

Parish Religious Education Program PREP Parent/Student Handbook

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A Blessing for Children

Loving God,

You created all the people of the world,

And you know each of us by name.

We especially thank you for the children who celebrate your life each day.

Bless them with your love and friendship that they may grow in wisdom, knowledge, and grace.

May they love their families always and be ever faithful to their friends.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Adapted from the book "*Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy. National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Philosophy

The Incarnation Parish Religious Education Program (**PREP**) is committed to a dynamic partnership with parents in the Religious Education of their children. Parents, by word and example, teach their children from birth throughout life. At their child's Baptism, parents undertake the responsibility of providing for their child's Christian formation. The **PREP** staff will do everything it can to assist parents with their child's continuing Christian formation with *formal* classes. This *partnership* between parents and PREP requires ongoing communication and collaboration. In our classes, we seek to provide the catechesis and skills needed for each child to grow and mature, as far as each is able, in understanding, positive attitudes, and faithful practice of the Catholic faith (see Cor. 13:11). We strive, therefore, to assist each child in committing him or herself to a relationship with God characterized by a lifelong pattern of vigorous sacramental life, prayer, Christian service, and growth in understanding of the Catholic faith.

Committed to an active partnership between program and families, we place our efforts with confidence in God's loving hands.

Early Childhood Program

Classes are held during the 9:30am and 10:30am Sunday Masses. Class length is at least **45 minutes**. The children will remain in the classrooms with their teachers until Mass is over. We assume the parents will be at Mass during the class time. If the parents plan to leave the parish grounds, please notify the Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) beforehand.

Children are accepted for the Early Childhood program as follows:

3 years old before September 30 - 3 Program

4 years old before September 30 - 4 Program

5 years old before September 30 - 5 Program

There are a few exceptions. Should you decide that your child is not ready for a regular Kindergarten class, he/she may continue in the program with the option of repeating the 4's Program or the Kindergarten program with a different teacher. Many children attending Incarnation Day School Kindergarten also attend our Sunday Program.

Elementary Program

Classes are held on Tuesday or Wednesday from 4:15 - 5:30pm in the Incarnation School building. Class for 7th & 8th graders is also held on Sunday evenings from 7-8:15 PM. *The 7th & 8th graders may choose to come Wednesday or Sunday evening.*

Learning Goals Grades 1-8

To assist parents and catechists in accomplishing each grade level's learning objectives, a list of content summary, unit aims, prayers to be memorized, scripture stories, and positive discipline skills will be published and sent home at the beginning of the year. Mastery of these learning goals is achieved when the student grasps the faith concepts, internalizes the faith

message, and incorporates that message in his/her daily life.

Progress Reports Grades 1-8

To encourage student accomplishment and accountability for learning, a student's achievement of basic learning objectives required for his/her grade level will be monitored throughout the year. A mid-term and final progress report will be sent to each elementary student's parent(s)/guardian. Areas assessed will include:

- 1) Attendance
- 2) Behavior and positive attitude
- 3) Class participation
- 4) Memorization of Catholic prayer and doctrine (when required)
- 5) Class and home assignments
- 6) Understanding of lessons

A successful year will result in advancement to the next level. A student who fails to achieve basic learning objectives or does not have good attendance will be required to work with a parent/guardian during the summer to complete their work. Once completed, the student will demonstrate competency to the Coordinator of Religious Education and be advanced to the next level. Failure to complete the work will automatically result in repetition of the same grade level in the fall.

Sacramental Preparation

Normally, formal preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist takes place during second grade. Confirmation preparation is completed during the eighth grade.

- A parent and child Reconciliation Retreat is held as part of the preparation program in the fall before Reconciliation.
- A parent and child First Communion Retreat is required of candidates as part of the preparation program in the spring before First Communion.
- Christian Service and attendance at a Confirmation Retreat is required of candidates as part of their Confirmation preparation.
- Parent and candidate information meeting for Confirmation will be held in the spring before the 8th grade year to enable parents to assist in their child's preparation. At least one parent of every candidate in sacramental preparation must attend the meeting or meet with the coordinator before

the student will be considered as a candidate to receive a sacrament.

- Students should be registered and participating in their grade level programs *from the beginning of each and every year.*
- Parents of late registrants will be required to meet with the Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) to discern whether the candidate for a sacrament needs to be in the Special Sacrament Class or be prepared with the students in the regular class.

There will be a *Special Sacramental Preparation Class* for students in the following situations:

- Children who have not been baptized and are beyond the first grade.
- Children beyond second grade who have not received the catechesis for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.
- Children Baptized into another Christian Community, who have not been received into the Catholic Church.

If your child is in the second or eighth grade and has not had religious training the **prior** year, the following steps will be required: the student will be required meet with the CRE to have an evaluation of the circumstances and the child's readiness. Additional classes may be required to prepare the child. Following this procedure will insure sufficient preparation for your child to receive the sacrament with his/her class.

General Policies

Admission Policies

Registered and supporting members of Incarnation Parish may register their children in the Parish Religious Education Programs. If you are not a member of the Parish please contact the CRE.

Parent/Guardian Consent

Due to Archdiocesan Policy requiring written consent by parent or guardian to allow children to participate in parish programs (Decree on Child Protection, C.2). A child's custodial parent(s) /guardian must give written consent to register a child in the Parish Religious Education Program. The custodial parent/guardian's signature will also signify that the signer has read, understands, and supports the policies contained in the Parent/Student Handbook. Parents are asked to review the Handbook contents with their

children.

Non-discrimination Policy

Incarnation Parish Religious Education Program admits students of any sex, race color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to program participants. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race color, or national origin in the administration of its programs or the recruitment of its teachers.

Catch-up Catechesis

Elementary or High School Students, who enter our programs after extended periods of time without formal education, and those who transfer from other programs, will be assessed by the Program Coordinator for their grade level readiness around the time of registration. Remedial assistance will be provided if needed. Some special sessions may be required before students are admitted to regular class sessions.

Students who enter our parish religious education programs without having been prepared for one or more of the initiation sacraments normally provided to their peers are provided instruction through special classes.

Parents are asked to bring such special sacrament preparation needs to the attention of the Program Coordinator at the time of registration before classes begin.

Special Needs Program

Children in the Early Childhood or Elementary program with special learning needs are welcome and included in our programs. Parents are asked to indicate their children's special needs at registration time.

Rights of Non-custodial Parents

Both parents have the right of access to a child's religious education progress reports and achievement information unless one parent produces a legal (court certified) document to the contrary. The Elementary Religious Education Program will supply a mid-term and final progress report to the non-custodial parent upon request, which must be in writing. Changes in the child's normal routine must be approved by the custodial parent/guardian. No child will be dismissed from our programs to the non-custodial parent

without the written consent of the custodial parent/guardian.

Financial Policies

Tuition and Fees: Incarnation Parish provides a significant portion of the costs for our Early Childhood and Elementary programs. Families with children registered in these programs are asked to pay a percentage of program costs. Families are to pay the entire fee at registration or make special arrangements with the administrative assistant.

Families who are unable to pay are asked to let the PREP office know at registration. Such matters are kept confidential.

Refund Policy

Families, who withdraw from PREP before the scheduled start date, will be entitled to a full refund upon notifying the Religious Education Office at 433-3377. Families who withdraw children from our programs **after** the start of classes will be entitled to a partial refund; pro-rated according to the balance of classes remaining in that year at the time of withdrawal.

Attendance

Perfect attendance is anticipated and necessary for continuity. If illness occurs, a note should accompany the child to the next class. A parent will be contacted by the CRE by email after each absence. If a 7th or 8 grader misses class they will be required to attend a make-up class on Sunday mornings.

Child Protection Policy

Child Abuse includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- 1) Engaging in sexual activity with a child
- 2) Denial of proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical care, or other care necessary for the child's health
- 3) Use of restraint procedures on a child that cause injury or pain
- 4) Administration of prescription drugs or medication without the ongoing supervision of a licensed physician
- 5) Providing alcoholic beverages or controlled substances
- 6) Commission of any act, other than by accidental means that threatens or

results in any injury or death to the child

The Coordinator of the Parish Religious Education Program is required by the Ohio Revised Code and Archdiocesan Policy on Child Protection to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Class and Home Assignments

Catechists in the Elementary Religious Education Program do assign class work and homework as needed. Elementary students are expected to complete all class and home assignments.

PREP Classroom Courtesy

Parents please go over the following rules with your child(ren).

- 1) Gum, food, and drink are **not permitted** in the halls or classrooms.
- 2) Respect for all parish and student property, all teachers, and fellow students must be shown at all times.
- 3) If tardy, enter the classroom quietly so as not to be a distraction.
- 4) Students may **not** enter the classroom until the teacher arrives. The children must wait in the hall **outside** of the classroom.
- 5) Normally students should arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before class and be picked up no later than 10 minutes after dismissal.
- 6) Students will not be dismissed early from class until the parent/guardian reports to the Hall Monitor and **signs** their child out of the building.
- 7) **Cell Phones and other electronic devices.**
 - Cell phones, iPads, I Pods, MP3 players and all other electronic devices must be kept in school bags.
 - All devices must be turned off.
 - Any device that is not stored and turned off will be given to the Coordinator of Religious Education and parents will then have to retrieve the items from the PREP office.
 - The Parish is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones or any other electronic equipment that is brought to class.
 - Texting is prohibited.
 - If a student needs to contact a parent after class, the catechist will permit the student to use the phone located in the classroom or in Room 13.

Building Visitors

All visitors, including parents/guardians, must report to the Hall Monitors when entering the building during program hours to drop off or pick up a child, other than normal arrival/dismissal time. A visitor is not permitted to go to any classroom without permission from the Hall Monitor.

Safety

Emergency Procedures for Fire and Threatening Weather: Children will be instructed by teachers of the proper procedure to follow in case of fire or threatening weather.

Parking Lot – Dismissal

Early Childhood: A parent must report to the child's classroom before the child will be dismissed.

Tuesday & Wednesday afternoons **please drive slowly.** There are walkers coming from the Middle Schools. You may join the car line for pickup or park in the lot and walk in to meet your child. If you are not in the car lane you may not park in front of the school building because it is a fire lane. All children should wait in front of the north doors or in the building for their ride. **Students may not exit from any other doors or wait in other areas.** This is for the safety of the children.

Sunday evening: Students will be dismissed from the main school doors. And follow the same procedures for Tuesday and Wednesday.

Discipline

Every person is worthy of being treated with care and respect fitting one made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, classroom behavior should be characterized by genuine Christian care, mutual respect, and honesty.

Under no circumstances will a student or an adult be permitted to strike another or use abusive language for any reason. Lack of self-discipline during religion class will be addressed promptly.

The normal steps for disciplinary action will be:

- 1) Verbal correction by the Catechist.

- 2) Removal from class - child sent to the Coordinator
- 3) Incident report mailed to the parents by the catechist/coordinator.
- 4) Follow-up phone call by the catechist//coordinator.
- 5) Removal from class. Prior to this step, the catechist will have met with the program coordinator, reviewed the students misbehavior and the catechists adherence to the above disciplinary action and conclude that this step must be taken. Parents will be informed in writing of a student's removal by the Program Coordinator.
A Parent/Student/Catechist/Coordinator conference will be arranged before the student will be allowed back into the classroom or program. The Pastor will also be informed in writing. The student's removal from class, necessary changes in the students' behavior and the probationary time allowed will be noted in the student's record.
- 6) Removal from program. Should the above steps go unheeded after a suitable probationary period; the Program coordinator will inform the student's parents of the decision to permanently remove the student from the program. The Pastor will be informed in writing, and the decision will be attached to the student's file. The Program Coordinator retains the right to omit one or more of the above steps whenever they deem it necessary.

Major Disciplinary Violations

Actions meriting an immediate response by the Catechists and the Program Coordinator are as follows:

Drugs/Alcohol/Substance Abuse (See substance abuse policy)

Harassment - Verbal or Physical (includes sexual)

Stealing or Damaging Parish /School or another students property

Jeopardizing a person's safety

Fighting

Crude or Offensive Language

Weapons - possession of, threat of or suggestion of use

Substance Abuse Policy

Substance abuse is defined as the possession of, use of, or trafficking in any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, or injection. Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance on parish property will be immediately suspended from the program. A conference with the parents/guardian, student and the Program Coordinator is mandatory for re-admittance to the program. Any student found in possession of or using any illegal, unauthorized substance a second time will be removed from the program. Any student trafficking in illegal substances, even for the first time, will be formally withdrawn from the program and the matter turned over to local authorities.

Suspension/Immediate Removal

Gross violations of program policies or any action which continually disrupts the learning environment, or endangers another student or the parish facilities can lead to suspension or immediate removal. The Program Coordinator can apply any of these actions when deemed necessary. Written notification will be sent to parents and student indicating the reason(s) for suspension. The Pastor will be notified when such action is taken. When a student's presence constitutes a disruption or a threat, he/she may be immediately removed from the classroom. A conference will be held between the program personnel and parents before a student can be readmitted to the classroom or the program.

Class Cancellations

Early Childhood: Whenever inclement weather forces cancellation of Early Childhood Classes, the Program Coordinator will announce class cancellations over the same stations listed below for Elementary closings.

Elementary: Whenever inclement weather forces school closings for Centerville Schools, or Incarnation School; Elementary Parish Religious Education Classes are also cancelled. Should Parish Religious Education Classes be cancelled because of weather or other emergencies toward the end of the normal school day, area schools will be contacted and asked to announce our cancellations to their students. Announcements of Parish

Religious Education Class cancellations will be announced on: **WHIO/TV 7 & WDTN/TV 2.**

Field Trips

Any activity involving transport off of parish grounds requires advance parent notification and written permission from a parent or guardian *before any student may participate in such an activity.* An “Activity Consent Form” will be sent home prior to such events to secure proper parent notification and permission.

Extracurricular Activities

Parents are asked to demonstrate a commitment to their children’s formal religious education even when it is difficult, or involves potential conflicts with a child’s interests in sports or other extracurricular activities. Should a parent/guardian anticipate an unavoidable conflict (sports team **practice** is **not** considered an unavoidable conflict), in a child’s attendance at religion classes, they should contact the Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

Parish Organizations for Children

Children’s Choir: Children are recruited in the fall for participation in the Parish Children’s Choir. The Parish Music Minister holds a weekly practice during the school year in preparation for music ministry at weekend Mass.

Catholic Youth Sports: Parish youth are invited to participate in a number of sports activities through the Incarnation Athletic Association. Announcements are regularly included in the Church Bulletin and notices are periodically sent home with times and dates of registrations for the various sports activities. The president of the Incarnation Athletic Association may be contacted for additional information.

Altar Servers: Boys and girls in grades 6, 7 & 8 are recruited and trained annually to serve Masses. They are trained to serve Mass by the Priest.

Scouts: Boys and girls may join Scouts. Religious Award Badge information is available through the office or your scout leader.

Incarnation Commission on Education

All Incarnation Parish Religious Education Programs are responsible to the Pastor and to the members of the Commission on Education. The Coordinator of Religious Education reports at each commission meeting normally held the **first Monday of each month (September - June) at the Parish Center**. All parishioners are encouraged to attend these commission meetings.

Telephone Numbers

The Religious Education Office will be open Monday - Thursday between 9am - 3pm. Parents may call 433-3377 ex. 210 to reach the Program assistant about any question or concerns during that time.

During Program hours, parents should call 433-3377 ex. 113. No teacher will be summoned from the classroom to answer the phone during program hours. Only emergency phone calls will be relayed to students during program hours.

E-Mail

Paula Weckesser, Coordinator of Religious Education
paula.weckesser@incarnation.catholic.org

Cathy Winkofsky Administrative Assistant
cathy.winkofsky@incarnation.catholic.org

The family is a kind of deeper humanity. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, it needs the kindly communion of minds and the joint deliberation of spouses, as well as the cooperation of parents in the education of their children. In the family, the various generations come together and help one another grow wiser... (The

Church in the Modern World, Vatican II, no 52)