



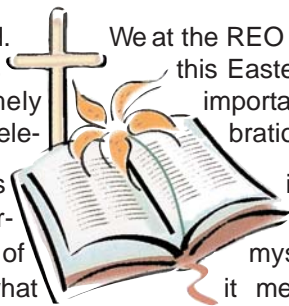
Leaven

The Newsletter of the Religious Education Office



He is Risen!!

Christ is risen, risen truly indeed. We at the REO want to take this opportunity to wish you continued blessings this Easter Season. You, as a catechetical leader, have an extremely important role to play in how your parish community perceives its celebration of Easter.



The NDC (see this month's installment on page 8) asks for people to be helped to "interiorize" the seasons of the liturgical year. Your leadership of mystagogical experiences of "breaking open" the experience of what it means to have new life in Christ for those who have recently received sacraments, your symbolic presence joyfully celebrating sacraments, community, family and faith during the season – these cannot be underestimated. When you model an Easter spirituality, you show others how it is done.

A reminder, that if you are looking for practical suggestions for your community's celebration of Easter, you can find them in the Liturgical Catechesis article in the March 2006 issue of *Leaven* which is available online at www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/REONewsletters.asp. Again, Easter blessings to you and yours!

Young Adult Ministry

(Ministering to Those in their 20's and 30's)

Paul Mach

In the Bishop's document, "Sons and Daughters of the Light", it states that a pastoral plan for successful outreach to young adults will achieve four goals. A successful plan will connect young adults with the following:

1. Jesus Christ.
2. The Church, by inviting and welcoming their presence in the Christian community.
3. The mission of the Church in the world.
4. A peer community in which their faith is nurtured and strengthened.

How do we accomplish these with young adult ministry? One way is through programs such as: Theology on Tap, Y.A.C.H.T. (Young Adult Catholics Hanging Together) or Charis retreats. This can be done by advertising to young adults about dates for Theology on Tap (out in next month's *Leaven*); or inviting young adults to attend the I & M Canal Y.A.C.H.T. club at White Fence Farm which meets once a month from Sept. to May; or encouraging individuals or groups to be part of Charis Ministries retreats, which are offered throughout the year.

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Attendees at the March Y.A.C.H.T. club enjoy a talk on Great Catholic Signs & Symbols.

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MAY
2006

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 -
June 22, 2006 - 12 pm
SCPC, Romeoville

Ford-Iroquois CRE Cluster -
May 11, 2006 - 6:30pm
St. Edmund, Watseka

Joliet-Will DRE Cluster -
May 18, 2006 - 10:00am
St. Paul the Apostle,
Joliet

Kankakee-Grundy DRE Cluster -
May 11, 2006 - 1:00pm
St. Martin, Kankakee
End of Year Luncheon

Northeast Dupage DRE Cluster -
May 18, 2006 - 10:00am
Notre Dame,
Clarendon Hills

West Dupage DRE Cluster -
May 11, 2006
Christ the King,
Lombard
(Luncheon)



Tom Quinlan
Director

A Time To Sow



In this busy month of May, I thought I'd offer the following items for your consideration...no particular order, certainly no connection to one another.



NCCL, The Aftermath!

For over a year now you've been hearing encouragements to attend this year's conference here in Rosemont. As you read this it is likely that the April 30-May 4 Conference has come and gone. Of course, for those who chose to participate in this national catechetical event, I hope it was an exciting, energizing and informative experience. I would welcome your feedback since I serve on the permanent planning committee that now turns its attention to 2007 in Columbus and 2008 in Houston.

I am looking at the 2006-07 year as a time for the REO, in dialogue with parish catechetical leadership in the diocese, to give particular attention to the centrality of leadership formation. How well each of you is engaged in ongoing personal and professional "development" is a critical element to effective parish faith formation. (OK, I'll recite the truism once again: *You can't give what you don't have!*)

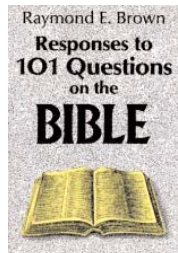
Parishes need to provide both the time and resources for you to be able to renew yourself spiritually and deepen your professional competencies. And you ought to build a plan for your ongoing formation that addresses your particular needs and takes advantage of opportunities available strengthen yourself as a ministerial resource...an invaluable leader called to help serve and guide a community of faith!

Bottom line: NCCL may be over, but the challenge to grow, change, learn and deepen continues. What is your plan for yourself for 2006-07?

What Can Brown Do For You? Depends on Which Brown!

Here comes *The DaVinci Code*. Is your parish doing anything to take advantage of this opportunity to catechize about Jesus and the Church? I hope so. You could use your parish website, the bulletin, the moments before Mass (or even briefly during), etc., to help clarify Catholic faith in areas challenged by **Dan Brown's** compelling fiction. Some good information and a fine resource were included in last month's *Leaven*.

I have to admit that I've never read a word of Dan Brown's writing. I hear he has a knack for weaving a tale. And I am aware that so many of our parishioners have enjoyed his various books. Perhaps you and I can encourage them to read another noted author, if they are really interested in the Bible and want to gain a fair, accurate and clear understanding of Scripture. (They are good "reads" for parish leadership, too!)



Who am I talking about? In my opinion, the finest biblical writer/scholar of recent times is also a man named Brown...**Fr. Raymond Brown**. When he died about 10 years ago, Ray Brown left us not only an extraordinary legacy of in-depth scholarship that was acclaimed worldwide, but he also gave us easy-to-read, practical books on the Bible that any adult could pick up and grasp. So, I would ask you to go to Amazon, or wherever you explore authors and their works, and consider getting some of Fr. Raymond Brown's wonderful books to gain insight and truth about Scripture. All his books are non-fiction! And share this with your people, who are hungry for places to go to become more scripturally informed. (Another great, accessible author is Fr. Donald Senior.)

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)

A Tension for All Institutions...and Yet, An Opportunity

Change is hard. Dynamism, while life-giving, is challenging. To be static and unchanging is much easier and less frustrating. And yet, all institutions are called to grow and evolve. Certainly this is so for the *living* Body of Christ, which has undergone much change and development over the centuries.

The other day I came across the insight that there is an ongoing tension in institutions between *structure* and *process*, and that over time *structure* tends to win out. And ultimately, the only *process* that may survive is one that serves the *structure* as an end in itself. Obviously, this is not healthy.

Certainly, this is something for all of us in ministry to reflect upon. For me, it names the need to continually measure what is being done against the mission of the institution or organization. Is what we dedicate our time and resources to *effectively* serving the reason for our existence? If not, then it is time to return to an intent focus on process, with the hope that process that will appropriately lead us to restructure the structure...for it is the mission, and not the structure that we must ultimately serve. For those of us in Catholic ministry, I'll give you one big example to help put this in context: The Second Vatican Council.

Best Practices for Safe Environment Instruction

Beginning this fall, we will engage in the second year of required safe environment instruction of children, youth and parents. The USCCB has not yet informed us as to our diocesan requirements for next year. As soon as we know, we will let you know.

Catechetical leaders should begin preparations to conduct the training in the fall. Several new videos with accompanying lesson plans will be ready by early summer, so those who wish to add to or replace instructional elements will be able to do so.

Here are some things we learned the first time through this experience:

- Catechetical leaders who approached safe environment instruction positively had the best results when dealing with parents, so it appears to be useful to communicate confidently when speaking about this program element.
- Inclusion of safe environment instruction parent permission forms with registration materials or with program handbooks at the beginning of the catechetical year works best. The OCYP in Washington asks specifically for a formal signed opt-out, if parents choose that option.
- Parishes that conducted instruction outside of regular session meeting times did not have good participation. The preference would be to incorporate instruction into the normal session calendar so that most children/youth receive instruction.
- Competent catechists were able to conduct instruction using diocesan materials. Some catechetical leaders chose to do it themselves. Some parishes were resourceful in uncovering additional qualified people in their community to assist. No matter what the approach, reactions following instruction were reportedly mostly positive, both from children/youth and parents.
- Parishes and schools who conducted instruction via smaller groups had better discussions. If a video is shown or a speaker presents to a large group, smaller group breakout sessions for discussion are preferred.
- There were actually very few disclosures around the diocese from children or youth regarding prior abuse, and those who received them generally reacted well and did what was needed and prudent.

For more information about safe environment instruction, contact Joyce Donahue at jdonahue@dioceseofjoliet.org or Paul Mach pmach@dioceseofjoliet.org or 815-727-6411. School personnel may contact Pamela Gean at pgean@dioceseofjoliet.org or 815-838-2181.

YOUTH MINISTRY CLUSTERS

Senior High Youth Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook, Lisle,
Naperville, Oswego)

May 11, 2006

St. Margaret Mary,
Naperville

2:00pm - 4:00pm

Junior High Ministry Cluster

(Aurora, Bolingbrook,
Naperville)

May 2, 2006

Holy Spirit, Naperville
3:45pm

Joliet Cluster Youth Ministry

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

May 1, 2006

St. Paul, Joliet
8:00 pm

June 5, 2006

St. Paul, Joliet
8:00 pm

South of the Border Cluster

(St. Mary, Mokena; St.
Jude, New Lenox; St.
Joseph, Manhattan; St.
Anthony, Frankfort)

May 24, 2006

St. Walter, Roselle
All Meetings begin at 10am

**Cluster is attempting this year to meet before or after the Diocesan YM meetings.

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A Little Equipment Can Go a Long Way . . .

Brian D. Topping

Since announcing that the Media Center membership will include access to the audio-visual equipment, people have asked how the equipment can help their ministry. A few examples follow.



Digital projectors cast an image from a computer, VCR, or DVD player. They make showing videos or computer presentations to a large group of people very easy. REO projectors can accommodate groups of 10 – 1000 people.

Two rental laptop computers are available as well. These can be used for presentations, for mobile computing, or for backing up data using the built-in CD burner.

No presentation would be complete without the proper sound equipment. The portable audio systems work with the computers and projectors and can accommodate a wide range of audiences and locations. Five different styles of microphones are available along with speakers of different capabilities to allow the right sound for each situation.



It is also possible to use the video camera to set up a simulcast – using the camera to capture a live image of an event and showing it in a different location at the same time.



One of the best-kept secrets of the Media Center is the digital video camera. Use this to videotape events, such as First Communions. It is also possible to use the video camera to set up a simulcast – using the camera to capture a live image of an event and showing it in a different location at the same time. Churches have used this feature for events that have overflow crowds. Coupled with the audio and projection equipment, this can be a great solution for special events.

In short, this equipment has been used for volunteer training, showing videos to classes, displaying internet resources (using the laptop and projector), providing sound at special events, movie nights, sock hops, mobile computing, videotaping events, providing a live video feed, taking pictures for publicity, retreats, conferences, and workshops. Please contact Brian Topping if you would like more information on Equipment Rentals.



Planning is in Full Speed for the 2006 Youth Leadership Conference!

Mike Kuhn

Some exciting changes have been made to this year's schedule. First of all, participants will be happy to hear that the schedule has been tweaked to allow for more sleep! Meal times have been adjusted to begin approximately one hour later than years past, which should be greatly appreciated on Saturday and Sunday mornings!! Mostly a consequence of making meal times later, the second significant change to the schedule will be the relocation of the dance to Friday night. Yes, the Field House at Lewis University will be rocking on the first night of the Conference. Our snack that will be served on the traditional "subs", we will snacks at the dance. The sub the Reconciliation Service on

NO FEAR,



Our Shepherd is Near!

Another change is that regis-
gathering area of the Field
being relocated to second level
to the Conference, YLC
services are provided: 1) Administration; 2) First Aid
Information and Home-base of Conference Staff. Please note: There is an elevator in the Field House, so YLC Central will be very accessible! Anyway, the reason for the change is to locate the hub of Conference services within easier reach of our main facility.

Please promote the Conference at your Church and REGISTER! The deadline for registration is **June 23rd**. Remember that registration is now online at www.sauvtrax.com! Blessings from the Core Planning Team. Please respond to mike@st-irene.org.

YLC 2006



DO YOU KNOW A COLLEGE-AGED YOUTH THAT WOULD MAKE A GREAT LEADER?

We still need staffers to help run this year's conference. It's a great opportunity for college-aged youth to experience YLC from a leader's point of view and it is at no cost to them.

Visit our website at www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo/YLC2006info.asp to find links to an introductory letter and an application that you can use to invite potential staffers.

For more information contact:

Janet Cashchetta
YLC 2006 Staffer
Coordinator
St. Anthony Frankfort
(815) 469-3750, ext
145
janet@stanthonyfrankfort.com

Generations of Faith



Parishioners depict the stations of the cross during the opening of a recent Generations of Faith event entitled "Experiencing the Triduum" on March 4 & 5, 2006 at Notre Dame in Clarendon Hills.

Upcoming Intergenerational Events:

Generations of Faith Spring Conference

June 1, 2006
St. Raphael, Naperville

Generations of Faith Training #3 (Round Three Parishes)

June 2, 2006
St. Charles Pastoral
Center, Romeoville

Institute in Lifelong Faith Formation

August 7-11, 2006
St. Luke, Carol Stream
50 person maximum

For more information on these events, please contact Brian Topping.

HEAR YE,
HEAR YE !!!



2006-2007 Contract
Renewal Materials for
"returning" parish cat-
echetical leaders are
available on the REO
website under "publi-
cations" at www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo

Are you retiring?
Changing ministries?
Changing parishes?
Please let the REO
know of your plans.
Contact either Helen
Johnson, Catechetical
Associate for Leadership
& Formation or Tom
Quinlan, Director of the
REO.

If you know of some-
one who is interested
in securing a parish
catechetical ministry
position advise them
to contact Helen
Johnson at 815-727-
6411 ext 261 or
[hjohnson@diocese-
ofjoliet.org](mailto:hjohnson@dioceseofjoliet.org).

My First Year as DRE at St. Charles Borromeo

Luanne Wilhelm, SLW



The invitation to reflect on my first year as DRE at St. Charles Borromeo in Bensenville afforded me some wonderful graced time. It's important to note, however, that I'm not a first year or new DRE. My 30+ years in catechetical leadership ministry gives me the feel of a pioneer of sorts. This year, however, I do feel very NEW. I'm new in two ways: not only to St. Charles parish but to the Joliet diocese as well. Most of my ministry experience has been in the archdiocese of Chicago with ten years also in Detroit. My previous two experiences include nine years at St. Giles in Oak Park and six at Holy Cross in Deerfield.

My prayer these past months holds an awareness of two important factors/images: often I greet God as Holy Newness, attempting to be open to the gifts of that day, particularly in the new situations and new people. *Prayer to Welcome Holy Newness* by Pat Bergen CSJ, provides this new God image and helps sustain me through the changes and the ups and downs they bring.

The second more challenging awareness that I bring into my days comes from Donna Markham's *"Spiritlinking Leadership"*. Though I've read only a portion of this enlightening book, Markham's statement "there can be no fixed vision...there can be only visionary direction" (p. 12) has given me much pause and helps me take on more of a "listening/learning" stance than I might have in previous new situations.

I am a BRIDGE DWELLER. This feels like a good image for one at a new place of ministry. Who is this Bridge Dweller person? The image of bridge in relation to our ministry is not new to me. I have a hard hat in my office as a reminder of Carole Eipers' in-service entitled *"DRE as Engineer"*, building bridges being an important skill for catechetical leaders and one I'm very conscious of this year. But bridge dweller? It recently occurred to me that being new I also am standing ON a bridge, not just building them. And it is difficult. I'm reminded of two scary experiences of being on a bridge, both of which help me relate to being in a new place of ministry. Once I was on a rope bridge walking over a deep canyon and someone on the bridge decided it would be fun to jump up and down. The second bridge experience was me sitting at a red light at an intersection above two expressways on a very windy day with both my car and the pavement shaking. The light couldn't turn green soon enough! And, of course, I will always remember driving the long causeway across Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana. I am indeed a BRIDGE DWELLER and need to remain on the sometimes shaky, often long bridge.

Holy Newness is a bridge dweller with me and gives me energy, insight, and conviction so that together we can listen and continue to build and do God's work.



Are You Changing your E-mail Address?

Have You Hired a New Catechetical
Leader?

Please contact Mary at the Religious Education Office or e-mail mmaloney@dioceseofjoliet.org with any change in e-mail addresses, contact information, or new hire information (this includes volunteer staff). We appreciate all updates at any time!


(Young Adult Ministry...Continued from Front)

Another way is by renewing your parish Baptismal and Marriage prep. The greatest number of people who are inquiring about these sacraments are those in their 20's and 30's. Do these sacraments catechize and evangelize these young adults in a way that fosters involvement in the parish and the Catholic community? Jim Healy, director of the Family Ministry Office for the Diocese of Joliet, is working hard to enhance these sacramental experiences (note: not "programs"). Mr. Healy can be contacted at (815) 834-4043.

College students will be coming home from college this month. How do we, as a parish community, recognize their presence back in our community? We could, and should, look at college students as missionaries from our parish to their college communities during times of sending forth and welcoming home.


Finally, there are many young adult groups that are open for more members. In time, young adults will be able to visit our diocesan web page and find many activities for them in the Catholic church communities of the greater Chicago area. Sometimes it is our job to plant the seeds, even if we don't get to harvest and reap the fruits of those seeds. In the long run, you will harvest many other seeds you didn't plant. I look forward to growing this ministry in our diocese, with your help great things can happen.

Paul Mach is the Catechetical Associate for Young Adult Ministry in the Diocese of Joliet.



UNIVERSITY of
DAYTON

The Virtual Learning Community for Faith Formation



The Virtual Learning Community
For Faith Formation

E-Learning in the Joliet Diocese

BE A PART OF IT!

REGISTRATION BEGINS
MAY 23 AND CLOSES JULY 5 for CYCLE 5:
JULY 9 – AUGUST 12 (5weeks)

Register now for one of the following courses:

◆ Basic Ecclesiology ◆ Catholic Beliefs

◆ Catholic Social Teaching – 2 ◆ Church History – 2 ◆ Evangelization

◆ Introduction to Catechesis ◆ Jesus ◆ On Bended Knee (3 week seminar)

◆ Our Hearts Were Burning (3 week seminar)

◆ Overview of the *General Directory for Catechesis* and the
National Directory for Catechesis (3 week seminar)

◆ Sacraments ◆ Scripture (New Testament) ◆ Scripture (Old Testament)

Go to <http://vlc.udayton.edu/>

REO CALENDAR

May 18, 2006

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

May 25, 2006

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

June 22, 2006

Adult Faith Association
SCPC, Noon - 2:30 pm

July 9, 2006

Theology on Tap (Week 1)
Location and Time TBA
Contact: Paul Mach

July 16, 2006

Theology on Tap (Week 2)
Location and Time TBA
Contact: Paul Mach

July 21-23, 2006

Youth Leadership Conference
Lewis University, Romeoville
Contact: Paul Mach

July 23, 2006

Theology on Tap (Week 3)
Location and Time TBA
Contact: Paul Mach

July 26, 2006

Conversation with Tom
Far South- Location TBA, 7pm
Contact: Tom Quinlan

July 27, 2006

Conversation with Tom
Kankakee-TBA, 10am
Contact: Tom Quinlan

July 30, 2006

Theology on Tap (Week 4)
Location and Time TBA
Contact: Paul Mach

August 2, 2006

Conversation with Tom
Central DuPage-TBA, 10am
Contact: Tom Quinlan

August 4, 2006

Orientation for New CL's
Location & Time TBA
Contact: Helen Johnson

August 4 - 6, 2006

Young Adult Conference
San Francisco, CA
Contact: Paul Mach

Tom Zanzig and Shirley Kelter Present:

“Adult Faith Formation Strategies”



Offers over 170 creative activities and engaging exercises for catechist training, RCIA programs, adult education courses, seasonal events, parent meetings, and more. A wide variety of approaches, models, and strategies, will provide you with exactly what you need to create successful programs that will work in your parish. The strategies collected in this manual include discussion starters, group exercises, games, prayer ritual and services, and theologically sound presentation outlines.

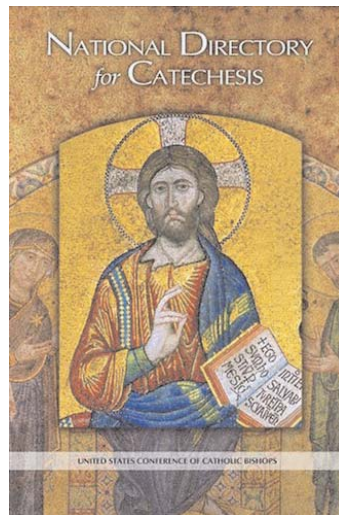
- Provides over 170 time-tested strategies on major themes of interest and importance for all Catholic adults.
- Enhances or supplements existing programs with strategies that can be linked to create integrated programs or be used individually.
- Grants permission to copy-paste-and-print which means total flexibility...and low costs for materials!

Available from Silver Burdett Religion for \$150
www.sbgreligion.com

What the NDC Says About Liturgical Catechesis II: Sacred Time, Sacred Space, Sacred Music, Sacramentals & Popular Devotions

Joyce Donahue

The cycle of Church year seasons: Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent, Easter, etc. is certainly something we give attention to in catechesis. Children and youth are normally instructed about these special times, their signs and symbols and even their spirituality. The new *National Directory for Catechesis* asks for even more: catechesis for “interiorization” of the liturgical year for all Christians. (p. 147)



“Interiorization” means people of all ages, especially adults, are helped to understand that the spirituality of Advent or Lent, for example, transcend their presence at the community’s liturgical celebrations. Rather, this spirituality shapes their daily life in the world. Advent is lived with a genuine sense of anticipation, Lent with a real interior disposition towards penitence and renewal. To get there, catechetical and liturgical leaders need to work together to form members of their parish communities to live fully the seasons of the Church year.

Sacred space, art, and architecture, the *NDC* notes, have an innate catechetical character. Of themselves, they have the potential to teach about what we believe. The building and all that is in it reflects the reality of the sacred world. People should be helped to realize how this is true in their own worship spaces.

Sacred music, the *NDC* says, “also has a distinct catechetical purpose” (p. 151). Not only does it allow people to pray better, but it assists them in expressing and sharing their faith. Again, music should be chosen well to accomplish this, and people should be helped to see how their whole-hearted participation in song not only enhances the celebration, but helps them own and develop their faith.

Lastly, the *NDC* notes that many sacramentals and popular devotions are culturally linked, and that it is important to pay careful attention to the role of popular piety in people’s lives. At no time, however, should popular devotion replace liturgical worship or sacraments. Catechesis on sacramentals and popular devotions should “describe their relationship to faith in Jesus Christ and their function in the Church and in the lives of individual Christians.” (p. 152) Formation should be provided to relate piety to evangelization and to ensure that the various forms of popular devotion “radiate from the Church’s sacramental life but do not replace it.” (p. 155)

So, what is this all about? Liturgical catechesis is a necessary element of parish life to help people integrate experiences of the fullness of Catholic life, within the liturgy and outside of it. We are called to think outside the box and move to formation which assists people in developing a Catholic outlook and a balanced spirituality.

“Liturgical catechesis is a necessary element of parish life to help people integrate experiences of the fullness of Catholic life, within the liturgy and outside of it.”



Formation Wheel

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PART III

Helen Johnson

The following information comes from *Recruiting and Training Catechists*, part of the Loyola Press "The Effective DRE" series (1998), excerpts reprinted with permission, and offers keen insights on how to handle the catechist process, from the initial conversation to empowerment.

From the Beginning

There are certain ideas and expectations that should be communicated from the beginning. These will convey the tone and attitude your ministry will have toward its most valuable component – the volunteer. I suggest that the following statement needs to be banished from our vocabulary – "I'm just a volunteer." This statement expresses a perception of second-class status. This certainly should not be so, because the volunteer comes forward to share faith and build community just as professional ministers do. After all, volunteers make up the majority of catechists in our ministry. How blaring – "I am a volunteer!!" It can be just a volunteer", but it is possible. And it regains its proper dignity, respect and

The expectation that volunteers should be in place. This school purchases the supplies, pays volunteer for all items that he or she is know that they and their time are valued and that they are not expected to spend their money as well. Sometimes there may be a need for financial assistance from the volunteer for a special event, such as a retreat. In these cases the expense should be optional and not mandatory. When the price tag stops the ministry, it is time to redesign the ministry to fit the budget. It can always be done – just think of the budget Jesus and the first 12 catechists had, and we all know how much they did!



effectiveness. incur no out-of-pocket expenses for the means that the parish, the ministry, or the for workshops, and readily reimburses the authorized to purchase. Volunteers need to

incur no out-of-pocket expenses for the means that the parish, the ministry, or the for workshops, and readily reimburses the authorized to purchase. Volunteers need to

Training for Service

"What will I be doing?" is usually the first question a volunteer will ask. It is good not to answer this question too quickly. It is best to begin the process of orientation and training first. Discovering strengths, likes, dislikes, goals, expectations, skills, interests, and personalities will help answer the question, "What will I be doing?" The reason for this is that faith will be shared and renewed throughout catechetical ministry and as leaders it is important to concentrate on the spiritual and personal growth of team members rather than on the institutional maintenance of a program.

"It is more productive in the long run to know who will be sharing the catechetical message and tailor the roles to individual skills and capabilities."

It is more productive in the long run to know who will be sharing the catechetical message and tailor the roles to individual skills and capabilities. To determine specific roles first and then try to find people to work in them can be extremely difficult and frustrating. This is not saying that a general description is not necessary, only that it is best to develop the answer to the question "What will I be doing?" once the talents and skills of the volunteer are identified in collaboration with the catechetical leader.

There are many different ideas about what sort of training to offer new catechetical volunteers, but there is agreement that new volunteers do need some sort of training. What matters is that we gather these people who care and start to get to know each other so that the sharing of our hopes, faith, and Gospel values with each other can occur.

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One suggestion for training volunteers comes from Fayette Veverka's article, "A System for Empowering Volunteers in Ministry" (Our Sunday Visitor; 1991). Veverka wrote:

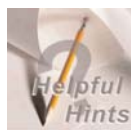
"Educating volunteers for ministry includes four distinct tasks: orientation, theological reflection, skill development and personal integration. First, volunteers need orientation to their new role and context. In order to feel connected, they need to know the organization's "rules of the game," its policies and procedures, as well as something of the institutional "story", its history, present activities and plans for the future. Second, volunteers need theological education that deepens their ability to reflect critically on ministry in the Christian tradition. Third, they need opportunities to acquire, develop and practice skills for their particular ministry. Finally, education for ministry supports spiritual growth and encourages volunteers to integrate theological vision and skill development in the context of their own life situation."



In designing training for volunteers, begin by asking these two questions – "What does the volunteer need **to know**?" and "What does the volunteer need **to do**?" What the volunteer needs to know is sometimes distinctly different from what the volunteer needs to do. The answers are equally important but address different areas of concern. Let's examine each one.

The question "What does the volunteer need to know?" addresses the volunteer's knowledge of doctrine, the catechetical process, the history of the program, the characteristics of the community in which he or she is to work, the mission and goals of this particular program, and the volunteer's place in all this. This part of the training can be determined in advance and can more or less remain constant from year to year. This training can include presentations on Scripture and theology, overview of liturgy, presentations on prayer, discussions on current catechetical trends and processes, and even a short presentation on group dynamics.

The question "What does the volunteer need to do?" addresses the specific tasks the volunteer will engage in during the term of service. This section of training can include such things as methods of faith sharing for the specific age group being served, practice in leading discussions, and a presentation on goal setting and evaluation. Instruction on practical things such as use of the copy machines, videocassette/CD recorders, computer systems and thermostats, doors and keys will prove helpful to the volunteer.



Here are some suggestions to consider as you develop your training efforts:

- Identify specific areas in which training is needed and establish learning objectives that are consistent with the overall goals of your ministry.
- Review diocesan guidelines for catechist certification (In Service To The Master).
- Explore training scheduling options; check out what is available to your volunteers on the diocesan, cluster and/or parish level. If something is already planned and scheduled that will meet a volunteer learning objective guide the volunteer to that program; you don't have to do everything yourself; and remember you won't be able to address every learning objective for each volunteer all at once. Training never ends!
- Examine current theories of learning and forming, and model those principles for the volunteers.
- Address topics of human growth and development.
- Use good resources for training (religion publishers usually provide some ideas either in the director/catechist manual or on their websites); you may have to customize to meet your specific needs.
- Gather feedback about the training experiences.
- Determine and develop the follow-up that will be useful for the volunteer; in other words – identify the next step.

Job Descriptions

Developing a job description for each volunteer will be helpful. Parts of the job description may be designed by the leader, but the final version should reflect the input of the volunteer. This document should be signed by both, the volunteer and the catechetical leader. It might include such elements as the name of the ministry area, job title within that ministry area, description of tasks, length of time commitment, name of supervisor or mentor, and any special procedures and comments.



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Job descriptions should be available for reference throughout the ministry season. As the year moves along, it may be necessary to revise the job description. This is fine. Movement and change are growth. In the end, it is important that everyone involved has the same expectations and understandings.

Covenant and Commissioning



There are two final pieces that cap the training experience for volunteers. One is the signing of a covenant between the volunteer and the leader of the catechetical ministry. The other is a commissioning ceremony.

The covenant is personal and should reflect a spirit of the ministry. The signing of the covenants should be in the context of prayer with music, candles and Scripture readings. The covenants can also be printed on special paper in advance.

The commissioning ceremony is ideally held during the weekend liturgy to be witnessed by the assembly. Catechetical Sunday is a perfect occasion for such an event. The volunteers come forward after the Gospel and are blessed by the presider. Volunteers may be given a gift such as a lapel pin, book or bookmark, or a fresh flower to symbolize the importance of the commissioning and the importance of their commitment to service. The more public the commissioning, the greater the impression on the whole community.

Now is the time to make your volunteer training plans. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact Helen Johnson, Catechetical Associate for Leadership & Formation.

GOING DEEPER INTO... RENEWING THE VISION OF CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

Paul Mach

Let us look at the goals of youth ministry. The first is to empower the youth to be Disciples of Jesus Christ. But what does that mean? Mike Carotta, a National Speaker in the area of youth ministry and Catechesis, was in the Diocese of Joliet in late March and shared a great analogy. He presented the following words: Leadership, Relationship, Sportsmanship, Scholarship, Worship, Hardship, Citizenship, Fellowship, Kinship, Workmanship. Then he asked the questions: 1.) Which “*ship*” do your youth take to make it through life? 2.) Which “*ship*” are we offering them in our programs? That is where we should be coming into with the “*ship*” of DISCIPLESHIP.

We are the only location that can give them this ship to make it through life. How different would our ministries, not programs, be if we truly were based in making disciples? This is what *Renewing the Vision* asks of us. This is what the new *National Directory for Catechesis* asks of us. This is what the *General Directory of Catechesis* asks of us, and the document *Our Hearts were Burning* asks of us.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Are we doing it?
- What is a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- Do we have an understanding of discipleship?
- Can we get rid of programs that don't make disciples?
- What is our ministry lacking?
- What should be added to make it work for “Making Disciples”?

Let us take the time to look into the Bible and see what Jesus saw in a disciple. Are we introducing our young people to the person of Jesus Christ? Do we take time in the scriptures with youth? Are we taking time ourselves in scripture to better know Jesus so we can model Discipleship? Do we help our youth ministry teams to realize they are there to be and make disciples? Steven Covey, in his book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, states that we need to start with the end in mind. Our end in mind should be about Making Disciples, then you will have success, at least in heaven.



PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY

Brian D. Topping

So far, this series has reviewed the first three steps in strategic planning: step 1, assess your current ministry; step 2, identify your purpose; and step 3, clarify the organizational mission and values. Step 4, assessing the internal and external ministry environments, was introduced and will be covered in this issue in further detail.

Step #4 in Strategic Planning – assessing the internal and external ministry environments. Organizations find this to be one of the most helpful steps in the strategic planning process. It also tends to be one of the most involved. The purpose of this step is to understand the context in which an organization seeks to accomplish its essential purpose by examining the dynamics both within the organization itself and the dynamics outside of the organization. One of the most popular and effective ways to do this is by using a SWOT analysis.

A SWOT analysis examines the strengths and weaknesses of your ministry and the opportunities and threats it experiences. Examining the strengths and weaknesses of your ministry tends to be an internal assessment. Examining the opportunities and threats your ministry experiences tends to be an external assessment. Keep in mind that only an honest, realistic analysis will help your ministry be successful in strategic planning. Here are some suggestions on what to look for in each analysis:

Strengths:

- What advantages does your ministry have?
- What do you do better than any other ministry in your area?
- What unique resources do you have access to?
- What do the parishioners, including participants, see as your strengths?

Weaknesses:

- What are you currently doing in your ministry that could be done much better?
- What should your ministry be doing that it is not currently doing?
- What should your ministry avoid?
- What efforts are in place within your ministry that do not really matter?
- What do the parishioners, including participants, see as “needs improvement?”

Opportunities:

- What are the good opportunities facing your ministry?
- What are the interesting trends you are aware of?
- Look at all forms of opportunities, from what the responsibilities of the ministry require it to do, to the internal dynamics of the parish, to factors outside of the parish such as local community events and service opportunities.

Threats:

- What obstacles do you face?
- What does your completion accomplish?
- Are the requirements for your ministry changing?
- Could any of your weaknesses threaten your ability to do the ministry?
- Is your ministry at risk due to lack of resources or a funding problem?

Answering these questions can be done in many ways. The more comprehensive the approach to answering these questions, the more accurate the internal and external assessment will be. The more accurate the results in this step, the more effective your strategic plan will be. That is why this step can be time-consuming. Sometimes it is also helpful to have an independent person or group of people develop strategies for how to answer these questions.

The next steps of strategic planning move toward action – you have an essential purpose and a mission to your ministry. Now, what do you do about it in light of your internal and external environments? This series will examine those steps in the next issue.

