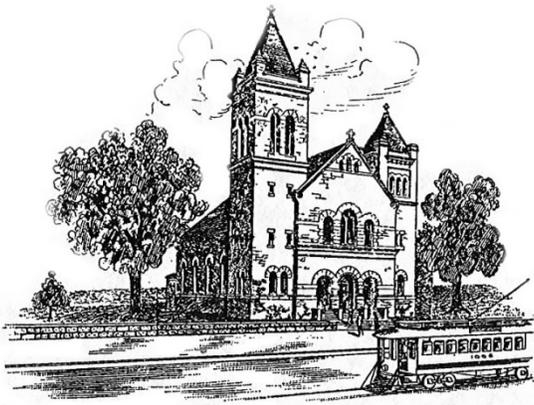


**Jim Thorpe  
Regional Catholic  
Whole  
Community Catechesis**



*Serving the parishes of  
Immaculate Conception  
& St. Joseph*

# *Jim Thorpe Regional Catholic Whole Community Catechesis*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO WHOLE COMMUNITY CATECHESIS

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian Life.” (*Lumen gentium*) Whole community catechesis (WCC) connects what happens at Sunday Mass to what happens in all other areas of parish life - formation, community, home, school and mission. It takes many of its ideas from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and its directives from the General Directory of Catechesis. It invites all members of the Parish Community to participate.

The two major components of WCC are the Intergenerational Gatherings and the classroom component. The Intergenerational Gatherings are open to the whole parish young and old alike, and they cover different topics. Participants pre-register for the gatherings and pay a fee to cover the costs. The gatherings include a meal or snack, a teaching, and an activity. The gathering will last approximately 2-3 hours and in order to get credit for the gathering the family must attend the whole gathering. **Three gatherings are required per year.** Seven to ten gatherings will be offered during the year. Children must attend with a family member, be it a parent, grandparent, Aunt, Uncle or Godparent. Recent studies have found that sharing faith and religious activities within a family increases the religious participation of the children as young adults and adults. It also promotes closer family relationships. (*Best Practices in Faith Formation*, Roberto)

**Other Religious education opportunities that can count as gatherings are a religious play ex. *Noah, Jesus Christ Superstar*; tour a religious shrine or church, ex. St. Patrick’s in New York, the cathedral in Baltimore; Faith Alive –diocesan youth ministry.** Please check with the WCC office to see if your family event would qualify.

The classroom program follows a level system based on the religious education semesters the students have completed, which is comparable to grades 1 through 8.

Semesters:

**Levels I through VIII** The program in these grades will use the text from *Our Sunday Visitor* Religion Publishing Company entitled *Alive in Christ*. This series provides a spiral sequence so that it may be used for those home schooling and in the regular parish program. It conforms to Diocesan guidelines which are available in the Religious Education Office for anyone who would like to see them.

**First Penance and First Eucharist:** *Encounter with Christ* will be used as the sacramental program. It is a sacramental program from *Our Sunday Visitor*.

**If this program does not meet a family's needs students are welcome to attend another parish's program and still retain membership in one of our parishes.** (please contact the office for more information)

### **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

A child who enters our program at an older age or who has not attended classes each year will be interviewed to determine the appropriate Level that they should be attending. If it is determined that the child should be enrolled in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) modified for Children, the Pastor and the CRE will determine when the child will be receiving the Sacraments of Initiation according to Diocesan guidelines.

### **SACRAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS**

#### **First Penance:**

1. Completion of Level I, First Penance year, and the respective assessments
2. 4 Intergenerational Gatherings (3 gatherings in Level I and 2 gathering in the year First Penance takes place—usually grade 2)
3. Retreat
4. Age appropriate participation in the Sunday Liturgy

#### **First Eucharist:**

1. Completion of First Penance
2. First Eucharist year
3. First Communion Dinner or First Communion Retreat
4. Lenten Penance Service
5. Teaching Mass
6. Age appropriate participation in the Sunday Liturgy

#### **Confirmation:**

1. Completion of First Penance and First Communion.
2. Grade 8
3. Completion of the Diocesan Requirements
4. Completion of Levels IV– VIII.
5. 3 Gatherings each year registered in program
6. Completion of the Confirmation Classes

### **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

**Special Education:** Parents of students with any type of learning or physical disability should note this on the student's registration form. Every effort will be made to work with the parents and student so that the child may participate in the classroom. Other provisions will be made for those students who are not able to handle the classroom experience, either by home-schooling or by the parents acting as aides in the classroom. **Custody Issues:** Please include on the registration form any custody issues that involve your child. If at anytime during the year custody arrangements change please notify the CRE. This information will help us ensure your child's safety.

## **WCC REGISTRATION**

All young people attending grades 1 through 8 in Non-Parochial schools or those being home schooled should be registered in the Jim Thorpe Regional WCC Program. Students attending Catholic School are invited to attend if they so wish.

If your child is new to the program and has not been baptized at Immaculate Conception or St. Joseph's of Jim Thorpe please include a copy of the Baptismal Certificate and a copy of your child's birth certificate with your registration.

Anyone other than a custodial parent who wants to register a child for WCC should contact the WCC office to receive a form that gives the parishes permission to educate the child in the Roman Catholic faith.

### **The Summer Religious Education Program**

The summer program consists of 2 weeks during the summer that corresponds to the A and B semesters. Dates and times of the summer program are announced in the Spring of the year.

#### **PROCEDURES**

**Arrival and Dismissal Hours:** 9 am—1 pm Our program begins and ends with prayer in St. Joseph Church.

**SNACK:** Students are provided with a snack. Because of allergies we ask that **NO** food be brought from home and if your child has allergies please let us know on the registration form.

**Children will be released only to those authorized on the registration form.** If a situation arises and a change takes place as to who will be picking up the child, a note should be sent in with the child and given to Mrs. Merkel.

#### **Walking Students**

Students who have the permission of their parents to walk home after class should give a note, signed by their parents, to their catechist at the beginning of the semester.

#### **Attendance**

Because of the incidence of children skipping class without parents' knowledge, we request that the parent or guardian phone, or e-mail the Religious Education Office before the start of class, and report the reason for absence. If you get the answering machine, please leave a message. Students may not miss more than one day during the summer semester. Parents will be asked to home school the child or the child will repeat that grade after the second absence has occurred.

#### **Cancellation of Class**

In the event that classes are cancelled we will e-mail the parents if we have been provided with an e-mail address. Calls will be made to those who do not have e-mail. Parents and guardians should use common sense in regard to transporting their children.

## **Suspected Child Abuse**

Suspected child abuse must be reported by the Catechist to the state and local authorities as mandated by law, and to the CRE and Pastor.

All Catechists, aides and volunteers working with children are required to complete all the requirements mandated by the state and by the diocese of Allentown. Any type of harassment, either sexual, physical (bullying) or psychological by students or any representative of Immaculate Conception or St. Joseph Parish must be reported to the CRE or the Pastor.

## **Emergency Procedures**

If a child becomes ill during class time the catechist will notify the CRE and the parents/guardians will then be called.

## **Fire and other Emergencies:**

The students will be evacuated in an orderly fashion to a safe location on or near the property of St. Joseph Parish. If such an emergency occurs parents will be notified by the proper authorities.

**No student is to be removed from the area without notifying the CRE.**

In the event of a natural or other disaster the Catechists will be warned, if possible, and the children will be moved to the area that has been designated as safe by the Emergency plan, whether it be an on or off site location.

Children will only be dismissed to persons who have been authorized by the custodial parent on the registration form.

## **Responsibilities of Parents**

Religious Education can be effective only to the extent that parents regularly participate at Eucharist, nurture prayer life in the home, are involved in parish activities, and strive to live daily by gospel values.

## **Participation at Sunday Eucharist**

The Parish Religious Education Program can be understood only in the broader context of the Church as a whole. Children who participate in WCC must also be present when the Church gathers for celebrating the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy. (Saturday vigil or Sunday morning)

## **Rite of Reconciliation**

Children are encouraged to go to Confession with their parents and guardians as frequently as possible. Family/Parish Penance Services will be scheduled several times during the year. Parents and Guardians will be informed of these dates in the bulletin and email notices.

## **Responsibilities of Students**

In addition to attending classes regularly, students are expected to participate fully, complete all assignments and conduct themselves in a Christian manner and exhibit that same Christian manner towards fellow students and catechists.

## **Assessments**

Each student is expected to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the content presented during class time. At the beginning of each semester each student will be given a set of questions and prayers on which they will be assessed on at the end of that semester. If a student does not

attain an 80% on the assessment they will be asked to retake it. This may be done in an oral or written format, whatever is best for the child. If the child does not attain an 80% upon the second review it will be determined whether the child will move on to the next level.

### **Conduct**

If a child is disrupting the classroom, the catechist will meet with the child after class to discuss his/her behavior. If the CRE deems it necessary the parents will be asked to come in for a conference, and at that time the coordinator may suggest other alternatives for religious education.

## **CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION (CYO)**

According to Diocesan Regulations all students participating in the CYO program must be enrolled and participating in the Catholic school or in the Parish Religious Education Program. WCC students must be registered for the year in which they wish to participate in CYO. (For example students wishing to participate in Spring 2018 track must be registered for the 2017-2018 school year)

**Failure to complete the program or attend classes will result in the students not being eligible to participate in the games, tournaments, meets or participate in CYO the following year.**

## **ADULT EDUCATION**

**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA):** RCIA is a process for adults and unbaptized or uncatechized children above the age of 7 to become members of the Roman Catholic Church, while completing the Catholic Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). It is a process that gives all who partake a chance to discover more about themselves and our faith. For more information on our RCIA program, contact the WCC Office.

**Catechist Formation Classes** The Diocese of Allentown recommends these classes for all who wish to volunteer their time in religious education.

**WHOLE COMMUNITY CATECHESIS OFFICE  
25 W SIXTH STREET  
JIM THORPE, PA 18229**

Rev. James J. Ward - Pastor

Phone: 570-325-3186      Fax: 570-325-2523  
Email: [wccjt@ptd.net](mailto:wccjt@ptd.net)

Immaculate Conception Parish Website: [www.iccjimthorpe.org](http://www.iccjimthorpe.org) (WCC information)  
Mrs. Kathleen Daday Merkel - Coordinator of Religious Education  
Email: [wccjt@ptd.net](mailto:wccjt@ptd.net)

Diocesan Victim Asst. Coordinator:  
**Ms. Wendy S. Krisak, M.A., NCC, LPC**  
**Confidential Phone: 800-791-9209**  
Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator:  
**Sr. Meg Cole, SSJ**  
**610-332-0442 ext. 19**

## CHILD PROTECTION CATECHESIS

Dear Parents and Guardians:

“Let the children come to me...” is what Jesus said to the Apostles when they tried to keep the children from Jesus because He was tired. At another time Jesus tells us, “Unless you become as little children, you cannot get to heaven.” Children are close to the heart of Christ.

One of the mandates passed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is that preventative measures be put into place to ensure the safety of our youth. With this mandate in mind the Diocese of Allentown has implemented a **Children and Adolescent Protection program in our schools and religious education programs**. The purpose of this program is to help children improve self-reliance, raise self-esteem and master personal safety skills – all while reassuring them that most people are kind, safe and committed to their well-being. Students learn to identify specific signs and behaviors often used by predators.

The material has been prepared in the light of our faith and according to the morals and teachings of our faith by the Department of Religious Education of the Diocese of Allentown. You may have concerns as to whether or not this material is appropriate for your child and in keeping with your beliefs. With this in mind I invite you to preview the material available online at the diocesan website <http://www.adeducators.org/Page/483>.

If after reviewing the material you decide that it is best for your child to opt out of the Child Protection Catechesis please fill out the form emailed to you with the registration form.

**The material will be presented in an ongoing manner worked into each class’ curriculum. The students in levels six, seven, and eight discuss topics consistent with what is going on in the community: drug abuse, pornography and date rape.** If you have any questions please feel free to call my office at 325-2791 or e-mail me at [wccjt@ptd.net](mailto:wccjt@ptd.net).

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kathleen Daday Merkel

## PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This is to acknowledge that I / we have read and understood the Parents' handbook for the Jim Thorpe Regional Catholic Whole Community Catechesis program. I understand my responsibilities as a parent/guardian and I have explained to my child/children their responsibilities.

Family Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

Please initial each item below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participation in the WCC program/  
homeschooling includes  
our family attending 3 Intergenerational  
Gatherings per year.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sacraments are Level II— First Penance  
Level III—First Communion  
Level VIII—Confirmation

\_\_\_\_\_ Diocesan mandated Child Protection  
Catechesis is taught at each grade level.  
If we have decided to opt out I have sent  
in the opt out form with my child's  
registration form.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand my child will be taught  
traditional Catholic Moral Values

Parent/Guardian signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

**This form must be included with the registration form.**