

Agenda Forming Disciples June 5, 2023 Family 21 6:30 PM at Blessed Trinity - Faith Formation Room of the school building behind the church

Attending: Nancy Arnold, Toni Goins-Singleton, Deborah Jones, Lanette Jennings, Deborah Obstarczyk. Fr. Bob Gebhardt, Jr (second half of meeting)

Excused: Dcn. Jerry Hodson, John Monnin, Ed White, Olive Ndiyashimi

- **Response from our consult with Fr. Ron Sajak**
  - *Based on Fr. Ron's comments, it was agreed that we would add a question on the registration about who else is allowed to pick up or get information, to send letters to homes with the schedules in addition to the bulletin, to encourage rather than require a parent to stay during classes, and to do in person general registrations on Sundays with the person assisting registration indicating based on age, grade in school etc which programs and sacraments are appropriate on the form rather than asking parents to register for specific areas. Then we send letters with the schedules. Also, we would add a more formal program for parents during class time. These things might be beneficial for families who are primarily Spanish-speaking at home, too. An additional suggestion was to use "icebreakers" to get conversations rolling.*
  
- **Safe Environment**
  - *Two for the family as a whole and will do the reports*
  - *Parishes would continue to have one of their own if they prefer; however, that person would not be responsible for the reports.*
  
- **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.** *After several months of trying to set this up, one site was located to visit; however, we could not set a time that worked. The pillar committee has reviewed the program materials and has committed to looking into using some of the principles in working with preschool children, but not this program as it is set up. The reasons were small numbers of children, relatively high upfront costs, and not enough people to get the job done well. We will look into getting some of the preschool "theology" for children books suggested by Fr. Jud, and other similar books, and order the preschool program that we used for a four-year-old this past year.*
  
- **Youth and Young Adult Ministry** - Andrew Pitisi joined us for about 20 minutes. He was instrumental in growing this ministry in a medium size congregation while working with two parishes. Andrew worked with St. Benedict and St. Leo parishes. He has over a decade of experience in this area. Andrew joined us via Zoom to give some insight into how this was done.

- *We concentrated our discussion on young adults as this seems to be an area that is ready for some improvements*
  - *It was not surprising that Andrew emphasized things we have seen in other areas: relationship, accompaniment, and presence.*
  - *Name pins so that the role is easily identified, but has not used business cards*
  - *One early success was an invitation to a bonfire*
  - *Walking around, greeting new people, handing them something, inviting them to join us for something specific*
  - *He used icebreakers and guest speakers*
  - *Some things were successful for a couple of years and then there was less interest*
  - *As group forms, an increased emphasis on prayer and reflection*
  - *He used mentors based on interests*
  - *We discussed the value of age, wisdom, and experience versus “youth” pastor who is also young. We came away with the sense that we need both to work together as long as the older person was enthusiastic, willing to let the youth take the lead on things, and energetically participating. (Train your successor.) The younger person gives more of the youth perspective.*
  - *Identify who does what in bulletin in terms that people will understand - with contact information*
- **Answers to questions from the inventory**
    - *Fees - \$10/child and \$50/family maximum - direct to parish office if unable to pay then ask the family to sign up for cooking and cleanup*
    - *Food - Each parish take a turn and look for donations*
    - *Record keeping and sacrament reporting - discussed requirements*
    - *The items below were deferred to our July meeting:*
    - *Recruiting catechists*
    - *Catechist training*
    - *Family calendar*
- **Where and in what other ways do we teach?**
    - *Homilies*
    - *Prayer*
    - *Meetings*
    - *Storytelling*
    - *Bulletins*
    - *Youth groups*
    - *Technology*
    - *Twitter/Facebook*
    - *Family Faith Formation*

- Movie presentations
- Sacramental Preparation
- Adult presentations on various topics - Catholic Social Teaching
- Adult Faith Formation - *please review the results of your parish surveys for opportunities as well as belief in core Catholic teachings - added to July agenda*
- **Things we wish that we were still doing and any other suggestions from the “Big Ideas” category**
  - Family Faith Formation - maybe retry the four times a year program, with some added content
  - Movie Nights - maybe an outdoor summer event with a firepit. SMdP suggests their site would work. Need to fundraise for some equipment. Other equipment is already available from within the parishes. A committee to look into this for this summer under our existing Faith Formation group will be decided at our next meeting.
  - Children’s Liturgy of the Word or Children’s Church - including teen group. After discussion of the difficulties and reasons that this has not been happening, it was decided that we might use the same catechists and rotate which parish had it each week as we train more catechists and mentors. It was generally agreed that we would work toward this goal while maintaining our current program. The competition with extracurricular activities was noted as a problem.

#### Upcoming Meetings

- Next meeting July 3, 2023, 6:30 PM in person at BT
  - Catechist and leader formation
  - Recruiting catechist
  - Family calendar
  - RCIA/OCIA
  - Youth Ministry report of what CB has been doing
  - Marriage
  - Adult Faith Formation - *please review the results of your parish surveys for opportunities as well as belief in core Catholic teachings*

August meeting - Planning for the future General Framework

September meeting - Planning for the future Expanding on framework

**On-going questions to keep in mind when we are planning:**

- What do we perceive our needs to be?
  - *Connection of families to each other*
  - *Connection of families/individuals to a parish community*
  - *Money*
  - *“Staff”*
- Are there other groups or individuals we will want to contact to create a plan or who have particular skills and knowledge that will help us? *Liturgy Pillar contacted to obtain their input as to celebrations of the sacraments in particular, First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, Baptism, and Confirmation.*

New resources to take a look at:

[Family Faith Formation](#)

[Catechesis of the Good Shepherd](#) website

[7 minute video on Catechesis of the Good Shepherd](#)

[Vatican document on youth](#)

[Age and Youth "Pastors"](#)

**Quote from *Living as Missionary Disciples***

*Evangelization invites people to experience the gradual and lifelong process of conversion: to draw all people into a deeper relationship with God, to participate in the sacramental life of the Church and to develop a mature conscience. (p. 12)*



Year Three

Goals	Strategies	Milestones	Time Frame	Value to the Family

**Resources:**

- Convocation for catechesis July 26 at St. Leo the Great. This is an all-day event with speakers from Detroit (just went through a “renewal” process) and Wisconsin (family catechesis.) Lots of information on Catechesis of the Good Shephard and using technology and more! Registration information is coming soon.

- Youth Convention planning session on June 17 at 9 AM. Convention is for grades 3-6. This is an opportunity to address children who leave the Church in middle school. Held at Our Lady of Pompeii, Lancaster. Must pre-register. Includes breakfast.
- GEMS - sign up for this helpful newsletter.
- Revive - see attached flyer.
- Youth and adult ministry - <https://www.volunteerwny.org/need/>
- Workshops for catechists and leaders - sample here <https://www.volunteerwny.org/need/>
- St. Bernard's Here is the link to the course catalog. They have been offering a free audit in the summer. <https://stb.highland.dev/2022-2023-Course-Catalog.pdf>
- For those interested in ministry to youth - [Mental Health crisis in teenage girls](#)
- Increasing engagement: [Church Growth](#)
- This article is from research done by a Protestant church but has some valuable insight: [Obstacles in passing on faith](#)
- [Help forming catechetical leaders](#)
- Research from FF committee on why and when Catholics leave the Church.
  - "We have completed our study of why people leave the Church and will now focus on re-engagement and retention; however, a new article that just came in may be helpful as well as two books that were mentioned." (From meeting notes FF) Two basic themes and one surprise: lack of concrete relationships and not connecting faith to their lives. Surprise? They leave in middle school.
    - Blessed Are the Bored in Spirit: A Young Catholic's Search for Meaning by Mark Hart
    - You Lost Me: Why Young Catholics Are Leaving the Church by David Kinnaman
    - [https://uscatholic.org/articles/202106/black-catholics-are-leaving-the-church-why/?utm\\_source=Main+Reader+List&utm\\_campaign=d59873393c-E\\_MAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_03\\_16\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_407bf353a2-d59873393c-91246125](https://uscatholic.org/articles/202106/black-catholics-are-leaving-the-church-why/?utm_source=Main+Reader+List&utm_campaign=d59873393c-E_MAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_03_16_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_407bf353a2-d59873393c-91246125) Fr. Bryan Massingale
    - [Why Catholics leave the Church article](#)
  - Can we create a plan to change the tide? Radical hospitality videos: <https://www.rebuiltparish.com/confirmation-hospitality-video-series/?cid=74265758-1be2-4273-b830-fc12ba6957fd#video1>

**Notes: Inventory and statistics notes. (Highlighted areas are questions to address.)**

1. The numbers enrolled in programs are from the Family as a whole since there is only one program for religious education.
2. Committee members will all be able to see and add notes to these minutes. Please do so in a different color and put your name after the comment.

3. Space available and equipment:
  - a. St. Lawrence has a large hall and kitchen with limited access to the internet. This space is handicap accessible. There is a projector, speakers, and a portable screen. There are several meeting rooms in the rectory - one with a television.
  - b. Blessed Trinity has a large hall with kitchen, internet access and handicap ability as well as a classroom that will accommodate 25. There is a projector and large screen in the cafeteria and a 40-inch television in a classroom.
  - c. Ss. Columba-Brigid has a newer hall with kitchen and internet access as well as a large screen and a couple of smaller classrooms with handicapped access attached to the church. There are other rooms in the office building.
4. Fees
  - i. Currently \$6/child with a maximum of \$20/family - families have been about 50:50 in paying the fees. Fees have been collected per year and not per program. Donations have also been received to cover some costs.
  - ii. No fees have been charged for retreats.
  - iii. We have not charged differently for active vs inactive parishioners (definition is attending Mass and participating in parish activities)
  - iv. Food - we have had volunteers and family potlucks
  - v. Paper supplies have come from different parishes and donations and craft supplies, some old supplies
  - vi. Books have been donated from other parishes and a few bi-lingual books ordered and paid for by CB Using *Christ Our Life* from Loyola Press.
  - vii. Currently being taught by a combination of volunteers (one is a paid secretary with elementary teaching experience in a Catholic school and one is a practicing Catholic and a deacon.) One paid staff member (paid by Blessed Trinity) used for some classes and is currently also working with the other parishes to make programs possible- elaborate at meeting.
  - viii. **Do we need to make changes here? Are there grants available?**
5. Record Keeping - has been done by coordinators of programs and turned over to the parishes for recording in sacramental books. Registration forms are emailed to the parishes. *Centralized records? **Need buy-in and planning input.** This is a change in how things are done:* As parishes begin to share sacramental celebrations , you will need to know that **each parish reports their own statistical data** for First Communion and Confirmation. **CONFIRMATION**
6. **Parish A**: Hosts the celebration w/ 35 of their own Candidates  
**Parish B**: Candidates receive Sacrament @ Parish A / w/ 10 Candidates
7. **Each parish reports their own data.**
8. **Each parish can make special annotations :**
9. **Parish A** : Sacrament was celebrated with Parish B at Parish A site

**Parish B** : Sacrament was celebrated at Parish A site

10. Religious education staff within the parishes includes one “certified” DRE, a former elementary school teacher (Catholic School,) and a deacon - there are no catechists.

***How can we recruit catechists?***

11. Family calendar - Faith Formation consults the “Family” calendar when determining dates and times for events. ***Who should we be working with to ensure that other***

***groups also do so to avoid conflicts?***

12. Assessment of “family” needs regarding those who are behind in faith formation or new to the parishes. SMdP is currently doing this. ***Who else needs to do this?***



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*Special thanks to St. Gregory the Great*



**Wednesday**  
**May 31, 2023**  
**7:00 pm**

**Location:**

**St. Gregory the Great**  
200 St Gregory Court  
Williamsville, NY 14221

Doors Open 6:15pm  
Praise & Worship 7:00pm  
Speaker 7:30pm