

# CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

111 High Street, Westerly, Rhode Island 02891

*Office of Catechetical Instruction*

Rev. Giacomo D. Capoverdi, Director – Mrs. Catherine Kimmel, Coordinator

401.596.0900

October 26, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our Religious Education program here at The Church of the Immaculate Conception. We hope you enjoy your time spent here growing the Catholic faith and the light of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

This letter is also being sent home to each family to provide you with information regarding the *Circle of Grace* program, which has already been implemented or if not soon by your child's classroom teacher. *The Circle of Grace* lessons are a part of the Safe Environment protocol authorized and approved by the Diocese of Providence. The Diocese requires that the Religious Education programs of each parish be in compliance by putting into practice the *Circle of Grace* curriculum. This is part of our dedication to providing a safe and protective environment while your child receives instruction in our program.

*The Circle of Grace* program helps children understand how special and unique they and others are; that we are meant to respect ourselves and everyone else as persons created and loved by God. As listed in the agenda, "The goal of the *Circle of Grace* program is to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others. A truly safe and protective environment is where children recognize when they are safe or unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives."

The plan will be to integrate the four lessons of the *Circle of Grace* curriculum into your child's religious instruction. This instruction will come to recognize and better understand the special person that they are.

In addition, **the children's safety is always one of our major concerns and a lot of thought has been put into the dismissal of the children, on Sunday mornings after Catechism classes are over.** It is for this reason that orange cones are now being placed in the church parking lot around 10:45 am. This allows more room for parents to congregate and wait for the dismissal of their child/children and eliminates the flow of traffic in the area in which there is child pickup. The Religious Education teachers continue to kindly walk their class outside at dismissal and wait until each student has been picked up. It is very important that all parents park their car and meet their

child/children at the Parish Center, a few minutes prior to dismissal, on Sunday mornings. The dismissal bell rings at 10:55 am. This respectfully helps the families that want to attend 11:00 am Mass. We certainly understand if you are a few minutes late so please do not rush. In conclusion, due to the 11:00 am Mass, the parking lot is very congested and the children are not allowed to meet their parents at their car. Also, the inclement weather will soon be upon us and we do not want the children to wait outdoors any longer than they have to. I thank you for your cooperation, understanding, and attending to this matter.

For further information and use, I have attached our Religious Education handbook. Please read at your leisure. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Religious Education office. I will return your call as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mrs. Catherine Kimmel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial 'M'.

Mrs. Catherine Kimmel  
C.R.E.

**CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**  
**Office of Religious Education**  
**111 High Street**  
**Westerly, RI 02891**  
**401.596.0900**

**OUTLINE OF HANDBOOK FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**STAFF**

***Pastor:*** Rev. Giacomo Capoverdi

***D.R.E.:*** Rev. Giacomo Capoverdi

***Coordinator:*** Mrs. Catherine Kimmel

**OFFICE HOURS:** Sun. 10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Mon. 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

**REGISTRATION:**

New students must be registered in person. Registration dates will be announced during Mass and in the church bulletin. Bring Baptismal Certificate with you, which can be obtained from the Parish where your child was baptized. Payment must be made at the time of registration.

All families should be registered at Immaculate Conception Parish. If you live outside this parish, a letter of permission must be obtained from current Pastor before registration is possible. The Pastor of Immaculate Conception Church must be advised as well.

**CLASSES:**

The Religious Education Office assigns students to classes. Any class changes are done through the office only!

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

Grades 1 – 4 (Sunday, Morning 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.)

Grades 5 & 6 (Monday, Afternoon 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.)

Grade 7 (Level I, Confirmation) Sunday, Afternoon 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.)

Grades 8 (Level II, Confirmation) Sunday, Afternoon 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.)

**ARRIVAL:**

Students should arrive on time. Parents should see that their elementary age child is safely inside the Parish Center. Parents need to park their cars and accompany their child/children into the building for safety reasons. (CCD staff will not be responsible, if a parent vacates the parking lot before their child has entered the building.)

**Doors to the Parish Center will be locked on Sunday at, 10:15 am, and 12:15 pm, and on Monday at 4:15 pm. Doors will be unlocked prior to dismissal. If a child is late he or she should be escorted into the building via the front entrance on High Street. This is for the safety of the children.**

**DISMISSAL:**

***Elementary:*** Parents need to park their car & come to the sidewalk to pick up child/children. Safety is always one of our main concerns. Teachers will walk out their class and wait until each child is picked up.

***Secondary:*** Students & Parents should exhibit common sense and courtesy.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

**Please note:** a note written and signed by the parent must be given to the coordinator if a child needs to be dismissed early. The parent or designated person must come into the parish center, via the High Street entrance, stop in the office and make themselves known. The adult will then be able to escort the child out of the building. For safety reasons I cannot release a child without written permission from the parent/guardian. You may also call the office if there are any changes with dismissal and talk to the coordinator.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Students are expected to attend ALL CCD Classes, Mass each Sunday as well as Holy Days of Obligation, and all other required meetings and activities. All students in Grades 3 – 5, Level I Confirmation, and Level II Confirmation must go to Confession at Immaculate Conception Church during the Seasons of Advent and Lenten. Penance vouchers must be used.

### **ABSENCES:**

Parents are to call the CCD office prior to class time; class make-up work will be required; if students are absent for a prolonged period of time (e.g. School Events), parents should inform the office so arrangements can be made for make-up work.

### **CALENDAR:**

Classes begin in September on or near (Catechetical Sunday) each year. After that, they follow the Westerly Public School calendar. Save & post the Religious Education calendar. Classes end in late March or April. Sacramental students will end CCD for the year with the celebration of the Sacrament.

Permission must come through the CCD Office only, before parents, friends, or relatives are allowed to visit classrooms.

### **CANCELLATIONS:**

CCD is not in session during public school vacations, holidays, or when public school is cancelled. CCD classes are canceled for Halloween & Presidential elections.

*N.B.* Public school early dismissal cancels afternoon elementary sessions only!

(If necessary, announcements will be made over WBLQ radio or Channel 6, 10 & 12 television)

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURE:**

Should a child become ill or impaired during class, time, a parent will be called after simple emergency first aid measures are taken. During Retreats only, an adult in charge will oversee & supervise a needed any medication being taken.

### **COMMUNICATION:**

The office will send out letters or mailings, make phone calls to the home, send home notices with the student, post announcements in the church bulletin, or make announcements at Sunday Mass. Also, for reinforcement, Secondary Level announcements re: policy or scheduled activities are made during each class.

The office should be informed of any changes in address or telephone numbers, pertinent family situations, medical conditions, or special needs.

Communication between home & the teacher should go through the Coordinator, who should be contacted at the CCD office.

### **CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE:**

Students are expected to exhibit a Christian attitude at all times: before, during & after classes! Disruptive behavior, such as; disrespect for teachers, students, staff, or property, inappropriate physical contact, foul language, or gum chewing will warrant the child being sent to the office. Repeated out-of-class time will result in a telephone call to the home by a member of the CCD staff.

If child continues to misbehave, a meeting with the student, parents, coordinator, and pastor will be arranged to determine further action, such as home schooling.

### **SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS:**

First Confession and First Communion preparation is a two year program starting in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade of Religious Education.

Sacraments are received in the second year, after candidates successfully complete Religious Education classes, and faithful Mass attendance, using the vouchers provided.

Confirmation is a two year preparation program, also! Requirements for both levels include: signing a commitment contract, faithful Mass attendance, using the Mass vouchers provided, and class attendance.

In addition Level I requirements include: choosing a sponsor (not a parent), who is at least 16 years of age, must be in good standing with the Catholic Church by having received Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, if married, have been married by a Catholic priest or Catholic deacon.

Level II requirements include: a) choice of sponsor has been made and paperwork has been handed in to Coordinator, b) choosing a Confirmation (saint's name), c) completing all "Spiritual Works of Mercy" and "Corporal Works of Mercy" and handing in completed paperwork, d) attending the day retreat,

**All Sacramental students must use Mass vouchers; please complete form and hand it to Fr. Capoverdi or the visiting priest after Mass. If a student attends Mass at a different parish please hand the voucher to the priest, have him sign it, and bring the voucher to the CCD office when student comes to class. (Grades 2, 7 & 8 students only)**

***N.B.* RECEPTION OF ANY OF THESE SACRAMENTS COULD BE DELAYED IF CANDIDATE DOES NOT PREPARE WILL OR TAKE THE SACRAMENT SERIOUSLY.**

### **CONFESSION**

**Children** in Grades 3 through 8 should go to confession at least twice during the year, at least once during the Season of Advent and at least once during the Season of Lent. Please use the voucher that has been given out. Please check the church bulletin for Confession times or call the rectory. The children are asked to go to Confession at Immaculate Conception Church.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:**

Any student who does not demonstrate grade-level proficiency and/or fulfill requirements will be referred to Coordinator. If a review indicates the student should repeat a grade, parents will be notified by phone or letter. Parents may request a subsequent meeting with the Coordinator and/or Pastor.

If a Secondary Level student chooses not to complete the year's program requirements by a certain date, including submission of make-up work, the Coordinator will send home a letter followed up with a phone call. N.B. Advancement could be postponed.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS:**

As Christians, we recognize the uniqueness of God's children; therefore, if a parent voluntarily identifies, through the registration form that a child has special need, conference with the Coordinator will be arranged to determine the best course of study.

**STUDENT PORTFOLIO:**

A portfolio of the Student's performance is filed with the office. Signed contracts, class attendance, Mass attendance, service projects, and Confession attendance make up this important record. The portfolio is the main source of information & thus used to determine a student's readiness to participate in and complete the Sacramental program.

**TEACHING STAFF:**

Our teaching staff consists of volunteers who are knowledgeable in the Catholic faith, are at least 18 years of age, and have been confirmed in the Catholic faith. The Diocese of Providence requests that all teachers be certified or be working toward certification. Workshops are available. Contact the office for more information.

All volunteers, staff, and clergy are instructed in the "Safe Environment" program.

Confirmation Classes, Level I and Level II are taught by either the Pastor or Catholics in good standing appointed by the Pastor.

**TESTING:**

Teachers of each level are encouraged to give tests to their students in age appropriate ways. This can be a great aid for students.

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:**

The Catholic Church has always taught that parents are the primary religious educators of their children. The CCD program is here to assist parents in the faith formation of their children; therefore, parental involvement on every level is strongly urged. Parents may call the office at any time during office hours to speak with the Coordinator. All Catholic parents & students are obligated to attend weekly Sunday Mass & Holy Days of Obligation.

**ATTIRE:**

Students may dress casually, but respectfully. Hats must be removed upon entering the building. Headsets & audio equipment are not allowed in the building. All cell phones must be turned off!

**SPECIAL PROGRAMS:**

Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC) is a program designed for those students age 7 – 16 who did not receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and/or Reconciliation at the appropriate age level & normal time, for whatever reason. Contact one of the Staff members for more information.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The Religious Education Staff will respect a family's right to confidentiality.