



**Update on Confirmation Liturgy Dates from Bishop Pates' office:**



Sherri, Angie Hemmingsen and I have received quite a few phone calls and e-mails about Confirmation liturgy dates. I spoke with Bishop Pates' about this and he is feverishly working on finalizing this with Angie this week to begin sending them out next week. He apologized, realizing you have calendars to finalize but it has been a summer of unexpected surprises which has delayed his work on this project. I will follow-up with Angie beginning next week and provide an additional update in next week's Growing Disciple E-Newsletter.

**The Rich Soil Catechetical Certification Brochure & Program Dates:**

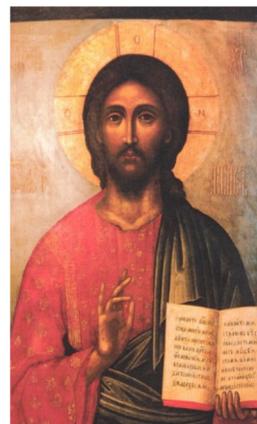
Attached to this e-newsletter please find pdf files of the registration form, the brochure and the programming dates for the retreat and sessions.

Please take time to visit with your catechists, especially your newer ones, about participating in this formation process. I have been very surprised by the number of experienced catechists who have called or e-mailed who are also very interested: including a few catechetical leaders. I am finding this exciting and so happy to be able to provide a process that is focused directly upon those who are sharing their gifts and talents in formational ministry.

The goals of the process are simple:

- To focus on the importance the role of witness brings to the catechetical session
- To help create a community of support as new catechists to God's call into this ministry
- To provide some skills and resources that can be used in the religious education and youth ministry setting immediately.

If I can be of service to your catechists I am happy to come to your parish and visit with them or call in by conference call. For more information please contact me at [jgaffney@dmdiocese.org](mailto:jgaffney@dmdiocese.org) or call me at 515-237-5026.



## **Retooling your parish religious education and/or teen ministry:**



Recently I have been working with a handful of parishes that are desiring to make significant changes in their religious education or teen ministry process. The beginning of a new catechetical season is an excellent opportunity to begin this process because it allows you to include stakeholders from your entire parish community over a long period of time. This time of the year also works very well regarding budget planning for the next catechetical year. Many of the decisions that will be made might have some expense tied to it. This way you can have these discussions and plans in place for that process too.

Below are some insights to consider when retooling a program:

### **1. Focus on faith outcomes that you want to see occur in the program and in the parish (think transformation) (Information + Formation = Transformation)**

- a. Example of a well thought out faith outcome – We want our children and teens to experience the love of God as healer
  - i. Steps to make this happen include:
    1. Getting children, teens and parents to learn and practice the Examin multiple times throughout the week
    2. Offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation during retreats and days of reflections
    3. Share stories of healing with the children, teens and parents (whether local or through resources)
    4. Practice an examination of conscience (developmentally appropriate) multiple times throughout the year
  - ii. Example of a poor faith outcome – We want more attendance at Mass.
    1. Although this is a very worthy goal, it includes factors beyond that of a good religious education/teen ministry program: music ministry, the level of hospitality, liturgy prayed well, etc.
    2. This is a great faith outcome for the entire parish and one that I would encourage, but it is far larger than a faith formation program.

### **2. Is the bus going the right direction and do you have your leadership team (catechetical leader, youth minister and volunteers) on the bus moving the same direction?**

- a. Is everyone joy-filled even in the midst of difficulty and challenge?
- b. Is everyone well formed in one's role as faith formation (strong Christian witness is at the top of the list)?
- c. Does everyone know what your mission is and accepts it?
- d. What amount of support do you have from the parents and the leadership of the parish community (Finance Council, Pastoral Council, etc.)?
- e. Most critical – is everyone a disciple (a student of Christ)? I propose that you take this seriously and it goes back to points a and b.

### **3. Do your resources support the faith outcomes that you are desiring?**

- a. Are the resources really the catechist or are they tools?
- b. Are they outdated and need replacing?
- c. How much use of technology are you using, especially social media regarding formation (parish website, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.)
- d. Are there times you bring the entire community together to learn about a faith topic (Whole community catechesis)?

**Upcoming presentation of special interest – An Evening with John Carr – October 2:**

Save the date for October 2 at St. Pius X Catholic Church in Urbandale from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm as the Diocese of Des Moines presents an evening with noted *America* Magazine contributor and Georgetown University expert of Catholic Social Thought, Mr. John Carr. His topic is ***Everyday Christianity: Catholic Principles, Gospel Priorities***. This is a free event and registration information will be available shortly. This would be a wonderful event for those whose formation sessions include Catholic Social Teaching. For more information, contact John Gaffney at [jgaffney@dmdiocese.org](mailto:jgaffney@dmdiocese.org).

