

## OCTOBER/NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

We are attempting to send a newsletter every two months or so with 1) some reflections to think about, 2) formation material and/or websites 3) ideas for the coming months 4) requests for and sharing of experiences in your catechetical programs.

1. On Our Sunday Visitor's website in an article Joseph D. White makes the following points about the challenges of involving family:
  - Today, religion teachers face several challenges with regard to engaging the family. These challenges include hectic schedules and divided attention. One study from the University of Michigan showed a shocking decrease in the amount of time devoted solely to family conversation, a 33% decrease in families eating dinner together and a 28% drop in family vacations. (*I don't think Canadian statistics are much different.*)
  - Another challenge to engaging families is the increasing secularization of modern society...faith ...is seen as a school subject rather than a central aspect of one's life.
  - A third challenge is the fact that some adults are not yet well-formed in their faith, due to incomplete or inadequate catechesis.
  - There exists a cultural fear of commitment, likely due to the busy-ness of modern life – a struggle with taking on additional responsibilities.

With that said we still have to try to engage families as best we can. A few ideas for you:

- Invite them to stay with the children. If you can, after the opening prayer, have someone talk to the parents separately on the same theme as you are using with the children, letting them have an adult conversation on the topic. This also helps parents connect with other parents and share their struggles and their joys.
  - Affirm them in what they are doing, let them know how they catechize in daily life, give them some simple home prayer ideas, encourage them to do things with their children.
2. Have you registered yourself at [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com)? Go to pages 4-5 of the *Alive in Christ Web User Guide* (you were given this at our conference or study day [priests]) and follow the directions. If you need help, call us. When you have done that there is a wealth of information at your fingertips! Take your time surfing the site, as it can be overwhelming. My suggestion for starters is [http://aliveinchrist.osv.com/parish/catechist\\_formation/cf\\_catechists/43](http://aliveinchrist.osv.com/parish/catechist_formation/cf_catechists/43) Choose "Doctrinal Themes" and download an outline for yourself on the next theme you will be doing. Remember the theme in every year is the same, just developed in different ways. The video referred to in the outline is found in "Formation videos" in the same side menu. Maybe get a buddy to share with, or gather all the catechists...whatever works for you. Having a bit more background gives more confidence, I find.

Newman College offers many on-line courses and Certificate Programs. You can take a course for interest, or work towards a Certificate in Catholic Studies. Each course requires the completion of readings, assignments, and participation in on-line discussions. The cost per course is \$85. Here's the good news! MEMBERS OF OUR DIOCESE QUALIFY FOR A TUITION BURSARY! If you are interested visit <http://www.newman.edu/BenedictXVIIInstitute/CertificateinCatholicStudies.aspx> or give us a call.

3. Advent is fast approaching. Here are a few ideas for activities you may want in addition to the Advent/Christmas themes in *Alive in Christ*.
- [www.aliveinchrist.osv.com/parish/plan\\_lesson](http://www.aliveinchrist.osv.com/parish/plan_lesson) Once on the site, choose a grade and then choose "seasonal". There are lots of ideas to help you plan your Advent/Christmas lesson.
  - [www.loyolapress.com](http://www.loyolapress.com) Choose "Advent" for a free download. In the request to download you do not have to state the program you are using; you will still get the free download.
  - [www.missionsocieties.ca](http://www.missionsocieties.ca) Choose "Educational materials". There is a nice Advent calendar there.
  - [www.osv.com/Portals/4/pdf/30Things\\_Adventposter.pdf](http://www.osv.com/Portals/4/pdf/30Things_Adventposter.pdf) This is nice to put out in the church for everyone to take and use. I found it better to use 8 ½ by 14 paper for easier reading.

Don't forget Remembrance Day. It can easily tie in with the feast of All Saints and the little card you may choose to give out to the children.

4. Are you using the saint cards? It is not obligatory, we just thought it would be nice to give families heroes from our faith. They are inundated with reminders from the secular world. If you are using them, could you let me know how many you will need from January onward. In September, we sent out according to the number of books you ordered. That may have been too much or not enough.

Do you have any stories you would like to share with others around the diocese? Anything that worked well? Challenges? Looking for ideas? Feedback from parents or children? Please share with us, send pictures if you can, and we will share those with the rest of the diocese. We can learn so much from one another.

During the next few weeks we will be contacting parishes we haven't heard from to see how you are doing, and if there is any way we can help you in your catechetical ministry to children and their families.

### **KEEP THESE DATES IN MIND FOR 2017**

May 6, 2017 – our Diocesan Catechetical Conference

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

More information on both of these later.

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