

The parish is, without doubt, the most important focus in which the Christian community is formed and expressed. This is called to be a fraternal and welcoming family where Christians become aware of being a people of God. In the parish, all human differences melt away and are absorbed into the universality of the Church.

(General Directory of Catechesis [257])

Immaculate Heart of Mary

Children's Religious Education Program (CCD) and Sacramental Preparation Programs

Penance (Reconciliation) is the Sacrament which gifts us with God's loving mercy. Through this sacrament, all the sins which we commit after Baptism can be forgiven us if we are truly sorry for them. **Holy Eucharist** is the Sacrament of the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ. In order for a child to receive First Penance (confession), and First Eucharist (communion) he/she must be in the Religious Education Program for **two consecutive years**. (Children who transfer from another program are given credit for that program). Children must attend Mass regularly (weekly). Children in grades 3 through 7 who have not received First Penance and First Eucharist can be part of a special sacramental preparation program. Please contact Janet Harmon at 301-863-8793 or janet@ihmrcc.org.

Confirmation: Confirmation is the Sacrament that gives us the special gift of the Holy Spirit to strengthen our Baptismal commitments and help us to live a good, holy Christian life. Preparation for this sacrament is ***two consecutive years***.

The Religious Education Program at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church recognizes and acknowledges the parents of each child as the primary teachers of that child.

You teach formally when you teach or talk about God and your relationship to God, when you teach prayers, and when you discuss what is right or what is wrong. You teach informally in all that you say and do. Your action and examples, as well as the values that you reflect in your life are powerful teachers. You are the primary educators of your children in handing on the faith.

CCD Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

An association established at Rome in 1562 for the purpose of giving religious instruction. Till about the thirteenth century, the Apostles' Creed and Paternoster formed the general basis of religious instruction; all the faithful had to know them by heart, and parish priests were commanded to explain them on Sundays and festivals. Then the range of instruction was widened to include the Commandments and sacraments, the virtues and vices...The Council of Trent, seeing how multitudes had fallen from the Faith through ignorance of their religion and recognizing the truth proclaimed by Gerson more than a century before, that church reform must begin with the religious instruction of the young, issued the "Catechismus ad Parochos", and decreed that throughout the Church instructions in Christian Doctrine should be given on Sundays and festivals.

Lastly, in 1905 Pope Pius X strictly ordained that "in each and every parish the society commonly called the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine shall be canonically erected".

Today, the term **CCD** is used interchangeably with

Continuing **C**hristian **D**evelopment
Parish **S**chool of **R**eligion,
Children's **R**eligious **E**ducation,
Sunday **S**chool,
Children's **F**aith **F**ormation, etc.