



### ***Parent's Prayer***

*Most loving Father, you have entrusted our children to us to bring them up for you and prepare them for everlasting life.*

*Assist us with your grace, that we may fulfill this sacred duty with competence and love.*

*Teach us what to give and what to withhold.*

*Show us when to praise, when to reprove, and when to be silent.*

*Make us gentle and considerate, yet firm and watchful.*

*Keep us from the weakness of indulgence and the excess of severity.*

*Give us the courage to be disliked sometimes by our children, when we must do necessary things that are displeasing in their eyes. Give us the imagination to enter their world in order to understand and guide them.*

*Grant us all the virtues we need to lead them by word and example in the ways of wisdom and piety.*

*One day, with them, may we enter into the joys of our true and lasting home with you in heaven.*

***Amen***



## **Immaculate Conception and St. Patrick's**

## **Religious Education**

## **Parent Handbook**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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*The Vision of the Immaculate Conception / St. Patrick's Religious Education Department is to create an environment where parents recognize the importance of a strong religious educational foundation and youth are stimulated to prepare for sacraments and desire a personal understanding of the Catholic Church, its history, traditions, and teachings.*

## OUR MISSION

The Religious Education Department of Immaculate Conception / St. Patrick Church strives to assist parents in leading their children to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Through a combination of classroom, sacrament preparation and stewardship; building on the teachings from their parents, our young people will grow in their knowledge of God and the Roman Catholic Church.

## GOALS:

- To teach the message/Word: *guiding youth toward a deeper personal understanding of our faith by teaching Jesus' message of love through Scripture, Tradition and History of the Catholic Church.*
- To Prepare for the Sacraments/Grace: *preparing youth to experience God's grace through church traditions and the Holy Sacraments.*
- To Engage in Worship/Prayer: *assisting families with spiritual development and prayer by providing a variety of communal prayer and worship experiences that involve people in the sacramental life of the church.*
- To support Our Church Family: *creating a partnership where all family members feel comfortable sharing their time, talents, and faith.*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM:

Immaculate Conception / St. Patrick's Religious Formation Program uses the following programs:

### **Kindergarten: *Allelu! by Our Sunday Visitor***

These colorful innovative sheets can serve as the child's placemat at the dinner table, reinforcing key rituals for every home environment while serving as a conversation starter to help parents discuss Catholic teachings. Includes prayer, Scripture, and a profile of a Saint in every lesson.

### **1st grade: *Alive in Christ... Jesus Christ by Our Sunday Visitor***

### **2nd grade: *Alive in Christ... Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist by Our Sunday Visitor***

### **3rd grade: *Alive in Christ... The Church by Our Sunday Visitor***

### **4th grade: *Alive in Christ... The Moral Life by Our Sunday Visitor***

### **5th grade: *Alive in Christ... The Seven Sacraments by Our Sunday Visitor***

### **6th grade: *Alive in Christ... The Word of God in the Old Testament by Our Sunday Visitor***

### **7th grade: *Alive in Christ... The Church by Our Sunday Visitor***

Alive in Christ teaches children to know, love, and live their Catholic faith through Scripture, doctrine, and prayer.

### **8th grade & Freshman: *Chosen... Your Journey Toward Confirmation by Ascension Press***

*Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation* is a twenty-four lesson program that provides everything you need to prepare your students both intellectually and spiritually to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and to become lifelong disciples of Christ. All too often we see teens drift away from the Church after Confirmation. *Chosen* seeks to reverse this trend by winning over the hearts of teens at a critical time in their lives and keeping them firmly planted within the faith community of the Church.

## SACRAMENTS CONT'D

- If a student is absent, they need to watch the weekly video on-line
  1. Go to [www.evangelization.com](http://www.evangelization.com)
  2. Click on “Log In” button in the top right corner.
  3. Login as [icfre@frontier.com](mailto:icfre@frontier.com) and enter the password **8155893542**
  4. Under “ACTIVE STUDIES”, click on the “CHOSEN” button.
  5. Click on the desired lesson and segments to watch or review.

## CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

Choose a sponsor with the following requirements:

- Must be a practicing Catholic
- Sponsor must be over 16 years old and have had their Sacraments (If married, the marriage must be recognized by the Catholic Church.)
- A sponsor need not be the same gender as the Candidate.
- Since the role of the sponsor is to assist the parents in guiding their children in the faith, a parent may NOT be the sponsor of the candidate.
- Since Confirmation is the completion of Baptismal initiation in preparation for Christian mission, it is recommended – *but not required*– that a godparent be considered for a sponsor to show the unity between the sacraments.
- A letter of good standing from the parish where the sponsor worships is required.

## REGISTRATION GUIDELINES

Registration takes place each July for the following fall, with forms being mailed out to the home. They will also be available on the back tables at church or calling the office. Every student must be registered each year in order to arrange for textbooks, materials and catechists. Parents will be notified of dates and times in the mailing sent out in July. All fees are required at the time of registration. Please note that the later the registration is received the harder it is to plan for textbooks and catechist.

## ADMISSION GUIDELINES

Each student will be placed at the grade level that he/she attends in public school unless no other students are in that grade; they will then be asked to join the grade above or below their grade. Parents will be notified of the change.

## SPECIAL ADMISSION TO RE PROGRAM

Registration for non-parishioners must be arranged through the catechist and parish priest.

## TUITION AND SACRAMENTAL FEES

Registration fees are as follows:

- Registered Parishioners: \$25.00 for each student; \$60 for families with 3 or more children
- Non-Parishioners: \$35.00 each student
- Sacramental Fees:
  - \$20 additional fee for First Reconciliation and/or First Communion
  - \$45 additional fee for Confirmation this year (Fall Retreat and Youth Summit)
- “Alive in Christ” Homeschooled Classes are \$80.00 per student (workbook & Teacher Editions)
- There will be a \$20 late fee for registrations received after August 17th

## SACRAMENTS CONT'D

### Student Requirements

### ATTENDANCE

Please call / text the catechist prior to class time if your child will be absent from class on Wednesday.

*Regular attendance is essential for the student to benefit from the continuity of the curriculum. Therefore, our expectation is that no other activities are scheduled during your child's class time. This may be a sacrifice, but a necessary one for faith formation. Thank you for your cooperation! Students in sacramental years must not miss more than 4 classes (this does not include weather cancellations)*

### PROMPTNESS

Promptness is very important to enable the catechist the needed amount of instruction time. *Doors will be locked at the start of class time and remain locked during class.*

### DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress in an appropriate and modest manner. Wearing ball caps during class is not allowed. T-shirts, pants, shorts and shoes should be comfortable to your children. No bare midriffs, bare shoulders, or spaghetti-strap tops are allowed. Clothing should be free from words, slogans or pictures which advertise drugs, alcohol or which contain vulgar or offensive writing, racial slurs, suggestive pictures or emblems.

### PROCEDURE FOR DROP OFF AND PICK UP

**Drop Off:** Please drop off your children in front of the hall doors. Make sure the children enters before driving away (K-5<sup>th</sup>). Please do not park your vehicles in front of the hall doors, this is just for quick drop offs.

**Pick Up:** Children will be released after class for pickups. Please come in and pick up your children if in K-1st grade. If there are older siblings picking the children up please notify the catechist. Please watch for children crossing the street. Please make arrangement with the instructor if your going to be late.

- Students must have two years of Confirmation classes (only exception are new students that moved into the area but has been taking RE classes before they moved & a letter will be needed from former church)
- Weekly offering of the Holy Mass on Sundays
- Completion of assigned reading and "Challenge of the Week" (signatures req'd.)
- Be an example of CHARITY through 20 hours of service to the church and community PRIOR to confirmation. A sheet will be provided for the students to fill out and have adult in charge sign.
  - 10 hours of service can be done volunteering as a server at church (Priest or sacristan must sign paperwork)
  - Other community service hours can be working in the community or volunteering around church (Examples of volunteering at VBS, RE teacher aid, etc) (Make arrangements with Priest, CRE or office staff).
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation just prior to Confirmation (CCC 1310)
- Students need to go to 1 Confirmation retreat
- Meet with their sponsor through out the year, work out of the "Sponsor Book"
- Turn in any paperwork such as sponsor form, sacrament paperwork, student application, etc.
- Write a letter requesting Confirmation and explaining why it is desired.
- Choosing a Confirmation PATRON SAINT, a brief written report on the Saint will be required (1pg minimum) Saints Website: <http://www.catholic.org/saints/> or <http://www.americancatholic.org/features/saints/byname.aspx>

## SACRAMENTS CONT'D

### **CONFIRMATION PREPARATION FOR 7<sup>TH</sup> & 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS**

Our parish strives to journey with our young people as they discern if the Lord is calling them to the sacrament at this time. Preparation begins in seventh grade and continues throughout the eighth grade.

During the preparation period, your child's faith journey will be nurtured toward understanding and living their faith. It will be a time of searching, challenging, learning and resolving their faith. Your active support and encouragement will enhance the process. As the child's relationship with Christ and with the community grows, they will look for you for example.

**Regular Mass attendance is very important.** Our Church is a worshipping community, in which each member is called to minister to one another each week. Faith formation and regular worship are closely linked. The Church celebrates Christ's life, death, and resurrection in its liturgy. It is VITAL that children see faith development as LIFE-LONG, and that one must strive continuously to grow in faith, throughout adulthood. Our faith journey does not end as long as we are living.

#### **Confirmation Requirements**

##### **Why Confirmation? (CCC 1316)**

1. Confirmation perfects our Baptismal grace, making us full members of the Church.
2. Through the Holy Spirit, we are rooted more deeply out divine adoption as God's children.
3. We are incorporated more firmly into Christ.
4. Our bond with the Church is strengthened, drawing us more closely into Her saving mission.
5. The Holy Spirit helps us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

#### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CELL PHONES:**

Absolutely NO electronic devices. Cell phones must be silent during class. Thank you for your cooperation!

#### **WEAPONS & PROHIBITED OBJECTS:**

Students are forbidden to knowingly and voluntarily bring to the parish hall and /or to possess, handle, transmit, or use, any instrument on parish grounds, or at parish/religious education events that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon. Any object which could be used to injure another person may be considered a weapon. Police will be contacted when there is a suspected violation of criminal laws concerning weapons.

The following are examples of prohibited objects which students are forbidden to knowingly and voluntarily bring to the parish hall and/or to possess, handle, transmit, on parish grounds or at parish/religious education events: electronic devices/games, knives of all types or any other dangerous instruments capable of inflicting, cutting; guns of all types; lead pipes, chains; unauthorized tools; fireworks, explosives or other chemicals; controlled substances and/or drug paraphernalia; alcohol, tobacco, matches or lighters; and laser pointers.

#### **FIGHTING AND OTHER DISTURBANCES**

If a fight occurs, the possibility of injury or damage to other persons or property exists. For the protection of persons and property, such activities will not be tolerated before, during or after Religious Education classes and activities. Throwing snowballs, rocks, or other objects also involves the possibility of injury or damage to persons or property. Repeated violation of this rule may result in contacting the parent immediately and/or police will be notified.

## **DRUG & ALCOHOL FREE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:**

The following guidelines relative to drugs, controlled substances, and alcoholic beverages apply to all individuals enrolled at Immaculate Conception and St. Patrick Religious Formation Programs.

### **1. Prohibited Conduct**

A. possession or use of drugs, alcoholic beverages or a controlled substance

- Possession includes any knowing and voluntary having, taking, receiving or handling of drugs, alcoholic beverage or controlled substances.
- Students are prohibited from taking part in a parish function while intoxicated

B. selling or distributing drugs, alcoholic beverages or a controlled substance

C. possession or use of imitation controlled substances  
possession includes any knowing and voluntary having, taking, receiving or handling of an imitation controlled substance

D. selling or distribution imitation controlled substances

- An imitation controlled substance is a substance that looks very much like an illegal drug and is said to be an illegal drug, but is not an illegal drug. The following are to be considered in determining whether a particular pill/capsule is an imitation controlled substance:
  - a. The substance is said to produce the same or similar effects as the illegal drug or substance.
  - b. The person who has it or who is distributing it says that it is a specific illegal drug.
  - c. The person who is selling it charges more per pill/capsule's than the pill/capsule's contents usually sell for.
  - d. The pill/capsule is packaged in the same or similar bottle or box as the illegal pill/capsule drug.
  - e. The pill/capsule looks like the illegal drug it is said to be.

## **SACRAMENTS CONT'D**

**-Students must have two years, or the equivalent, of Religious Education before receiving First Eucharist, First Reconciliation or Confirmation.** On-going (grades K through 8) religious education provides the student with the best opportunity for reception of any Sacrament to be meaningful. For this reason, we ask for your cooperation in making religious education a priority. Our expectation is that once the child begins religious education classes, they should attend consistently from one year to the next.

### **FIRST COMMUNION REQUIREMENTS FOR EUCHARIST IN 2ND GRADE**

The Church asks that baptized children who are to celebrate First Holy Communion....

Have celebrated the Sacrament of Penance

This is the norm for the Diocese of Rockford.

*It is stated in the Catechism (#1457): "Children must go to the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time." (Code of Canon Law #914).*

Recognize the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist;

Understand how the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ; and desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

## SACRAMENTS

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST EUCHARIST AND CONFIRMATION**

***NOTE: Specific details for each sacrament will be provided for you at Sacrament Parent/Child Sessions. Please make attendance your top priority as they are mandatory!***

- Each student preparing for a sacrament must supply a copy of the Baptismal certificate for our office, unless Baptism took place at Immaculate Conception, Fulton /St. Patrick's, Albany Churches.
- Parents play an essential role in sacramental preparation programs. It is vital that parents, parish and religious education work together to nurture and support the children preparing to receive a sacrament. Thank you for your cooperation.
- Parents' example of regular attendance at Mass and reception of the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation are crucial.
- Catechists and parents work together in cooperative and supportive ways to provide the necessary instruction and guidance needed. Parents, as primary educators of their children, are expected to work with the catechists to determine if their children are ready for each sacrament.
- Curriculum and guidelines for preparation are provided by the Diocese and the Parish.
- The parents are required to attend any Parent Meetings or Sessions held for each sacrament their child receives.
  - Under normal conditions, students receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist in second grade, and Confirmation in seventh or eighth grade. Special arrangements will be made for students in other grades who need sacramental preparation. Parents must notify the Parish Office of this special need.

## DRUG & ALCOHOL FREE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:

### 2. Discipline

Parents will be contacted immediately and/or police will be notified.

### **BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES**

Immaculate Conception / St. Patrick's personnel will handle matters of inappropriate behavior in a fair and consistent manner. *We find that the more quickly we approach the problem, the easier it is to solve the discipline problem.* At no time will disrespect toward another person be tolerated.

Also, offensive student conduct/harassment/lack of respect of students and staff will not be tolerated. Repeated incidents of offensive conduct constitute harassment. Offensive conduct or harassment may result in leaving the class and not being asked to come back. Any incidents of bullying will be dealt with immediately. Bullying is defined by:

Repeated acts of physical or nonphysical deliberate aggressions by a person or group against another with intent to harm and includes pushing, kicking, hitting, slapping, knocking things out of hands, intimidating gestures, etc. Also includes spreading of lies, gossiping, saying mean things.

### **If a student is disruptive:**

The student will be sent to the Pastor/CRE/Catechist with an explanation of the behavior. The Pastor/CRE/Catechist will visit with the student and determine if the parent will be contacted. If the behavior continues, the CRE/catechist will again notify the Pastor. A phone call may need to be made to the parent. If so, the parent will be asked to come and pick up the child. It may be determined that a meeting needs to be held with the catechist, CRE, pastor, parent and student to discuss the problem

**STUDENT CONDUCT**

Students enrolled in Religious Education classes are expected to maintain high standards of behavior. Our purpose is to encourage and strengthen each child's character in accordance with Catholic principles and to promote order within the classrooms so that an atmosphere of learning may prevail.

Our team consists of catechists and assistants who give of their time, talents, and energies and deserve the utmost respect, consideration, and support at all times.

Since the true form of discipline is self discipline, it is our goal as educators to assist the student in acquiring self-control. Disciplinary actions will be used, if necessary, to help the individual grow in this area.

**The student will:**

Listen

Follow directions

Share time and space with fellow students

Ask questions to understand more completely

Cooperate with others

Demonstrate an understanding of rules

Accomplish designated tasks

Communicate appropriately

Demonstrate leadership when appropriate

Respect others and the rights of others

Respect Church property

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

There are children of God who, because of a disability, may not be able to participate in the or Wednesday classes. At this time, we assist families on a case by case basis. If you have any questions regarding this program, please call the Parish Office.

- **For Grades 1 – 8: The Diocese of Rockford Formation in Christian Chastity and Safe Environment Program.** This program consists of two parts – a Formation in Christian Chastity program to be taught in every grade from Grades 1 through 8, and a Safe Environment program taught in Grades 1, 3, 5 and 8. The benefits of this new program are twofold. First, the program places a strong emphasis on the Church's recognition that parents are the primary educators of their children, particularly in the areas of human intimacy. Throughout both the Formation in Christian Chastity portion of the program and the Safe Environment portion, parents are given a wealth of ideas and tools designed to assist them in fulfilling their task as primary educators of their children in these areas. Under this program the classroom will serve as reinforcement of the concepts taught in the home, always sensitive to the primary role to be played by parents.

Secondly, the program in its Chastity Formation portion more concretely answers the Bishops' call "to provide formation to children in the area(s) of...the integrity of their person." Put quite simply, when we faithfully instill in our children the Catholic faith, we are protecting them against abuse and teaching them how to respond should they be victimized.

*Parents will have the option to fill out and sign our Opt-Out Form if they would not like to have their child(ren) be in class for this lesson. This class is usually held the second class of the school year.*



## CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* requires parishes and schools to provide formation to children in the areas of safety and the integrity of their person. The Diocese of Rockford is pleased to present these programs for the children and youth of our Diocese:

- **For Grades PreK and K: The Diocese of Rockford Safe Environment Program Keeping Myself Safe.** The basic theme of the Pre-K and Kindergarten program is Personal Safety. We are using the 19-page story book, *The Birthday Suit*, by Kristina and Ashlin Muldoon, and illustrated by Claire Shatzen, to introduce children to personal safety. This program reinforces the concept of saying no at any age for inappropriate touching or contact. In Pre-K and Kindergarten classes, *The Birthday Suit* story book will be read to the children by the classroom teacher. With instruction and reinforcement, and support and affirmation from their parents and teachers, children can learn to take responsibility for their safety. *The Birthday Suit* is an excellent starting point to introduce our children to the skills they need to be safe. This program is used recognizing that parents are the first teachers of faith, prayers and a life of love with Jesus, as well as God's gift of human sexuality and to remain chaste. This short, one-book program for Pre-K and Kindergarten children is intended to assist parents in the formation of their children in the virtue of chastity and to address this topic in a very age appropriate manner.

## BULLYING:

Any action, word or behavior which harasses, intimidates or causes physical, emotional or psychological harm to another student or students is strictly prohibited. This prohibited conduct also extends to the use of technology (“Cyber bullying”) as a tool to harass or cause harm.

In writing or electronically (“cyber bullying”), directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school. Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. Examples of “cyber bullying” include but are not limited to the use of e-mail, web sites, text messaging, electronic photos or videos & social media (i.e. Face Book, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc...) to harass or intimidate. These lists are meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

## CATECHISTS/VOLUNTEERS

Catechists have participated in “Safe Environment For All God’s Children” training and undergone a background check. Parents and catechists are partners in supporting each other in their efforts to provide religious education for the children. Catechists are members of the parish community who generously give of their talents and time.

Catechists are required to attend trainings during the year to help them work effectively with the children.

Parents are asked to participate actively in the program in other volunteer needs such as helping with programs, retreats, chaperones, etc. It is expected that parents will involve themselves in their child's progress in the following ways:

- attending Mass regularly*
- helping with home activity assignments*
- praying traditional and personal prayers regularly*
- attending special sacrament meetings & events*
- taking an interest in their child’s curriculum*
- assisting the catechist on occasion*
- involving your child as the family extends concern and service to neighbors and community.*

We need all parents to volunteer in some capacity - whether in the religious education program or parish community. Your time and talents are important to the success of our parish.

*Please feel free to contact your parish office if you have questions.*

## PARENTAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

A parent or guardian who has a question or concern regarding a situation involving his or her child is urged to follow these procedures:

1. Contact the student's catechist to discuss the situation and work with the catechist to arrive at possible solutions. Appointments with the catechists must be made by stopping before or after class to make arrangements, by calling the Catechist or call the parish office.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the catechist, the parent or guardian should then request a conference with the CRE. After discussing the situation with both parties, the CRE will act as a facilitator making every effort to resolve the problem and initiate reconciliation between the two parties.
3. If resolution and reconciliation have not been achieved after discussing the problem with the catechist, CRE and the parent or guardian still feels that the complaint has not received proper consideration, the pastor will be asked to assist in resolving the situation and achieving reconciliation.

**Every effort should be made to resolve questions, concerns and problems at the earliest possible stage in a manner appropriate for Christians.**