

From: Dept. of Lifelong Faith Formation
Sent: Monday, February 3, 2020 10:14 AM
To: seasred@outlook.com
Subject: E-News from Lifelong Faith



Lifelong Faith Formation

Serving leaders of faith formation across the Diocese of Buffalo
Division of Evangelization & Catechesis

February 2020

Dear Natalie:



I want to give a SHOUT-OUT to our friends at SS. Joachim & Anne Parish in Attica:

WHOO-HOO!

Here's why:

Late last summer they found themselves without a coordinator of faith formation and rather than throwing a program together for September, they made a gutsy move. They decided to postpone the start of religious education until January. **Yes, POSTPONE!**

When meeting with the pastor and several parish leaders, I recommended that they consider postponing the start of their program until January in order to give themselves **TIME** to seek new leadership and **PLAN** for a new chapter in the life of their parish. I encouraged them to use this staffing transition as an opportunity to do a needs assessment and plan rather than panicking to 'start in September!!!' And, really, who says things have to start in September anyway???

So, what did our friends do in the months between Sept & Dec?

- The pastor **GATHERED** with members from their TWO worship sites and myself to discuss his plans and their ideas.
- Within a remarkably short amount of time, 2 new leaders **stepped forward** to co-lead these new efforts.
- The new leaders began **ATTENDING** our diocesan training workshops and **CALLED** on diocesan staff for consultations **REGULARLY** (phone, email)
- The team **LISTENED** to catechists and families about needs/ideas.

- They hosted a few **SOCIAL EVENTS** to encourage fellowship between those of the 2 worship sites.
- They wrote a special "Prayer for Religious Education" and **PRAYED** it as a faith community at **EVERY MASS** at BOTH worship sites.
- They came to believe in the value of **FAMILY** and its key role in the life of the parish and began to realize that investing in the whole family would benefit all.
- They **TRUSTED** the best practices they were researching and began to develop an approach to engage families and youth in the life of the Church.
- They **met OFTEN** for planning!

Then, in January, they held their first intergenerational faith formation event. I was told that they **ran out of the 100 name tags they started with!** Their event may not have been perfect, but it was what the community needed - it was well done and well received.

Our friends in Attica **EARNED** this shout out - they understand that failing to plan is a plan for failure and so they trusted a **planning process that slowed them down**, allowed for dialogue, prayer, and was not driven by the calendar.

Their story can be your parish's story as well - you have the power and control as a leader to lean into the needs of our families and parish communities. It is the 2020s, it is no longer the '80s...are you still programming like it is? Does your parish invest more time and resources in to child-centered catechesis with few **effective** connections with parents? (and how do you know?)

As always, your diocesan staff is available to work with pastors and lay leaders, together, to sketch out a long-range plan for parish-wide catechesis engaging all ages - it's not about doing MORE, it's about doing what's NEEDED today. No one has time anymore to do what is unnecessary or unproductive. YOU are cordially invited to spend time between NOW and September planning for the future - and you don't have to do it alone!

Congratulations, Fr. George Devanapalle, Maureen, Marlene, and the faithful of SS. Joachim & Anne for your example of faithfulness and discipleship! **Keep on going!**

Let us pray...

In His Peace,
Mary Beth Coates ([email](#))
 Director, Lifelong Faith Formation
 716-847-5510

**Connecting Parish Life to Sacraments:
 Rescheduled in a Different Format!**



Using webinar technology, we have scheduled 2 sessions to explore creative, faith-FILLED, and awesome strategies to connect the families and children participating in sacramental prep processes with the larger parish community (and, vice-versa!)

Join us for TWO sessions ONLINE:

Wednesday, February 5 at 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Review sacramental preparation guidelines for Penance and Eucharist, important resources, and begin to look at some specific case studies for current practices.

Wednesday, February 12 at 7:00-8:00 p.m.

For this we will re-gather to discuss strategies and ideas based on our earlier case studies, sharing with other leaders on how to make parish connections that work.

[In order to receive the link to the Zoom Meeting, please RSVP by February 4.](#)

Planning Ahead for 2020-2021



The mission of the Church is to form disciples...to introduce people to Jesus and then accompany them through a lifetime of discovery and conversion. In 2020, we need to do this with explicit intentionality and by seeking different ways to engage the families of our parishes. Whether your parish is large, small or in-between and whether you have been a catechetical leader for a day or 10,000 days...one thing we can agree on is that the methods of the last decade (and century) are insufficient for the generations in our midst today.

Strategic planning with an eye toward discipleship and engagement is needed today. Our team is available to assist your PARISH LEADERSHIP (clergy & laity) to develop a 3-5 year customized catechetical plan using the unique assets of your parish community. Only with a plan will we move forward, only with a plan will we effectively invite people into a relationship with Jesus Christ - more than ever, today this happens through families and in relationships with mentors. Planning for 2020-2021 begins NOW - let's get started!! Contact [Mary Beth Coates](#) to discuss planning to plan!

Getting Ready for Lent



Focusing on Jesus' journey to the cross during the 40 days of Lent is a reminder that we, as disciples of Jesus, are called to walk with others on their road of faith. As catechetical leaders, we have a particular responsibility to tend to the needs of the children, teens, and families of our parishes. View this [2020 Lenten Resource Guide](#) for a variety of online resources and videos that will assist you in the spiritual accompaniment of your children, teens and families during the season of Lent. To learn more or ask questions, [email Kaitlin Garrity](mailto:email) or call 716-847-5521.

Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month - February



As a key adult in a young person's life, parish leaders have a responsibility to safeguard our teens. Please refer to [Reach Out WNY](#) for a variety of educational resources for parents, teens, and adults on relationship abuse. Keep this resource your ministry tool box and be sure to share it with parents of the parish. Looking for a creative entry point to discussing this with teens? Check out [This](#)

[video](#) .

Sacramental Preparations with Families

Have general questions about what your role (or the role of your parish) is to prepare families for sacraments? [Check out this short video](#) regarding sacramental preparation for Penance and Eucharist. Want to talk more about these sacraments or discuss strategies for intentionally involving parents in sacramental preparation? Contact [Megan Nixon](#) for more information.

Catechist Formation



Spring is inching closer - making it a great time for your catechists to work on their formation! Here's what you can do in 3 Steps:

#1. To read about Catechist Formation Requirements and a look at our current topics, see our Spring 2020 brochure.

#2 REMEMBER, if nothing is scheduled nearby, [Contact Megan Nixon](#) to schedule a workshop at your site, free of charge.

#3 Visit www.DOBformation.org regularly for updates and to see all the details!

Here's what's on the calendar so far:

Praying With on Saturday, 2/22, 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Annunciation, Elma

Partnering with Parents on Monday, 3/16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Mary, Holley

Getting Comfortable with Hot Button Topics on Tuesday, 3/24, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
at Our Lady of Mercy, LeRoy

Theological Catechist Formation (subject to be determined) on Tuesday, 3/31
6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Aloysius, Springville
Partnering with Parents on Tuesday, 4/7, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Gabriel, Elma

Centering on Our Families



Passing on the Faith: Here's a [great short video](#) (6 minutes) to share with your parents on how to pass on the faith. Use this as a discussion starter for your next parent gathering, or send it along in your weekly email to parents. Are there other ways you can help parents share their story of faith?

Tips on Praying with your family: Encouraging and helping families pray can be challenging when you are not with them in the home to guide them through the process. Teaching Catholic Kids wrote an article on tips for a successful family prayer time. [Click here](#) to read and share this helpful resource with the families in your parish.

To learn more or to ask questions, [email Kaitlin Garrity](#) or call 716-847-5521.

Sacramental Preparations with Families

Have general questions about what your role (or the role of your parish) is to prepare families for sacraments? [Check out this short video](#) regarding sacramental preparation for Penance and Eucharist. Want to talk more about these sacraments or discuss strategies for intentionally involving parents in sacramental preparation? Contact [Megan Nixon](#) for more information.

Christ Is Alive! - Preparing for the Youth Convention



The Diocesan Youth Convention is fast approaching! **Get a group together and let's GO on February 28 - March 1, 2020 at the Buffalo Grand Hotel.**

[Visit our website](#) for some [materials to prepare your parish](#) for the event including our [promotional video for youth](#) or our [promotional video for parents](#).

Unsure if you want to bring a group to this year's Diocesan Youth Convention? [Watch this video](#), contact [Kaitlin Garrity](#) or call 716-847-5521 for more information or to discuss how to incorporate the Youth Convention into your faith formation programming this year.

Staff Directory:

Always available to you!

Call: 716.847.5501 or email us:

Director: [Mary Beth Coates](#)

Administrative Assistant:

[Doris Brydalski](#)

Planning & Formation Specialist:

[Megan Nixon](#)

Catechetical Planning Specialist:

[Kaitlin Garrity](#)



Dept. of Lifelong Faith Formation, 795 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14203

[SafeUnsubscribe™ seasred@outlook.com](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by llff@buffalodiocese.org in collaboration with

Constant Contact® 

[Try email marketing for free today!](#)