



Office of Lifelong
Faith Formation

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Have ewe herd?

CATHOLIC YOUTH LEADERSHIP TEAM DOES AN UN-BAA-LIEVABLE JOB PLANNING THE CATHOLIC YOUTH GATHERING.

On April 25th many sheep from different folds all over the state gathered to participate in the first ever Maine Catholic Youth Gathering.



The man, the myth, the legend Shawn the Sheep

“This is the second year that we are not able to gather for an in person Convention.

This year this is not a replacement for Convention at all. It’s an opportunity to gather for fun, for fellowship and in faith. And it’s a chance to have some fun tonight wherever we are, whether we’re in Madawaska or down in Kittery, or everywhere in between,” remarked Shawn Gregory, Coordinator of Youth Ministry.

Bishop Robert Deeley, the Shepherd of the Diocese joined the youth and shared some and shared some impactful words on vocation and how our first and primary vocation is to be followers of Christ:

“One of the ways we help ourselves know what the difference is, it makes to be a follower of Jesus is to be with other followers of Jesus and that’s why I’m so glad you are all here tonight because that kind of discussion and conversation you have with each other, and the worship life of your parish church you have the opportunity to understand what it means to be a follower of



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Jesus,” stated Bishop Deeley. The Bishop encouraged the youth to ponder how we show the difference that following Jesus makes in our own lives and those of others.

Being true to the feast day the theme of the gathering was “Shepherdy.” Several Catholic Youth Leadership Team (CYLT) members were contestants answering questions from the following categories: outstanding in their field, all sheeps and sizes, ewe-nity, the baaa-ble, relationsheep with Christ, and wolves in sheep’s clothing. The audience were engaged as they listened to talks on trust and the Bible, and participated in mentimeter polls and games such as two truths and a lie and heads or tails. The night concluded with a decade of the Rosary and more sheep puns for good meaaa-sure.

LEVEL II CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD TRAINING IN JAY

This summer and next, St. Rose of Lima Parish in Jay will host a *LEVEL II Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* adult training program with trainer Audrey Walko. Level II Part I will run July 18-23, 2021, with Part II taking place in the summer of 2022. For more information or to register, please contact Diane Maurais at (207) 491-5454. **Please register by June 17.**

For more information on *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* and how it has been utilized in parishes around the diocese click [here](#)



2021 CATHOLIC APPEAL VIDEO SHOWS HOW WE TOO HAVE BEEN GOOD SHEPHERDS

The [2021 Catholic Appeal video](#) is now available. It recounts the difficult year we’ve had but also how ministries within the Diocese of Portland Maine have flourished and how the people of Maine have become good shepherds of the resources we have and to people in need—whether physical, emotional, spiritual. The work that gets funded by the Catholic Appeal helps to spread hope and Christ’s love across the Diocese. Make sure you watch starting at 6:35 for a special focus on faith formation.

If you or someone you know would like to donate to the Catholic Appeal go to www.portlanddiocese.org/appeal or call (207)-321-7806.

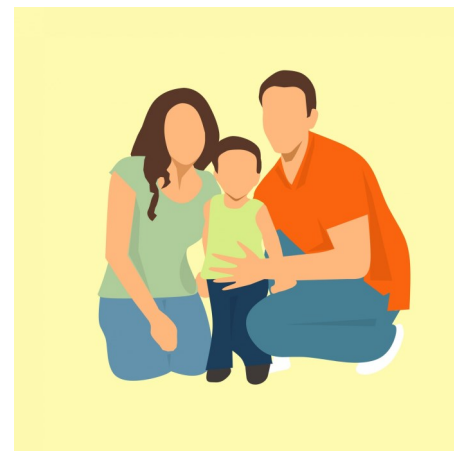


WALKING WITH FAMILIES ACROSS THE DIOCESE

From the *Directory for Catechesis*, 227

The family is a proclamation of faith in that it is the natural place in which faith can be lived in a simple and spontaneous manner.

It “has an unique privilege: transmitting the Gospel by rooting it in the context of profound human values. On this human base, Christian initiation is more profound: the awakening of the sense of God; the first steps in prayer; education of the moral conscience; formation in the Christian sense of love, understanding as a reflection of the love of God the Father, the Creator. It is, indeed, a Christian education more witnessed to than taught, more occasional than systematic, more ongoing and daily than structured into periods (GDC 255).



What is the aim of our efforts?

This question should be at the heart of everything we do. If something does not serve in bringing about the aim that you envision then you must reconsider what you are doing. The same can be said for family formation. We may need a paradigm shift. For many, the mindset for family formation seems program-dominated, with the focus on getting people to “come” to something. While this is not a bad thing, it is not the most sustainable either. Instead we must shift the focus of family formation to a kerygmatic conversion approach that helps families encounter Christ and recognize their own households as holy and domestic churches.

How do we make this shift?

1. First we get to know the families in our parish. This can take the form of a phone call to check in with them. The OLFF team in collaboration with parish leaders are working on a guide for developing a phone outreach process that you can utilize and adjust as needed for your own parish. [Click](#) to see an example of what Parish of the Holy Eucharist used in March 2020
2. Next, we can ask families what of the central message of Christ they most want to hand onto their children and how they would like to incorporate it in their family life. Perhaps families with similar central messages could meet together to discuss unique and creative ways of transmitting that message to their children.
3. And lastly, but most importantly, we can encourage families to frequent the Sacraments and to see these celebrations less as isolated stops and more as mile markers on the long road of continuing conversion. The Sacraments are not the end of living the Catholic faith, instead they mark new beginnings in living out the call to holiness within the context of the family.

CALLING ALL JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL ARTISTS

Society needs artists....artists have their unique place. Obedient to their inspiration in creating works both worthwhile and beautiful, they enrich the cultural heritage of each nation and of all humanity.



Catholic Extension is looking for Catholic artists to share their unique interpretation of the birth of Jesus. Selected pieces will be published prior to Christmas in the Winter edition of EXTENSION, Catholic Extension's award-winning magazine that is sent to more than 50,000 readers. Artists have two options that can help inspire them.

1

Illustration Option 1



Jesus came to Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. Born poor, in a manger next to animals, humble shepherds were the first to meet him. Create an illustration that answers this question: "If Jesus were born today, where would he be born? Who would he come to first?" *Include a short, written explanation with your illustration.

2

Illustration Option 2



Some of the greatest artists of all time have depicted Jesus through their own culture, nationality, race, and ethnicity. Draw an "inculturated" nativity scene based on your own traditions, culture, ethnicity, or family history. *Include a short, written explanation with your illustration.

For more information about the contest or to submit a piece click [here](#)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM LFFA

WHAT DO MIDDLE SCHOOLERS WANT YOU TO KNOW?

Along with their love of all snacks, love of games (especially soda can basketball), a need for a bit of autonomy and control, middle schoolers answered that they wanted us to take the time to listen to them and to help them to know that they have a special place in

the parish instead of just a designated spot in the pew, stated Michelle Valcourt at the Faith Formation Association (LFFA) meeting on May 13th.



Lifelong

Middle school ministry is often an overlooked ministry, yet it is vital to the flourishing of the parish and the well-being and development of the youth for several reasons including:

- Middle school youth are deciding if they even like the people they see at Church. Julianne Stanz in August spoke about how her son did not want to go to Church because no one looks happy. Middle school youth ministry is a place where youth are able to encounter Christ and each other, and experience authentic joy.
- They are wrestling with big questions pertaining to their identity and being pressured to make decisions about their sexuality. They need a place to calm down, relax and experience a sense of belonging, welcome and hospitality.
- Middle school youth are beginning to think abstractly. They are questioning who God is. Is He really as good and kind as He is made out to be, or is He mean and intimidating? Through the accompaniment of their youth ministers middle school youth can come to the conclusion that God is good all the time.

It is not easy to build up a strong middle school ministry. It involves consistency, ritual, constant communication with both youth and their families, persistence, flexibility, support from other adults who want to minister to middle school youth and a lot of faith.

Above all middle school ministry is about forming those relationships and helping them to find a place of belonging. If we don't form relationships with our youth and if our attitude is one of exclusion rather than inclusion, then the numbers don't matter. We need to take the time to show these youth that they are supported, welcomed, needed, and loved. I encourage you to ask yourself "if I've never been to Church before would I feel invited and welcomed," stated Michelle. If the answer is "yes" congratulations! If the answer is "no" its time to start inviting, investing, and building up this vital ministry of the Church.

IN WORD AND WITNESS MEMBERSHIP

The organization formerly known as the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL) has chosen to rebrand as “In Word & Witness.” During the final session of Magnify members were encouraged to vote for or against the rebranding of NCCL. The majority voted for the rebranding. The website is now changed to <https://inwordandwitness.org/>.



In Word & Witness has two different types of memberships that you can sign up for; **1) a free membership and 2) a paid membership.**

Free Membership: Free members engage and contribute to the mission of In Word & Witness and gain access to all public resources plus exclusive invitations to limited live sessions and specialized content.

Paid Membership: Paid members contribute to the mission of In Word and Witness and gain ongoing access resources and events. Opportunities include authoring content for the resource library for peer review and discussion, partnership project proposals with crowdsource funding potential, regular live networking sessions, discount on events, and unique accompaniment opportunities.

Click [here](#) to register



Pope Francis has instituted the ministry of lay catechist as a stable form of service in the local Church! To celebrate this momentous occasion In Word & Witness (formerly known as NCCL) is offering a 50% discount to those who register for their annual membership summit by May 17 and use the discount code CATECHIST50. The annual membership summit will include inspiring prayer, exceptional presentations and even a paint and sip with Br. Mickey McGrath.

**Don't miss out!
Register today
for this amazing
opportunity!**

WHAT'S NEXT AT LFFA (JUNE 10, 2021)

Join us on June 10, 2021 for the usual business meeting followed by a celebration of our shared ministries. The time will include playing “everyone’s favorite gameshow: Jeopardy!” Questions will be a mix of catechesis-based, how well you know you co-workers in the vineyard (i.e. other parish catechetical leaders), and humorous stories that were definitely not mentioned in the job description.



“Don’t worry about having the right words; worry more about having the right heart. It’s not eloquence He seeks, just honesty.” (Max Lucado)

Inspiration

As I (Hannah) was looking at the feast days during the month of May I was drawn to look into the story of St. Paschal Baylon whose feast day is May 17. Though he lived what seemed to be an ordinary life, his virtue and his devotion to the Eucharist was extraordinary. As parish pews begin to be filled again I am inspired to pray for the intercession of St. Paschal that we will all have an increased desire to cultivate the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us and to foster a stronger devotion to the Eucharist.

PRAYER

**O Holy Spirit of Light and Love, to You I consecrate
My heart, mind, and will for all time and eternity.
May I be ever docile to Your Divine inspirations
And to the teachings of the holy Catholic Church
Whose infallible guide You are.
May my heart be ever inflamed with the love of God
and love of neighbor
May my will be ever in harmony with Your Divine
Will.
May my life faithfully imitate the life and virtues of
our Lord Jesus Christ.
To Him, with the Father, and You, Divine Spirit,
Be honor and glory forever.
Amen.**