

Immaculate Heart of Mary

Faith Community

Religious Formation Department

Policy Handbook

580 Ratzer Road

Wayne, NJ 07470

973-694-4891

reled@ihmwaynenj.org

www.ihmwaynenj.org

CLASSES:

First through Grade 5

Sundays 9:00 AM-10:15 AM

Grades 6-8

Sundays 9:00 AM-10:15 AM

Mondays 6:45 PM – 8:00 PM

CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY:

On days when Wayne Public Schools are canceled or when an early dismissal day is declared, there will be no Religious Formation classes. When classes are canceled, parents will be notified via email.

RE-REGISTRATION:

Re-Registrations will take place every mid March-July. All children returning for instruction the following fall are to be registered by a date set forth by the director.

NEW REGISTRATION:

New Registrations take place every March to July. All families registering their child(ren) for the first time must also be parishioners of the parish here at Immaculate Heart of Mary. To register for both Religious Education and the Parish, please call 973-694-4891 to set up an appointment. A copy of your child's baptismal certificate is required at the time of registration. All appointments take place throughout the months of April- July. Office hours are 9:00 AM-4:00 PM (M-TH) Families will also use the online registration.

TUITION:

The cost of tuition is as follows:

- 1 Child: \$200
- 2 Children: \$400
- 3 Children: \$450
- 4 or more children: \$500

If there is a family experiencing financial difficulty, it should be addressed with the Director of the Religious Education Department. Arrangements will be made for a payment plan at that time. All remaining payments are due by Dec. 15th.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY:

Our goal is to develop in each child a sense of Catholic Identity and belonging to a Faith community. Our faith is identified by its belief in Jesus Christ, as well as the writings and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. This is supported by family prayer, participation at weekly Sunday Mass, and the Sacraments. Together we can bring your child to a better understanding and generous sense of building a relationship with God through the Church. Through the implementation of religious formation text presented in a meaningful manner, every teacher strives to nurture the child's intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PARENTAL POLICY:

A child's religious education is strengthened by parental involvement. Parental involvement and support of the catechists/teachers is essential to the overall success of the Religious Education Program. The limited time for the programs (Approx. 25 hours per year) recognizes the importance of the role of parents as the primary religious educators, and the program's effectiveness is greatly heightened by actively involved parents and active discussions referencing the subject matter on a weekly basis as well as reciting our prayers. It truly helps when families attend Mass together on a regular basis as well.

"The role of parents in religious education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute." (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2221)

HOME SCHOOL POLICY

Diocesan Policy states that students who are physically unable to or have a long-term illness (doctor note provided) will be allowed to continue religious education in a home school capacity. The director and pastor will then coordinate with the parents as far as a return date to enter back to the classroom.

PARTICIPATION AT MASS:

It is extremely important to also attend weekly Sunday Liturgy and Holy Days of Obligation. Our prayer together as a community of faith is the life blood of the Church. For a community to grow together as a community of faith is important to worship together. If your child is enrolled in the 1-8 Program, every effort should be made to attend Mass weekly. In addition, each family will be required to volunteer to bring up the Gifts twice a year. Students in grades 6-8 also have the opportunity to read at Mass.

ATTENDANCE FOR CLASSES:

To attend classes weekly is essential for the students in our program. Your child's other activities outside of school should not interfere with attending weekly religious education classes. If your child is to be absent, an email to reled@ihmwayne.org should be sent.

There should be **no more than 3 absences** in grades 1-5 throughout the entire school year. There should be **no more than 2 absences** in grades 6-8 throughout the entire school year. However, in the case of an extended illness, accident, etc., arrangements would need to be made with the Director of Religious Education to prepare a home study program in the interim.

DISCIPLINE:

IHM Religious Education Code of Conduct

1. Students will respect the adults in the classrooms at all times.
2. Students will address the adults in the classroom by Mr., Mrs., and Ms.
3. Students will listen to others in the classroom without interrupting them.
4. Students will thoughtfully consider what is being taught and other's thoughts and discussions.
5. Students will not talk out of turn.
6. Students will keep their hands out of the desk that is provided.
7. Students will always honor the privilege of using IHM classrooms, by proper care and respect all school and student property.
8. Students will do their best to arrive on time.
9. Students will not disrupt class activities as there are others who do want to learn.
10. Students will treat others on how they would like to be treated; "The Scriptures Golden Rule."

Disciplinary Procedures

1. If students break any of the rules under the Code of Conduct, their Catechist will address the matter with the Director of Religious Formation.
2. If students continue to break any of the rules set forth, the matter at hand will be addressed with the Director of Religious Formation.
3. Students will review the IHM Religious Education Code of Conduct and print and sign on the spaces provided.
4. If the problem persists thereafter, their Catechist will notify the students' parents via email or phone call.

5. Students will understand that if the areas addressed are not improving, then the Director of Religious Formation will contact their parents and set up a conference.
6. A determination of programming will be discussed between the parents and the director.

In addition, we must also maintain a safe environment program among the children in the program. The following mandate supports a safe environment for our religious education program. All adults within the program will work to uphold these standards among the children in the program.

1. Use of the internet, computer and other video must fall strictly within the guidelines of the Religious Formation Program.
2. Hand held devices, included but not limited to cell phones, should not be used during any part of the Religious Formation Program.
3. There is zero tolerance for disrespectful, violent, or abusive behavior of any type. Bullying will not be tolerated.
4. There will be zero tolerance of harassment, including but not limited to, verbal harassment, gender bias, threats, sexual harassment, and foul language.
5. There will be zero tolerance for substance abuse of any kind, including, but not limited to drugs, inhalants, alcohol, and tobacco.
6. No object which may be construed as a weapon or use of said object as a weapon will be tolerated on-site at Parish programs.

Consequences

If any of the above behaviors occur, the Director of the Religious Formation Program will assess each incident. The Director will then consult with the Pastor, and a meeting with the parents will be scheduled. At that time, the decision to have the child continue the program with no refund will be decided. Consequences will be immediate. Parents will be called to remove the child from the premises.

PROGRESS REPORTS:

Progress reports will be given two times per year. The first progress report will be given to students after 9 weeks and the second progress report on the last day of class. The following areas will be considered in grading: class participation, understanding of material, student behavior, and home preparation. Parents are required to sign and return progress reports mid-year.

PARENT PARTICIPATION:

The success of the program relies on the support of the parents throughout the Religious Formation school year. It is very important to discuss with your children and be familiar with the week to week lessons of the program.

THREE POINTS OF PROTECTION:

All volunteers that participate in the Religious Formation Program must satisfy the three points of protection in order to be vetted. The three points of protection are as follows:

- a. To read and sign the Paterson Diocese Code of Conduct.
- b. Complete a criminal background check form.
- c. Attend a mandatory 3 hours of Virtus Training Course.

TRANSFER POLICY:

Parents who are transferring their child into the IHM Religious Formation Program **FROM** another parish must submit a copy of official transcripts from their previous Parish, along with a copy of the child's baptismal certificate.

Parents who are transferring their child out of the IHM Religious Formation Program **TO** another parish may request a copy of their official transcripts from the IHM Religious Education Office. Please allow 3-5 business days to complete the request. It is also understood that once the child transfers to another Parish for Religious Education, the family will be automatically withdrawn from being an active parishioner at IHM. All outstanding fees must be accounted for prior to a transfer transcript being issued.

FIRE DRILLS:

Fire drills will occur during the school year for every day of catechism (Sunday and Monday) for the purpose of evacuating school quickly and orderly as possible to ensure safety for every child in the program.

RECONCILIATION:

Jesus began His risen life by giving his 12 Apostles the power to forgive sins. The Sacrament of Reconciliation continues His work of forgiving and reconciling. Catechesis for children must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances of individuals.

Reconciliation Seeks to:

1. Make clear the relationship of the Sacrament to the child's life.
2. Help the child recognize good choices and bad choices, and turn for forgiveness to Christ and the Church.
3. Encourage the child to see that, in this Sacrament, faith is expressed by being forgiven and forgiving.
4. Encourage the child to approach the Sacrament freely and regularly.

On-going catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation should begin as soon as the child enters the formal process of Religious Education. It should continue throughout the school years and beyond.

- A.) **Age**: Primary decision as to when a child is ready to celebrate the Sacrament for the first time rests with the adults responsible for the child.
- B.) **Readiness**: Children need to have a basic understanding of sin and their responsibility for their decisions. They should also desire to experience the forgiving and healing power of God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation celebrated within the Christian community.
- C.) **Requirements**: Attend and participate in classes of religious instruction, along with participating in parish weekend worship with the family.
- D.) **Parental Involvement**: Parents are expected to take an active role in the preparation of their child by attending the Parent Meeting (date set forth by the Director at the beginning of the year) and by working with your child in the preparation program.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:

Initiated into the Christian Faith by Baptism and Confirmation, Christians are fully joined to the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the center and heart of the Christian life for both the universal and local Church and each Christian. All that belongs to Christian life leads to the Eucharistic Table or flows from it.

PARISH POLICY AND GUIDELINES:

- A) **Age:** Children must complete two years of religious education classes in order to be eligible to receive the First Holy Communion.
 - a) **Requirements:** Students must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Holy Communion. Children and parents of the First Holy Communion candidates are expected to attend Mass throughout the two years of preparation.
- B) **Readiness:** The candidates for the sacrament should have the basic knowledge of the life and mission of Jesus, the celebration of the Mass, and a desire to receive Jesus and to grow in His life and Love.
- C) **Parental Involvement:**
 - 1.) Parents have the responsibility to be involved in the preparation of their child for the reception of the First Holy Communion.
 - 2.) Parents are expected to attend the parent sessions that are scheduled on the Sacrament Calendar to help them prepare their child for the Sacrament. (Parent Only)
 - 3.) Parents are expected to work alongside your child using the Parent Guide for the Eucharist Book provided in October and follow the dates for the work to be completed.
 - 4.) Parents and children are expected to participate on the scheduled Reconciliation day.
 - 5.) Parents are asked to join us for the Celebration of Light that happens during the week leading up to the child receiving their First Holy Communion. (Parents only)

RECEPTION OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:

Reception of the First Eucharist takes place on the Saturday in late Spring. Communicants will receive First Communion at a 10:00am or 12:00 PM liturgy.