

UPDATE Plus +

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Lambs do not sit on thrones. Nor do they act as shepherds to the flock. But what is meant that the *lamb* is the shepherd? It is, of course, the truth about Jesus that is so spoken. He is made a weak and finally a slain man. Yet this very one knows his own, calls them by name. One who is no king at all is the only king.

It is the resurrection of the crucified one which is spoken by these images. In his “knowing us,” that is his being in the midst of our agony, knowing it by sharing it, we are placed irrevocably in God’s hand. But how shall we know that?

Come to the table. Eat and drink. In the address of the body and blood to you, hear the shepherd’s voice calling you by name, knowing you and your need. Here is the end of hunger and thirst, the beginning of the wiping away of all tears, the flowing of the spring of life-giving waters. – *Gordon Lathrop*

Relational Ministry: Putting First Things First

by Barbara Ramian

The past two articles in this series on adolescent catechesis focused on techniques that catechists might use to help teens to articulate their faith and to connect their faith with their daily lives. But before we can do that, there is a more basic need that has to be addressed – the need to be known and loved.

Psychologists generally agree that there are certain universal psychological needs shared by all humans. Some, like Abraham Maslow (1962), organize them hierarchically. “Hierarchically” to Maslow means that lower needs have the greatest strength until satisfied.¹ His *hierarchy of needs* lists five such needs: Physiological needs (the most basic needs such as food, water, and shelter), Safety and Security needs, Social Affiliation needs, Esteem/recognition needs, and Self-actualization. Humans are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other needs.

I began my career in education some 30+ years ago as a high school French teacher in my hometown, where I taught for seven years. To this day I bump into many of my former students - at church, at the grocery store, at the polls on voting day. I still remember most, if not all of them. Sometimes I recognize them right away. Other times they have to introduce themselves to me (especially the male students, who have grown from immature boys into tall, handsome men). Most of the time I even remember where they sat (ah yes, I remember her – she is the soft-spoken girl who sat in the third seat in the row next to the windows). They all appear to be pleased that I still remember them.

I once saw one of my former students in Walmart. As she walked by me, I greeted her (though not by name) quickly, as I was preoccupied with something else at the moment. By the look on her face, I could tell that she assumed that I did not remember her. When I got in line at the check-out, she was in front of me. I greeted her by name, and she said, “You *do* remember me! When I walked by you earlier, I said to myself, ‘oh...she doesn’t remember me.’” We had a pleasant chat, and I left feeling glad that I had gotten a second chance to greet her.

Are we trying to meet the higher needs of the young people in our parishes before meeting their basic needs – their need to belong, to be in relationship with others? Tom Zanzig, who has done significant work in the field of adolescent catechesis and youth ministry, says that “adult members of our parishes should try to make every effort to reach out to individual young people, to demonstrate the sincere care the Church has for them, and to invite them into the life of the community... Until young people feel welcomed by and into the parish community of faith, there is no reason why they should be open to the message of faith it proclaims.”²

We can look to Jesus as a model of relational ministry. When people were hungry, he didn’t subject them to a lesson in theology. He fed them (all 5,000 of them). When people were sick, he healed them. When they were mourning, he comforted them. He met their most basic needs before trying to address their higher needs.

A few years ago, I attended a LifeTeen Conference in Phoenix, Arizona. The one thing that struck me was how committed the presenters were to the importance of relational ministry. They clearly understood that without that as the starting point, ministry to youth will not be effective. But the good news for all of us, no matter what religious education model we are using with our young people, is that relational ministry is something that all of us can do. It doesn’t require a particular text or a specific program. It doesn’t depend upon the size of our programs. In terms of money, it costs absolutely nothing! Relational ministry can be practiced regularly in very simple ways:

- By meeting young people at the door and greeting them by name when they arrive for class
- By asking them about their week at school, their jobs, their sports events
- By making sure that we spell and pronounce their names correctly when listing them in the parish bulletin or presenting them to the Bishop at Confirmation
- By praying with them before each session, making sure to ask them if they have any personal prayer intentions to share with the group
- By showing sensitivity to the needs and problems of their families

When my son Mike was growing up in our parish, he was an altar server for many years, serving at the 8:30 a.m. Sunday mass. More often than not, the minister of Holy Communion scheduled for that mass was an older man named Leo. He greeted Mike warmly every Sunday, and made Mike feel welcome and valued for what he was doing. They chatted together about all kinds of things. When Mike was confirmed, he chose the name Leo as his confirmation name because of the influence of this man with whom he had served on Sundays. Leo, most likely without even knowing so, was practicing relational ministry. May we all do likewise so that the young people among us will realize that they are known and loved.

¹Saphier, Jon and Gower, Robert: *The Skillful Teacher*. Acton, Massachusetts: Research for Better Teaching, Inc., 1997, p. 165.

²Zanzig, Tom. “Youth Ministry: Reflections and Directions” from *Readings and Resources in Youth Ministry*, edited by Michael Warren. Saint Mary’s Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 1987, p. 43.

Administration of Religious Education (ARE) Course

The ARE course will be offered once again this spring, beginning during the second week of May and ending the third week of June. Dates, times, and location will be announced soon. When combined with Master Catechist Certification, the course leads to diocesan certification as an ARE. For information, please contact Barbara Ramian at (508) 929-4308 or bramian@worcesterdiocese.org.

EVENTS

- Apr 11 **MULTI-PARISH CONFIRMATION** 3 pm
Cathedral of St. Paul
- Apr 18-22 NCCL, Las Vegas
- Apr 25 **MULTI-PARISH CONFIRMATION** 3 pm
St. Cecilia Parish, Leominster
- May 5 **Catechist Training***
Introduction to Scripture – *Echoes of Faith*
North American Martyrs Parish, Auburn
Joan Sundstrom, *Instructor*
- May 6 PREA Meeting
Most Rev. Robert J. McManus, *Speaker*
St. Anne Parish, Shrewsbury
- May 8 **Catechist Training*** 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Introduction to the Ministry of the Catechist (1 - 3)
St. Anna, Leominster
- May 23 **MULTI-PARISH CONFIRMATION** 3 pm
Cathedral of St. Paul, Worcester
- June 16 **PASSPORT TO SUCCESS** 10 am - 2 pm
Part IV: Mary and the Saints
Ms. Claire McManus, *Presenter*
St. Matthew Parish, Southboro
- June 25-27 **PASSPORT TO SUCCESS, Parts I, II, III & IV**
Summer Institute and Retreat
Immaculate Conception Retreat Center
Putnam, CT
- Aug 11-12 **NECDDRE ADULT FAITH FORMATION SYMPOSIUM**
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Worcester
Sponsored by NECDDRE
- Aug 25 **PASSPORT TO SUCCESS** 10 am - 2 pm
Catechizing for a Just World
Mr. Frank Kartheiser, *Presenter*
North American Martyrs Parish, Auburn

* Only 1st meeting of course is listed here.

Spring Catechist Training

Introduction to the Ministry of the Catechist – St. Anna Parish, Leominster

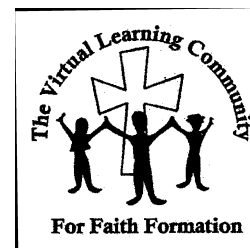
**Introduction to Scripture – *Echoes*
North American Martyrs Parish,
Auburn**

See schedule and registration on pages 6 & 7

On-line Catechist Certification - University of Dayton
For information, call
LaVerne Bertin (508) 929-4305

Visit vlc.udayton.edu

Cycle 3 April 11 through May 15
(Registration: 3/2/10 - 4/7/10)
Cycle 4 May 30 through July 3
(Registration: 4/14/10 - 5/26/10)



NE ADULT FAITH FORMATION

SYMPOSIUM

August 11-12, 2010

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
Worcester**

**New Technologies,
New Relationships:**

Connecting with Young Adults

Sponsored by NECDDRE

Featuring:

Mike Hayes
Tim Welch and others

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Christ the King Parish, 1052 Pleasant Street, Worcester, is seeking a DRE or CRE who will be responsible for coordinating Religious Education Program for grades Pre-K through high school. 1,750 households; 300+ children enrolled in Religious Education Program. Full-time: Saturday through Wednesday, with some flexibility. Would like candidate to begin to get acquainted with parish in May, with position beginning in July or August. Contact: Rev. Thirburse Millott, pastor at (508) 754-5361

“Whoever tells the story defines the culture.” – Dr. David Walsh

by LaVerne Bertin

Storytelling is not just for children. The next time you find yourself standing near a stained glass window, a statue, or a sacred symbol, ask yourself what the story is behind the image that you see. How much do you know about it? Who told you the story? Now, imagine visiting the same place, looking at these images, and not having a clue as to what they could possibly mean. How would that make you feel?

Faith does not occur in a vacuum. It must be taught or witnessed to by others. When it comes to passing on the faith, parents, family members, teachers and the Catholic community at large have natural, necessary and rightful roles as storytellers.

Each of us is born into the Catholic Christian culture by means of our Baptism. Like every other culture, ours was oral at some point and it will bear the mark of that orality for as long as it lasts. Eventually the oral tradition of any culture becomes transformed into the written word or literature. In time, that written word provides momentum for a second stage of orality which happens as what is written becomes expressed through the arts, actions and gifts of a particular people.

Indeed, the *only* way any culture can survive is by preserving and passing on its stories to the next generation. Through the hearing of stories one learns what matters to the culture, how it defines itself, how it understands and relates to God, how it connects with its earthly and spiritual environment, what forms its identity, its relationship with others, and so forth.

Storytelling helps us learn right from wrong, discover truth, learn from heroes, discover our heritage and identity, know those who went before us, and, in due course, to discover our own beliefs.

The question we should be concerned with is what happens when our story is *not* being told in an intentional, meaningful and ongoing fashion. Who then is telling the story and consequently defining the culture for our young people? Faith may not be born in a vacuum, but we all know that nature abhors one. Many people bemoan the secular culture today, but how are we as individuals, parents, teachers, or community actively and concretely working to define our own culture today?

One thing that is within everyone’s power to do is to become a better storyteller. As people of faith, this should be the first language Christians use to describe the world as they see it. When we introduce people, identify prophets, describe events, point to God’s indwelling presence and attach meaning to our lives with stories we are teaching as Christ did.

Becoming familiar with Scripture is one way to begin the process of storytelling. In this issue of Update Plus you will find a review of two new Family Bibles that offer tremendous resources in this area. If you are interested in attending or sponsoring a workshop on the art of sacred storytelling for parents and teachers, please contact LaVerne Bertin at the ORE.

There are many resources available and myriad ways to develop skills in storytelling. The only “wrong” way for a Christian to share his or her story of faith is not to tell it at all.

TWO NEW EDITIONS OF THE BIBLE FOR FAMILY STUDY

The Catholic Family Connections Bible

© 2010, Saint Mary's Press
\$26.95 *

New American Bible (NAB)

The Catholic Faith & Family Bible

© 2010, Harper Catholic Bibles (OSV and CMD)
\$29.99

New Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition (NRSV)

Both bibles are approved for study and reading. The NAB is used for Catholic liturgies. Each is designed to encourage family dialogue and ultimately spark rich conversations that connect faith to everyday life. Both incorporate a holistic approach to learning, living and passing on the Catholic faith.

RESOURCES/ARTICLES:

Reading and Studying the Bible
Core Catholic Teachings on Revelation,
Scripture and Tradition
Overview of Salvation History
Biblical Inspiration and Interpretation
Family Activities
Ideas for Family Service
When a Family Member Dies
28 Articles on Catholic Social Teaching
Events, People and Teaching

Reading the Bible as a Catholic Family
FAQs about the Bible
How the Bible is Used in Mass
Great Stories of the Bible
Reading Plans on Hope, Courage,
Gratitude, Faith and Biblical Prayer
Passages on the Issues & Events of
Family Living
Index of Text Articles on major themes
including Catholic Social Teaching

FORMAT:

Pray It! Study It! Live It!
Did You Know?

Make the Connection, Take it to Heart,
Act on It! Meet the People, Pray the Word

FEATURES:

Presentation Page with opening prayer
Introduction to each Testament and Book
In Depth Overview with Quick Facts and
At a Glance Column

Presentation, Family and Sacramental Records Pages
Introduction to Sections and Books - with parent notes
Books with Parent Notes, For the Family Comments.
Bullets and a Brief Synopsis

MAPS:

8 pages, hard paper, in color

5 pages, thin paper, black & white

Catholic Prayers and Practices

Traditional Catholic Prayers

Timeline: 4 color pages, plus figures and events

None – Who's Who Timeline Activity

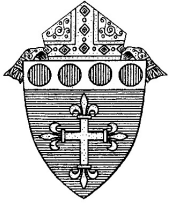
Glossary: 13 pages

None

Calendar of Lectionary Readings

2010 through 2018

* This bible is available in paperback for \$20.00 from now until June 1st.
Call the ORE Resource Center at (508) 929-4301



OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
49 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609

Spring 2010

**Introduction to the Ministry of the Catechist
A six-session course**

Sessions 1 - 5 – \$25.00 per person

N.B. Registrations are due one week prior to first session. No refunds will be given after this deadline.

**St. Anna Parish
194 Lancaster Street
Leominster, MA 01453**

SESSIONS 1, 2 and 3 Saturday, May 8 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

SESSION 4 – Lesson Planning and the Developmental Stages of the Learner

Tuesday, May 11 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

SESSION 5 – Methodology and Classroom Management –

Tuesday, May 18 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

SESSION 6 – The Spirituality of the Catechist

Advent 2010 TBA -- (separate registration/fee; includes meal)

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City Zip

Phone: _____ Parish: _____

E-mail _____

Please check appropriate box(es) below.

Fees: \$25.00 (Sessions 1 - 5) – if completed in one semester

Otherwise, \$15.00 Sessions 1-3

\$10.00 Session 4 \$10.00 Session 5

Bill Parish: **Yes** or **No** **OR** **Amount enclosed:** _____

Please make checks payable to the “Office of Religious Education” and mail to same at 49 Elm St., Worcester 01609 or FAX (508) 753-7180. For information, call (508) 929-4303 **N.B.** Registrations are due one week prior to first session. No refunds will be given after this deadline.

