



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SCHOOL



Est. 2001 Principal's Message – April 2018 – #2 Visit Us on the Web At: www.icsannandale.org

From Mr. Stone's Desk

Greetings Immaculate Conception School Community,

Last week I posed this question in our school newsletter, "Why choose Immaculate Conception School for your child?" Continuing along with this theme, on a related note, I now pose this query... "Why do families typically consider and choose a Catholic school for their child's education?"

Inevitably there seems to be three main reasons.

- A. Catholic/Christian values.
- B. Good academics via smaller class sizes.
- C. Safe, supportive environment that provides more individual teacher/staff attention.

So far, so good. Obviously these are exactly the three primary points of interest for Immaculate Conception School when it comes to facilitating our Catholic education mission and philosophy.

Ok, so why do some families typically choose not to enroll (or re-enroll) their child in a Catholic school?

There may be more, certainly, but let's stick with the 'three most common reasons' approach for now.

- A. Finances.
- B. Grumpiness with a policy or personnel; not serving a family's desired needs.
- C. Belief that a Catholic school may not be necessary. Public and Religious Ed is ok.

Finances can be tough. I have been unemployed before. I remember what it was like. Even so, to the extent that it is humanly possible, education is a priceless gift that will set the tone and provide the foundation for all future endeavors. What kind of foundation do you wish to provide your child? At Immaculate Conception School we will try to do everything possible, working with individual families via their individual financial circumstances to try and make Catholic education a reality for their child. No, we can't provide services for free, and yes, our parish already supports our school significantly. (Thank you!)

Still, I personally do not believe that teaching children about the Catholic faith, while providing excellent academics, should just be for people of means, of affluence, and I unabashedly think Jesus would agree. Please come and speak with myself, Mrs. Sharon Hillwig as our Enrollment/Admissions Director, and/or our parish Business Manager, Mrs. Catherine Solfaro, so we can confidentially explore your family's financial situation, if and as necessary.

As for point number two, grumpiness with respect to how a school may not be serving a family's needs, we are very blessed here at ICS because our talented staff members understand and seek to facilitate good cooperative working relationships with our families. Partnership is understood. Community is encouraged. All are welcome. My door is always open anytime a parent/guardian wants to come by to discuss a topic of interest – or just to say hello for that matter. It doesn't always have to be just about business after all.

Finally, the real reason for my rambling along... Point #3. There are families – I've heard them at various parishes over the years – who believe that their child can receive the Catholic/Christian values which they feel is important via their church's Religious Education program and thus there is no need to send their child to a Catholic school. Their local public schools are good or "good enough" academically. It's not even necessarily a matter of finances. The family just feels that Religious Education once a week and public school are good enough. Besides, a public school may have more extracurricular offerings in sports, clubs, etc.

Good enough? I am admittedly biased as a Catholic school administrator however I just don't think so. Helping to make the case, reinforcing my thoughts, I offer the following. Yes, it's a little long, and yes, it comes from a Catholic source though it's a wee bit of a 'back in the day' reference now. However, I believe it is still very much on topic and worth reflecting on.

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Ensuing excerpts from *The Catholic Family Handbook* by Rev. George A. Kelly, 1959, Random House

CHAPTER 5: WHY SEND YOUR CHILD TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS?

Supporters of nonsectarian education often object when Catholics characterize public schools as "Godless." But the cold fact is that they are Godless in the literal sense of that word. Inasmuch as our society consists of citizens with every conceivable gradation of belief and those who profess no faith at all, it has been deemed necessary to eliminate such a controversial subject as God from the public school curriculum. One need not look far for graphic illustrations of this fact.

In some areas, even attempts to start the school day with a prayer to the "Supreme Author of Life" have met with rebuffs from those who advocate "separation of Church and State." Some schools prohibit the observance of Christmas as a religious feast. The children may sing harmless jingles, but they may not learn that this great feast celebrates the birthday of Jesus.

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Even a young child will tend to question the religious beliefs and moral lessons taught to him at home when they are considered of such little importance that they go unmentioned at school. No Christian parent could maintain that a knowledge of geography - or music or dancing - is more important to a child's development than his religious training; yet public schools, by their very ignoring of God, can subtly create this impression.

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As we have seen, however, success in academic subjects should not be the sole basis upon which a school is judged. Even were the Catholic school in a particular community to hold a place below the tax-supported schools in scholastic achievement, it would nevertheless be superior. For it teaches the child the most important subject in his life - his relationship to his Creator, his fellow man and nature.

"My child can learn about religion at home and at Sunday School." This is actually a basic teaching of the secularists - the false notion that religion can be made a thing apart. The child who is led to believe that religion is a subject reserved for Sundays is likely to grow up as a "Sunday Catholic" if, indeed, he keeps his faith at all. Religion cannot be recognized only one day in the week and ignored the rest. Truths learned in religion class are more important than truths in other subjects, because religious truths must influence every thought, word and deed of every waking hour.

Moreover, a child cannot obtain in a weekly class the understanding he requires to meet the challenges of his adult life as a Catholic. In Catholic schools, the study of religion is a regular part of the curriculum and is taught just as thoroughly as reading, writing, arithmetic and other subjects. The child gains a deep and reverent understanding of the principles of his faith, and practicing his religion becomes second nature to him. Parents who believe that Sunday School instruction is adequate for a religious education would protest vigorously if their child were instructed only one hour each week in geography, history or some other subject of considerably less importance in the long view.

Father Joseph Fichter, S.J., who in 1958 completed a fine sociological study of one school system, confirms this judgment: "Here is ultimately the key to the difference between the public school child and the parochial school child. The latter gets more and better reasons for his attitudes and behavior. By systematic observation in the classrooms, and by the testimony of police and fire departments, as well as of pupils and teachers who have had experience in both types of schools, there is demonstrable proof that the parochial school children are more orderly and self-controlled than the public school children. They have

a better attendance record on school days and fewer of them get in trouble with juvenile court authorities."

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Sometimes it is good to be reminded of what is important, the basic tenets behind our reasoning, even if we already know, acknowledge, accept, and support the information being given. In this case, it is my hope that Fr. Kelly's reinforcement behind 'Why Send Your Child To Catholic Schools?' will help spark some reflective thought regarding what is important, our mission, and the students we serve here at Immaculate Conception School.

Serviam, -David

(The Catholic Family Handbook can be found at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/blue/famhndbk.txt>)



Prayer for Immaculate Conception School:

Dear Lord, bless our Catholic school. Help us to continue to be a humble source of wisdom, always yearning to learn more about your tremendous love for us. May all who enter Immaculate Conception School be filled with the gift of your Holy Spirit, coming to know you in a more meaningful way. Guide us as a community that respects and welcomes everyone. May Catholic education continue to grow so that your good news can be taught to children throughout the world. In your son Jesus's name we pray, Amen.



SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR – April 16th-20th

Online Shopping available through April 21st:
<https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bookfairs/cptoolkit/homepage.do?method=homepage&url=immaculateconceptionschool53&appesp=CPT/ib/20120101///txtl/FairFindertoHomepage>

- A. Shop Online / Shop Now (orange icon)
- B. e-wallet (blue icon) – Pre-load monies for shopping!



04/13-25 – IOWAs testing window here at ICS

04/16-20 – Scholastic Book Fair

04/17 – Confirmation – 4:30p.m.

04/19-20 – Early Dismissal both Days – 12:15p.m.
Parent-Teacher Conferences in the Afternoon

04/20 – Father-Daughter Dance – 6:00p.m.

Note: The parish Children's Consignment Sale event has been rescheduled to April 26th-28th.



Attention: Virtus/Safe Environment Training

Spring is coming and you may want to accompany children on ICC/ICS activities. **All adults** involved with youth on our property or thru our organizations **are required** to take the 3-hour course - Protecting God's Children. Please pre-register for the Tuesday, April 24 class at virtus.org thru the Diocese of Metuchen. Classes will be in the Parish Hall in the church basement from 7p.m. thru 10p.m. This course is a **required** pre-requisite to volunteer with children.

Parent-Teacher Conferences – April 19th-20th

With the 3rd Quarter grading period ending on Friday, April 13th our spring parent-teacher conferences will be taking place in a very timely manner. This is an excellent opportunity for teachers and parents to check in regarding progress, strengths, and/or needs of students as we look to facilitate the final 4th Quarter.

Upcoming Free Dress Down Day for Students

'Downstairs and ECE Building'

Reason: CRS Rice Bowl 'Penny Wars' Winners

8th Grade – Staff vs. Students Volleyball Winners
Congratulations 8th grade for your 3-1 victory!

Both Groups – Free Dress Down Day

Thursday, April 26th

ICS GALA 'Tease Item' of the Week:



Place your bid now at: www.501auctions.com/icsannandale

ICS GALA Auction: Saturday, April 28th

Theme: **Flashback to the 80's**

The Farmhouse at the Grand Colonial
86 Route 173 West, Hampton, NJ 08827

“Cocktail Attire with an 80's Twist”

Have you purchased a ticket to attend? Yes, there's still time! Questions? Please contact event coordinator Mrs. Sharon Hillwig at shillwig@icsclinton.org. Back-to-the-80's outfits, food, fun, lots of interesting oral, silent, and tricky tray items...it's going to be awesome! Even better, the proceeds help support Immaculate Conception School! 😊

IOWAs Testing Window – April 12th-25th

All Catholic schools within our Diocese are currently engaged in facilitating the IOWA standardized testing assessment. As offered by our own Mr. Stephen Puricelli, please consider the following.

In order to help prepare your child for success, the following tips are encouraged:

1. Have your child get a good night's sleep each evening starting on Sunday night.
2. Have your child eat a healthy, protein-rich breakfast each morning to wake up the brain.
3. Make sure your child is up early each morning, relaxed, and arrives to school on time.
4. Avoid scheduling doctor's appointments or other activities that may pull your child out of testing time. Rescheduling is difficult and may not afford your child the best test-taking environment.
5. Be positive and encouraging toward your child. Encourage your child with words that help him or her to understand that testing allows him or her to “show off” knowledge.

A snack and water will be provided each morning during testing. Thank you in advance for providing the snacks!



8th Grade Students – Half Day on April 17th

(8th Grade Only)

In preparation for and in advance of Confirmation, all 8th Grade students will have a half day of school on Tuesday, April 17th.

8th Grade students will be dismissed at 12:15p.m.

Confirmation will begin by 4:30p.m. (Immaculate Conception Church). All are welcome.



CONFIRMED

Staff vs. 8th Grade Students – Volleyball

Congrats, again, to the victorious 8th grade students. Additional thanks to our event coordinators: Kathy Hausler and Melinda and Jeff Ulrich. Judging from the obvious enthusiasm everyone had fun! 😊