



Church of the Immaculate Conception

1 Munn Street / Montclair, New Jersey 07042 / 973-744-5650 / Fax 973-744-7936

Parish Catechetical Programs Family Handbook 2011-2012

Parish Catechetical Staff

Rev. Joseph Scarangella.....Pastor
Rev. Frank Burla.....Parochial Vicar
Rev. Aro Nathan.....Parochial Vicar
Mary Clinton.....Pastoral Associate for Catechesis
Preston Dibble.....Director of Music
Jonathan Lace.....Coordinator of Youth Ministry

Mission Statement

The mission of the Parish Catechetical Programs of The Church of the Immaculate Conception is to support parish families in helping their children grow to love God with their whole heart, mind and soul, and to love their neighbor as themselves through learning and living the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Brief Description of the Parish Catechetical Programs

Our parish catechetical programs consist of two dimensions:

- Sacrament preparation for First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation
- Catholic religious instruction for children age 4 through 8th grade

All parish families are invited and encouraged to participate. Please visit our parish website (www.mtcimmaculate.org) for registration forms or contact the parish Catechetical Office (973-744-5650). We will be happy to assist you.

Note to Parents and Guardians:

Whether your child attends a Catholic school or the parish Religious Education Program, your role is vital and wondrously beautiful. No classroom or textbook can or should provide what you must provide in order help your child grow in faith.

The General Directory for Catechesis states:

“Parents and other family members awaken in the child a sense of God. This religious awakening within the family is irreplaceable. A child’s first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive traces which last throughout life.”

If your family is struggling with how to provide what your child needs to grow in faith, please contact a parish staff member; we will be happy to assist you.

Sacrament Preparation for School Aged Children

At Baptism, parents accept the responsibility of training their children in the practice of the faith, teaching them to keep God’s commandments as taught by Jesus, and to love God and neighbor.

First Reconciliation and First Communion

A child’s remote preparation for sacraments begins by observing his or her parents’/guardians’ behavior and priorities, and by coming to Sunday Mass and experiencing

time for prayer and a growing relationship with God. They learn by observing how the significant adults in their lives respond to their own Baptismal call. No classroom or textbook can provide this.

Parish families who wish to have their children continue their initiation into the Catholic Church may enroll their children in Sacrament Preparation. This includes parish children who attend Catholic school. At Immaculate Conception, children generally receive immediate preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion in 2nd grade, after having completed two years of formal religious instruction.***

Please complete a Sacrament Preparation Enrollment Form which is available on our parish website (www.mtcimmaculate.org) or at the Parish Center at 1 Munn Street. The Parish Center is open from Monday through Friday, 9am - 4pm, and on Saturday mornings from 9am – noon.

Confirmation

Parish families whose children desire to complete their initiation into the Catholic Church may enroll for Sacrament Preparation for Confirmation prior to 8th grade. This includes parish children who attend Catholic schools. Please complete a Sacrament Preparation Enrollment Form which is available on our parish website (www.mtcimmaculate.org) or at the Parish Center at 1 Munn Street. The Parish Center is open from Monday through Friday, 9am - 4pm, and on Saturday mornings from 9am – noon.

It is the expectation of the parish that each young person wishing to be confirmed has received ongoing religious instruction in grades 1 – 8 in a parish Religious Education Program or Catholic School and celebrates Sunday Mass each week. ***

At Immaculate Conception, specific preparation for Confirmation begins in 7th grade and continues through 8th grade; young people generally receive immediate preparation for Confirmation during 9th grade by attending faith formation sessions throughout the year, culminating with the celebration of Confirmation in Easter Season.

****Regardless of grade level or years of instruction, families are welcomed and encouraged to contact the parish Catechetical Office to discuss having their children prepare for sacraments.*

Religious Education for School-Aged Children

Parish families are invited enroll their children in our Sunday morning Religious Education Program, or to contact the parish Catechetical Office to discuss participating in the Family-Based Religious Education Program.

Family-Based Religious Education Program:

Recognizing that the family is the foundation for all faith formation, our parish offers a program for any family who feel their child's religious education will be served best by working at home. Parents and guardians are expected to

proclaim the Gospel message through lifestyle as well as instruction, and place a priority on helping their child nurture a personal relationship with God.

Families who are interested in taking this option should contact the parish Catechetical Office to arrange for an interview with the Pastoral Associate for Catechetical Ministry to discuss the possibility.

General Requirements:

- Weekly Mass Attendance
- Timely completion of textbook chapter material
- Attendance at three parents' meetings during the upcoming year
- Parent commitment to ongoing personal faith development
- Family commitment to participating in family-based gatherings and events

Sunday Morning Classroom Program Information:

- Offered for 4 year-olds through 8th grade
- Runs from September through late April/early May
- Sunday mornings from 9:40-10:55am
- Conducted in Tegakwita Hall (parish school building on Munn St.)
- Grades Pre-K – 7th use Sadlier's, *We Believe*, textbooks; 8th grade uses Sadlier's *One Faith, One Lord* and *The Spirit Sets Us Free*

Registration Information:

- Currently enrolled families should update and sign-off on their child's "re-registration form" at the Parish Center before the June 15th deadline.

- Families of **new** students should access a “new student registration form” on our parish website, www.mtcimmaculate.org or pick one up at the Parish Center at 1 Munn Street, Monday through Friday between the hours of 9am - 4pm, or Saturday morning from 9am – noon. Baptismal certificates are required for children who were not baptized at Immaculate Conception.

- All families are needed to help with hall monitoring 2-3 times per year. Our parents/guardians’ association, ***Immaculate Conception Association of Religious Education (ICARE)***, helps coordinate this service, and also offers many volunteer opportunities that support the parish community and faith formation of our children. Please fill out an ***ICARE*** volunteer form which can be found on the parish website (mtcimmaculate.org), or picked up at the Parish Center.

- Registration Fees for the 2011-2012 Religious Education Program:
 - one child - \$80
 - two children - \$130
 - three children - \$150
 - four+ children - \$175

Late fee for returning families after June 15th deadline- \$50.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Child Abuse Policy

Consistent with the Archdiocesan policy and legal code of the State of New Jersey, all parish staff members and volunteers have a moral and legal obligation to report any suspected child abuse to authorities to ensure the welfare of a child.

All parish staff, catechists, and regular volunteers are required to:

- Complete a standard archdiocesan application
- Acknowledge receipt of and compliance with the *Archdiocesan Policy Regarding Conduct with Minors*
- Complete a criminal background check
- Complete the *Protecting God's Children* workshop training program.

Catechists

Our catechists are volunteers who dedicate themselves and their time to serving the children of the parish. Students are expected to respect the presence and authority of their catechists.

All catechists are required to complete the Archdiocesan Child Safety requirements listed above.

Catechists are not permitted to administer medication.

Catechists are not permitted to drive children to or from our Sunday Classroom Program.

Communication

Most communication from the parish Catechetical Office will be sent via email. Please inform us immediately if you realize you are not receiving emails from us, or if your email address changes.

Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather, please go to the parish website (mtcimmaculate.org) to check for a Snow Closing Announcement or call the parish Catechetical Office at 973-744-5650 x 118 to listen to the recording. Information will be posted or recorded by 8:30am.

In the event of a non-weather related closing, you will receive a phone call from your child's catechist or a parish staff person. Please be sure that we have the correct phone number on file for you to reach you in such a situation.

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures for Classroom Program

Your child should arrive to class by 9:40am. It is imperative that your child be on-time. Excessive or repetitive lateness is to be avoided as it is detrimental to your child's learning and also disruptive to the instruction of his/her entire class.

Please park in one of the designated parking lots on Cottage Place or Munn Street. Do not double park on any street as this leads to dangerous situations for your child as well as others.

For safety, the Munn Street Entrance only should be used to enter and exit the building, except in the case of fire drills or emergency situations. For the safety of all children, the Munn Street doors will be closed at 9:50am, and will be reopened at 10:50am. Should you need to enter the building in between these times, please knock on the door.

*Children in Pre-K through grade 2 **must** be dropped off and picked up at their classrooms by a parent or guardian. Parents and guardians for children in grades 3 – 8 should*

indicate and sign on their registration forms whether their children may leave their classrooms unaccompanied by a parent or guardian.

Please be prompt in picking your child up at 10:55am; many classroom catechists attend the 11am Mass.

Please do not ask that your child be dismissed early from class unless it is an emergency. This is very disruptive to classroom instruction. In the event your child absolutely must leave early, please come into the building to sign him/her out in the log book, indicating the reason for leaving, and a catechetical staff person will retrieve your child from class.

If you know that your child will have a continuing conflict with the class schedule on Sunday mornings, please speak with the Pastoral Associate for Catechetical Ministry about using our Family-Based option. This might be a better option than pulling your child out of class early each week.

Attendance Requirements for Classroom Program

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If your child has an unavoidable absence, please contact the parish Catechetical Office to inform us, and then follow-up with his or her catechist right away to make up class work. Any student who misses more than three class sessions without serious cause and without making up class work will be required to complete an end-of-year assessment before moving to the next grade.

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.

In the event a student's behavior disrupts the learning process for himself/herself or others, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) The catechist will issue a verbal warning to the student
- 2) If the behavior stops, the catechist will speak with the student after class about the behavior
- 3) If the behavior continues, the catechist will fill out a Behavior Report Form and send the student, accompanied by a hall monitor, down to the Main Hall desk where a staff member will call his/her parent to retrieve the student and to discuss the situation.
- 4) If the disruptive behavior continues in subsequent weeks, the student will not be permitted to return to class, and parents will be required to work at home with him/her on the grade level textbook material.

Harassment

It is the policy of Immaculate Conception Parish Religious Education Program to maintain a learning environment that is free from any type of harassment. No student associated with our program shall be subjected to any type of harassment.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to harass another student or volunteer in our program through the

conduct as defined below. Administrators and catechists shall be responsible for promoting a learning environment free from harassment within his or her classroom or office.

Definition of Harassment:

The verbal or physical conduct that demeans, shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability or any other physical feature.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability or any other physical feature; and
2. written or graphic material that demeans, shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability or any other physical feature and that is circulated within the classroom or elsewhere on the premises.

Violations of this policy will be treated as a significant disciplinary matter and will be reported to the Pastoral Associate for Catechetical Ministry and to the Pastor.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Immaculate Conception Religious Education Program admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges and programs made available to students who register for this program.