

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH

Religious Education Handbook



Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Parish Religious Education

In this Parish, religion classes begin in the 1st grade and classes are held each year until the Sacrament of Confirmation in the 10th grade. Kindergarten is optional. We expect that a child has 8 years in a continuous religious education program prior to starting Confirmation formation classes.

Collaboration with Parents

For Catholic parents, the mission to catechize is rooted in the Sacrament of Matrimony, which consecrates them for the Christian education of their children. **By virtue of this sacrament, parents are the primary educators of their children.** Therefore, catechists are encouraged to communicate with parents throughout the school year so that a collaborative effort may be made, each supporting the other in providing a strong foundation in Roman Catholic doctrines and morals. Together, they fulfill the mandate Christ gave His followers to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Commitment

It is expected that your child will be at all classes barring illness or other personal reason. We do expect that you and your child will make the program a priority. The role of the parent is critical by attending weekly liturgy with your children (Sunday Mass, or the anticipatory Mass Saturday evening), and in overseeing your child’s attendance at religious education class. In the event where there are more than 3 absences the parents will be required to meet with the director of education. Excessive absenteeism may result in the child having to repeat the grade in order to progress in the program, or for teens in the Confirmation program to postpone receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Catechists

All catechists, aides and helpers are volunteers and deserve and will get the utmost respect from all people involved. They give many hours preparing for their classes and attending training sessions. Each classroom has a minimum of two catechists present for each session. Parents are needed and urged to volunteer in the program. If you are interested please contact the Parish Office at (361) 645-3095. Dedication to your faith and a love for children/youth are the key characteristics of those we seek to work in this ministry. Everything else we can teach you. Catechists will keep information about your children confidential. Please let the CCD director and catechists know if you have a child that may need modified work or some other accommodations. If a problem arises with a catechist, please seek to solve it by meeting with them privately. If the private meeting was not successful, submit your complaint in writing to the CCD director within five days of the private meeting. The CCD director will respond with a written decision within five days of the written complaint, detailing the action to be taken. If the

complainant is dissatisfied with the decision or, if no decision is received within five working days after the complaint is sent to the CCD director, the complainant may appeal to the next level. If you have any questions regarding complaint procedures contact the CCD director (361) 648-2289.

Tardiness

Classes start at 5:30 PM on Wednesdays and 10:30 AM on Sunday make-up day. Students are considered tardy after this time. Please make sure that your child is in their classroom on time.

Absenteeism

A notification by the parents is appreciated when a child will be absent. This can be done by a phone call, to the CCD director (361) 648-2289. Students preparing to receive the sacraments of First Holy Communion, First Penance, or Confirmation, should miss no more than three absences during the CCD year.

Classroom Rules

As we are made in the image and likeness of God, we deserve to be treated with care and respect. Therefore, classroom behavior by all should exemplify virtuous living. We are called to react towards one-another with love, respect, patience, humility, fairness, and modesty. Each student is asked to be attentive by listening and participating in classroom activity while being both courteous and polite.

Discipline

We ask that the students not disturb classes by unnecessary conduct or talking during class. In the event that misbehavior occurs, the following procedures will apply.

1. First consequence – The student is asked to improve their behavior.
2. Second consequence – The student is asked to improve their behavior and may be asked to leave the classroom.
3. Third consequence – The student will be sent to the office to meet with the CCD director. Upon this meeting, the student will be asked to write a letter to their catechists and classmates explaining their wrongdoings, describing how they will improve, and asking for forgiveness. Depending on the time remaining and/or catechist preference, the child may return to class or may remain in the office until CCD is over.
4. Fourth consequence – The parents will be notified and asked to come pick up their child early; the parents will need to schedule a meeting with the CCD director.
5. Fifth consequence – The student may be suspended from CCD for the remainder of the year.

Dress Code

1. Be properly dressed when attending class. No short shorts, short dresses, or short skirts (shorts must be no more than three inches above the knee, and skirts/dresses must cover the knees when standing). No undergarments are to be visible at any time. No tank tops, inappropriate wording, or pictures on clothing. Students should be mindful that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

2. No earrings should be worn by male students. Inappropriate chains on any students will not be allowed.
3. Caps are not to be worn during CCD.
The above guidelines are the same during scheduled Masses on Wednesday night, weekends, holidays, and any Parish/CCD sponsored event. Parents will be called if their child abuses the dress code and students may be asked to leave CCD.

Pick Up and Drop Off of Students

On regular CCD nights: students are to be dropped off and picked up at the front of the CCD building. Students should not arrive at the CCD building prior to 5:00. Parents should be aware that there are no assigned monitors outside the CCD building prior to 5:30pm. Parents are responsible for their child's activities prior to 5:30 PM and pick up no later than 7:10 PM.

Safe Environment Training & Abuse

The information below comes from the Diocese of Victoria Handbook: How to Protect Children from Child Abuse: A Parent Guide. This handbook is available for pick-up at the CCD office. Every CCD adult volunteer involved with children at any time is required to take the Safe Environment Training class and have a clear background check. No adult is allowed to work with students in any form without this program being completed by the first CCD class day. Please check with the Parish Office if you would like to take this course. Unfortunately, many young people have experienced the trauma of physical abuse and neglect and/or sexual abuse. Catechists may learn of such abuse from a young person or see the signs of such abuse due to regular contact. When catechists learn of such situations, they have a moral and legal obligation to take action.

Any person who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect MUST report his/her suspicions to the Texas Department of Human Services or local or state enforcement agency within 48 hours of learning of the abuse. The report can be made by calling the 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400) or online at www.txabusehotline.org. This incident should be kept in complete confidence between you and the pastor.

If church personnel are involved: First contact civil authorities. Second, contact the Bishop or the chancellor of the Diocese of Victoria at 361-573-0828 or the Coordinators of Pastoral Care and Outreach: Vicki Pyatt, LMSW, at 361-827-7186 or email patoralcare@victoriadiocese.org.

Bad Weather Policy

If at all possible, we will hold classes. But, if bad weather is expected or does occur and CCD must be cancelled, parents will be notified when/if possible via the contact number listed on the registration form.

Communications

Cell phones may be brought into the school but will be given to the catechist/teacher prior to entering the classroom. If you need to reach your student during class time call the Religious Education Office at 210-390-5261, and we will send someone to deliver the message or bring your student to the phone. Students are always permitted to use the office phone to call parents. No electronic items such as ipods, ipads, MP 3 players or other such items are allowed at CCD. Parents will be kept informed of upcoming events during the school year primarily church bulletin announcements and the church website at www.goliadcatholic.org . Memos and notes may also be sent home periodically. Please check weekly with your student for any notes that are sent through them to you.

Medical Release Forms

Each student is required to have a medical release/permission form on file in our office. Please notify the office of any change in your address, phone numbers or insurance information as soon as possible.

Sacramental Preparation

It is very important that those preparing to receive a Sacrament attend all classes. Communion candidates prepare all year to receive the Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion. Students receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation are asked to do service projects and attend a spiritual retreat. A parent meeting will be scheduled at the beginning of each CCD year. Parents are required to attend in order for their child to receive these sacraments. Specific rules and requirements for each sacrament class will be reviewed in detail at this parent meeting. Students preparing for the sacraments should miss no more than three classes and attend Mass weekly. Students are expected to attend weekly Sunday Mass or the Saturday Evening, as well as the Religious Education classes. Parents are responsible for bringing their children to the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist regularly. The parents of the students will bring a signed Mass verification form to each class to show they are attending Mass each Sunday. The teacher will record attendance and if a student is noticed to have missed Mass **and no extraordinary reasons are given**, then a meeting may need to be set up with Father to understand the faith of the Church given to us by Jesus. **The Ten Commandments are our Code of Conduct.**

Hall Monitors

There will be a minimum of two hall monitors during each CCD session. One Hall Monitor will monitor who enters and exits the CCD building at the main door by the CCD office at all times. The other Hall Monitor will ensure all other entrances/exits to the CCD building are secured (and remain such) approximately five minutes after the start of CCD in each session and ensures students do not leave the CCD building without permission and/or a supervising adult. He/she will also monitor the main hall and assist teachers in taking students to/from the bathroom (but does NOT enter the bathroom with students) , taking notes to/from the classroom and office, and making copies for catechists. Both Hall Monitors assist catechists in all emergency situations. Hall Monitors will agree which duties each will assume.

Emergency Procedures

Catechists, assistants, and hall monitors should be aware of Emergency Scenario Procedures. Training will be provided at the beginning of the CCD year and procedures will be posted on the

bulletin board by the main CCD entrance as well as in each classroom. These procedures will be practiced at the beginning of the year and once more during the CCD year.

Fire/Bomb Threat:

1. 911 will be called, and the Pastor will be notified
2. Hall Monitors will be notified of the place of the fire and one Hall Monitor will notify classrooms to the right of fire/bomb location. The other Hall Monitor will notify classrooms to the left of the fire/bomb location. Hall monitors will assist catechists in getting all students out of the building safely, closing the doors and turning off the lights.
3. Catechists will lead their students through the nearest exit opposite the fire/bomb and away from the CCD building to the meeting area in the parking lot south of the school building. The floor plan for evacuation will be posted in each classroom.
4. Catechists should take attendance registers, keys, purse, and cell phones with them as they exit, close the doors, and turn off the lights.
5. Catechists should count to be sure all students exited the building successfully.
6. Remain calm, and wait for further instructions.
7. Parents will be contacted and medical attention provided as necessary.

Shelter-In-Place

(Weather emergencies or hazardous substance is released)

911 will be called. Hall Monitors will be notified of the type of emergency and the need to shelter-in-place. One Hall Monitor will notify rooms on the right side of the hall (#'s 6,7, 8, 9,10 & 11) of the need to shelter-in-place. The other Hall Monitor will notify rooms on the left side of the hall (#'s 1, 2, & 3) of the need to shelter-in-place. Hall monitors will assist catechists in the below procedures:

1. Close all windows.
2. Lead students into the north interior hallway and have students assume the “duck and tuck” position.
3. Catechists should take attendance registers, keys, purse, and cell phones with them as they exit, close the doors, and turn off the lights.
4. Catechists should count to be sure all students exited the classrooms successfully.
5. Catechists and Hall Monitors assume the “duck and tuck” position after all students are settled and in the correct position.
8. Remain calm, and wait for further instructions.
9. Parents will be contacted and medical attention provided as necessary.

Active Shooter

(Seek cover within classrooms)

1. Ideally the Entrance Hall Monitor will notice the disturbed person and alert the CCD Director of impending danger and the need to alert catechists /students to seek cover. Gun shots may also be heard within the building to alert catechists of danger.

2. The second Hall Monitor will notify classrooms on the right by consecutively yelling, “Seek cover!” as loudly and quickly as possible. He will seek cover in the last classroom notified. The building entrance Hall Monitor will leave the locked front door after notifying the CCD director of the disturbed person in order to notify the classrooms on the left of the need to seek cover by loudly yelling “seek cover!,” and seeking cover in the last classroom notified.
3. Meanwhile, the CCD director will call 911 and assess the situation. The CCD director will help as needed to get all students in safe locations and seek cover in the office or in a classroom if deemed necessary.
4. Catechists should “seek cover” by following these procedures:
 - a. Lock classroom doors.
 - b. Have children sit in the “duck and tuck” position in the corner “least visible” from the classroom door window. Catechists also stand/sit in this corner where room allows.
 - c. If possible and time allows (no gun shots have been heard in the building), tip tables on the side with the legs still extended and place in front of the students in order to totally block all visibility of students from the closed & locked classroom doors.
5. Turn out lights to make the room look unoccupied or closed-off.
6. Remain calm and wait for further instructions.
7. Parents will be contacted and medical attention provided as necessary.