

# Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish



# CCD Handbook 2013-14

So that together we grow “not only in touch,  
but also in communion and intimacy  
with Jesus Christ.”

(from *Catechesi Tradendae*, John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation)

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## To CCD Families:

**Peace be with you!** Welcome to a new year of parish faith formation. A special welcome is extended to those new to Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish or to the CCD program. The catechists of the parish and we are very grateful to be in partnership with you to help your child grow in faith and in relationship with God.

This handbook is distributed to make clear the intentions of faith formation at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. Please keep it handy during the year and refer to it for general information. If you have any questions, ideas, suggestions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us at the rectory (330-793-9988), or the Religious Education Office (330-799-4202).

We look forward to our time this year with you and your children. We ask for your support and prayers as we begin this year together. We pray for you, too. May we all grow closer to God and to one another as we journey together in faith.

In Christian love and joy,

Rev. Kenneth E. Miller  
Pastor

Joan M. Lawson  
Director of Faith Formation

Deacon Nick Moliterno  
CCD Principal

# Faith Development

The Church teaches that we are a Pilgrim People, journeying together in faith and hope (*Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*). Some of us have been on the road a long time, some not so long, and some only a short distance. No matter how long any one of us has traveled, we all have something to learn from each other about our relationship with God as individuals and as a Christian community.

Life in Catholicism is rich with opportunities to express our relationship with God. We have much to share with each other in prayer, in learning, and in service. Generation to generation, faith is handed on and handed back, responding always to the life-giving breath of the Spirit of God. The Church lives and grows because of the handing on of faith.

Parish faith formation is part of that handing on and handing back, and is meant to assist and support all the learning and teaching that takes place in families. The Church reminds us always that parents and those who act as parents are the first and best teachers of children. Within the family, children learn who God is, what it means to live a Gospel life, how to pray, and why we participate in the life of the Church.

From the Declaration on Christian Education (2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council- the most recent worldwide church council)  
*Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators.... Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man.*

From Catechesi Tradendae (Pope John Paul II)  
*Education in the faith by parents, which should begin from the children's tenderest age, is already being given when the members of a family help each other to grow in faith through the witness of their Christian lives, a witness that is often without words but which perseveres throughout a day-to-day life lived in accordance with the Gospel.*

From General Directory for Catechesis (The Holy See – the governance and administration of the worldwide church)  
*Parents are the primary educators in the faith.... The family as a locus of catechesis has a unique privilege: transmitting the Gospel by rooting it in the context of profound human values.*

Faith formation programs in the parish are meant to provide opportunities for everyone to recognize and grow in relationship with God and with God's people. Those of us who work in the parish faith formation programs of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish are privileged to accompany you and your children as we all answer the Gospel call. We will do our best to share with your children in developmentally appropriate ways our understanding of the person and message of Jesus Christ. At every age level we convey our understanding of Scripture, liturgy, the Church, and the natural world, and how these lead us to living, thriving, and vibrant relationship with God.

# The Faith Community

As Catholic Christians, we take comfort, inspiration, joy, and peace from our belief that God is at work in the life of each of us **and** of the community gathered together in the name of Christ Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are by nature and by tradition a people who gather together, who believe that our relationship with God is beyond the one-to-one. We recognize that our communion with God involves our communion with other people.

At the center of our lives in community is the Sunday Eucharist in which we gather, tell the story of God's presence to the people of our sacred history and to us, share in the meal that is our salvation, and are sent forth to love and serve. Our faith formation programs teach that our celebration is the most important action of our lives together as Catholic Christians. Because parents are the first and best teachers of children, handing on the faith to them means that family participation in Mass is central to all faith formation experiences.

At the conclusion of Mass, we are sent forth to live the gospel. We do that as individuals and as members of a community. Through the year, there are opportunities to serve the poor, the sick, the infirm, and the hungry through the programs and services of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. Again, participation in justice and charity through the parish is a primary faith formation practice for the family.

# Sacramental Preparation

The sacramental life is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Catholicism. We live in wonder and awe of the power and love of God, which we recognize in God's creation, in moments when we are clear and certain that God is with us in the beauty of our humanity here on earth.

The role of catechesis in preparing to celebrate sacraments assists children with understanding how God is at work in our lives and how we respond as individuals and as a people.

**Reconciliation** The Sacrament of Penance celebrates and makes real God's forgiveness in our lives. Catechetical preparation seeks to make clear that in relationship with God and with each other, we choose to act rightly or wrongly; that we seek forgiveness from God and the community of faith; that we forgive and are forgiven. Family life is the primary place where forgiveness and reconciliation are practiced again and again.

**Eucharist** Eucharist unites us ever more deeply to Christ and to one another throughout our lives. We celebrate and pray together in thanksgiving that Christ is with us here and now, and proclaim in our celebration and with our lives that Christ always will be. Catechesis for children seeks to strengthen their awareness of God's love and of their call to participate in the Body of Christ, and in works of charity, service, and witness. Catechesis also encourages parents to reflect on their own Eucharistic life, how it is growing and developing, and how to share it with children.

**Confirmation** Baptism brings us into the Body of Christ; Confirmation affirms and strengthens us in our participation in the mission of Christ. Catechesis prepares the candidates to understand the message to which they are to respond and the faith they profess. Parents/guardians and sponsors are intimately involved in parish catechesis for Confirmation.

## READINESS FOR SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATION

Age or grade level does not determine a child's readiness to celebrate a sacrament; readiness is discerned.

Evidence that the child is ready includes:

- faithful attendance for two full years of catechesis;
- participation in the faith community of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish: participation in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration; community involvement and support;
- development in a life of prayer and service;
- an ability to express understanding (appropriate to the development level) of what the child is about to celebrate.

Parents or guardians participate in family meetings for the sacrament the child is preparing to celebrate. The schedule for these will be distributed to the families.

If the parent(s) have reason to believe that the child is not prepared, then the celebration of the sacrament will be deferred until the child is ready.

# Calendars & Celebrations 2013-14

Sacramental	Celebrations	2013-14
First Reconciliation November 16, 2013	First Communion May 3, 2014	Confirmation April 8, 2014

Sacramental	Preparation	Meetings
First Reconciliation Parent Meeting October 20, 2013 9:30 a.m. School cafeteria	First Communion Parent Meeting February 9, 2014 9:30 a.m. School cafeteria	Confirmation Parent/Sponsor meeting September 22, 2013 9:30 a.m. Parish Center

CCD	9:25-10:40 am	Sundays
September 8, 15, 22, 29	October 6, *, 20, 27	November 3, 10, 17, 24
December *, 8, 15, 22, *	January 5, 12, *, 26	February 2, 9, *, 23
March 2, 9, 16, 23	April 6, 13, *, 27	

- *Note Breaks: 10/1, 12/1, 12/29, 1/19, 2/16, 4/20*
- *December 22 will be a family program.*

**Liturgy Apprentice Masses** The first Sunday of the month from October to April, the parish provides a special place for each grade level in turn to take a leadership role in our parish 11:00 Mass.

**Advent Family Program:** Our CCD children share their Advent preparations in a special presentation on **December 22**. Any and all family members are welcome – grandparents, aunts & uncles, special friends. Refreshments will be served.

**Family Activities** The parish provides opportunities for families to participate in and together experience personal and spiritual growth. You will receive information on these as the year progresses.

**Other Activities to be announced.**

# Policies

## Admissions

Any child who is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish is eligible to be enrolled in the CCD program. The pastor approves any exceptions.

## Attendance

- Attendance is expected at every session.
- Sessions begin in the classroom at 9:25 and end at 10:40 a.m.
- Parents of children in grades k-3 should accompany their children into and out of the classroom hallway so no child crosses through the parking lot unaccompanied by an adult.
- No one should park in the fire lane at any time.
- A parent or guardian is asked to call the office to report a child absent (330-799-4202). In the interest of protecting children, if the absence is not reported by 9:45 a.m., someone from the parish will phone the number(s) you provide to ascertain that the child is safe.
- For the missed session, materials will be made available so that families will be able to discuss at home the aspect of faith that was learned during CCD.
- If your child is to be excused early from the session, a note from you must be given prior to the beginning of the session to the CCD Principal or your child's catechist.

## Child Protection

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish is in compliance with all the provisions of the Child Protection Policy of the Diocese of Youngstown, promulgated June 15, 2008. Copies of the Diocesan policy are on file in the CCD office. If you would like a copy, or for further information, please contact the Director of Faith Formation.

## CCD Behavior

The emphasis of CCD behavior is on the respect and dignity that belongs to each person and to creation because God made us all. All people in the program are called by their baptism to remember that we respect each other, we respect our process, and we respect our surroundings. We are also willing to accept and include others, forgive others, and accept responsibility.

Respect to each other means:

- Catechists and leaders will treat the children with respect.
- Children are to treat each other and the catechists and leaders with respect.
- Respect to our process means that children and catechists come prepared to participate in handing on the faith.
- Respect to our surroundings means that we all attend to the care of the natural resources God has given us and to the materials that human beings have made from them. Therefore, waste is forbidden, including damage to property. For this reason, gum chewing is not permitted. Any damage done by a child to the facilities must be paid for by the child or the parent or guardian.

## Discipline Practices

Children are expected to act in accord with their baptismal call, respecting all people and creation. Catechists enforce this way of behavior and may add gathering rules of their own, which children should also follow.

If a child behaves in violation of this basic stance, the **catechist** will speak to the child about it. If the child repeats the inappropriate action, the **CCD Principal** will speak with the child and contact the **parent or guardian**. If after these measures the behavior is still not corrected, the child cannot be part of CCD again until participating in a **conference** with a parent or guardian, and the CCD Principal, and the Director of Faith Formation.

## Emergency Closings

In bad weather, please check TV-21, -27, and -33 for news of closings. In case of another emergency, you will be contacted by phone.

## Emergency Procedures

In case of fire or other emergency, children will be evacuated according to the emergency routes posted in each classroom.

## Health and Safety

If a child becomes sick during a CCD session, he or she should report to the CCD Principal, who will notify the family to take the child home.

In the event of an accident or injury, the parent(s) will be notified as soon as reasonably possible. Reasonable first aid will be undertaken if it would serve to minimize the severity of the injury. Soap and water and band-aids will be applied, but no other measures or medications.

**If there has been a change in the emergency contact information you gave when you registered your child for CCD, please notify the Religious Education Secretary (330-799-4202).**

## Outside the Parish Activities

Children's participation in activities away from Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish property will require a permission form, which will be supplied at the time of invitation to the activity.

## Registration and Fees

To enroll a child in the faith formation program, a parent/guardian should be a registered member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish.

There is a non-refundable fee of \$50.00, which covers books, catechist guides, catechist training and resources, classroom supplies, mailings, and other administrative costs. It should be paid by December 1, 2013.

## Tardiness

For safety reasons, children who arrive late should report to the CCD Principal first before going to the classroom.

## Children's Envelopes

Each child will receive a box of church envelopes. Please encourage your children every Sunday to fill them out and put them in the collection basket. They are meant to help the children's reflections on how they shared their gifts in the previous week.