

Religious Education Office

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

505 E. North Street ♦ Morris, IL 60450 ♦ 815.942.4177

August 3, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope and pray that you are all doing well! With our current situation many things are up in the air, but one thing will remain – our faith and trust in God. It is so essential that we continue to give the children of our parish family a solid formation in that faith. Now that we are meeting in our churches again we are proceeding with preparations for the coming year and formulating a plan so that we can be certified by the Diocese for classroom teaching and in person instruction. That will mean added safeguards and protocols, but we will be sure to get everything done that is needed. Right now we also have two or three other options just in case in classroom learning is not viable. I sent out a survey earlier via email. If you have not filled it in yet, please do so as soon as possible so that we have accurate information to work with.

The goal of our Religious Education program is and has always been to pass on the essential elements and traditions of our Catholic faith to our children and to help them incorporate these teachings in to their daily lives. Many believe that the only purpose of Religious Education is to prepare their children for the Sacraments of Communion or Confirmation. It is our job to inform all families that faith formation is for the child's **ENTIRE LIFE - we never stop learning about God**. Here at Immaculate Conception's Religious Education Program all eight years of instruction are necessary and should be completed. **EACH YEAR** builds on the last. **EACH YEAR** is an important step in your child's growth in faith. Your children cannot become the future generation of the church without knowing what their faith is and how to live it. We ask that ALL parents enroll their children in **EVERY YEAR and EVERY GRADE not just sacrament years**.

In the Fall we will begin classes on Wednesday, September 2nd. Please note that the final day of registration is **August 1st – you can mail your forms in to the Religious Education Office at the address above or complete the forms online at our parish website – icmorris.org.**

Important Program Information

Diocesan/Parish Policies

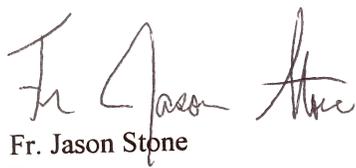
1. **Baptismal Records** - All new students must have a copy of their Baptismal Certificate on file in our office. This should be returned with the *Registration Form*. (For those baptized here at Immaculate Conception, a copy of the certificate isn't necessary.) Transfer students must also submit a *Transfer Form*, which should include an attendance record and complete information on Sacraments already received. Parents should request this form from the previous parish.
2. **Two Year Sacrament Preparation** - Students are required to complete two years of sacramental preparation before receiving the sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. If your older child has not attended the Second Grade year, then your child **MUST** attend tutoring classes for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in their **SECOND YEAR** of classes. These classes are on Monday evenings.
3. **Parent Contract** - Parents are required to sign and return the enclosed the **Parent Contract** included in this packet.
4. **Communication** – Please be sure to **provide us with your email address** if you have one. Most of the information we distribute regarding our program is done via email. If you do not have an email account, I encourage you to get one. Yahoo and Gmail both offer free email services. We are here to serve you and your children. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me, Julie Dillenburg, at jdillenburg@ics1.org.

5. **Family Participation** – All families are expected to participate in our parish, and give your family and children a sense of belonging and community. Religious Education is about all of us, as members of the Church, learning together, witnessing and growing in our faith together.
6. **Mass Attendance** – Parents are the primary educators of their children in all learning, including faith formation. Parents serve as role models of faith for their children at home by treating others with kindness and respect, by encouraging regular class attendance and by praying together. They are also role models in Mass attendance by participating with their children at Mass every Saturday or Sunday. The Spirit of God gathers us together as God's family when we attend the celebration of the Eucharist and teaches, nourishes and strengthens us to be good followers of Jesus.
7. **Tuition** – This year we are expecting 50% down payment upon registering and the other 50% by October 1st. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Lastly, catechists are called to **live out their Baptismal promises by carrying out the important task of passing on the faith.** I want to thank our dedicated catechists who teach Jesus' Gospel and help the children grow in faith and love of God and His Holy Church. God gives us amazing grace when we answer His call to carry on the joyful mission to teach as Jesus did. Our volunteers are one of the greatest assets we have and we are very grateful for the gifts of their time, talent and treasure. **Do you feel called to be a messenger for Christ?** We welcome parents and teens to be catechists or helpers in our Religious Education and Children's Liturgy of the Word programs. If you would like to help, please email me and I will contact you regarding all the opportunities we have available.

We look forward to continuing working with you on the faith formation of your children and seeing your family in the Fall. Please look for a letter to come home in August with further information and a yearly calendar of events. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me at jdillenburg@ics1.org or 815-942-4177.

In Christ's peace,



Fr. Jason Stone
Pastor



Julie Dillenburg
Director of Religious Education