



Leaven

The Newsletter of the
Religious Education Office



SAFE ENVIRONMENT INSTRUCTION

All instruction of children and youth for safe environment for this year is to be completed by **November 30, 2005**. Administrators of religious education and youth ministry programs involving children and youth will need to report their numbers by 12:00 noon on Friday, December 2, using the enclosed form. Reporting of numbers of children/youth instructed must occur whether instruction takes place at the parish, or is provided by local public schools. For more information about reporting, see the form or please contact Joyce Donahue, 815-727-6411.

Making Advent Real

Joyce Donahue



One of the biggest challenges catechists face in the month of December is the seeming disconnect between the low-key character of the liturgical season of Advent and the already-in-high-gear cultural "Holiday Season." How do you help children understand that even though their families are incredibly busy, even though the media is full of the message of "rush-rush" and "buy-buy" that this is a time to slow down, take stock of our lives and live them as though the end (and a new beginning) is near?

Help catechists by beginning Advent with a significantly different prayer experience, whether in large-group gatherings or in the classroom. Children need to be slowed down and focused into being in darkness while waiting for light.

See Page 4 for a few ideas.

Catechetical Leaders Gather in the Southern Counties of the Diocese



Members of the Ford-Iroquois CRE Cluster examine the contents of a diocesan-modified Talking About Touching Kit at their September meeting.

From left to right: Angie Tkachuk, Piper City; Judy Krones, Watseka; Marsha Hubert, L'Erable; Judy Jepsen-Popel, Paxton and Sarah Sarantakos, Gibson City.

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**DECEMBER
2005**

UPCOMING CLUSTER MEETINGS

Please attend your local cluster meetings for assistance, support and information. The next meetings will be as follows:

Directors of Adult Faith Formation -
12 p.m., February 23, 2006, SCPC, Romeoville

Ford-Iroquois CRE Cluster -
6:30 p.m.
February 9, 2006, St. Peter, Clifton

Joliet-Will DRE Cluster - December 15, 2005, Christmas Luncheon

Kankakee-Grundy DRE Cluster
1 p.m., Jan. 12, 2006
St. Rose, Kankakee

Northeast Dupage DRE Cluster
10 a.m.
December 15, 2005
St. Joseph, Addison

Parish YM Meeting
10 a.m. Dec. 8, 2005
SCPC, Romeoville

Special Needs Cluster - TBA

West Dupage DRE Cluster - Dec. 8, 2005
Christmas Party



A Time To Sow

Tom Quinlan
Director



As you can see, we've made some big changes to our newsletter for catechetical leaders of the diocese. The staff felt it was time for a new look and a new name. While we will be working to add some fresh features to *Leaven* as we go, our intention is to continue to deliver good formation and information just as we have tried to through *The Professional* in recent years. If you have any suggestions on possible regular features or other ideas to help the newsletter serve your needs, please send me an email. Likewise, I'd like to get your thoughts about our newsletter's new look.

The new name of the newsletter, *Leaven*, tries to convey an important dimension of ministry. *Leaven*, obviously, is used to make bread rise. In this process a small piece of fermenting dough is retained from prior bread baking and infused into a fresh dough. It is a small component but has the power to impact the entire new loaf. *Leaven* helps the new loaf to have a pleasing texture and reach its finished state. The secondary definition is "to spread through, causing a gradual change."

In a similar respect, good catechetical leadership affects the life of the entire parish community, helping it to rise. Though we who are catechetical leaders may be few, our presence and ministry touches, directly and indirectly, the lives of hundreds and thousands of fellow pilgrims on the way of life and faith in Christ. In our call to leadership we are, indeed, called to be leaven within the community, helping ministry to be formed and shaped to reach its fullness, in accord with God's will.

Each time the staff produces a new issue of *Leaven*, it will remind us that our job in the Religious Education Office is to try to be leaven for all of you. And in turn, I hope that when it arrives on your doorstep each month, *Leaven* will serve as affirmation and encouragement to you, naming what you are called to be for your parish and for one another. May God bless you for accepting this precious call to catechetical leadership. And may *Leaven* live up to its name by assisting you in ministry.

Celebration and Planning



The Youth Leadership Conference Team gets together to enjoy lunch and review a successful 2005 YLC. Planning has already begun for next year's conference. Look for registration materials beginning in January!

From Left to Right: Marta Spiezio, St. Joseph, Downers Grove; Mike Kuhn, St. Irene, Warrenville; and Brian Topping, REO.

In the Aftermath of Changed Expectations and Deadlines

Tom Quinlan

In early October the Religious Education Office was charged with the responsibility of communicating to pastors and to catechetical leaders that both the child and the youth curriculum regarding "safe touch" needed to be implemented, not just scheduled, and that this needed to occur by the end of November. I struggled greatly in crafting my letter to that effect. I felt many difficult emotions as I wrote, for as a former parish catechetical leader myself, I knew what a challenge lay ahead for many of our catechetical leaders, the people we care about and serve as REO staff.

It has been a tumultuous time. And the burdens placed on all of us trying to sort out the logistical and pastoral issues have been substantial. (I use the word us because the staff of the Religious Education Office has, in its own way, been impacted greatly from the entire protection of minors initiative.) The morale of many of our parish catechetical leaders has been deeply tested. Many of you had to turn on a dime and adjust what was scheduled for sessions in the fall. In some cases, additional meetings and sessions had to quickly be added. You had to deal with concerned catechists and parents. You did so conscientiously, with an eye always on the quality of the training for our children and youth. And, of course, all the other demands of ministry didn't stop, or even pause, during all this!

In the September issue of *The Professional* I expressed admiration and gratitude for all of you and the ways you had risen to the challenge regarding the protection of minors. Little could we imagine how much higher the bar would be set before our next newsletter issue! As we cross the deadline threshold and look ahead to the important ministry that awaits us in the New Year, I'd like once more to express how impressive your response has been in this extraordinary situation. With regards to safe touch implementation and more broadly, to all the wonderful ministry you lead day in and day out, you are outstanding examples of servant leadership!

Leadership is hard. In your role of parish leadership, I'm sure there are times your frustration level is very high...and your energy level very low. You may feel assailed from multiple sides at times. I want you to know that I am always concerned about how you are doing, never more so than in these days. I pray for you. I pay close attention to the input you provide in meetings and conversations with my staff. And I welcome the phone calls, meetings and emails where you and I can be in direct dialogue. Please trust that the entire staff of the Religious Education Office ardently strives to listen to your hopes and concerns and to serve the best interest of your parish ministry. May our shortcomings, as diocesan personnel, always motivate us to seek to do better.

Thank you for the ways in which you, in some cases heroically, worked to find a way to provide safe touch training under the pressure of the November 30th deadline. It is you who have been on the front lines of getting the training of our children and youth (and parents) accomplished this fall, and it is you who deserve so very much praise. If you are not hearing it enough, please accept deep and humble gratitude from the REO staff and myself, from Sr. Judith Davies and Bishop Imesch. We are, indeed, deeply grateful to you!

In these last weeks of Ordinary Time each year, our Sunday readings offer a challenging message and a somewhat ominous tone. This year they have spoken to what many were feeling in ministry. In the unique challenges of this time you have collectively shown what outstanding leadership resides in the Diocese of Joliet! I truly hope you are able to recognize and appreciate this in yourself and in one another! And I pray that each of us are able to cross over into the Season of Advent and our new liturgical year with an openness to God's great promise in Christ, so ironically fulfilled in this darkest time of the year: **HOPE**

YOUTH MINISTRY CLUSTERS

Senior High Youth Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook, Lisle,
Naperville, Oswego)

January 12, 2006

St. Thomas the Apostle in
Naperville; 2-4 pm.

February 9, 2006

Holy Spirit, Naperville;
2-4pm.

Junior High Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook,
Naperville)

January 3, 2006

St. Thomas the Apostle,
Naperville; 3:45 pm.

February 7, 2006

St. Margaret Mary,
Naperville; 3:45 pm.

Joliet Cluster Youth Ministry

(St. Paul, St. Jude, St. Ray,
St. John, St. Mary Nativity,
Holy Family, St. Bernard
Homer Glen, Sts. Cyril &
Methodius)

We meet on the first Monday
of the month (location varies,
every month different
parish). St. Ray's is hosting
the December meeting.

South of the Border Cluster

December 7, 2005

St. Luke, Carol Stream

January 2, 2006

St. Petronille, Glen Ellyn

February 15, 2006

Immaculate Conception,
Elmhurst

**All meetings begin at
10:00am

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OFFICE**

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Ideas for Creating a Quieted Environment for Advent



- Have catechists dim the light for an opening prayer. If fire codes allow, light the first candle on a classroom Advent wreath and read the blessing prayer from "The Blessing of an Advent Wreath" Chapter 47 of the *Book of Blessings*. (If you can't use a real candle, they can attach a paper "flame" to a candle, or light one small bulb-lit "candle").
- Give catechists specific direction on using the weekend readings. This year, there are many "end times" images - especially in the first readings. Have them talk to their students about the three "comings" of Jesus in Advent: as a child in Bethlehem, in our hearts when we welcomed him, and at the end of time when he judges the world.
- Make sure catechists are prepared properly to talk about what will happen when Jesus comes again. (Refer to Appendix M in the 2005 Faith Formation Curriculum.)
- Be sure to help catechists understand that Advent is an ideal time for good ritual - for slowing down prayers, carrying candles (or their substitutes), decorating a Jesse tree while pausing to remember the story of each item for the tree, singing verses of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" while marching in procession.
- Help catechists not to forget that it will still be the Christmas Season when students return from their break. Don't shelve the Christmas carols or decorations until after the Baptism of the Lord.

Through these and other classroom experiences, catechists can help communicate to students the Catholic identity of the celebration of Advent as a season of joyful hope, rather than merely as the Christmas shopping season.

A Great Opportunity for Young Adults to Explore Catechetical Leadership

The 2006 NCCL Annual Conference in Chicago is reaching out to people in their 20's and 30's with an unprecedented opportunity! Up to 25 young adults (under the age of 40) will be permitted to attend the Annual Conference '06 as invited guests of NCCL. They will be awarded a special pass, which will allow them to attend the keynotes and learning sessions. The value of this award is \$219.00. This award does not include travel, hotel, meals or any other expenses. They will be able to attend all sessions throughout the week at no cost. To be considered candidates must meet this criteria:

- Should have some catechetical ministry experience
- Cannot have been employed professionally in parish/diocesan catechetical ministry
- Must be able to incur all costs related to attendance beyond conference registration
- Must be nominated by their diocesan director

E-mail to pmach@dioceseofjoliet.org the name(s) and contact information (include email address) for candidates(s) and a brief description of their current employment, ministry involvement and interest in professional catechetical ministry. (Please mention if a candidate is only able to attend a portion of the week.) The deadline for submission of candidates is January 5, 2006.

Formation Opportunities for Catechetical Leaders...close to home



The Institute of Pastoral Studies at Romeoville of Loyola University Chicago will be offering two (2) courses in the spring at the St. Charles Pastoral Center:

- Christian Origin: An Exploration of the New Testament with Fr. David Medow (Saturdays 9am - 4pm; January 21, February 4 & 18, March 4 & 25, April 8)
- Church Documents on Catechesis & Religious Education with Felicia Wolf (Saturdays 9am - 4pm; January 14 & 28, February 11 & 25, March 11, April 1)

Go to www.luc.edu/depts/ips to register or call 1(800)424-1238. See insert enclosed.

See side bar for additional opportunities

ECHO: A Faith Formation Leadership Program

Helen Johnson



The Center for Catechetical Initiatives, Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame is sponsoring a service program that helps to form potential catechetical leaders. The name of the program is ECHO which includes classroom and field experiences. ECHO offers a two year opportunity for students to be "apprentices" in parish life. Apprentices work closely with an on-site, full-time, experienced catechetical leader, as a mentor in areas of personal and professional development while gaining hands-on experience in parish catechetical ministry. Prior to reporting to their parish assignments students participate in a comprehensive summer-long formation program. The second summer also includes study at the University of Notre Dame. Throughout the year ECHO students also take academic coursework online through the Department of Theology and the Satellite Theological Education Program.

What is required of a parish to participate in the ECHO program?

- Commit to two years of program participation for a Notre Dame graduate student.
- Assist in providing safe and suitable housing for the apprentice catechetical leader. (4 or 5 students are assigned to parishes within the same diocese. The group is required to live in community).
- Agree to provide on-site mentor support. Mentors go to Notre Dame for orientation, training and to meet
- Develop a position description for the apprentice parish catechetical leader in consultation with the Director of the Center for Catechetical Initiatives.
- Participate in program funding - each apprentice receives:
 - * A stipend of \$11,000 plus applicable withholdings (approximately \$3,000) for each year of service
 - * Medical insurance contributions toward a third party medical insurance plan (approximately \$3,000 annually)
 - * Housing (including basic utilities, local phone, standard furnishings, and routine maintenance). This expense will be divided among 4 or 5 parishes.
 - * Mileage/travel reimbursement for required travel
- Seriously consider an apprentice for a full time parish position after completing the program (including participation in the diocese's usual compensation and other benefits plan).

If you are interested in this program or have questions, please contact Helen Johnson (815) 727-6411 ext 261 or hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org



Spring in Chicago is a wonderful time of the year and attending the **annual meeting for the National Conference of Catechetical**

Leaders will also offer you a wonderful experience. You will be eligible for a special rate of \$199.00 for the week, since you minister in the hosting Province of Chicago (State of Illinois). Mark your calendars today **(April 30 to May 4, 2006)** and begin making plans. Don't miss this opportunity to gather with catechetical leaders from across the United States & Canada!



Winter Retreat with Lee Nagel sponsored by Benziger Publishers- Mark your calendars and plan now to attend:

Friday, January 20, 2006 or Saturday, January 21, 2006.
See insert enclosed

CATECHIST FORMATION

Catechist Initial Formation Days sponsored by the REO

The program is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the following date:

Sat. - January 28, 2006
St. Charles Pastoral Center, Romeoville

Registration materials are located on the REO website. If you have any questions, please contact Helen Johnson (815)727-6411 ext 261 or hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org

West DuPage DRE cluster hosts an Evening for Catechists with Lee Nagel.

Check out the registration insert that is enclosed.

BULLETIN BOARD

NCEA Conference -
April 18-21, 2006
New Orleans, LA

NCCL Annual Meeting
April 30 - May 4, 2006
Chicago, IL

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Shared Wisdom

As Catholic Christian Communities, the many parishes in our Diocese are blessed with an abundance of gifts and talents. Each parish is called to recognize and use their gifts to evangelize within their community and to the world. St. Raphael's, Naperville, recently completed a visioning process that brought the Pastor, staff and community together to prepare a five-year plan for the parish. With the permission of the St. Raphael's Faith Community, their vision of shared wisdom is printed below.

"It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us...."
(Jerusalem Council, Acts 15:28)

Shared wisdom,
in collaboration and through prayerful discernment,
has long been a principle of the St. Raphael faith community.
We recognize that all are called through baptism to holiness and ministry.
All are given gifts and charisms to be used in ministry and service.
Together we are responsible to empower each person
for the mission of the church.

We are mindful of our scriptural and traditional history.
Our Catholic tradition has long recognized
the wisdom of the Holy Spirit
both in the people ("sensus fidelium"),
and in the bishops ("magisterium")
in discerning the needs of the Church.

We commit ourselves to work together through a council,
commissions, and various ministries for the sake of the people.

We work communally,
making decisions intentionally by consensus.
We keep in mind the vision, mission,
guiding principles and goals of the parish.

Because God speaks to and through all people,
the wisdom of the Spirit
guides this discerning community to make decisions that are rooted
in listening to the divine presence within each member.

(St. Raphael's Faith Community, 2005)

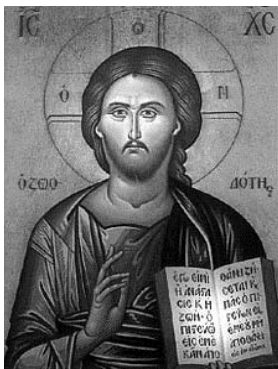
Evangelization Tidbits



The role of evangelization is precisely to educate people in the faith in such a way as to lead each individual Christian to live the sacraments as true sacraments of faith- and not to receive them passively or reluctantly.

EVANGELII NUNTIANDI 47

Leaven - The Newsletter of the Religious Education Office
www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo



REO Website Happenings

New to the REO website is a page (www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/parishevents.asp) for parishes to advertise their events and programs that are open to parishioners and non-parishioners alike. Advertising your event is simple: send us an email listing the date, time, topic, speaker, location, description, audience, and contact information for the event. If you do not have all of that information, simply send us what you have. Please allow us a week to get it posted. Send information to: Adult Faith Formation events - rowens@dioceseofjoliet.org. All other events: mmaloney@dioceseofjoliet.org.

The REO staff continues to add new links to the helpful links page weekly. Take a moment to see if any of the links are helpful to you: www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/helpfulLinks.asp. Or, if you use websites that we do not have listed, please email us a copy of those links. Send your email to Brian Topping at btopping@dioceseofjoliet.org.

A Speaker Directory that will eventually be posted on our website is currently in the works. Anyone wishing to be included in this directory should email Rosie Owens (rowens@dioceseofjoliet.org) the following information: their name, full contact information (including email and website, if you have them), a bio, list of topics, and fees. We will let you know when this directory is online and available.

Please continue to send comments and suggestions to Brian Topping at btopping@dioceseofjoliet.org. Happy surfing!



Media Center Helps Bridge Technology & Catechesis

Brian Topping

Ministering effectively in a digital age is no small trick. Parishes are feeling the pressure to become more and more adept at using audio, visual, and electronic tools in ministry to appeal to their members. To do so requires time, money, and patience. The good news is there are many places you can turn to for help.

One of those places is the Religious Education Office Media Center. The Media Center can offer you a start by providing video, audio, and equipment resources that will allow you to integrate multimedia into your ministries. With over 10,000 titles to choose from in the Media Library, chances are good that you can find something to compliment your lesson plan. The Media Services website, www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/mediaServices.asp, provides searchable access to the media library titles, and *Leaven* features monthly video suggestions as well. See *the inserts* this month on Advent Videos and videos highlighting Vocations.

If you need help with displaying this multimedia, the Technology Rentals provide that for you. We offer computers, digital projectors, sound systems, screens, cameras, and playback devices to help you provide multimedia to your audience. The cost of purchasing this equipment is often too high for parishes. However, it is available for rental at a nominal cost, and unlimited annual rental memberships are available.

These options can help parishes get a start in bridging the gap between technology and catechesis. Watch for more information on emerging options that might help support your ministries through the Media Center and beyond! If you have questions, or for more information, please contact Brian Topping at (815) 727-6411.

Youth Ministry Events

Rally Day will not be held in January as originally stated. The diocesan day for youth in 6th, 7th & 8th grades will take place on **Sunday, March 5th, 2006.**

Souper Bowl for Caring - February 5th, 2006

Think about your parish joining this ecumenical movement to support those in need. This event links the millions of dollars spent during Super Bowl Sunday, with remembering those who don't even have enough for soup that day. More information can be found on their web-page www.souperbowl.org

Summer Mission Trips:

If you are thinking about taking a group of youth on a summer mission trip, you would be wise to start planning now, if you haven't already begun.

SPECIAL NEEDS

A great big thank-you to St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Joliet, the Knights of Columbus, Katherine Smith of Catholic Charities, and to all who helped with or attended our Mass on October 9th.

Madonna Wojtaszek-Healy is now the contact person for Special Needs. Please call the REO at (815) 727-6411 and ask for her voice-mail extension 266.

REO Calendar

December 1, 2005

Adult Faith Association Luncheon; St. Thomas the Apostle, Naperville
12p.m. - 2p.m.
Contact: Rosie Owens

December 1, 2005

REO Board Meeting, SCPC, 10 am to noon
Contact: Tom Quinlan

December 8, 2005

Parish YM Meeting, SCPC, 10 am - noon
Contact: Paul Mach

January 12, 2006

YM Meeting
Contact: Paul Mach

January 20, 2006

Winter Retreat for Catechetical Leaders, Lee Nagel, SCPC, 9am-Noon
Contact: Joyce Donahue

January 21, 2006

Winter Retreat for Catechetical Leaders, Lee Nagel, Maternity of the BVM, Bourbonnais
9am-Noon
Contact: Joyce Donahue

January 26, 2006

REO Board Meeting, SCPC, 10 am to noon
Contact: Tom Quinlan

January 28, 2006

Catechist Initial Formation Day, SCPC, Romeoville, 9:00a.m. - 1:00p.m.
Contact: Helen Johnson

February 16, 2006

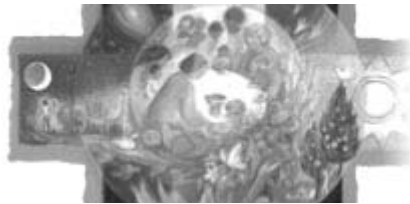
Parish YM Meeting, SCPC, 10 am - noon
Contact: Paul Mach

February 23, 2006

REO Board Meeting, SCPC, 10 am to noon
Contact: Tom Quinlan

February 23, 2006

Adult Faith Association Meeting, SCPC
12:30 - 2 p.m.
Contact: Rosie Owens



Generations of Faith News

John Roberto, *Center for Ministry Development*

The new Generations of Faith Resource Manual has just been published by Twenty-Third Publications.

The Resource Manual contains all of the latest tools and resources for fashioning a lifelong curriculum, designing intergenerational learning, and developing leaders. This will become the "textbook" for GOF workshops. It will serve as the basis for GOF training and mentoring in the coming years. It comes with a CD-ROM of the handouts and PowerPoint Presentations for each GOF workshop. Parishes involved with the Generations of Faith project can order this from GOF Online for \$24 (a 20% discount off the \$29.95 price).

The People of Faith Organizer's Manual, written by Mariette Martineau, provides new resources to assist your parish in facilitating intergenerational learning, including Tip Sheets for organizing and conducting an intergenerational program. The Organizer's Manual is an essential component of the People of Faith series, but is also a stand-alone manual that will help all parishes. Order your copy directly from Harcourt Religion: 800-922-7696 or www.harcourtreligion.com/onlinecatalog.

Coming in spring of 2006, Center for Ministry Development will be conducting one-day GOF conferences to report the findings of the research study just completed and to present the development of GOF theory and practice over the past five years. This conference series will bring the Lilly Endowment grant to a close. More information will be available at GOF Online and through CMD's monthly E-Newsletters.

After a very successful pilot this summer, the one-week Institute for Lifelong Faith Formation will become a national program in the summer of 2006 with at least 6 regional sites. More information on the Summer 2006 Institute program will be forthcoming from the Center for Ministry Development.



Cathedral Days Return, Revamped Due to Cathedral Construction

Joyce Donahue

The popular Cathedral Days event for Grade 5 will make a comeback in a revised format this year, open to students in both grades 5 and 6 to accommodate those who "missed out" last year.

Rather than go yet another year without the event, we are offering a streamlined version of the event that will take into account that only the Cathedral worship space itself is available. Construction on the Joyce Center and the grounds between the Cathedral and the school continues to limit our access to additional space. There is currently no kitchen, so there is no ability to serve hot food as has been done at the event in the past.

The tour of the Cathedral, offered by Fr. Thomas Paul of St. Mary of Gostyn parish, Downer's Grove, who was an original member of the Cathedral renovation team, is a popular mainstay of the event and will take place within the space. Since we expect a larger number of students because of the involvement of two grade levels, the tour will most likely involve some adaptations to the usual movement within the room.

John Lamperis, of Joyful Hope Presentations, Geneva, will provide a rousing youth-friendly addition to the program. After closing prayer with the Bishop, students will receive a small snack on the way out to their bus or car-pool.

Registration materials and permission forms are enclosed. Deadline for registration is **March 10, 2006**.



Formation Wheel

(continued from page 10)

Lay men and women hear and answer the universal call to holiness primarily and uniquely "in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence. There they are called by God to contribute to the sanctification of the world from within, like leaven, in the spirit of the Gospel, by fulfilling their own particular duties." (*Pope John Paul II, The Vocation of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World - Christifideles Laici, 1998, no. 16*). Indeed, all the baptized are called to work toward the transformation of the world. Working in the Church is a path of Christian discipleship. Lay Ecclesial ministry is grounded in Scripture and the teachings of the Church, from St. Paul to the Second Vatican Council and in more recent documents.

"Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the Church." (*Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People - Apostolicam Actuositatem, no. 10*) What Pope Paul VI said of the laity thirty years ago and what the Catechism of the Catholic Church specifically repeats, has now become a necessary welcomed reality throughout our church. "The laity can also feel called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them". (*Paul VI, On Evangelization in the Modern World - Evangelii Nuntiandi, no. 73*).

We are blessed indeed to have gifted and generous co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord. We will continue to work together as a community of people, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, in pilgrimage toward the Father's kingdom, bearers of a message for all humanity. (*GS, no. 1*) Watch for further discussion on the topic of Lay Ecclesial Ministry in future issues of **Formation Wheel**.

CATECHESIS WITHIN THE CHURCH'S MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION

Joyce Donahue

Want to know exactly how important our work in catechesis really is? Chapter 2 of the new *National Directory for Catechesis* makes clear the essential relationship between evangelization and catechesis:



"Catechesis is so central to the Church's mission of evangelization that if evangelization were to fail to integrate catechesis, initial faith aroused by the original proclamation of the Gospel would not mature, education in the faith through a deeper knowledge of the person and message of Jesus Christ would not transpire, and discipleship in Christ through genuine apostolic witness would not be fostered." (22)

What does that mean in practice? It says that catechesis is a central priority of the Church. It says that sufficient resources must be given for catechesis to take place for all the faithful. It says that catechesis is equally important to the proclamation of the Gospel that takes place within the liturgy and the living witness of the community. Catechesis is not the poor stepchild. It is not a mere afterthought. It is not just making sure there are catechists and books, the doors are unlocked and lights turned on. It is an essential part of the central mission of the Church. It deserves a central place on every parish agenda, no matter what the economic status of the parish community. It deserves a proportionate amount of resources and energy.



Formation Wheel

NEW RESOURCE FROM THE USCCB

Helen Johnson

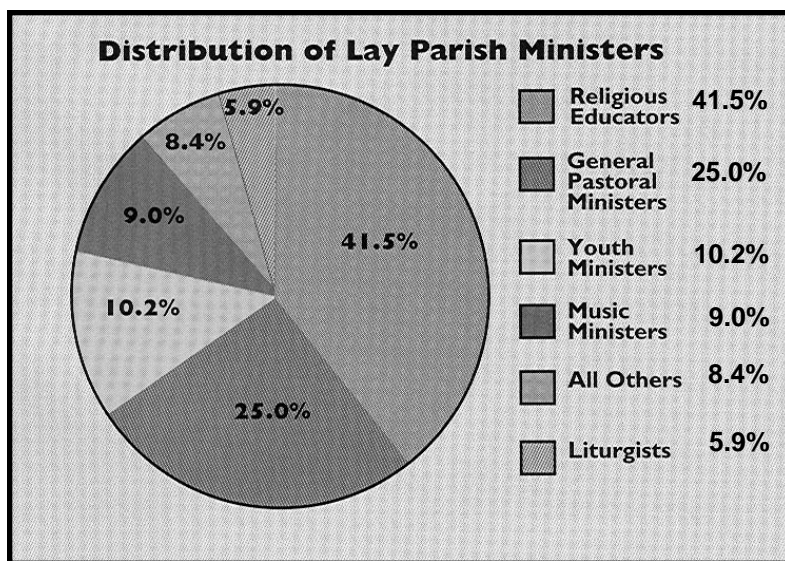
The US Bishops have developed an excellent resource titled *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* is a resource for guiding the development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry. Lay Ecclesial Minister is a broad category, not a specific job title, for many roles and responsibilities undertaken by laypersons. Lay is used because these ministers remain first, foremost and always members of the laity. Their work is a specific expression of the general vocation of laypersons. Ecclesial is used because their ministry has a place within the communion of the church, under the judgment and supervision of the hierarchy. (*Lay Ecclesial Ministry: The State of the Questions*, NCCB, 1999).

Identity as a lay ecclesial minister is partly a question of personal awareness and intentionality, as well as a matter of recognition by official church authority. These two dimensions must converge. Lay ecclesial minister has come to mean the following:

- A fully initiated member of the Christian faithful (including vowed religious) who is responding to the empowerment and gifts of the Holy Spirit received in baptism and confirmation, which enable one to share in some form of ministry.
- One who has responded to a call or invitation to participate in ministry and who has prepared through a process of prayerful discernment.
- One who has received the necessary formation, education, and training to function competently within a given area of ministry.
- One who intentionally brings personal competencies and gifts to serve the church's mission through a specific ministry of ecclesial leadership and who does so with community support and acknowledgement.
- One to whom a formal and public role in ministry has been entrusted or upon whom an office has been conferred by competent ecclesiastical authority.
- One who has been installed in a ministry through the authority of the bishop or his representative, perhaps using a public ritual.
- One who commits to performing the duties of a ministry in a stable manner.
- A paid staff person (full - or part-time) or a volunteer who has responsibility and the necessary authority for institutional leadership in a particular area of ministry.

Presently there are 30,632 lay parish ministers working at least 20 hours per week in paid positions serving 66% of all parishes in the US. Add in unpaid ministers working 20 hours per week and the percent of parishes with lay ministers on staff increases to 68%. The diagram to the right indicates the distribution of lay parish ministers.

Church Magazine,
National Pastoral Life Center,
Fall 2005
CHURCH Ministries: A Parish
Guide p.5





Formation Wheel

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT LIABILITY

Brian Topping

Have you ever read one of those permission forms that says, "I hereby release and indemnify _____ parish, its staff, volunteers, and the Diocese of Joliet from any and all liability arising from claims of any kind or nature whatsoever from my child's participation in this event."? Just imagine the trepidation a parent would feel signing such a form if it were true verbatim? It would be like giving the church permission to do whatever they wanted with their child and not being able to do anything about it. Imagine . . . "Come join us for 'Christian Community Goes Overboard,' an event that teaches children teamwork and dealing with adversity by stuffing twelve of them in a barrel and sending them over Niagra Falls!"

Luckily for the children and youth who participate in church programs and events, liability waivers do not work that way. Diocesan legal counsel, in consulting on the catechetical policies found in Faith Formation in the Diocese of Joliet, explained that organizations offering events and programs for minors have certain responsibilities. One such expectation is to keep those participants safe. If parents send their child to a church program or event, they have the right to

"If a parent sends their child to one of our programs or events, they have the right to expect that we will look out for the safety and security of their child while in our care."

expect that we will look out for the safety and security of their child while in our care. Not to do so in a reasonable way may constitute negligence.

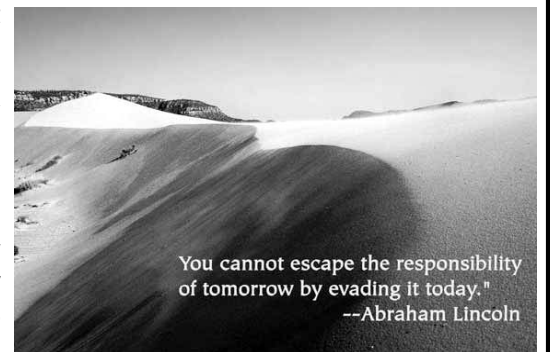
During a time when child safety is such a hot topic, this is an important dynamic to explore. The parameters that define what is reasonable to insure a participant's safety has changed over the years. It is not enough anymore to have adults simply present as chaperones. Now, these adults must go through specific training,

both for the responsibilities of the role they are asked to fulfill and more general training on how to keep children and themselves safe. It is no longer sufficient to have adults trained for those situations we can expect, we now have to have adults trained to respond to situations we cannot expect. Crisis intervention and emergency response are two examples of this. We now have to have procedures established on how we respond to situations such as a child twisting an ankle on the stairway. Removing the stairway to prevent injury is unreasonable, but we better know how to get that child immediate care when such an injury occurs. Perhaps the most profound example of this dynamic is that we can no longer rely on the goodwill of trained adults to watch out for our children's safety. We now have to train children to watch out for their own safety.

This can be a very difficult dynamic to deal with, especially for people who experienced a different reality for themselves or their children. What is considered reasonable has shifted due to the times when adults entrusted with these responsibilities were found not to have fulfilled them, resulting in some form of injury to a child. As more occurrences of the same type of negligence are discovered, new expectations for child safety emerge. In many cases, these new expectations are developed to limit further future liability, whether in advance of or in response to changing laws or recent court rulings. As the new expectations emerge, organizations that offer programs and events for minors must adjust as well. And that can mean significant changes in how they operate.

As an organization that offers events and programs to minors, the Church has a responsibility to deal with these shifting expectations and the subsequent changes that go along with them. The good news is that most employees and volunteers of the Church take this very seriously. The bad news is that responding effectively to these shifting expectations takes a considerable amount of time and effort. Many church employees and volunteers spend every bit of available time fulfilling current responsibilities. Adding new expectations often means adding more time to already full schedules.

Meeting the challenge of the "moving target" of expectations is a collective responsibility. It is one that may require more time and effort from present staff and volunteers. It is one that may require discovering new ways of doing ministry. It is one that may even reap benefits beyond our ability to forecast. But it starts with one thing: knowing and accepting this part of the responsibility of ministering in the present day society.



You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today."
--Abraham Lincoln



Formation Wheel

Welcome to the first issue of Formation Wheel. It is our hope that you will find this section meaningful and helpful. Effective ministry depends upon competent ministers. The goal of Formation Wheel is to provide ongoing formation for you, the catechetical leader, as you seek to grow in discipleship and service.

Webster defines the word wheel as a circular frame of hard material that may be solid, partly solid or spoked and that is capable of turning on an axle. The word form is defined as to give a particular shape to; to shape or mold into a certain state. As I reflected on these two definitions, I was led to the wonderful scripture passage in Isaiah:

*"O, Lord, you are our father;
We are the clay and you the potter:
We are all the works of your hands." (Isaiah 64:7)*

The way in which clay is shaped on a potter's wheel seems, even today, to have a magical quality to it; the clay has the appearance of being a living thing that is being created or shaped by the potter. The potter and his clay have long served as a metaphor for creation and for the relationship of God to humankind.

When a potter forms a piece of clay the following steps are taken:

Centering the Clay

- The clay should always be placed close to the center of the wheel.
- This is one of the most important steps; if the clay is not centered when you begin to mold the piece, it will be off balance and cause challenges throughout the process.



Opening up the Piece

- Opening up the center of the clay can be a tricky task, your hands need to be totally still.
- If your hands are not still the hole in the center will wobble around.



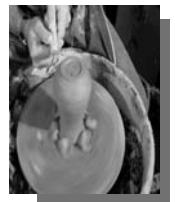
Pulling up the Walls

- If centering and opening were done well, pulling the walls up will not be difficult.
- Pulling up the walls usually takes two or three pulls; don't try to accomplish this in one pull; it is best to move at a slow to medium pace and when you feel comfortable move onto a faster speed.



Trimming on the Wheel

- Trimming is a term for shaving the clay.
- Trimming finishes the shape of the piece.



As the clay, we must center ourselves on the Lord; hold still as our mind and heart open to the Lord; live each day (pulling up the walls) open and centered on the Lord; and finally be willing to refine ourselves (trimming) as we go forth in this world. The potter works on a solid, strong wheel, just as God is our solid, strength. As the potter labors through the process of forming the clay, so too, does God labor with our continual formation. So, as **Formation Wheel** spins, just like the potter's wheel, we hope you will take this opportunity to be formed for your role as a Catechetical Leader.