



Your CHURCH, Your VOICE

Catechesis: A FAMILY'S VOCATION



Suzanne Lusty works at Saint Bernadette Parish where she is the Catechism Sacramental preparation and Youth coordinator. When first talking to her, the excitement in her voice makes you believe that she just started doing this, but you quickly learn that she has been involved in this her entire life in every parish where she has been a member.

The program at Saint Bernadette reaches 120 children starting at age 3, extending to the teenage years, and offering adult sessions to about 80 community members. Suzanne teaches grades 6-7-8 faith formation as well as sacramental preparation. It is a family affair because her daughter Jasmine teaches pre-school as well as working with the youth and sacramental preparation. There are also 35 other adults in the parish who help them out.

Suzanne and the catechetical team uses the Finding God program (Loyola Press) which the diocese has implemented. "What we want them to have is a relationship with God so that it remains with them no matter their journey in life."

The other core element is social justice and she adds that the Year of Mercy fits very well into this. As an example, they have just finished a collaborative project to give food and clothing to the Main Street Project. One other project is support to an orphanage in Sierra Leone. Her daughter Jasmine is very involved because every year she organizes a fashion show to raise money and is part of a group called Sierra Leone Action Mission (SLAM). They maintain contact with the orphans by exchanging letters and as Jasmine says, "they have become family." SLAM expanded last year during the Ebola crisis. Many people had to pull their children out of school. When the group learned that it costs 60 dollars a year to keep a child in school, they organized a "Wrap 5 dollars Around a Pencil Program" to raise funds.

The children responded enthusiastically. The reward as Jasmine has learned is that "these kids want to go to school".

Suzanne and the group of catechists are always striving towards their goal of "living your faith by giving life to learning." She adds that parental involvement is essential because parents are the primary teachers of the faith and vital in the proper preparation for the sacraments for both parents and children. †



Suzanne and
Jasmine Lusty

Catechetics MINISTRY

By: Koreen Hrizai



Knowing and sharing joy is part of everyday life, isn't it? We post photos of good times, text or call someone with good news. For us, people of God, the Good News is the Gospel and we are called to share this joy. «Catechesis is nothing other than the process of transmitting the Gospel, as the Christian community has received it, understands it, celebrates it, lives it and communicates it in many ways.» (GDC) #105

When I began as a catechist in 1998 at St. Joseph the Worker, I loved God and his church, but was new to sharing and growing in faith. I am thankful that I became a catechist! The formation and ways to learn and grow

are endless and have given me what I need to know and share this Good News! I had no idea how much my faith would grow and my relationship with Christ would deepen. In 2004, when I began as the archdiocesan coordinator I met others committed to catechesis as parents, grandparents, parish catechists, coordinators, catholic schools teachers and many religious, deacons and priests. How wonderful to share and serve in this ministry to children, youth and adults!

There are Six Core Tasks of Catechesis (GDC #85-87): Knowledge of the Faith, Liturgical Education, Moral Formation,

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Catechetics MINISTRY

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...Life, Missionary Initiation. These six tasks give a whole for catechesis to reach its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ. Evangelization is the Church's deepest identity. Evangelization brings the good news of the Gospel to all seeking the life-giving message of faith in Jesus Christ. Catechesis nourishes forms and deepens this faith received.

Over the years, we see how traditional catechism classes evolved to pass on the message of the Gospel. Catechesis continues to respond to peoples' needs and is relevant for today's culture. We offer new techniques, workshops, online

resources, apps, etc. There are many ways to catechize and bring ourselves and others deeper in communion with Christ and one another. Your diocesan service of Catechetics offers many resources, training and consultation. All parishioners are welcome to contact Koren directly to meet or access these resources. Enjoy this issue of *Your Church, Your Voice* which explores some unique ways catechesis is happening in our communities. "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

John 15:11 †

Confirmation Candidates IN ACTION



Elaine Kalyta

Christ Our Savior Parish in Steinbach has added a unique way of enhancing preparation for Confirmation through community involvement.

When Elaine Kalyta started preparing students for Confirmation quite a few years ago, the students were encouraged to volunteer at a soup kitchen as part of the process. The only option available was a local soup kitchen in Steinbach. About 5 years ago, when Father Gerry Sembrano was appointed Parish Priest, he suggested that the experience could be enhanced by visiting the Catholic soup kitchen in Winnipeg run by the Missionaries of Charity. The order was founded by Mother Teresa and works with disadvantaged people in the North End of Winnipeg. About six candidates go at a time and this year, the parish will be sending four groups of teenagers. They leave at 6:00 AM and when they arrive, they attend Mass before going to work in the kitchen with the Sisters. It's a small

place that serves a maximum of 12 people per sitting. They are mostly homeless people who know each other and this is their family. The Sisters insist that the people must ask to be served the soup and sandwiches. They can eat as much as they want, as long as they ask for it and eat it all. The Sisters let the students know that they should not offer the soup to the people, but that the people should ask for service. They are very aware of the words once spoken by Mother Teresa: "Charity is not a social service, it is a service to God." This is to remind the candidates that charity is not a social service, it is a religious act, part of the life of a Catholic, and of Jesus' words in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, "Ask and you will receive". They not only experience the good feelings that come when helping people, they receive some catechetical teachings as well. After working here, Elaine has had some kids telling her "We really felt that this was a service that is really needed."

In the name of THE FATHER

By: Fr. Dominic LaFleur



Q: "Nowadays, it seems that kids are confirmed at different ages - this is so confusing! Also, I thought that once my child is 'confirmed' then he or she 'is done' and there's no need to take catechism classes and so on! What's up with that?"

A: Simply put, there are two things to consider. The local Bishop decides on the age of Confirmation which can be anytime beginning with the age of discretion in the Latin Rite (CIC 891). Confirmation completes a primary formation, or is given with a view of a formation and

an initiation into the Life with Jesus through the Sacraments. Confirmation is therefore not the end of formation in the Spirit but the beginning of the greatest adventure of our lives. If we are not aware of this, we treat the Sacraments and commitment to the Church with the modern consumer mentality, like a Sacramental Country Club, where now I am a member who has access to all the services.

Were the Apostles done after they received the Holy Spirit? Did they return home the same men as before and say: There, finally, we're done with working for Jesus! Obviously not, Like

Catechesis Through THE PASSION PLAY



Manitoba's Passion Play

Seventeen years ago, Belita Sanders and a group of collaborators challenged themselves and created Manitoba's Passion Play.

Catechism has many forms and Belita and her team use the play to bring the story of Jesus to life while creating a sense of community for the volunteers who set it up and the audiences who attend. It is a huge task. It started with a gentleman who donated some pasture land to provide a site to build a stage. Belita has always been its Artistic Director and the first play was written by Sarah Pasafeld. Over the years, some scenes have been added or re-written. The current version follows Jesus's life from the Annunciation to his Resurrection. Every year this non-profit organization needs between 60 and 80 actors and approximately 120 support staff and musicians who volunteer their time to make it work.

Because of the way it is set up, Belita notes that "It is a moving experience especially if the story of Jesus is close to your heart. The biggest experience that we see is how people are moved when talking to the people who usher them out. For us it's great because we give the little that we have and God does the rest."

It is also a great example of Christian unity because from the very beginning it has always been different churches working together. The board is very ecumenical with a common purpose of bringing the story of Christ to the forefront. Belita adds, "It highlights the beauty of the people in this area because no matter the denomination, people have embraced this project." †

In 2016, the play will be presented July 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 and, as always, in La Rivière, Manitoba (passionplay.ca).

After helping the sisters clean up and prepare for the next day, the group goes out for lunch where they enjoy some fellowship and talk about their morning. Doing the active social service requirement of Confirmation and serving together builds fellowship among the candidates and brings them together as a group, making for strong group ties among them. They bond as a class.

In the afternoon, they meet up with other Confirmation candidates and meet Archbishop Albert LeGatt at the Saint Boniface Cathedral. They engage in a conversation with the archbishop about their upcoming confirmation and the history of our diocese. They are curious about what he does, his vestments, and other symbols of the Church. These meetings enhance the

confirmation ceremony because they feel a connection to him when he comes for the Confirmation ceremony. It is someone they feel is a "friend" who confirms them, not a stranger.

This day takes a lot of organizing, but Elaine and Jason, the Youth Minister, feel that it is worth all the work. At the end of the process, when they attend their next Confirmation meeting, there is a debriefing with the kids. As Elaine sums it up, none of the candidates come out of the experience unmoved. None of them say "this is something we had to do." They all say it is a faith-filled experience and that they felt appreciated and needed. It is something that they liked doing and would do again, if given the chance. It really seems like a positive way for candidates to become Catholics in action in the world. †

the Apostles at Pentecost who received the Holy Spirit, their Holy Job only began. A confirmed disciple is now considered a Soldier of Christ, a Knight of Truth. All Knights begin as squires, all soldiers go to boot camp in order to be armed and ready for the good fight. Any training is for a performance or a work of art later on. Is my Marriage done once after the Wedding Day? Am I a Holy Perfect Priest after my Ordination? Is my mission accomplished? Can I retire now that Graduation is over? Now that the basic training and lessons are over, is my work of art perfected? Now, it can be with the tools, vitamins and skills provided. Our accountability towards Jesus and His Church is now in our hands, I choose to say Yes to living my Faith to its fullest extent with Confirmation, it is not a Yes to mediocrity. Saint Paul tells us to run the race by the rules to win the crown of immortal glory, not for a crown of laurels, we would say for

an Oscar Award for best performance as a Christian...and to fight the good fight he calls it. (1 Timothy 6,12) He even speaks of pulling no punches as a spiritual boxer! (1 Corinthians 9,24-26)

Show me the fruits of your Confirmation is the challenge. We are called to cultivate the graces, the seeds of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we received at Confirmation when our roots in our Faith are deep enough that our Confirmation grows into a solid tree with branches that reach out to others offering fruits in due season. These fruits in the Spirit such as works of Mercy, that heal the body and the soul in the Name of Christ, known as corporal and spiritual works of Mercy, and the fruits of the Spirit are named by Saint Paul (Galatians 5,22 and 23). How we all pine and sigh for the Day when we can say with Jesus: Father! It is accomplished! I glorified You Father by completing the Work you gave me to do! (John 17,4) Amen. †

Catechesis of the VERY YOUNG

How do you engage children as young as 3 years old in liturgical catechesis? Three years ago in Lorette, they decided to begin The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. It is a program that was founded in Italy 60 years ago.

Holy Cross Parish in Winnipeg has been offering this for about 20 years. The Atrium, which

is defined as a physical place to learn, is at the centre of this program. In Lorette, it is a small room in the rectory where four catechists meet with the children. The catechists have followed a minimum of 90 hours of training and their main goal is to help the child grow and discover his/her relationship with God.

As Cécile Plante, one of the four catechists explains: "The children already have this wonder of God and we give them the materials and stories to further discover that God is love with a focus on the parable of the Good Shepherd."

In Lorette, the first level group is aged 3 to

WHY I LOVE BEING a catechist...



Denise Walley
ST. JOHN BERCHMANS PARISH

"I love being a catechist because the children are so vibrant, thoughtful, engaged in faith discussion, innocent and yearn for world justice and peace. They stir up the Holy Spirit within me and challenge me to be a better me." †



Nicole and Godfrey
Tamayo
ST. JOSEPH THE WORKER PARISH

"We love being catechists because we love being a part of the church community and watching the kids grow in their faith. Being catechists has been such a blessing in our lives as it has also helped us grow in our faith." †



Dawn Kautz
HOLY CROSS PARISH

"I love being a catechist because it taught me how to make a prayer space and pray at home with my children." †

Gathering to SEEK THE FACE OF CHRIST



Christian Martinez

The Western Conference of Catholic Religious Educators (WCCRE) took place from November 5th to 7th in St. Boniface. During those three days, during which catechists from Western and Northern Canada were gathered, several speakers were present for discussions. In the afternoon of Saturday, November 7th, various workshops to discuss, listen and pray took place at the Norwood Hotel.

The very first WCCRE conference was held in May 1970, and since then, believers from Western and Northern Canada have been meeting every year. Manitoba has not hosted WCCRE for 12 years. After this long wait, the theme of this year's conference in St. Boniface was "Seeking the Face of Christ, He is among us, come and see."

On the Saturday afternoon, after two days of conferences by Dr. Josephine Lombardi and Father Eugene O'Reilly, seven speakers led workshops. Koren Hrizai, one of the coordinators of the event, explained that the goal of these meetings was to help each and every one of us to grow in faith through discussions on subjects such as education, the sharing of resources, and any and all concerns common to believers.

In four different rooms, Sr. Eva Salomon, Kathleen Nguyen, Patrick Gillespie and Vicky Adams, who were from Edmonton, Vancouver or Winnipeg, each broached a subject associated with religion. Like every other workshop, the one led by Patrick Gillespie - "The catechumenal model is unbelievable" - began with a prayer, after which the thirty or so people present started sharing with each other on the questions "Who is God?" and "How can I be a good person and grow my faith in Jesus?"

At the same time, in another room of the Norwood Hotel, Kathleen Nguyen spoke of the role of the family today, with respect to faith and raising our children. Each of the participants was invited to share his or her reaction to this question and the

relationship between the role of the parents and the interior work everyone has to do. Kathleen Nguyen perceives in these discussions a means of reflecting on our own lives, of learning who we are. According to Kathleen, we must practice our faith every day.

At the half-hour break in the afternoon it was time to take stock of the situation. For Michelle, who attended the workshops, this Saturday afternoon was an opportunity not to be missed. She claimed that it was important for her to be there, saying it was a good meeting. She added that her faith in God allows her to better live her life every day, and here she could discuss things with others and learn a lot.

During the second half of the afternoon, four new conferences took place, including one in French on the subject of questioning the transmission of faith.

Various subjects were discussed in each of the workshops. Christian Martinez led a workshop dealing with the role of the new technologies, and in particular with regard to social media, in today's evangelization. After an opening prayer, Christian Martinez had the opportunity to bring up the subject of society as it related to faith. The goal of these workshops was ongoing interaction between participants of all ages. Koren Hrizai, Coordinator of the event, is proud to have been able to contribute to this wonderful meeting. Koren says she enjoyed the meetings with different people; she particularly liked the way the speakers (Dr. Josephine Lombardi and Father Eugene O'Reilly), as well as all the workshop leaders, did some intertwining, creating bonds of mercy and compassion between all the participants.

Approximately 80 people were divided into the various workshops that Saturday afternoon. But over 300 people answered the call and showed up, gathering in St. Boniface from November 5th to 7th for discussions and debate. †

6 and they hope to eventually add another level. The sessions are offered both in English and French and they use the Montessori method, which emphasizes self-learning through guidance and training of the senses. The catechists use the materials to present the bible stories or liturgical gestures to the children. It is then up to the children to choose their particular work, like art or other related tasks, which will enable them to deepen their understanding of what they have heard and seen.

Cécile adds that the sessions also include prayer time and she has noticed the children are very spontaneous and use this time to give thanks. She adds that the parents appreciate the program because it demystifies the mass for their children and parents are welcome to come and see what their child is doing during the sessions. †

If you are interested in beginning the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, please contact the Diocesan Service of Catechetics.



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Synods on the Family: DID YOU KNOW?

By: Sophie Freynet-Agossa

Early on in his pontificate, Pope Francis called two Synods on the Family: the first to take place in the fall of 2014, and the second in the fall of 2015. The goal of these Synods, which bishops from all over the world attended, was for the Church to reflect on and discuss the realities and challenges faced by today's families. The goal here was not to reinvent the Church's doctrine, but rather to review our pastoral approach in order to better welcome and support families.

At the closing of the second and last Synod last October, the synod fathers issued a document summarizing their discussions with Pope Francis and requested that he create an official document on the theme. As such, an apostolic exhortation on the family is expected from the Pope this year, and according to certain sources, this document may come out sooner than later...perhaps as early as the spring of 2016! Among the highly anticipated topics that the pontiff is expected to address are: recommended pastoral approaches in relation to homosexuals, as well as those who are divorced and remarried (without having obtained an annulment.). That being said, it can be expected that the apostolic exhortation will not focus exclusively on these sensitive topics, but will explore a variety of issues, from support for newly married couples, to faith education for children.

It is worth mentioning that the purpose of the Synods on the Family was to make recommendations to the pontiff, but that their final documents do not have formal influence in the Church. It is rather Pope Francis who has the final say on the matters discussed, and it is his apostolic exhortation that will definitively leave its mark on the history of the Church, in relation to the family. †





Dear FRIENDS,

The catechesis of children and adults has always held a central place in the ministry of the Church. Helping young people get to know Jesus, and therefore get to know the love of the Father, is a great and beautiful responsibility. It is the responsibility of many: firstly the parents, then the Christian community, including the pastor and catechists, and finally, the entire Church.

At one time, society as a whole also played a very important role in providing common values and guidelines that were accepted by all. This is no longer the case. In fact, in many areas, the values and behaviours encouraged by society go against Christian values and teachings. In this situation of plurality (the good side) and relativism (the bad side), it falls to the parents and the parish to redouble their efforts in the beautiful task of transmitting to children and youth the light of truth and the fire of love that Christ brings us.

I firmly believe that the parish's most important task is to help parents to grow in their own faith as adults. This can be accomplished through discussion and sharing sessions with parents while their children are preparing for sacraments. To help parents grow with their children in the home, starting in early childhood, we can provide them with appropriate resources, such as illustrated books about the history of our faith, simple prayers and even games that teach our faith. Literature, DVDs, and website recommendations can also allow them to search out answers to questions regarding faith, church and life that interest them. The pastor working with the Parish Pastoral Council must endeavour at all times to educate and support young parents in their own development. In this way, children who are constantly observing their parents will receive a catechesis firmly rooted in daily life, and not simply in programs and ideas. †

+ Albert LeGatt
Archbishop of St-Boniface

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www.archsaintboniface.ca/resources/en/ or 204-594-0271.

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Upcoming EVENTS

Jubilee of Mercy

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By doing certain things between December 8, 2015 and November 20, 2016, the faithful can obtain a plenary indulgence, that is to say a complete remission before God of the temporal punishment for sins that have already been forgiven.

Read more: <http://www.archsaintboniface.ca/main.php?p=636>



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"Every time I go to St. Malo camp, I never want to leave because it was really fun. I learn lots, and I always feel good after. Every time I go to camp it ALWAYS reminds me that I can, and will be a saint one day if I try... We've moved just a few months ago, and St. Malo feels like home." -Camper, girl, 13

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1. A Catechist
I love being a catechist because...
Include parish (name optional)

2. A Family Selfie
I love catechism because...
Indicate parish (names optional)

Please send all submissions to khризai@archsaintboniface.ca



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