



D I O C E S E
of NEW ULM

Office of Religious Education
Office of Youth Ministry

Gatherings

Reflections

Dear DREs and Youth Ministers:

November 6, 2008

From the Religious Education Office:

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Intergenerational Catechesis Parish Catechesis for the Whole Community By Bryan Reising

Take a look at your parish. Take a look at your fellow members of your parish. Do you know them? Do you have opportunities to get to know them, share faith with them, and learn with them? This past spring, it was such a blessing to have our Area Faith Community Missions. This built a foundation to implement intergenerational catechesis or whole community catechesis for our parishes.

Critics of this catechesis claim that it is just faith sharing, that there is no room for the content and age-appropriate catechetical opportunities, that even though the whole community is invited – the whole community does not come. These are valid concerns, but let us look at this model in depth. In talking with practitioners, experts in this field, and ordinary parishioners, they alleviate many of these concerns.

What is Intergenerational Catechesis?

"Catechesis is a responsibility of the entire Christian community."
—From the *General Directory for Catechesis*, paragraph 220

It is a vision of catechesis to maximize our efforts to teach and form the faith of every person within the parish. It is rooted in early Church history, formation of religious throughout the centuries, the documents of the

Second Vatican Council, the RCIA, the General Directory of Catechesis, and other official documents of the Church.

What are its components?

- **Renewal and Opportunities for Ongoing Conversion** – Like our Area Faith Community Missions, we need to incorporate the idea of having opportunities for an evangelizing renewal within our parishes. Conversion precedes catechesis. It is the foundation.
- **Life-long Catechesis** – It promotes the idea that we need to learn about our faith throughout our entire lives - no matter how much education or experience we have.
- **Faith Sharing** – This component does not replace catechetical learning, but it enhances it to see how we assimilate the teachings of Christ into our lives. Many parishes incorporate a “question of the week” derived from the Sunday Gospel reading and the homily.



- **Family As the Domestic Church and a Place for Learning** – It recognizes the role of parents/guardians and children as they learn together about the faith and create opportunities for prayer, devotion, and learning.
- **Eucharist as the Center** – It recognizes that the celebration of the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. The

Eucharist inspires us to learn more and empowers us to do Christ’s work.

- **Age-Appropriate Catechesis** – This traditional model is still very important as more and more practitioners and experts promote a blended model of both the age appropriate as well as the intergenerational. With adults, it is appropriate to have small Christian communities as well as the intergenerational gathering. In the small Christian community, they can learn more in depth about the Word of God and the teachings of the Church.

- **Intergenerational Gatherings** – A potluck meal is shared and the pastor, a catechetical leader, or a guest speaker talks about a teaching of the Church. Some parishes have just adults attend this gathering. Other parishes have adults and teens (see the following article about youth and intergenerational catechesis: <http://www.cmdnet.org/images/Youth%20Ministry/Youth%20Growing%20in%20Faith%20as%20Part%20of%20the%20Intergenerational%20Community.pdf>) Yet, some other parishes have every age group, and catechists can sit with their students so that they can discuss and respond to the presentation in an age-appropriate way.
- **Stewardship** - It promotes the expectation for involvement with the parish and within society by sharing our gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Special efforts are reaching out to Catholics we miss, the unchurched, welcoming those of other cultures, and social outreach to the poor.

What are parishes doing to implement this model?

My first experience of intergenerational evangelization/ catechesis was in Mexico in 1990-1991. Four times a year, the parish would gather all parishioners for an entire day under a circus tent. The pastor, pastoral staff, and master catechists would present a series of catechetical talks and activities. They also gathered for meals, the Eucharist, and prayer on that day. How would they determine the four times? Four times a year, there is a fifth Saturday in a month. For example, in 2009, it occurs in January, May, August, and October. Monthly, these parishioners would meet as a neighborhood, and weekly within a small Christian community. As they are learning about their faith, they experience Church at various levels.

Most parishes begin with an evangelizing renewal experience with a concrete plan for follow-up, which include the above components.

Some parishes follow a plan already developed like St. Paul's Parish in Ham Lake, Minnesota, and their Family Faith Formation model (<http://www.familyformation.net/>) or the Generations of Faith model (<http://www.generationsoffaith.org/>) used by parishes throughout the country. Other parishes take the curriculum they use for age-appropriate catechesis and add intergenerational opportunities through a corresponding website. The following curriculum promotes intergenerational catechesis:

- Loyola Press
http://www.christourlife.org/m_frmwork.asp?id=83413 or http://www.findinggod.org/m_frmwork.asp?id=91967
- RCLBenziger
<http://www.wholecommunitycatechesis.com/> or

<http://www.christjesustheway.com/program/ogs/tensteps.shtml>

- Sadlier
<http://www.webelieveweb.com/gather.cfm?language=en>
- Harcourt
<http://your.harcourtreligion.com/pof/program/index2.html>

Intergenerational Catechesis can succeed within the parish if it is well thought out in its planning and if each component is implemented. However, pastoral leadership and catechetical leaders need to realize that it does not happen overnight. We need to take our baby steps first.

No matter the size of the parish, it can also create a greater sense of community. It will enable your members to know one another better, care for one another, and grow in the faith more deeply together as a parish. In addition, whether you have families with children in Catholic schools or religious education, whether you have many who are retired or young families, everyone can participate in this model of learning and growing in faith. Most importantly, it will lead all to encounter Christ in a real way as we follow Christ together.



For further information, *Fashion Me a People* is a conference regarding Intergenerational Catechesis with all its facets. Over 750 people attended last year. See their website:

http://secure.cmdnet.org/store.cfm?px=86&CFID=597800&CF_TOKEN=ce39b9093c23bae4-507CCC33-C2E2-338F-ADA60C703986C9B8

Advent Resources Online

Creative Communications for the Parish:

<https://catholic.creativecommunications.com/index2.php>

eCatholic.org:

http://www.ecatholicism.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/category.display/category_id/55/index.cfm

Liguori: www.liguori.org/advent/

Loyola Press:

<http://www.loyolabooks.org/seriesdetail.asp?prodcatname=Seasonal>

Passionist Publications: <http://www.cptryon.org/prayer/adx/>

Saint Anthony Messenger Press:

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Advent/default.asp>

Twenty-Third Publications:

<http://www.twentythirdpublications.com/search.php?category=Seasonal+Booklets>

Advent Resources from the Diocesan Media Library

- For Elementary Grades: **The Angels Advent Lesson** by Twenty-Third Publications
- For Middle School Grades: **Celebrating the Church Year – Advent** by Paulist Press
- For High School Grades and Adults: **The Christian Year** (Section Two – Advent) by Cathedral Films and Video
- For Catechists and Parents: **Advent: A Time for Hope with Kathleen Chesto** by Twenty-Third Publications

These and many other resources (DVDs, videos, and audio) can be used by member parishes, schools, and individuals. Check out the Media library catalog at <http://dnu.kdsi.net/search/search.php>

National Symposium for Adolescent Catechesis

Bryan Reising will be attending this national symposium from November 5-8. He and 99 other parish and diocesan level coordinators and directors, publishers, theologians, and national level directors will gather to look at this important topic in light of the “Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age” promulgated by the US Bishops last November. A “virtual” symposium is available online for youth ministers, Catholic high school religion teachers, DREs, and catechists for high school grades within our diocese, and they are encouraged to participate. This virtual symposium will be available starting November 17, 2008. For further information and how to participate, see the following website:
<http://www.adolescentcatechesis.org/symposium/virtual.htm>

VIRTUS Trainings

December 3, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. Winsted
 December 9, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. Bird Island
 January 12, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. Redwood Falls
 February 12, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. Arlington

Advent Prayer Day

This year we will have two Advent Prayer Services sponsored by the Diocese of New Ulm. They will both take place on December 14, 2008.

- The first one will be at St. Peter Catholic Church in Saint Peter, MN at 2:00 pm.
- The second one will be at St. Peter Catholic Church in Canby at 7:00 pm.

All families and individuals are invited to join our bishop, Most Rev. John LeVoir, for this special event. They are to bring clothing for babies, blankets, and layettes. These will be sent to our mission at San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala, and a local charity within the Diocese of New Ulm. In addition, each family can bring their baby Jesus from their Christmas crèche to be blessed by the bishop. A social will follow each service.

Upcoming Gather with Bishop LeVoir

Our next Gather will be at the Center for Youth Ministry in Renville on Saturday, November 22, from 10:30 am - 3:00 pm. Our featured guest will be our new bishop, Most Rev. John LeVoir. He will talk on “Catechesis in Our Time.” We invite all catechetical leaders and youth ministers to this gathering! Please RSVP to Cindy Blickem for this Gather. (cblickem@dnu.org or 507-233-5325)

ACRE

Remember, this is the month that we assess our 5th, 8th, and 11th graders with NCEA ACRE Assessments. In addition, new catechists can take the assessment, IFG (Information for Growth). This helps improve our catechetical formation! Our office has extras if you need them. Just let us know!

Parish Catechesis Question

- ❖ If you are implementing Intergenerational Catechesis, share your experience. What is working for you? Are you implementing many of the components described in the article?

Mark Your Rel Ed / Youth Ministry Calendars for 2008-09

Sat, Nov 22	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:30-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Jan 5	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, Feb 2	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	10:00-3:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Sun, Mar 15	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers	2:00-5:00	Center for Youth Ministry
Mon, April 20	Gather for DREs & Youth Ministers – Curriculum Day	10:00-3:00	Catholic Pastoral Center, New Ulm
Sun, April 26	Junior High Festival	1:00-7:00	St. Mary's High School, Sleepy Eye
Mon, May 18	DRE/YM Spring Fling	Noon-4:00	Victorian Inn, Hutchinson
TBA	Young Men's Discipleship Camp	Thu 9:30 am-Fri 5:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry
TBA	Young Women's Discipleship Camp	Thu 9:30 am-Fri 5:00 pm	Center for Youth Ministry

From the Youth Ministry Office:

Sr. Margaret McHugh, DSMP

Director of Youth Ministry & Vocation Awareness

mmchugh@dnu.org



"The Word of God in the Life and Ministry of the Church"

International Meeting
of Bishops in Rome
October 5-26, 2008

I've been following the Synod on Scripture held in Rome October 5-26 as the Bishops discussed the "Word of God in the Life and Ministry of the Church." This has implications for the way we minister to youth in our schools, religious education classes, and youth groups. As you know, the foundational document on youth ministry is still *Renewing the Vision* (see <http://www.usccb.org/laity/youth/rtvcontentets.shtml>) published by the USCCB in 1997. It outlines the eight components of ministry with adolescents: advocacy, catechesis, community life, evangelization, justice/service, leadership development, pastoral care, and prayer/worship. The way we pray with our youth and encourage them to pray connects with so many of the listed components!

Since Archbishop Nienstedt first introduced me to the practice of *lectio divina* and it has become an approach I've used often with young people, I was especially interested in the topic of *lectio* as it came up in the Synod. This ancient way of praying with Scripture is becoming increasingly popular. Pope Benedict spoke of this early on in his pontificate on September 16, 2005:

I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of "Lectio divina": "the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to Him with trusting openness of heart" (cf. "Dei Verbum," n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church -- I am convinced of it -- a new spiritual springtime.

Lectio divina was also the topic of our last *Gathers*, our monthly gathering for Youth Ministers and DREs on October 20. For that occasion, I showed a Power Point presentation put together by the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry. After explaining and working

through the steps of *lectio*, we broke into smaller groups to "practice praying." We used the following method:

Listening for the gentle touch of Christ, the Word *The Literal Sense*

1. One person reads aloud twice the passage of Scripture, as others are attentive to some segment that is especially meaningful to them.
2. Silence for 1-2 minutes. Each hears and silently repeats a word or phrase that attracts.
3. Sharing aloud: a word or phrase that has attracted each person, a simple statement of one or two words. No elaboration.

How Christ, the Word, speaks to ME *Allegorical Sense*

4. Second reading of the same passage by another person.
5. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "Where does this touch my life today?"
6. Sharing aloud: briefly "I hear, I see..."

What Christ, the Word Invites me to do *The Moral Sense*

7. Third reading by still another person.
8. Silence for 2-3 minutes. Reflect on "I believe that God wants me to ...today/this week."
9. Sharing aloud: briefly share the results of your reflection.

The National Directory of Catechesis says that, "Catechesis is enriched when the word of God shines forth in the life of the Church, especially in the lives of the saints and in the Christian witness of the faithful. And it is made more fruitful when the word of God is known from those genuine moral values that, by divine providence, are found in human society."



On the evaluations for the Senior High Rally, young people were asking for more information on the saints. Feel free to run off the next page for use with your young people.



So, whatza "saint"?

The Essential Catholic Handbook: A Summary of Beliefs, Practices and Prayers, by John O'Connor, defines a saint this way:

"In the wide sense, any person known for Christian holiness; in the strict sense, a person who has manifested heroic devotion during his or her life and who is officially honored by the Church as one who has attained heavenly glory and as one through whom God freely chooses to exhibit exceptional generosity."

I like to think of saints as signs along the highway of life, people who offer direction, often without saying a word. These are the many named and nameless folks who point us to heaven by the way they live.

St. Anthony's Messenger Press notes under "Saintmaking 101": "But none of us can *make* ourselves saints. None of us can even say the name of Jesus in faith without his grace. It is God who reaches out to us, not we who first choose God. God reaches out to us every day in a million ways, so grace is always there. It all starts with God and it ends with God, and in between there are nothing but God-laden moments, although we may not always recognize them as such."

Their website also does a good job outlining the process of "saint-making": "There are three steps necessary for a person to become a saint. First, the person must be named **Venerable**, which means he or she exhibited heroic virtues in life. Before moving on to beatification, the person must have a miracle attributed to him or her. Once such a miracle is confirmed, the person is known as **Blessed**. For the final step before canonization, the individual must have yet another miracle attributed to his or her intercession—unless he or she was a martyr for the faith. Only then is a person "canonized" and referred to as **Saint**.

Often people will say Catholics worship saints. Actually, it's more of a "looking up to" them as examples of how we should live. Paintings or statues of these saints serve as visual reminders for us to emulate the saints in our own lives. We pray to saints for their intercession, which is like asking a friend of God to ask God for a favor.

Remember, though, that just because someone has been declared a saint doesn't mean he or she didn't have struggles. Many holy people—including saints—have wrestled with temptations ranging from anger to prejudice to substance abuse. In fact,

St. Bernadette once said of the saints, "Don't tell me their virtues; tell me their weaknesses and how they overcame them!"

"Keep in mind that our community is not composed of those who are already saints, but of those who are trying to become saints. Therefore, let us be extremely patient with each other's faults and failures."

— Mother Teresa quoted in *No Greater Love* edited by Becky Benenate & Joseph Durepos

Thomas J. Craughwell, author of *Saints for Every Occasion: 101 of Heaven's Most Powerful Patrons* says, "Catholics are intensely attached to our saints. We regard these heavenly intercessors not only as sources of inspiration, but also as our 'good neighbors,' as the English mystic Julian of Norwich described them. Saints are faithful and reliable friends who come to our help during times of trouble. Although times change, our need for the help of the saints remains constant. And so, in every age, Catholics have assigned new areas of patronage to saints who have been longtime favorites."

In her book *Saint Watching* (Viking Press), Phyllis McGinley writes that saints are human beings with an added dimension. "They are obsessed by goodness and by God as Michelangelo was obsessed by line and form, as Shakespeare was bewitched by language, Beethoven by sound."

Not too many years ago, I was preparing a lesson for my RE class on the saints. The simplest and most concrete example I could give them was a Halloween pumpkin, I told my students,

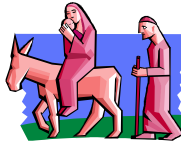


"Saints are people who let God's light shine through them."

Modern people listen more willingly to Witnesses than teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.

—Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 41

Have You Ever... Done This for Advent?!



Advent *Lectio Divina*

If *lectio divina* is new to you, perhaps you could try it just for the Advent season. The beauty of this prayer form is that it can be prayed individually or in a group. Many people who pray *lectio divina* find it to be a very calming, peaceful, and focusing prayer. If you've never done it before, I'd suggest trying it yourself *at least once* or in a group of adults before you introduce it to your youth. This way, you'll familiarize yourself with both the Scripture and the method. The method outlined in my first article is just one of many adaptations. I'd like to suggest the following Scripture passages as especially appropriate for Advent:

- Matthew 1:18-25 Joseph's Dream
- Mark 1:1-8 Preaching of John the Baptist
- Luke 1:26-38 Announcement of Jesus' Birth
- Luke 1:57-66 The Birth of John

Advent Service Projects

After you've prayed, I'd like to propose two original and potentially life-changing ideas to practice for Advent... One involves outreach to pregnant mothers and newborns by way of Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem and the other is an invitation to join Christians around the globe to help create "A Complaint Free World." The first involves financial aid and hard cash; the second won't challenge your economic resources nearly as much as your negativity and lack of discipline. If you decide to go with the first proposal, you may save the life of a mother or child near the birthplace of Jesus. If you choose the second, your family, friends, Church, and neighborhood might never be the same!

Birthplace of Hope

Many of you facilitate service projects with your youth. This is an opportunity to reach out and offer hope in the very place Jesus was born. You might consider giving a "Baby Shower" this Advent to help mothers and babies in Bethlehem. Visit the website of "Birthplace of Hope" for more information: <http://birthplaceofhope.org/babyshower.html>

"A mere 500 yards from the traditional site of Jesus' birth, a Bethlehem maternity hospital is committed to seeing that no expectant mother is ever told there is "no room."

Holy Family Hospital is an obstetrical/gynecological facility--the only one in the

region that can handle the complicated medical conditions of women living in extreme poverty and under the shadow of political strife which stalks the birthplace of the "Prince of Peace."

The women who give birth at the hospital may have different traditions but they are united in the primal need of all laboring women: safety and care as they bring their children into the World.

Like Mary and Joseph, these families are on journey to find a place of refuge, a place of promise, a place where their babies can be delivered safely."

A Complaint Free World

Several years ago, a pastor in Kansas City, MO, challenged his congregation to fast from negativity and complaining. To help them do this, he proposed wearing a purple silicon bracelet. Every time they caught themselves complaining (a very natural human tendency) he asked them to switch the band to their other wrist. He was also quick to point out that complaining is not the same as, "informing someone of a mistake or deficiency so that it can be put right. And to refrain from complaining doesn't necessarily mean putting up with bad quality or behavior. There is no ego in telling the waiter your soup is cold and needs to be heated up—if you stick to the facts, which are always neutral. 'How dare you serve me cold soup...?' That's complaining."

"Begin to wear the bracelet, on either wrist. When you catch yourself complaining, gossiping or criticizing (it's ok, everyone does) move the bracelet to the other arm and begin again. If you hear someone else who is wearing a bracelet complain, you may point out their need to switch the bracelet to the other arm; BUT if you're going to do this, you must move your bracelet first! Stay with it. It may take many months but when you reach 21 days you will find that your entire life is happier, more loving, and more enjoyable."

For more information and to get a practically free purple silicon bracelet, visit: <http://www.AComplaintFreeWorld.org>.

Junior High Festival at St. Mary's in Sleepy Eye April 26, 2009

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this annual event for young people grades 6-9. More information will be forthcoming in the months ahead.

Operation Andrew Dinners

If you know a young man whom you feel may be called to the seminary or the priesthood, why don't you invite him to attend one of the two upcoming Operation Andrew Dinners?

- November 19, 2008 - Dawson/Madison/Appleton: Please contact Sr. Vivian Petersen at 320-769-4465 to RSVP.
- December 1, 2008 - Church of St. Phillip, Litchfield: RSVP to Fr. Joe Steinbeisser at 320-693-3313.

Frassati Visit

The Office of Vocations has set two weekends aside to make a college visit to the University of St. Thomas and connect with events conducted by the Archdiocesan Office of Vocations. This is really a way to connect for your young people to connect their faith with their future. It is meant for juniors and seniors in high school.

* December 4-7, 2008 * February 5-8, 2009

For more information please contact Sr. Margaret McHugh at 507-359-2966 or Fr. Craig Timmerman at 507-233-9501. See the attached flyer.

Senior High Rally in Benson

The Senior High Rally was well attended on October 26 despite strong winds and even a little snow in some parts of the diocese. Over 400 participated in the event with several dozen joining us just for Mass with Bishop LeVoir. It was his first time attending a Rally as our Bishop and he did a great job!

Sr. Mary Bethany Zietler, a Nashville Dominican sister teaching in Stillwater, MN, shared her testimony about "Becoming Catholic." Jenica Thornby, a Columbine survivor, shared a powerful witness of God at work in her life in the face of tragedy. Our keynote speaker, John Flynn, came all the way from Texas to deliver a message on "Fitness to Witness" which was the theme of the whole Rally.

Christine Pinto from Catholic Area Parishes gave invaluable assistance in organizing the event from the very beginning. We could not have done it without her and a small army of volunteers from Benson, DeGraff, Kerkhoven, and Murdock! Special thanks to the Diocesan Youth Council for an awesome skit and to Sean and Jessie Collins, Warren and Stacy Johnson, Craig and Carla Johnson, Neil and Nancy Miller, and so many others. Many, many thanks to all who attended, participated and assisted!

Two Essay Contest for Young Catholics

Both on the topic of "Mission"

The Propagation of the Faith is launching an essay contest for young Catholics (grades 9-12). The contest's theme: *Got Good News?* Teens are asked to tell the story of a missionary they know or have learned about--a priest, Religious Brother or Sister, or layperson who shares with others the "Good News of Jesus." Entries must be postmarked by Friday, December 5. Winners will be announced in February 2009. Please check our website at: www.dnu.word.youth.html.

Maryknoll is also sponsoring a similar essay contest. Check their magazine and website for more info. <http://society.maryknoll.org/index.php?module=MKArticles&func=display&spotlight=1&id=12>

World Youth Day 2011

August 15-21 * Madrid, Spain

We're making arrangements with Eric Dulka at New Ulm Travel for WYD 2011. It's not too early to let us know you're interested!

NCYC 2009

National Catholic Youth Conference

November 19-21, 2009

Kansas City, Missouri

We'll probably leave by bus on Tuesday, November 17, and return late on Sunday night, November 22, 2009. We're working out the details right now and will be sharing more information soon.

Riverbend TEC

112 W Van Dusen St., Springfield, MN 56087

507-723-4141 riverbendtec@newulmtel.net

www.riverbendtec.org

The next TEC retreat is November 22-24 in New Ulm.

Jesse Manibusan - In Concert

Friday, November 21, 7:00 p.m., at St. Andrew's Catholic Church, 101 S 1st St., Fairfax. There will be pre-concert Praise & Worship by Rick and Gwen Christiansen, of New Ulm, starting at 6:30 p.m. Jesse is internationally known as a dynamic and charismatic Christian musician, recording artist, composer, comedian and storyteller. There will be lunch for sale, youth bibles, Christian T-shirts, Bethlehem Woodcarvings, and the artist's music. Advance Tickets are on sale until November 19. For more information and ticket prices, contact: St. Andrew's Parish Office - 507-426-7739, or e-mail: ffgw@redred.com Presented by AFC of Fairfax, Franklin, Gibbon, & Winthrop, as a fundraiser for youth NCYC, World Youth Day, and mission trips.