligible to receive the sacrament. Failure to do so will result in postponement of the sacrament. There are scheduled parent meetings involving the First Communion and Confirmation classes. A parent/guardian attendance at these meetings, shows support of their child, and enables them to help their child develop a better understanding of the importance of the Sacraments. These meetings should be considered important, and attendance should take precedence over other activities.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

1. No notification from parent/guardian to religious education office concerning absence

It is the responsibility of the parent/student to contact child's teacher in regards to making up missed class work in a timely fashion.

After a student has three consecutive unexcused absences, a letter of notification will be sent to the parents regarding this matter.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURE SAFETY

Religious education classes start promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Please be considerate of the catechist and fellow classmates and ensure your child arrives on time. Valuable subject matter is lost by all when tardy students disrupt class.

A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives after 9:05 a.m. After a student is tardy three times, the parents will be contacted to discuss the matter.

Class is dismissed at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings. This is an extremely hectic time due to the arrival of parishioners for Mass and the dismissal of classes coinciding within a few minutes of each other. Traffic is very heavy on the north, west and east drives, as students anxiously await their parents' arrival.

For safety reasons, and less commotion, the students in the office building are escorted to the parish hall by their teachers after class. We ask **parents to please park their vehicles and walk into the parish hallway to pick up their children.** All other elementary students may be picked up at their classrooms. K-Grade 3 will be dismissed by Catechist to parents or guardians only. We know this is inconvenient, especially in winter, but we feel it is necessary to ensure the safety of all our students, and we greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

CATECHISTS REQUIREMENTS

Our catechists at Immaculate Conception Parish are faithful, practicing Catholics who give generously of themselves in order to share their deep faith with their students. They have high moral standards, years of experience, and when possible, attend on-going formation classes in the Diocese for certification.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

If there are more than two complaints concerning a child's behavior in class, the parents/guardians will be notified, and a meeting scheduled to discuss the matter with the directors'. If there are more serious discipline problems, each incident will be handled in an appropriate manner fitting the behavior.

GROUNDS FOR SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION OF STUDENTS

The suspension or expulsion policy shall apply when a student is:

1. On parish grounds;
2. Off parish grounds at a parish activity, function or event; traveling to or from class sessions or a Religious Education program activity, function, or event; or
3. At any other time when a student's conduct either causes harm or could potentially cause harm to the other students, parish employees or volunteers, parish property, or the reputation of the parish or the diocese.

The following types of student conduct constitute grounds for suspension or expulsion subject to the Diocesan Director of Religious Education's review. This listing is not intended to be exhaustive of all types of conduct:

1. Any conduct which, in the opinion of Immaculate Conception Church personal, is contrary to the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. Using violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, or other comparable conduct constituting an interference with the Religious Education Program purposes or urging other students to engage in such conduct.
3. Causing or attempting to cause damage to property belonging to any other person, student, church personnel or the school, stealing or attempting to steal property belonging to any other person, student, church employee, or school.
4. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical injury or intentionally behaving in such a way that,

in the opinion of religious education personnel, could cause physical injury to any person.

5. Threatening or intimidating any individual for whatever purpose.
6. Possessing, handling, or transmitting a knife, lighter, matches, or any other object which under the circumstances and in the sole opinion of religious education personnel could be considered a weapon. A student who must use a knife as part of an organized activity held by an organization that has been approved by school officials is exempt from this rule so long as the knife is used as a part of or in accordance with the approved organization.
7. Possessing, using, transmitting, or being under the influence of any controlled substance or intoxicant of any kind. The prescribed use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a physician is not a violation of this rule. This parish shall assist students experiencing substance abuse problems in accordance with diocesan policy.
8. Engaging in the selling of a controlled substance or engaging in a criminal law violation that constitutes a danger to other students or constitutes an interference with the purpose of the Religious Education Program and/or its educational function.
9. Failing in a substantial number of instances to comply with directions of catechists or other designated personnel during any period of time when the student is properly under their supervision.
10. Engaging in any activity forbidden by the laws of the State in Indiana that interferes with the purposes or educational function of the Religious Education Program.
11. Violating or repeatedly violating any rules that are, in the opinion of the catechetical leader or other designated official, necessary in carrying out the purposes and/or educational function of the Religious Education Program.
12. Possessing or using on parish grounds during class session hours an electronic paging device or hand-held portable telephone in a situation not related to a school purpose or educational function.
13. Engaging in any unlawful activity on or off parish grounds if the unlawful activity is considered by the catechetical leader or other designated officials to be an interference with the purpose and/or educational functions of the Religious Education Program.

EDUCATION IN SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Diocese requires all students to have the opportunity to a Safe Environment Class. The Catechists have been instructed on presenting this to the children in age appropriate sessions. Information is sent home to the parents so we can keep you informed on all the updates of the Diocese. We answer all questions regarding this subject and encourage the input of the parents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. ILLNESS

Parents'/ guardian's phone numbers, as well as a designated emergency contact person's phone number are on file and available in an emergency situation. If no one can be notified, the parish will decide how the situation shall be handled. Please include all necessary phone numbers, and chronic or notable health concerns on the registration form. Please notify the Religious Education office of any change of address, phone, or health status. **GRADING STANDARDS**

All students in grades K-7 receive evaluation reports twice a year, at each semester's end. They are evaluated on the following:

Prayers, Attitude, Class participation, Work Assignments, Participation in Religious Activities, Cooperation/Respect, Social Habits, Listening Skills, Attendance

The grading system used is:

S- Satisfactory

N- Needs improvement

PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN/VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

1. CLASSROOM VISITS:

We entertain an open door policy, whereby parents' are free to visit their student's classroom any time they desire.

2. HOMEWORK:

Throughout the school year, there may be forms, homework and papers that require a parent's attention, or signature. Please comply with the instructions regarding these matters, and return them to your child's catechist.

3. VOLUNTEERS

Parents and non parents are invited to contact the Religious Education Office, or their child's catechist if they wish to share some of their precious time as a volunteer in our program. We are grateful for any time you have to offer.

RACIAL/SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Racial or sexual harassment will not be tolerated in any form throughout the Immaculate Conception Religious Education Program.

Contact the Religious Education Office for full disclosure of diocesan policies on these matters.

Immaculate Conception Religious Education Program or Directors' reserve the right to revise the handbook when necessary. Parents will be notified when and if this occurs.

The Immaculate Conception parent/student handbook and other Diocesan policies are subject to review by the Diocese.

Students and their parents must comply with the policies issued by the Office of Catechesis. A copy of these policies is available in the directors' office.

When the Office of Catechesis issues a policy on a certain issue,
it will be given priority over any conflicting Religious Education program policy.