

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

Welcome back for the beginning of the home stretch for the first year of using the *Alive in Christ* resource. Those we've heard from say they really like it, as do children and parents. Catechists are looking to have their own copies of the Catechist Guide. That's all good news!

A few statistics for you: we have a 10% increase in the number of children enrolled; 9 of our parishes include parents/guardians in the sessions; 2 more are planning on doing so in the fall of 2017. When we think that nothing is happening it sometimes helps to take a look at the big picture!

Reconciliation Preparation

For those parishes who will celebrate First Reconciliation, it might be a good time to get a head start. We have two videos here in our resource centre that are meant to be used by/with parents

- *PARENTS – You, your children and their Catholic Faith* by David Wells. Talk 3 – *Confession, do they still do that?* We have this in both VHS and DVD format. I have used this with parents and found that is a great discussion starter.
- *The Sacrament of Reconciliation - Past and Present* by Kathleen Chesto
This one has a lot of information in it. I think it would be most helpful for catechists. It is good for parents, too, but I would view it myself before using it, to be prepared for discussion and/or questions.
- The following article is aimed at those who have already made their First Confession, and are being prepared for a Reconciliation Service. It has some good ideas to help you prepare both groups – first timers and repeat celebrants.
<http://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com/2017/01/four-reconciliation-questions-on-the-mind-of-every-third-grader/>

Remember that for those of you who will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation this year, Denise is available to do a retreat. It might be an idea to have a separate session for parents at the same time. We can help with that, if it is something you would like to try.

LENT

Ash Wednesday is the March 1...not that far away. There probably won't be another newsletter before then, so some ideas for you to think about.

Go to www.loyolapress.com search "Lent" and you will find many resources to give to parents and children, that is, if you want more in addition to what you find in *Alive in Christ*. Ash Wednesday is March 1, so during your February sessions it might be an idea to give parents some resources to use during Lent.

I am attaching the PowerPoint called *Holy Week, Triduum and Easter* for you to preview for use during April in preparation for these 3 events. The suggested yearly outline recommends Triduum themes p.27-40 and PowerPoint from Loyola Press for your April classes. If you can't show a PowerPoint you can still print the slides and use them in that way.

SAINT CARDS

The saint cards for the rest of the year were sent to you in December. Most parishes are using them with great success. One of the unexpected outcomes from this activity was the reconnecting of the generations...children, parents and grandparents talking about the heroes of our faith.

These saints may not be in your program, but 3 of them are Canadian saints and it is nice for the children to have spiritual heroes from Canada. I know it is sometimes difficult to choose which thing to do, but parents and children can read about the saints in the text at home. You can find more information on St. Brother Andre, Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys and St. Kateri Tekakwitha at <http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/office-for-evangelization-and-catechesis>

SIX TASKS OF CATECHESIS

The six fundamental tasks are described in *The General Directory for Catechesis*, paragraphs 85 and 86.. You can also find a further description on pages CE14-CE15 of the Catechist Edition (any year). The beginning page of each chapter tells which task is the focus of that chapter. See page 53A for an example.

By beginning each chapter by praying with Scripture you are fulfilling the task of teaching to pray. Liturgical formation takes place when we focus on the different seasons of the church year.

General Directory for Catechesis, n. 178: "Central aspects of the formation of children are training in prayer and introduction to Sacred Scripture." (Concacan Inc., 1997)

What people are saying

"The program is so prayerful!" "The children's books are colourful and inviting" "I'm learning so much myself by using the catechist guide" "Can't wait to show Nan THIS card!"

Here's an inspiring story from a catechist:

A mother brought her child to class. The mother is non-Catholic, the father Catholic; they have 2 children and the plan was that one child would be raised Catholic and the other non-Catholic. It seems that the mother (the non-Catholic) would be the parent participant in these classes, and would also bring the other to Sunday school. At the end of class, she was so impressed that she approached the catechist and asked if she could enroll the other child in classes in this church. So how do we evangelize? Bishop Hundt would tell you, "One person at a time; one person at a time".

CHURCH AND CIVIC EVENTS TO BE AWARE OF

- January 18 – 25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- February 14 – Valentine's Day
- February – city and towns' winter carnivals and festivals (This certainly fits in with the themes of the earth in winter, joy and beauty of creation and people coming together to celebrate)
- March 1 – Ash Wednesday
- April 13 – Holy Thursday
- April 14 – Good Friday
- April 15 – Easter Sunday
- April 22 – Earth Day

KEEP THESE DATES IN MIND FOR 2017

May 6, 2017 – our Diocesan Catechetical Conference

October 20-22, 2017 – Atlantic Catechetical Conference in Nova Scotia

We have meetings on both of these events in the next two weeks and as soon as we have final details information will be forwarded.

That's it for this time. Let us know if/how this was useful to you and is there something you would like to see next time.

Kay & Denise