

*IMMACULATE
HEART
OF MARY PARISH*

Parish Religious Education Program

PREP

Grades 1- 5

Shepherd Me, O Lord



*PARENT/STUDENT
HANDBOOK
2025 - 2026*

*IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY
PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM*

*5876 Veterans Way
Burlington, Ky. 41005
September, 2025*

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child/children to a new year of religious education at IHM parish. As with all new beginnings, it is our hope that the children who participate in our program will come to a greater knowledge and understanding of our Catholic heritage. The teachers and I are looking forward to getting to know you and your children better and working with you as we progress through this new PREP year. We assure you we will be making every effort to keep your child in a safe environment while attending PREP.

Included in this handbook are several brief explanations of procedures and routines, our calendar for the year, and a listing of prayers and precepts for children in grades 1-5. This information will give you a feel for the program, its expectations and how you can be of assistance as parents, the first educators of your children in the Faith.

If you have any questions, concerns or input about this year's program, please feel free to contact me at the Religious Education Center and Office at IHM, Carrie Aragon, Director of Religious Education at 859-689-5010, ext. 263, e-mail caragon@ihm-ky.org, Sr. Armella, PREP Assistant at 859-689-5010 ext 225, email srarmella@ihm-ky.org. Our administrative assistant, Lori Smith can be reached at 859-689-5010, ext. 261 or e-mail lori.smith@ihm-ky.org.

We look forward to a great year together as we share the ministry of “Faith Formation” with your children here at IHM Parish.

**God bless you,
Carrie Aragon
Director of Religious Education**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Admission.....	Page 1
Beginning and Ending of Classes.....	Page 1
Safety Plan.....	Page 2
Attendance.....	Page 2
Cancellation of Classes Due to Bad Weather.....	Page 3
Assertive Discipline.....	Page 3
Dress Code.....	Page 4
Parental Involvement.....	Page 4
Communication.....	Page 5
Homework.....	Page 5
Grade Level Content and Expectations.....	Page 6
Textbook.....	Page 6
Prep Home Study Policy.....	Page 7
Diocesan Sacramental Policy.....	Page 7
Prayers and Precepts by Grade Level	
Listing of Prep Teachers by Grade	Page 8
Special Dates for Grade 2 Parents	
(First Reconciliation & Communion).....	Page 9
The Parent You Want to Be.....	Page 10
Four Catechetical Moments.....	Page 11
Prep Schedule.....	Page 12

ADMISSION

Admission to the PREP Program at IHM is open to anyone within the parish boundary. Families must be registered, contributing members of the IHM parish. Families not registered at IHM must present a letter from their pastor stating that he is aware of and agrees to your child attending RE classes at IHM.

Book Fees are as follows:

\$100 for one child

\$155 for two children

\$185 for three or more children

These fees cover the cost of books and supplies, i.e., paper, pencils, crayons, etc. used by the students and teachers. Also, every school year the Education Office of the Diocese of Covington requires a \$2 head tax for each student attending religious education classes in any parish. This will assist us in obtaining more professional assistance from the Diocesan Office in areas such as Catechist training courses and resource materials. This fee is already included in the program fee for PREP.

- **NOTE:** If you are unable to pay the PREP fee in one payment on the due date, then a minimum of \$25 PER STUDENT is due by the first evening. Weekly or monthly payments are to be made until the PREP fee is paid in full.

BEGINNING AND ENDING OF CLASSES

Drop Off: Announcements and welcome will begin promptly at 6:50pm in the Church Gathering Space for teachers and students. Parents are asked to drop off students at the front entrance of the school/church 10 minutes before 6:55pm.

Pick Up: Students will be dismissed at 8:15 p.m. Parents/Guardians are asked to pick up students from their classrooms at dismissal time. Parents/Guardians will enter the hallway of the school for pickup 5 minutes after the dismissal bell rings. The bell rings at 8:10pm and the doors to the hallways are opened at 8:15pm for picking up your child/children from their classroom. Doors to the hallways will be opened by adults or aides in charge of monitoring dismissal.

IMPORTANT Pick-up Notice: If someone other than the custodial parent/guardian will be picking your child after class, a note must be given to the PREP teacher that night explaining that someone other than the usual parent/guardian will be picking up the child.

SAFETY PLAN

For the safety of our children & teachers while in Prep class on Tuesday/Wednesday evenings, all the outer doors to the upper & lower school hallways will be locked/secured from 7:05pm - 8:15pm. At dismissal time, 8:15pm, doors will be unlocked for parents/guardians to retrieve their children.

Late Arrivals: If children arrive for class after 7:05pm they need to check in with the receptionist. The reception area is located to the left as you enter the Gathering Space of the main entrance to the building. The children will be directed to their designated classroom via the receptionist. Please call Lori Smith # 859-630-1424 upon arrival if the receptionist is not available.

NOTE: Any parent or guardian picking up a child before the 8:15pm dismissal time due to an emergency, sickness, schedule conflict, etc. must do so through the receptionist at the front desk or call Lori Smith # above.

ATTENDANCE

The IHM PREP Program begins mid-September and usually ends the first week of May. In order for students to gain the most from the religious education program, regular weekly attendance is essential. Much of what a person learns comes from their interaction with others, from discussion, group activities and shared prayer. Sporadic attendance inhibits not only your child's grasp of the material but also prevents him/her from feeling comfortable with the members of his/her class and can eventually become a problem for the entire class. If you encounter a situation in which weekly attendance becomes difficult, please contact the Religious Education Office to discuss the situation.

Our program usually follows the Boone Co. School Calendar. We will inform you via email and/or by a note sent home with your child/children if there is an exception to the schedule.

NOTE: If your child misses more than *5 classes* he/she will be officially dropped from the class, unless we hear from you. Five or more "unexcused"

classes during one program year are considered excessive and may be the cause for repeating the same grade level the following year unless work is made up and turned in for verification. If, for any reason, you choose to withdraw your student from PREP classes, please contact us immediately. ** If you have a change of address, phone number or e-mail during the current year, please notify us as soon as possible. Thank you.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES DUE TO BAD WEATHER

DO NOT ASSUME that anytime Boone County schools cancel classes or dismisses early due to bad weather there will be no religious education classes that evening. Check your TV channels (Channel 5-WLWT, Channel 9-WCPO, Channel 12-WKRC and Channel 19-WXIX), and your e-mail for cancellations. Parents & Teachers will be notified by email as soon as a decision is made regarding the cancellation of classes.

ASSERTIVE DISCIPLINE

In general, we ask that students observe the following “rules of conduct”:

- Be on time.
- Wait quietly in the Gathering Space
- Raise your hand to speak.
- Treat each other with respect
- Ask permission to leave your seat.
- Come to class well clothed, fed and rested

So that learning may take place for all, the following are not permitted:

- a. Leaving class without the teacher’s permission
- b. Toys, ALL electronic devices including cell phones, gum or candy
- c. Loud noise or running in the hall.
- d. Touching or using classroom materials in the room or in another student’s desk.

Human nature being what it is though; we all have “bad days”. This is no different for children than it is with adults. In an attempt to deal with the days when behavior problems blossom into discipline problems, the following procedures will be followed. This procedure is applicable only in cases when a student’s behavior becomes disruptive and destructive of the learning process. Routine problems or “bad days” can usually be handled informally in the classroom.

Teachers are asked to follow the steps listed below:

First time: Student will receive several verbal warnings by the teacher

Second time: Student will be sent to the DRE for a private conversation
(Director of Religious Education)

Third time: Parents will be contacted by catechist or DRE

Fourth time: Parents will be asked to meet with catechist,
DRE or pastor

NOTE: Individual teachers will also have classroom rules for their students to follow.

DRESS CODE

Students are asked to dress in a manner that promotes a positive climate for learning in the classroom, gathering space and church.

Hats or caps are not to be worn in the building at any time.

***NO SKATE SHOES OR WHEELS**

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The Tuesday and Wednesday evening program can provide your children with the more formal instructional aspects of their religious education, but it cannot completely form your children in their faith. This formation happens not in a classroom, but in the everyday lived experience of their Catholic Faith provided at home and in the expression of that faith through participation in the liturgy activities and celebrations of our parish. Parental presence and involvement in the program on Tuesday and Wednesday evening is essential to the smooth functioning of the education offered to the children. Parents who teach, who help with special projects, who provide set up and clean up for PREP gatherings, and provide snacks, etc. are essential to the success of the program. But parents have a more foundational role to play in how they reinforce what is taught by their activities and attitudes at home. Children will not learn what they hear in 1 hour and 15 minutes a week if what they hear is not lived and experienced in daily life. Knowing the proper words or definitions will not help them to become good Catholics. Knowing the rhythm of our Church year, understanding what is celebrated in the sacraments, the ability to make moral judgments based on Christian values, having a sense of wonder and respect for God are key elements in faith formation.

Without parents doing their part at home, children cannot be expected to learn more than words and definitions in their classes.

COMMUNICATION

One of the most essential ingredients to a successful program is communication. Good communication avoids misunderstanding and builds trust.

Emails will be the primary source of communication from our Religious Education Office. Second grade parents will be emailed important information concerning special dates for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist preparation.

In addition, letters, flyers, outlines of materials to be studied will be sent home through your children. Please ask your child/children each week and also look in his or her folder for the presence of such communication. If at any time you have concerns or questions please contact the Director of Religious Education, Carrie Aragon (689-5010 ext. 263) OR e-mail caragon@ihm-ky.org OR your child's teacher.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help the child better understand the material that is covered in class. You can help by:

Encouraging your children to complete homework assignments on time. This will usually include the TAKE HOME pre-chapter material or a unit review page from the student text.

Following suggestions offered by your child's teacher for reinforcing concepts and ideas presented in class.

Helping your child to learn (by memory) those prayers and practices of the Church that help form their identity as Roman Catholics.

Participating in special programs, i.e., Liturgies, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Parent Nights, Prayer Services, etc. that are a part of the PREP Program.

Taking seriously the program and its expectations. Your attitude toward the program speaks louder than words!!! Make attending PREP classes a time to look forward to, *faithfully and joyfully.*

GRADE LEVEL CONTENT AND EXPECTATIONS

In the back of the handbook, pg. 8 you will find a brief summary of each grade level (1-5) taught in our program. This summary will provide you with an overview of the prayers and precepts taught in our Parish Religious Program.

Children will be tested at least twice during the year to assess progress, understanding and retention of information.

All teachers have been encouraged to evaluate student progress through learning/review games or other methods.

Parents will be informed of student progress in January, and at the end of the school year. Student report cards will be sent home with your child/children in early January. At the end of the Prep school year, the final student report card(s) will be sent home the closing evening of Prep.

TEXTBOOK

We are happy to announce that this year we will have two different options for religious education textbooks. Some teachers will utilize material from both. The first textbook option is entitled *SPIRIT of TRUTH* (Sophia Institute for Teachers and Students). The other textbook option is from Sadlier – Christ in Us Edition. Both textbook series help nurture the spiritual, moral, and cultural life of the souls of our children by providing materials and programs that are enlightening to the mind and sacred to the heart and soul of our children.

Grade Level Textbooks are entitled as follows (Spirit of Truth):

Grade 1 – God is Love

Grade 2 – Our Life in Jesus

Grade 3 – The Kingdom of God and the Church

Grade 4 – Jesus Teaches Us How to Live

Grade 5 – The Sacraments

IHM PREP HOME STUDY POLICY

In certain circumstances a child may need to complete a year of religion class in a home study mode. Once circumstances are discussed and approval is given by the Director of Religious Education, a family may embark in a home study program.

The following guidelines must be respected:

- **A student textbook for the appropriate grade level must be purchased.**
- **Completed Chapter & Unit Tests must be turned in at a specified time to the Director of Religious Education.**
- **A fee of \$60 is requested for Blest Are We textbook, and administrative assistance.**

DIOCESAN SACRAMENTAL POLICY

IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY POLICY FOR RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS: FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST EUCHARIST

The students of sacramental ages of IHM Parish will satisfy the requirements as stated by the Diocese of Covington and the Parish Board of Catholic Education.

The primary objective is for the understanding and acceptance of the concepts for the individual sacraments. To achieve this end the following guidelines are stated:

- a. **Normally one and one half (1 - ½) consecutive academic years directly prior to the reception of a specific sacrament with regular class attendance is required or its approved equivalency as a necessary preparation time.**
- b. **Those preparing for the sacraments are to be actively participating in the church community and attending Sunday liturgy on a regular basis.**

NOTE: Students will generally be placed in the Prep class of the same grade level they are presently in. For students in grade 3 and above who have not received their Baptism, First Reconciliation or First Eucharist, arrangements will be made for them to attend an RCIC Class (Rite of Christian Initiation for Children) after January 1st, which prepares students grades 3-8 for these sacraments plus Confirmation. After the required sessions are completed, students will receive the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation at Easter time according to individual need.

PRAYERS AND PRECEPTS BY GRADE LEVEL

GRADES 1 & 2:	Basic Prayers: Sign of the Cross Our Father Hail Mary Glory be to the Father
	Precepts Grade 1:
	Trinity Jesus' Birth Spirit as Helper Our Parish
	Precepts Grade 2:
	Forgiveness The Mass Eucharist
GRADES 3 & 4:	All Basic Prayers as noted above. Prayers for Reconciliation and Eucharist. By the end of the year: The Apostles Creed <b style="padding-left: 40px;">The Rosary
	Precepts Grade 3:
	Our Parish The Bible Marks of the Church
	Precepts Grade 4:
	Law of Love Ten Commandments
GRADE 5:	All Basic Prayers as noted above. The Rosary The Apostles Creed Prayer of St. Francis
	Precepts Grade 5:
	Jesus both Human and Divine Sacraments & Sacramentals

SPECIAL DATES TO REMEMBER for
GRADE 2 PARENTS
FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST EUCHARIST
2025-2026

FIRST RECONCILIATION:

1. Monday, November 10

*Parent Meeting for
First Reconciliation,
6:30pm – 7:30pm in Church
(parents only)*

**2. Tues./ Weds.,
January 27th & January 28th**

*First Reconciliation
Grade 2 - 6:30pm church
(for child/parents)*

FIRST EUCHARIST: 2026

1. Monday, February 9th

*Parent Meeting for First
Eucharist, 6:30pm – 7:30pm
**(Sign-ups for First
Communion Mass will take
place at this meeting)*

2. Sunday, March 15th

*Enrollment Sunday for First
Eucharist- 2pm for Parents
& First Communicant
in Church*

3. Saturday, May 2nd

*First Communion Mass, 12pm
**(Practice, Friday, May 1st-
6:30pm)*

4. Saturday, May 9th

*First Communion Mass, 12pm
**(Practice, Friday, May 8th-
6:30pm)*

THE PARENT YOU WANT TO BE

Ten Traits Worth Considering

- . **Giving the Praise They Crave: Are You an *Affirming* Parent?**
Realistically praise what your child does, and show him that you notice, love and value him.
- . **Counting to Ten – Again: Are You a *Patient* Parent?**
When frustrated, stay calm and cool and try to see the world from your child’s viewpoint.
- . **Hearing What They Don’t Say: Are You an *Attentive* Parent?**
Listen for the feelings, values, and fears your child does not overtly express and find gentle and meaningful ways to let her know you understand.
- . **Seeing a Picture of Their Future: Are You a *Visionary* Parent?**
Treat your child’s dreams seriously and foster a future that will help him actualize what he aspires to do and be.
- . **Building a Better Bond: Are you a *Connected* Parent?**
Create bonding experiences by intentionally fostering activities you both enjoy together.
- . **Commemorating Milestones: Are You a *Celebratory* Parent?**
Communicate a powerful message of love to your child by planning festivities to commemorate developmental signposts worth remembering.
- . **Keeping Your Word: Are You an *Authentic* Parent?**
Use everyday occurrences to “walk your talk” and show your child that you are deserving of her trust.
- . **Creating the Safest Place on Earth: Are You a *Comforting* Parent?**
Instill deep emotional security in your child by maintaining a non-anxious presence and reassuring him that you are always available to talk.
- . **Instilling Wisdom: Are You an *Insightful* Parent?**
Become an “emotional coach” for your child by accepting negative emotions as fact of life and using them as opportunities to teach life lessons.
- . **Practicing the Presence of God: Are You a *Prayerful* Parent?**
Use opportune times to talk to God together with your child and discuss ways you can pray for each other.



CAROLINE WOODHAM

*Never miss an
opportunity to
touch and bless
your children
and assure
them that God
is with them
even when you
are not.*

FOUR CATECHETICAL MOMENTS

Loyes Spayd

1. Mealtime

Mealtime is a time to give thanks. It is time to remember those who do not have enough eat. Mealtime is a time to share stories. It is a time to remember other meal times, perhaps special holiday ones. It is a time to relax and be together and maybe even squabble and make up. It is a time to connect what is happening at your dinner table and what happens at the altar table at the Sunday Eucharist.

2. Bedtime

Bedtime is a time for secrets and confidences; fears, insecurities and questions will surface; stories of their day and their worlds will be told. At bedtime, children look for extra affection and a sense of safety. It is a time to pray about all this with them and bless them and entrust them to God's care for the night.

3. Car Time

Car time is great because children are a captive audience. Families can discuss appropriate music to listen to, or listen to books on tape, or play games, or talk about the ethics and values in the way people drive and the way they live as you drive past.

4. Goodbye Time

Never miss an opportunity to touch and bless your children and assure them that God is with them even when you are not. Kiss and bless them at the door or at the bus stop, and once again entrust them to God's care until you see them again. Every once in a while, name what you are doing and tell your children why you are doing it.

IMMACULATE HEART

OF MARY CHURCH

PREP SCHEDULE – 2025-2026

GRADES 1 – 5

Classes -- Tuesday & Wednesday
6:50-8:15 p.m.



HOLIDAYS

Thanksgiving - Tues. Nov. 25 & Wed. 26 -

Christmas - Tues./Wed. Dec. 16/17 &

Tues./Wed. Dec. 23/24

New Year's - Tues./Wed. Dec 30/Dec 31

Spring Break - Tues./Wed. Apr. 7/8

First Semester

Tues./Wed.

Sept. 9 & 10 (*Opening Night*)

Sept. 16 & 17 Class Period

Sept. 23 & 24 Class Period

Sept. 30

Tues./Wed.

Oct. 1 Class Period

Oct. 7 & 8 Class Period

Oct. 14 & 15 Class Period

Oct. 21 & 22 **Reconciliation/Virtus Lesson**

Oct. 28 & 29 Class Period

Tues./Wed.

Nov. 4 & 5 Fall Break (no class)

Nov. 11 & 12 Class Period

Nov. 18 & 19 (*Children's Mass*)

Nov. 25 & 26 (*No Class - Thanksgiving*)

Tues./Wed.

Dec. 2 & 3 Class Period
(*Partial Christmas Practice*)

Dec. 9 & 10 Christmas Play

Dec. 16 & 17 (*No Class - Christmas Break*)

Dec. 23 & 24 (*No Class - Christmas Break*)

Dec. 30 & Dec. 31 (*New Year's Break*)

Second Semester

Tues./Wed.

Jan. 6 & 7 Class Period

Jan. 13 & 14 Class Period

Jan. 20 & 21 Class Period

Jan. 27 & 28 Class Period

Tues./Wed.

Feb. 3 & 4 Class Period

Feb. 10 & 11 Class Period

Feb. 17 & 18 Lenten Mass – **Ash Wednesday**

Feb. 24 & 25 Class Period

Tues./Wed.

Mar. 3 & 4 Class Period

Mar. 10 & 11 Class Period

Mar. 17 & 18 Class Period

Mar. 24 & 25 **Reconciliation/Virtus Lesson**

Mar. 31 Class Period – **Holy Week**

Tues./Wed.

Apr. 1 Class Period

Apr. 7 & 8 *No Class - Spring Break*

Apr. 14 & 15 Class Period

Apr. 21 & 22 Class Period

April 28 & 29 *Closing Practice*

May 5 & 6 *Closing Program*

Sacramental Program

Parent Meeting – November 10th

*Grade 2 – First Reconciliation *

Tues. Jan 28 – 6:30pm

Weds. Jan. 29 – 6:30 pm.

Sacramental Program

Parent Meeting – February 9th

Grade 2 – First Communion

Sat. May 2 – 12 Noon

Sat. May 9 – 12 Noon