



Growing Up Catholic

Faith Stories



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Leader Documents

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Introduction



This Leader Guide offers an overview of the material and programs that are available to you in the *Faith Stories* series. It also includes the theological, pedagogical, and catechetical underpinning of the series, as well as practical help in introducing and facilitating the program in your parish. There is a separate section for each of the programs in which the series can be used, as well as alternative suggestions for each program.

The series is primarily intended to be an intergenerational catechetical series. Its focus is centered on adults, early teens, and children's faith development. It can be used as a family series in the broadest parochial sense of the word family. It can also be used as a resource for children and adolescents who are a part of the catechumenate process. Finally, the series is an excellent resource for families who are just returning to the Church. It is catch-up catechesis at its best. It allows young people to join in the regular parish catechetical program while at home they listen to and reflect on many of the stories that make up the foundation of what they are learning at the parish.

As John Shea says in *Stories of God*,

To tell a story of God is to create a world, adopt an attitude, suggest a behavior. But stories are first: we are second. We are born into a community of stories and storytellers. In interpreting our traditional stories of God we find out who we are and what we must do. In telling the stories of God we ourselves are told.

There is nothing like a really good story to bring people of all ages together. Chairs circle closer; chins rest on hands as young and old lean forward in anticipation, and when the story is finished the reaction begins. Some have questions; some make comments and explanations as each person looks

inside the story and discovers the universal truth the story helped them touch and experience.

The *Faith Stories* series offers 30 really good stories that allow the reader or listener to travel through thousands of years of salvation history. It includes the stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Esther, and Daniel. It retells stories from Jesus' life, about the disciples, and about saints, early and contemporary. These are all exciting stories of how God has lived and been revealed in the lives of the people. They are stories of faith, right down to the last story in the book, the readers' own story, their part in the ongoing story of the Church.

The catechetical series is all about stories and community. It offers families an opportunity to listen to the traditional stories of God that form the foundation of our Christian faith. It is also a simple, enjoyable way for children and adults to listen to each other's stories and explore their own faith. Finally, it gives families of all sizes and make-up a chance to get together and receive the support and affirmation so needed in today's world.

A Child's Faith

From the moment of conception, children are invited by God into a lifelong relationship. Newborn cries and infant coos are their first response to that invitation. In their first conscious moments, they begin to reach out to the loving God who created them. With their first wondering questions they begin the ongoing process of reflection on their own life experiences: "Why is the sky blue? What makes the grass grow? Where do the stars go during the daytime?" Part of the growth process in every youngster is to ask those faith-centered questions and begin the internal dialogue that will, we hope, continue for a lifetime.

A child's faith life is as vital to personal identity at ages five or six, for example, as at any other time in life. How that life is nurtured and sustained, however, is very much dependent on outside influences. And no influence is greater than that of the child's parent. If there is one thing of which we are absolutely

certain, it is this: The family lays the foundation and helps form the infrastructure of a child's faith life.

Families, of course, come in all sizes and in a variety of forms. They can be single-parent, blended, or traditional. They may include grandparents, aunts, uncles or foster parents, one or many youngsters. No matter their makeup, all families are important. For better or worse, they are the foundation of every child's moral and faith life.

Families are crucial to the faith development of the next generation, and a faith-filled next generation is crucial to the future of our Church. This is the premise on which this series is based.

While we hope this series will be used primarily within a family setting, it can also be used in the more traditional parish catechetical setting as long as young people have willing adult mentors. While this situation is not ideal, it is workable.

A Hands-on Resource

The *Faith Stories* series is a hands-on resource. It can be used with the families of children who are about to be baptized or children whose families are just returning to the Church. It is primarily meant as a tool for families whose children have already been involved in catechesis over the years. Please note that the hyphenated word *hands-on* is plural. The material is meant to be in the hands of both children and the adults who are important in their lives.

Often parents and adults will do for children what they will not take the time to do for themselves. Sometimes the best adult education happens when parents, guardians, sponsors, or mentors are involved in educating youngsters. In the process of helping a young person learn what it means to be a Christian, adults often discover new insights or even rediscover the mystery of their own faith. This series is not just for children. It is family catechesis, a catechetical series for all ages.

Why Family Catechesis?

Look at the faces of the people who make up our parish congregations. Where are the young adults and teens whom we baptized as babies? How many of our parish ministers and volunteers are under the age

of thirty? What will the Church be like in another ten or twenty years?

We need to take a serious look at how we are educating, initiating and integrating our children into our Church. What used to work does not seem to be working anymore. We need to find a new approach to catechesis.

Our world and our culture changed dramatically in the last third of the twentieth century. According to national statistics, homicide and suicide rates for young people have tripled in the last two decades. At a time when young people need faith more than anything else, catechetical leaders struggle to discover the key that will help them open up the treasure with which each youngster has already been gifted.

In many parishes, catechetical directors, catechists, and Catholic school teachers spend hours working on lesson plans designed to "teach" children their faith. In today's world, the old adage, "Faith is caught, not taught," carries more weight than ever. The classroom model of religious education can no longer stand on its own. Today, parishes and parents have to work hand in hand to help youngsters grow in the faith with which they were blessed at Baptism. Religious education programs that worked in the past are no longer enough to ensure that our children will grow up to be faith-filled disciples of the Lord. To understand how we got where we are it may be helpful to take a brief look at how catechesis has developed over the last century and a half.

Parents and the faith community have always shared the responsibility of handing on their beliefs and values to the next generation. Parents were usually recognized as the primary people responsible for this essential task. Only recently in the history of our Church did this responsibility seem to shift.

Passing on Faith and Values to Our Children

In the earliest days of our own country's history, immigrant parents taught their children their prayers and their catechism. From time to time, the parish priest would come by to test the little ones, asking catechism questions and listening to the answers.

By the mid-nineteenth century, a standardized public education system had developed throughout

our country. Children were required by law to attend school. At that time, the predominant culture in the United States centered on three basic principles: republicanism, Protestantism, and capitalism. The public school was designed to promote this ideology.

In an era when the differences between Catholics and Protestants received greater emphasis than their common ground, the public schools were basically Protestant. Every day, children, no matter what their faith, were required to read the Protestant Bible, pray the Protestant Our Father, and recite the Protestant version of the Ten Commandments.

This did not sit well with the American Catholic bishops or with local pastors. They feared that Catholics would lose their identity as well as their faith. As a result, the Catholic Church began to develop its own school system. An 1884 mandate required every parish to have a Catholic school within two years. Religion classes were set up for children who could not attend a parish school. Bible reading and prayer eventually disappeared from the public schools, but the dual system of public and parochial schools remained.

For a great many years the system worked. The Catholic Church grew and flourished. As an unfortunate side effect, the responsibility for a child's religious education subtly began to shift from home to school. Until the second half of the twentieth century, this shift was gradual and seemed harmless. Only in the last few decades did we begin to experience the downside of classroom-based catechesis.

Three events in the 1960's had a significant influence on the American Catholic world: John F. Kennedy's election as president, the Vietnam War, and Vatican II. Kennedy's election was a milestone for American Catholics, who had been at the very bottom of the economic, social, and political totem pole for the first two centuries of our country's history. Vietnam opened up the global world to the American public. People began seriously to question our political system and the media brought all of this into our living rooms on a daily basis. Finally, Vatican II began to change the very image we had of ourselves as Church. We began to speak about collegiality and "the people of God." Windows opened that could never quite be shut again. And the "people of God," instead of just reciting rote answers, began to question.

In *Will Our Children Have Faith?* John Westerhof reminds us that a number of institutions once helped parents pass on their faith and values to their children: the extended family, the neighborhood, the entertainment industry, and the parochial schools and religious education programs.

In most cases, members of extended families lived close to each other. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles could support parents in passing on traditions and values. Baptisms and First Communions were celebrated as family milestones.

Children grew up believing in God because everybody around them believed in God. Some lived in ethnic Catholic neighborhoods where everyone was not only Catholic but also Italian or Irish or Polish. Others lived in neighborhoods with a diversity of faiths, but on weekends everyone went to some church or synagogue. Everyone was something. Being Catholic was a part of a child's self-identity.

The entertainment industry also supported parents in handing on faith and values. The music young people listened to, the movies and television they watched supported basic Judeo-Christian values. Good was rewarded; bad was punished; a good-night kiss or a punch was the extent of the sex and violence young people saw.

Our culture has changed significantly. The existence of God is no longer a given, and churchgoing is not a priority in many households. Jobs move people farther and farther from extended families. Neighbors no longer share responsibility for all the kids on the block. And the entertainment industry, for the most part, no longer supports basic Judeo-Christian values. Many of the books our children read, the music they hear, the television shows and movies they watch suggest a lifestyle diametrically opposed to those values. A system that seemed to have worked for a century and a half is no longer working.

Of all of the institutions that helped pass on the faith to children, only two are left: parents and the parish religious education program. Those of us who work in catechesis need to take this reality seriously. It is time to rethink how we approach children's religious education in our parishes. Most importantly, it is time to help parents reclaim their primary role in that education.

Yet we must also remember that each family is unique; each family has different needs and varied

resources. We often have no way of knowing what demands of time and energy stress a particular family. While it is important to affirm and encourage parents and guardians as they assume responsibility in the faith development of their children, we have to take care not to send already overburdened families on guilt trips. Therefore it is important to make sure parents and guardians understand that they can adapt any of the activities in the series to the needs and schedules of their families.

Catechesis for Children Today

The parish community needs to do more than simply provide classes that teach children about their faith. We also need to help them recognize and identify with that faith. At one time it may have been enough to teach children to be faithful Catholics, but today we need to do more. We need to help children become faith-filled Catholics, to create opportunities for youngsters to experience the faith they were (or are about to be) gifted with in Baptism. Even more importantly, we need to encourage parents and guardians to create an environment at home that does the same.

There is no question that young people need to learn about their religion. An important part of every parish education program will always involve answering questions and providing young people with a vocabulary to express their faith. But catechesis involves more than acquiring theological knowledge. Its primary purpose, according to the *National Catechetical Directory*, is to help one lead a living, conscious and active faith life (see NCD #32). Catechesis involves the head and the heart; it is formational as well as educational.

Catechesis begins early and continues throughout life. This developmental process involves pre-evangelization, evangelization, and—finally—the formal catechesis that can happen in a classroom setting. Indeed, if one has not been “formed” in the faith, formal catechesis is impossible and even the best religious education program becomes merely an academic endeavor.

Pre-evangelization creates an atmosphere of trust so that people, both young and old, feel comfortable enough to ask the age-old questions that lie at the heart of being human. Evangelization involves helping people experience the beginnings of faith

(NCD #34) by hearing God’s invitation to a lifelong relationship. It means helping them to connect their own life stories to the community’s stories and Scriptures.

Pre-evangelization and evangelization can happen anywhere—from Grandma’s kitchen to neighborhood swing sets. But today’s parish needs to create deliberate and intentional opportunities for pre-evangelization and evangelization. Even more importantly, catechetical leaders need to help families understand the vital role they play in evangelizing their children. Indeed, our most important task is often pre-evangelizing and evangelizing the adults themselves.

Formal catechesis (learning about one’s faith) can only happen after one has been evangelized, and evangelization can only happen after one has been pre-evangelized. No matter how faithful we are or how well schooled in our faith, we never outgrow the need for all three elements of ongoing catechesis. The process is usually most successful if at every stage and on every level it involves story, personal witness, and ritual.

Story, Personal Witness, and Ritual

This is the time-honored formula for catechesis. For centuries the faith was handed down as children listened to the stories the elders never tired of telling. For centuries the faith was down as elders and children joined in prayer and ritual. Generation after generation shared their faith in words and actions. And the mystery of God and God’s people unfolded in the telling and doing. Our faith survived because believing people told youngsters the stories, shared their faith, and invited them to take part in the rituals.

The blend of story, personal witness, and ritual is also the format for this series. It offers an opportunity for adults and children to share the Church’s stories as well as their own. It allows time for them to listen to each other as they discover new facets of their faith. It invites adults and children to pray together and experience the wonder of ritual.

Story. How did you come to believe in God? How did you learn who God was or what it meant to

have faith? Why do you still believe today? For most Christians the answer to these questions can be found in a story. The main character of the story may be a devout mother, a lively sister, or a compassionate teacher. The plot and the climax may involve a



birth, a death, a quiet “ah-ha” moment or a loud “Eureka!” But there is usually a story, a story of how you came to believe and why you believe even today.

One of the most consistent things we hear from anthropologists and sociologists alike about early civilizations is the importance of story. The elders transmitted their wisdom orally. Pictures and written symbols of words followed. Finally, complex alphabets and literary methods developed. Families, cultures, and whole nations cherish stories that give meaning and identity and a sense of unity. Reading the history of our country makes us proud of our achievements and aware of our shortcomings. Our stories help us to see ourselves as a people with a certain heritage.

Our Catholic religious tradition also cherishes stories. The most significant stories are in Scripture, both Old Testament (Hebrew Scripture) and New (Christian Scripture). These are the stories of God’s own self-revelation. They are the stories of our ancestors in faith, the men and women whose lives and commitments continue to teach us important truths.

There are other stories as well: community stories bound in tradition and lived out in the sacraments and rituals of our Church. The eucharistic Institution Narrative (“On the night before he was betrayed...”) centers us in our promise to remember Jesus each time we celebrate his continuing presence with us. The laying on of hands in Anointing or Reconciliation ties us directly to Jesus’ healing.

The stories of our culture and our experience affects how we see ourselves and others for good or ill. In our day-to-day lives we feel God’s presence most closely—or feel God’s apparent absence most poignantly. Our stories of friendship and love, courage and crisis, patience and commitment are the seed of God’s Spirit in our lives. When we take the time to examine these personal stories, share them

with others and include them in our prayer lives, they too become living testaments.

Which of these, Scripture or tradition, experience or culture, make up the stories of theology, the study of God? All of them! This series offers opportunities for adults and young people alike to hear, tell, expand and learn these stories of faith. The storybooks draw on Scripture and the lives of our Church’s heroes, heroines, and saints. The discussions in the activity books allow participants to add their own stories. This is an essential part of the catechetical process. If we lose the importance of our own stories, then faith will seem detached and irrelevant. When we integrate our own stories into Scripture and tradition, faith is alive! And when we share those stories with others we become personal witnesses to that faith.

Personal Witness. Sharing one’s faith in words or actions is what personal witness is all about. There is an old adage that faith is caught, not taught. While preaching and teaching are an important part of catechesis, we often learn more about God and Church by watching others live out their faith and listening as they share their stories.

Each person’s experience of God is unique and deeply personal. We can only picture or imagine God through our own limited perceptions. The same is true when we read Scripture. Each person filters the meaning of the story through his or her own experiences. But God is infinitely greater than one person’s perceptions or personal history. When we hear how someone “sees” God, our own image of God is broadened. And this is why it is so important that we talk about our faith. We need to say out loud what we believe and what we wonder about. Each person has a piece of a puzzle, a clue to the mystery. When we talk about our personal experiences of God or our viewpoints of Scripture, we are able to put some pieces together, coming closer to the infinite mystery that is God.

Sometimes words are not enough. Have you ever tried to explain to a three-year-old how to tie a shoe? It is almost impossible to do so without taking the shoelace and making those first loops yourself. Something similar happens when you try to explain to someone what it means to be a Christian. Words will take you just so far. In order really to understand what it means to be a disciple of

Christ, you need to see one in action. We can define words like community and service, but it is much easier to understand these concepts by watching and experiencing Christian fellowship and self-giving.

Unfortunately, some people find it difficult to talk about something as deeply personal as their faith. Giving witness through word or action is always a risk. But if we want our children to believe in God and share our faith, it is a risk we must take. How will children know God is real unless they hear the adults around them talking about God? How will children know the importance of prayer unless they see the significant grown-ups in their lives praying?

In many cases, parents would like to talk to a child about God or their faith but they find it difficult to get started. The activity pages were written with these parents in mind. Each session suggests simple questions for adults and children to reflect on and talk about. The questions offer a comfortable, nonthreatening way to ease into faith talk. Many of the sessions also include optional suggestions for Christian action.

Ritual is a customary procedure, “the way we always do it.” Every religion, like every family, has its own rituals. Rituals distinguish one faith from another. How a people celebrate their code and creed can tell you a lot about what they believe and how they live out their faith.

The Catholic Church is a Church of rites and order. Each sacrament has its own matter and form. Our mornings and evenings are marked with special prayers. We have marrying and burying rites, special anointings and blessings for all occasions. Our rituals are some of the hallmarks of our faith. They mark us as Catholic.

Rituals also serve as a way of integrating and encountering newcomers into the faith. For centuries, young people absorbed faith by accompanying their parents to Church rituals.

Rituals also serve to solidify and enhance family life—the Church family or the domestic family. In *Ritual In Family Living* (no longer in print), James H.S. Bossard and Eleanor S. Ball present four positive influences of family rituals: (1) Rituals are *vitalizing*, they say—life-giving not only to the individual but to the family itself. (2) They are *euphoric*: They make people feel good about themselves and about the family. (3) Rituals are *disciplinary*: They teach us the

value of patience and order as we wait and anticipate what comes next. (4) Finally, rituals are *adhesive*, They bring us closer together as a family. Rituals are shared experiences repeated and remembered. Bossard and Ball learned that even when individuals spoke in begrudging terms about the family rituals “their parents made them do,” it was still evident that they experienced pride and joy in them.

Some family rituals focus on special holidays such as Christmas or birthdays. More often, rituals are just a part of a family’s everyday routine. Families have set ways of sitting at table, reading the Sunday paper, or saying prayers before meals. The rituals we practice have a way of identifying and defining who we are as family. For this reason it is important to affirm families as they gather around an Advent wreath or bless a Christmas crèche. It is also a good idea to offer simple suggestions or an occasional booklet or pamphlet on Christian family rituals.

In the *Faith Stories* series, families are encouraged to pray together at the end of each session. The rituals offered are simple and short but they help develop a sense of the sacred. The special value of rituals centered around the family is that they help us celebrate the holy in the sacredness of our own home.

Using Faith Stories



The *Faith Stories* series offers three sets of stories and activities written on two different age levels (under 10 and 11-14). *God Calls* introduces Hebrew Scripture. *Jesus Lives* presents the gospel story—the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. *Spirit With Us* illustrates the work of the

Spirit with stories from the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the lives of saints and modern believers. Note that each year also focuses on a different person in the Trinity.

The parent activity pages remain the same in both versions, but the introductory activity and the response pages are different for each age group, allowing families with children in different age groups to read the same story, develop one theme, work together on the same activity, and close with the same ritual. Suggestions for involving preschoolers are also included.

The activities have two main objectives. The first objective is to help both adults and young people explore the message of each story to learn more about themselves, about God, and about the faith. The second is to facilitate faith talk among the youngsters and the adults, to provide a process that allows sharing and listening. The format allows time for prayer, discussion, a shared activity, and a closing ritual.

Two activity pages are provided for young people. One is an introductory activity—a puzzle or maze or some other fun activity that introduces the story or theme—for the child to work while the adult reads about the session. The other is a worksheet to help the young person articulate thoughts or experiences regarding the session's theme.

An adult worksheet also corresponds with the theme. Adults and young people share their worksheets as part of each session's activity.

Along with the ten stories presented in each book are six introductory chapters, which are intended to be used in a large group parish setting. Handouts for

the next sessions(s) are then sent home for parents and children to continue working on together.

How to Use the Series

For Family Catechesis: Ask families to meet as a group six times a year. Between these intergenerational meetings, they read the stories and complete the activities at home. The series offers a repeatable three-year cycle.

Some families may prefer to work independently, completing all the activities at home. If this option is offered, a staff person, catechist, or facilitator should remain in close contact with the family. If more than one family is using this option, the facilitator should meet occasionally with the adults or with the whole family units, both individually and as a group, to keep families connected to the parish and to offer opportunities to meet other parishioners.

For Children's Catechumenate: Invite children interested in joining our faith, along with their families, to participate in a parish intergenerational family program. The program, supplemented by retreat days, offers an excellent way to invite and welcome newcomers into a larger Church community. If *Faith Stories* is a regular part of your parish catechetical program, simply invite interested children and their families to join the ongoing program. If the series is not a regular offering, invite a number of parish families, depending on the number of new members, to join you in welcoming newcomers to Church life.

Along with the parish gatherings and take-home sessions, the chapter on the Children's Catechumenate includes a presentation of the Our Father and the Creed, and a family penitential rite. Four retreats that augment the process are also provided: an opening retreat, a retreat for Advent, and two retreats for Lent. The final retreat in Lent, designed for those about to be initiated, emphasizes the Sacraments of Initiation by focusing on the symbols of water, oil, and bread.

For Catch-up Catechesis: The children of families who are returning to the Church can be included in either of the above options. If your parish chooses not to sponsor a family catechetical program, parents who use the family booklets at home on their

own should meet regularly with a member of the catechetical staff.

Faith Stories is a supplemental resource that is not intended to replace a full elementary basal curriculum or sacramental preparation curriculum.

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Practical Helps

While family-centered catechesis is increasing, perhaps your parish does not yet offer such a program. This chapter is meant to help you start a parish program. Remember to take it slowly. The first step is to build interest and support for your program. The second step is just as important: Make sure you have plenty of help.

Communicating the Vision

The information offered earlier in this manual supplies you with background, theology, and objectives. Compare this material with your parish mission statement. All programs, events, classes, or workshops must be rooted in the expressed mission of your parish community (see CCC #4-10).

If you do not have a parish mission statement, look for other ways to connect your catechesis with the mission of the Church. Perhaps your local diocesan Office of Religious Education or Formation has a mission statement you can use. Perhaps you can write a mission statement, a vision, for your ministry at the parish. Best of all, get together a group of staff and parishioners to write a parish mission statement.

Whichever direction you choose, be sure you and others see catechesis as a crucial part of the mission of the universal Church. Through education and formation we fulfill Christ's commission to reach out to the entire world and spread the Good News!

Identifying Parish Needs

Once you know how your program fits with the parish mission, spend time identifying parish needs. Assess existing programs and see what gaps exist. A good place to begin is with the people who have expressed to you a need for something different. Talk to your parish council and commissions, and ask them to talk to others. Sit with parish staff members and ask their opinions and insights.

You can make these assessments in formal pen-and-paper sessions, focus groups, or informal conversations. However you do it, *do not skip this*

step. Asking and listening will help you tailor the components of *Faith Stories* to your community's needs. Wisdom abides in the assembly, so don't hesitate to trust it.

Tailoring the Program

This guide is designed to aid you in tailor-making a program that is just right for your parish. Once you've identified your parish needs you can adapt *Faith Stories* to fit those needs. The various uses of this series were outlined in the previous chapter.

Think of the family booklets, facilitator guides, and this document as ingredients in a recipe. Add a little more of what you like, take out what you don't, and the finished product will be distinctly yours. The main strength of a component-based series is that it has enough flexibility to help you structure an effective and attractive program for your community.

Then, when you're ready to go, get the news out with enthusiasm!

Getting the News Out

Evangelization often begins with our own contagious excitement about programs. Some parents may resist coming to intergenerational or family programs. Make certain that the program is seen as a way of supporting today's families, and a service to the parish.

Whenever you have the opportunity, at parent meetings, or parish gatherings, share the information in the beginning chapters of this guide book. The information in the Introduction section titled "Why Family Catechesis?" is often an eye opener for parents. You might also consider sharing the "Story, Personal Witness, and Ritual" of the Introduction. Taking time to lay this sort of groundwork may make the difference between hearing parents say, "Do I have to come with my kids?" and "When can we get started?"

In this initial time of gathering interest, remind the adults involved that they are just as likely to be learners as they are to be teachers. No matter what

our age, we all enrich each others' lives when we share our stories. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* points out, all believers are called to hand on the Good News to following generations by professing and living their faith, by sharing with one another and by celebrating their belief in liturgy and prayer (see CCC #3). In intergenerational or family-based catechesis, every participant is both teacher and learner, regardless of age. Everyone has stories and insights to share. Persons experienced in multi-age programs will tell you that some of the greatest faith statements come from very young people!

Getting Help

In effect, everyone who participates in family catechesis is actively involved in helping the program run smoothly. Depending on how you design your particular program, however, you will undoubtedly need specific volunteers.

It is always a good idea to spread out the responsibility for catechetical programs among parishioners. This encourages people to see themselves as spiritual leaders in the community. It increases their sense of ownership in the parish. And, not least, it gets a lot more done with less stress on any one individual. The following are some volunteer roles you may wish to consider.

Coordinators. These volunteers head up specific programs for you by taking responsibility for management. Coordinators may open up buildings, arrange for other volunteers, keep track of supplies, and so on. You may need to mentor these volunteers for a while before handing over the role. Certainly these people will need to show greater commitment. But in a year or two they may be able to take over a large part of your responsibilities.

Advisory Board. A group of parents who want family-based catechesis can be great support for the professional catechist. Their views and evaluations will add new dimensions to your own. It is a good idea to include some creative people who can help you think of new approaches to the group gatherings. It is especially helpful if members of this board have children of different ages and a teenager is on it as well. If you have coordinators, make sure they are a part of the board.

This group may meet just quarterly. Their task is both to recommend and to evaluate.

Facilitators. The types of facilitators you will need depends on how your parish chooses to use the *Faith Stories* series. You will need *small-group facilitators* when you break down the large-group gatherings in homes or on parish grounds. These people need to be good listeners. Check your diocesan media office for training materials.

If your large-group gatherings include more than 30 or 40 participants and you decide to divide the group, you will need *large-group facilitators* to assist you. These volunteers would be responsible for leading the actual session. They need to be good facilitators as well as good catechists and teachers. Choose carefully. It may be a good idea to include these volunteers on your advisory board.

You will need *home facilitators* if you have more than one or two families working on their own—one for every three to four families. Their job is to call the families together at least once or twice a year. They will also keep in regular touch with families to answer questions, offer suggestions, and invite them to family retreats and important parish events.

Retreat Teams. *Faith Stories* includes some retreat days, which can be expanded to overnights, if you wish. You will need people to help set the environment, take leadership roles, take care of the food, get supplies, and so on. Ideally, this retreat team would reflect the intergenerational character of the program—that is, all ages would somehow help lead the retreat. Even a very young person can introduce an icebreaker or read a prayer.

Sponsors. If you are using *Faith Stories* for children's catechumenate, consider asking parishioners to serve as sponsors. Admittedly, many young people will ask relatives or friends to serve in this role, but those people are often from out of town or otherwise unable truly to go through the program with a young person. A parish sponsor, in addition to this family sponsor, can represent the "extended family" of the Church.

We also suggest pairing each family presenting themselves or their children for Baptism with a sponsoring family. This mentoring family will initiate contact with the new family, participate with them

in as many intergenerational meetings as possible, answer questions, and make introductions during family sessions and other parish gatherings.

Hospitality. Anytime you gather, someone should be concerned with making the environment welcoming. Beverages, snacks, soft music, name tags, a prayer



table—all these and more can make even the coldest church hall seem warmer. These folks may also send out reminders for the next large-group gathering.

Cleanup. If you can find a volunteer to coordinate cleanup, everyone (including yourself) will probably get home a lot earlier. With someone else in charge of cleanup, you are free to talk to those people who may need a little encouragement or who have a few questions that need answers. This person should know where trash bags and brooms are kept. It will also help if they gently encourage everyone to help.

This is obviously only a partial list. You can decide what else is needed and go from there.

Choosing and Using Volunteers. Once you have a list of what volunteers your program can use, write job descriptions for each position. These need not be long. For example, a job description for a hospitality volunteer could read:

Skills/Background: Comfortable with crowds. Welcoming personality. Sense of humor.

Responsibilities: Set up snacks each session. Arrange for volunteer bakers when needed. Greet participants each evening.

The job descriptions can help you identify people you may wish to invite to serve and can help you interview volunteers who come forward. This will enable you to match the person's gifts with the right volunteer role.

Clearly defined responsibilities will help you to evaluate the work done and eliminate confusion. Nothing is more frustrating for a volunteer than to feel his or her time was wasted. And little is

accomplished if no one is sure whose job it is! A volunteer properly prepared, well-equipped, and lovingly appreciated is one who will serve gladly in his/her role—and will more likely be willing to recommit.

Finally, assign a term to the volunteers' commitment. People who know they are signing up for only one or even two years are more likely to say yes to your request. They can always sign up for another term—and having the option makes it easier to do so.

This will also give you an opening for periodic evaluations. A face-to-face discussion of the program's effectiveness, the volunteers' comfort with it, and how you can be of continuing support is crucial. It will keep your program fresh, your volunteers motivated, and keep you in touch with all that is (or is not) happening.

Printing Logistics

The stories and activities have intentionally been designed as separate booklets for each session. We have done this because compiling them into a larger volume can make them intimidating to families. We certainly don't want them making any associations with textbooks! Distributing booklets one session at a time also avoids the problem of families forgetting to bring their book or binder to a session.

Packets of color booklets are available for purchase from The Pastoral Center, which solves your printing problem easily. However, if you would like to print your own handouts, you are welcome to do so. In this case, you purchase an "eResource" licenses per child each year for permission to print. We provide files for printing both as individual pages or as booklets on tabloid (11" x 17") paper.

If you want to help your families keep their past booklets organized, you could provide a binder or folder. But we recommend still passing out individual booklets along the way.

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

Intergenerational Family Catechesis



“Intergenerational” is not some fancy new approach to catechesis or education. Intergenerationally is how we have always lived! Sometimes we separate into more homogeneous age groupings (school grade levels, retirement centers). But families, parishes, and

society itself are intergenerational institutions.

This series uses the term *intergenerational* to describe an approach that does not segregate learners by age group. Flexible and open to adaptation, the intergenerational program includes six meetings based on the main divisions of each year. (Possible adaptations are described in this section.) These could be large meetings held at parish centers or smaller gatherings held in individual homes. The families do the stories and activities in each division at home.

After an “icebreaker,” an introductory activity meant to relax those in attendance, each of these six meetings models the home sessions for the participants. Each time the leader sets the environment, asks the “Getting Started” questions, covers the reading material, and facilitates some activity and discussion of insights. Each also incorporates a closing ritual.

You may use one or more of these three groupings per session:

1) Family groupings bring young people and adults together to work on an experience or a discussion. Leave the definition of family to the participants themselves; it may or may not mean blood relatives. A family is whoever comes together to your program. An aunt and her niece, a grandfather and his grandchildren, a godmother or sponsor and a teenager—all of these may see themselves as the “family” in your program. In today’s world

of blended, single parent, and multi-generational families, it is best to be open to all possible configurations.

2) Mixed-generational groupings combine adults and young people of different families into small groups. Many activities form people into these groupings (counting off, same-colored name tags, same month of birth, for example) as long as you are careful to balance the number of adults and young people in each group.

This type of grouping has a few advantages. First, young people (especially teenagers!) often listen more attentively to adults who are not their parents. And adults are often much more patient with children who are not their own, perhaps because they feel less responsibility. And, not the least, the young people are exposed to the affection and faith-sharing of a wider portion of their adult community. Can any young person ever have too many adults care about him or her?

3) Homogeneous age groupings break the group into age levels for an activity or discussion. You will need additional adults to lead the preschool, primary, intermediate, and teen groups. To maintain the intergenerational approach, begin together, pray together, and gather at the end to share key insights.

Adaptions of the Intergenerational Program

Before you begin. Whatever schedule you choose to follow, begin by gathering the families for the introductory retreat, “Sharing Stories.” This retreat, which should be offered for new families each year, introduces the importance of storytelling, as well as small- and large-group sharing. It also teaches families to locate Scripture passages, a skill they will need for working at home.

Parish-Based Meetings. Six times a year, gather any interested families at a center in the parish. The lesson plans allow for 90 minute sessions. You may expand this time allotment to include some social time. In a large gathering (over 30 participants) enlist other adults as facilitators to help prepare the program. Then break the gathering into two or three groups for the facilitators to lead according to the lesson plans. This works especially well if you have other rooms available for use. Icebreakers, prayers, and rituals should include the entire group, however large, to encourage community.

Your own community schedules will affect how you divide these six sessions. We recommend meeting in October, November, January, February, March, and April. An Advent retreat day or service activity can be added in December, as well as a closing event of some type in May. (But bear in mind that December and May are often very busy times for families.) It is also possible to combine these six sessions in an intensive program: meeting twice a month in January, February, and March.

Home- or Neighborhood-Based Meetings. Equally effective are sessions in individuals' homes, whether monthly or bimonthly, year-long or intensive. The lesson plans can easily be adapted to a gathering of three to five families.

This method also has the advantage of creating a kind of small faith community for families. As director, however, you will need to keep in close communication with the volunteer leaders in each home so that they feel supported in this ministry. The Advent and end-of-year retreats, social times, and service projects should remain activities of the whole program, a gathering of all the home communities in order to keep the parish community as a focus for these smaller assemblies.

Supplementing Parish Religious Education Programs (e.g. PSR). It is possible to integrate elements of the intergenerational approach into a standard parish religious education program. Seasonal intergenerational gatherings (autumn, Advent, Lent, Easter) could be built on the four "middle" divisions of each of the three books.

The remaining stories and activities in each yearly program are done at home between parish gatherings. See the family guides for more details.

Meeting Topics

Initiating Children of Catechetical Age

The process of becoming a member of the Church involves stages or “steps marking the catechumens’ progress, as they pass, so to speak, through another doorway or ascend to the next level” (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, #6).

Precatechumenate

This is a period of pre-evangelization and evangelization, a time to build trust, tell stories, and begin hearing the Good News. It involves the following components of the series:

- Opening retreat (“Sharing Stories”)
- Monthly meetings with other families
- Reading and reflecting on Scripture as a family at home

Catechumenate

This period is a time of continued evangelization, a time of budding faith, the beginning of conversion, a continuation of the proclamation. It involves the following components:

- Continue monthly meeting with family groups
- Advent Retreat (salvation history until the time of Christ)
- Rite of Becoming a Catechumen
- Presentation of the Creed and Our Father
- Continue reading and reflecting on Scripture at home with family members

Purification and Enlightenment

This period just prior to the sacraments of initiation is a time for preparation, recollection, and prayer. The following components are part of this important stage:

- Enrollment of Names
- A retreat to reflect on who Jesus is
- Penitential Rite for Families
- Another retreat focusing on signs, symbols and sacrament
- No other monthly gatherings

Mystagogia

This period, which follows the sacraments of initiation, is a time of celebration. It is also a time to talk about and process the experience of the Rite of Christian Initiation. It involves the following components:

- Monthly meetings
- Time for sharing the experience
- Encouraging families to continue growing in their faith by becoming regular members of the Family Group

Children's Catechumenate and Catch-up Catechesis

There are two essential factors to remember when inviting children of catechetical age to become members of our Church: (1) The process must always be relevant to the ages of the children involved (see RCIA #307). (2) It is important that the children's parents, as well as peers who have already been baptized, are involved in the process (see RCIA 308). These factors also apply when we welcome young people back to the Church. The *Faith Stories* series meets both of these needs.

The materials found in the family booklets, facilitated sessions, and retreats, offer a broad, evangelizing process of catechesis and initiation. If your parish is using the series as an ongoing family catechetical program, the family presenting a child for Baptism is simply invited to join the gatherings. If you would like to use the series solely for children's catechumenate and/or catch-up catechesis, you will find an alternate schedule in the overview.

It is important to emphasize, however, that the materials in this series are only one component in the whole process of initiating children into our faith. This series is not to be seen as a total catechetical package. The Rite itself, as well as the lectionary, provides the foundation on which any additional process rests. (For example, if adults are being dismissed from Mass following the reading of the Gospel, it is appropriate that children are also dismissed to break open the Word of God.) Those who are facilitating the process must be well versed in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, particularly chapter five, which deals with unbaptized children of catechetical age. Any necessary adaptations for children will be found there. If no changes are indicated, use the adult rite.

Remember throughout the process to distinguish between children who are being baptized and children who are being received into the Church. You may want to mention at one of the first meetings that as Catholics we believe in one baptism. In general, anyone who has been validly baptized using the Trinitarian formula cannot be baptized again. However, the validity of any baptism will be verified in the context of the RCIA process since not every denomination is recognized as having valid baptism.

Adapting the Series for Children's Catechumenate

When using this series for children who are to be baptized or are returning to the faith, the facilitator needs to take care of two additional matters: (1) invite specific sponsoring families to become a part of the gatherings and (2) adjust meeting schedules, as well as some meeting contents.

Sponsoring Families. Make sure there is a particular family that agrees to mentor each family that is presenting children for Baptism. As mentors, they will be part of as many gatherings as possible, take the initiative in welcoming the new family, spend some time socializing with the family during break times, introduce them to other parish members, and be available to listen and encourage. Often a family is attracted to the Church because of friends or neighbors who have invited them to "come and see." If this is the case, that family may be an appropriate sponsoring family. If this is not the situation, look at families who are already a part of the family group or go through the parish roster. In either case, try to find a sponsoring family that includes children the same ages as the children who are being initiated. A sponsoring family and age-appropriate peer groups are also important when working with children who have been baptized but not catechized.

Adjusting Schedules. When the families of children in the catechumenate are part of the family gatherings, the three-year calendar will need to be adjusted. If the sacraments of initiation are to be received at Easter, you should not hold meetings during Lent; plan two retreats and a penitential rite or scrutiny instead. The retreat gatherings are about an hour longer than the usual family parish meetings. If possible, serve a pot-luck supper or luncheon. Invite sponsoring families along with any other interested families from the parish to take part in these events. Also, give families (particularly those who will not be meeting) some printed or video materials that offer prayers and ideas on how to celebrate Lent.

Adjust regularly scheduled family gatherings to accommodate the presentation of the Creed and the Our Father. In addition, while the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens is better celebrated

with all catechumens, in some cases you may want to celebrate it as part of a regular family gathering. Sometimes a smaller setting is more comfortable for children (*RCIA* #260). Even if the children and their parents celebrate this rite with the larger parish, it is certainly appropriate that they also be recognized within their smaller faith group. The same holds true for the Enrollment of Names. Make sure the pastor and other staff members are asked to be a part of these significant gatherings.

It is important to emphasize that initiating children into our faith is a process that cannot be controlled or contained in a schedule-bound program. There always remains a need for direct personal contact with the individuals, to listen and encourage, and to help discern readiness. Therefore, you need to remain flexible, adapting the materials, ideas, and timetables in the family booklets or this guide. With children in the catechumenate, the primary schedule to follow is that of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

Precatechumenate. This initial period is a time of pre-evangelization and evangelization. It is time for those gathered to get to know each other. It is crucial that an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality be established so that the participants feel comfortable and secure. The opening retreat, “Sharing Stories,” offers those gathered an opportunity to get in touch with their own family stories as well as with God’s story in Scripture. Families meet each other in a warm environment and are encouraged to share their stories with each other at a comfortable level. They are introduced to the concept of “covenant” and asked to consider entering into such an agreement with the group.

Catechumenate. This time begins with the Rite of Acceptance. Following the rite or at the first regular meeting, consider presenting the catechumens with a cross and a Bible as a sign of welcome and encouragement. You may also present either or both of these signs of our faith to the other families who will be part of the regular gatherings (perhaps one to a family).

During this time, families continue to learn more about themselves and each other, about God and the faith. A retreat day at the beginning of Advent celebrates salvation history up until the time of Jesus’

birth. Advent is an appropriate time to present the Creed and the Our Father to the catechumens. Do this during one of the regular gatherings, after the adults have been given the appropriate handout with which to prepare the youngsters. Materials to facilitate these presentations can be found at the end of this document.

Purification and Enlightenment. If the sacraments of initiation are celebrated at Easter, this stage of the process coincides with Lent and begins with the Rite of Election or Enrollment of Names. It is important to celebrate the occasion with the family group, whether or not the actual Enrollment of Names takes place during group time. Two retreats are scheduled during Lent. The first, “Jesus Day,” celebrates who Jesus is, why he came, and the significance of his death and resurrection. The second retreat, “Signs, Symbols, and Sacraments,” explores the mission of the Church and the role of the sacraments in that mission. It introduces the elect to the sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist—along with their corresponding symbols: water, oil, and bread.

Also at the end of this document is a suggested reading and response for the celebration of a penitential rite. The Rite calls for at least one such scrutiny with children (*RCIA* #294). You or another staff member may also choose to spend additional time with the young people and/or the adults individually or in peer groups to discuss the sacraments of initiation and the details of the ceremony, giving them an opportunity to ask questions.

Mystagogia. This last stage of the initiation process should be marked with all the celebration appropriate for welcoming a sister or brother into the family. It is especially important to gather all of the families within a week or two after initiation to process the experience. Make sure that during the large group gatherings, the families—adults and children together—have time to share their thoughts and feelings about their experience of the Rite. Encourage children’s participation and initiate discussion by giving them paper on which to draw their favorite part of the Rite.

The last story and corresponding group activity should be scheduled after the sacraments have been

received. If Easter occurs exceptionally early, other stories may also be scheduled later in the Easter Season.

Another Approach to the Catechumenate

If you are not using *Faith Stories* as an ongoing parish family program, you may wish to intensify the initiation process by going through all three series in one year. You would cover *God Calls* before Christmas, *Jesus Lives* before Lent (possibly covering the last two stories “Jesus Last Days” and “Jesus Lives” during the season and dropping the “Jesus Day” retreat) and *Spirit With Us* during Mystagoga.

This format requires meeting every two weeks during those time periods. Make sure that you invite a few additional families to be part of the process along with the mentoring families. The rest of the process remains the same.

The Presentation of the Our Father and the Creed

Determine an appropriate time during the catechumenate to present these two great prayers to those who are preparing for Baptism or full communion with the Church—possibly during two separate regular parish family gatherings. Following the ritual, present a copy of each prayer to the young person or to the family. You might find a copy suitable for framing or a copy of the prayer on a bookmark or holy card. Date it so that the children can keep it as a memento of the occasion.

Remember, however, the presentation of the prayer occurs when the community recites the prayer together, not when the memento is given.

Explain to families of those who are asking for Baptism or full communion the significance of these two prayers. The Our Father is the very prayer Jesus gave his disciples. When the early Church was being persecuted, the Our Father was a secret prayer taught only to Christians or soon-to-be Christians. The Creed is a declaration of all we believe in.

Make copies of the handouts on the next page. Make sure you give the adults adequate instruction: Ask them to go over the page with their youngsters

in the time ahead. You may suggest that the children memorize the Our Father.

They should also practice reading the page out loud. Adults read the left side and the children respond by reading the right. Read the first two lines to demonstrate. Tell them that the next time the family group meets, they will join with the other families, adults and children, to read the page together. (Adults will say, “Our Father.” Children will respond with, “Our God, you are the source...”)

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

The Our Father

| Adults: | Children: |
|--|---|
| Our Father, | Our God, you are the source of all life. You loved us into being. You are the best parent I could ever imagine. |
| who art in heaven, | We know that your heaven is not just up in the sky. We know it is everywhere because you are everywhere—always loving, always ready to take care of me. |
| hallowed be thy name; | You are holy; you are all that is sacred. May all people become aware of who you are. And may they honor you by whatever name they know you. |
| thy kingdom come; | Your Kingdom is both already here and yet to come. The Kingdom is your dream of peace and harmony, of reconciliation and love. |
| thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. | Help us to make your dream come true. Help us to be people of peace, harmony, and reconciliation. Help us to live in your love. |
| Give us this day our daily bread; | We ask you to take care of us. Give us what we need for today. And please open our eyes to those in need, so that we can share what we have with them. |
| and forgive us our trespasses | We have not always lived out your plan of peace and harmony, reconciliation, and love. We are sorry. We ask you to forgive us. |
| as we forgive those who trespass against us; | Because you so lovingly forgive our wrongdoings and our sins, we promise to do our best to forgive those who hurt or wrong us. |
| and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. | Protect us from anyone or anything that sets out to harm us. Give us the strength to turn away from wrong and choose the path that leads to you and to all good things. |
| For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. | Our God, you will always be the greatest. No one is stronger, wiser, more powerful. I am glad you are our God. I am glad that you are my God. |
| Amen. | I believe! Yes! Yes! I believe! |

The Creed

Adults:

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Children:

I believe in God who is the Creator of all things—
things that we can see,
like trees and water, animals, and people.
And God is the Creator of things we cannot see,
like love and forgiveness, peace and joy.

I believe in Jesus who was born
the Son of God and the son of Mary.
He did great things.
He shouted the Good News
that the Reign of God had begun.
God's plan was happening.
He reconciled and brought comfort.

But he was crucified.
He died and was buried.
Yet the stone that blocked his tomb
could not hold him back.
Even death had no power over Jesus.
And the third day after he died, he rose from the dead.
He visited his friends and then went to heaven
to sit at the right hand of God.
And we believe that someday Jesus will come again.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
who comes from the Father and the Son.
The Spirit gives life and shares God's power with us.
Long ago the prophets told us about the Spirit,
and today we know it is the Spirit
who keeps our Church together and holy
and always reaching out to all people.
We believe in the gift of the Spirit in Baptism,
where our sins are forgiven.
We worship the Father and the Son and the Spirit
as we wait for the resurrection of the dead
and life that will last forever.

I believe! Yes! Yes! I believe!

A Penitential Rite with Families

The words and format for this rite, which is similar to the scrutinies celebrated with adult catechumens, can be found in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, #334-342. Below is a reading for use with families.

“A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

“And what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?”

“The word of the Lord.”

Response: “Thanks to you, Lord Jesus Christ.”

Print the above reading (Micah 6:8) in large letters on newsprint and place it where everyone can see it. Divide into small groups: family groups, peer groups, or intergenerational groups. (By this time you should have a good idea of what will work best.) Give each group a piece of newsprint that has one of the following phrases written on it: “DO JUSTICE”; “LOVE KINDNESS”; “WALK HUMBLY.” Tell the groups to spend some time talking about what they think their part of the reading means. After a minute or two ask them to think of all the ways they see this command not lived out in the world. Suggest they look first at their own experiences at home, school, or work, then at the larger community, and finally at the world and list what they come up with on the newsprint.

Ask them all to share their responses. Hang up the newsprint and ask them to take some quiet time to read what is on the newsprint, reflect on their own lives, and examine their own consciences in regard to what they have read.

You may choose either to have them write their own prayers or use the prayer offered below, asking a different person to read each paragraph.

Prayers of Intercession

Response: (“Lord, hear our prayer.”)

“We ask God’s help to do justice toward the people we meet at work, at school, and in our homes; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask God’s help to do justice towards those within our own community, throughout the country, and the world; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask God’s help to do justice in relationship to the environment, in regard to resources, food, water, and so on; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask God’s help to love kindness, to be kind to those closest to us, our family and friends; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask God’s help to love kindness, to be kind to those whom we know casually, at work, at school, or in other social situations; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask God’s help to love kindness, to be kind to those people who most need our love; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask for help to walk humbly with our God, to spend time with God; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask for help to walk humbly with our God, to get to know God better through study or in community; we pray to the Lord.

“We ask for help to walk humbly with our God, to see Jesus in others and treat everyone as we would treat him; we pray to the Lord.

“This is what God asks of us, only this: to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.”

Before retiring, **Judith Dunlap** was involved in religious education for over 30 years. She spoke throughout the country and wrote about the importance of the family's role in catechesis. She served as a consultant for St. Anthony Messenger Press (now Franciscan Communications). She continues to give retreats and parish missions on various topics of faith. She has a B.A. in education from Marquette University and an M.A. in theology from the University of Dayton. She is married, and has five children and ten grandchildren.

Mary Cummins Wlodarski has been a parish minister (DRE, Pastoral Associate) since 1976. This is the same year she married Wayne, with whom she raised their three, now adult, children. Mary has a B.S. in Education and an M.A. in Theological Studies, both from the University of Dayton along with an Associate in Pastoral Supervision from United Theological Seminary. Most recently she is an adjunct instructor for the Office of Learning and Teaching at UD.