



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE of PORTLAND
Office of Lifelong Faith Formation

Office of Lifelong Faith Formation Newsletter

August 19, 2021

Volume 3, Issue 2

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Fall 2021 Guidelines for Children/Youth Faith Formation



With the dramatic increase in the number of Covid19 case resulting from the more contagious Delta variant, Maine's Catholic schools and parish faith formation programs will return to using similar protocols to those in place at the end of May 2021. For example, all children, youth, and adults, regardless of vaccination status, are to wear face coverings while inside buildings for children or youth formation activities; all are also to continue completing a Covid19 self-check before coming onsite to participate. [Click](#) to read the full memo with details. Find the revised self-check poster [here](#).

Diocesan Catechetical Plan Rolled Out



The Office of Lifelong Faith Formation (OLFF) hosted two sessions which laid out an overview of the Diocesan Catechetical Plan. A webpage with the link to the full Diocesan Catechetical Plan, the recording to the overview session on July 26 and next steps for parish leaders has been curated and can be found by going to: <https://portlanddiocese.org/olff/diocesan-catechetical-plan>

What is a Diocesan Catechetical Plan?

A Diocesan Catechetical Plan is a document which establishes long-term goals and objectives for a Diocese. These goals and objectives are detailed and define indicators of success for the Diocese and how parishes can gain the most benefit from these goals and objectives. These goals and objectives serve as reminders that we as humans have limits as to what and how much we can do. Therefore, these goals and objectives help the Office of Lifelong Faith Formation to discern what efforts to devote our time and effort to and which ideas and projects to either put on the back burner for now and revisit later, or to let go of completely.

This Diocesan Catechetical Plan was formed through research done by the OLFF staff through various surveys which asked parish leaders about ministerial areas of need. The following were identified:

- Catechist/pastoral leadership development
- Parishes as places of encounter (especially through the sacraments of Baptism, and Eucharist)
- Developing a comprehensive, systematic catechesis for children, youth and adults which ultimately leads to missionary discipleship

Lifelong Faith Formation Association (LFFA)



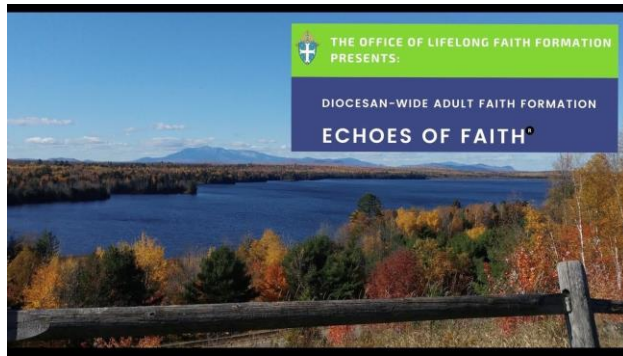
Here's a quick reminder: LFFA is a membership organization with annual dues of \$35/person. While anyone can participate in a monthly meeting, paid members receive detailed minutes from the monthly meetings as well as reminders for upcoming meetings and a complementary copy of the book for the annual group-read. Partial scholarships are available so please don't let cost keep you from becoming a member. [Click](#) to join or renew today!

LFFA 2021-2022 Topic Schedule

Month	Speaker/Topic
September 9, 2021 9am-11am	Copyright Considerations for Catechists/Parish Life
October 14, 2021 9am-11am	Resources for Digital Catechesis
November 4, 2021 9am-11am	Book Read--Renewing Catholic Family Life
December 9, 2021 9am-11am	Advent Reflection
January 13, 2022 9am-11am	Young Adult Ministry
February 10, 2022 9am-11am	Transgender Issues & Catholic Teaching
March 10, 2022 9am-11am	Lenten Reflection
April 7, 2022 9am-11am	Book Read: Renewing Catholic Family Life
May 3-5, 2022	Eucharist as Source & Summit for Spirituality of Catechetical Leaders (LFFA retreat)
June 9, 2022 9am-11am	Life as an outward facing minister & theological grounding for outreach

Echoes of Faith Emmaus Edition





Join the OLFF staff and the 75+ participants as we journey together and discover the truth, beauty, and goodness of the Catholic faith. For more information go to: <https://portlanddiocese.org/olff/echoing-faith>

Echoes of Faith Module Calendar (Community Track)

Module	Opening Gathering	Closing Gathering
Prayer & Spirituality	August 4, 6:30-7pm	September 22, 6:30-7:30pm
Getting Started as a Catechist	October 6, 6:30-7pm	November 17, 6:30-7:30pm
The Church	December 1, 6:30-7pm	January 19, 6:30-7:30pm
The Learner	February 2, 6:30-7pm	March 23, 6:30-7:30pm
Liturgy & Sacraments	April 6, 6:30-7pm	May 18, 6:30-7:30pm
Adult Faith Formation	June 1, 6:30-7pm	July 20, 6:30-7:30pm
Catholic Morality	August 3, 6:30-7pm	September 21, 6:30-7:30pm
Grade Level Methodology	October 5, 6:30-7pm	November 16, 6:30-7:30pm

Walking with Families Across the Diocese



Middle Childhood (Ages 6-10)

From the Directory for Catechesis 232d, 236, 240-241

- *The community fosters the involvement of parents in their children's journey of initiation, which for some of them is a moment to deepen their faith and for others is an authentic space for its first proclamation (232d).*
- *Children have the capacity to pose meaningful questions relative to creation, to God's identity, to the reason of good and evil, and are capable of rejoicing before the mystery of life and love (236).*
- *The overall itinerary of Christian initiation...provides...for a teaching of the truths of faith that is reinforced with the witness of the community, participation in the liturgy, the encounter with the word of Jesus in Sacred Scripture...the exercise of charity. The child enters into a community larger than the family*

Ponder

As part of all parish visioning and implementing of gathering models for catechesis, are we intentionally including some form of adult formation and welcome?

What message do the children receive when "their adults" are invited to and say "yes" to participation in the life of the parish and catechesis?

Pray

The children gradually learn and practice these prayers

- The Sign of the Cross
- A morning prayer
- A prayer before meals
- A prayer at bedtime
- The Glory Be
- Hail Mary
- The Our Father
- 1 decade or more of the Rosary.

Practice

Using these parts of our Creed (our statement of belief), create colorful conversation cards with brief teachings and questions to prompt conversation at home and in group gatherings.

- ***We Belong***

To one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church. These are called the 4 marks of the Catholic Church

- ***We Believe***

In God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus teaches us about the holy Trinity.

- ***We Respond***

As disciples of Christ in helping to build the Kingdom of God. What's my part in this mission?

Share Your Story



When was the last time you shared your story? *In Word and Witness* (formerly known as NCCL), in recognizing the value of sacred stories, has created a space where parish leaders, catechists and members of *In Word and Witness* can share their communal or individual stories of faith.

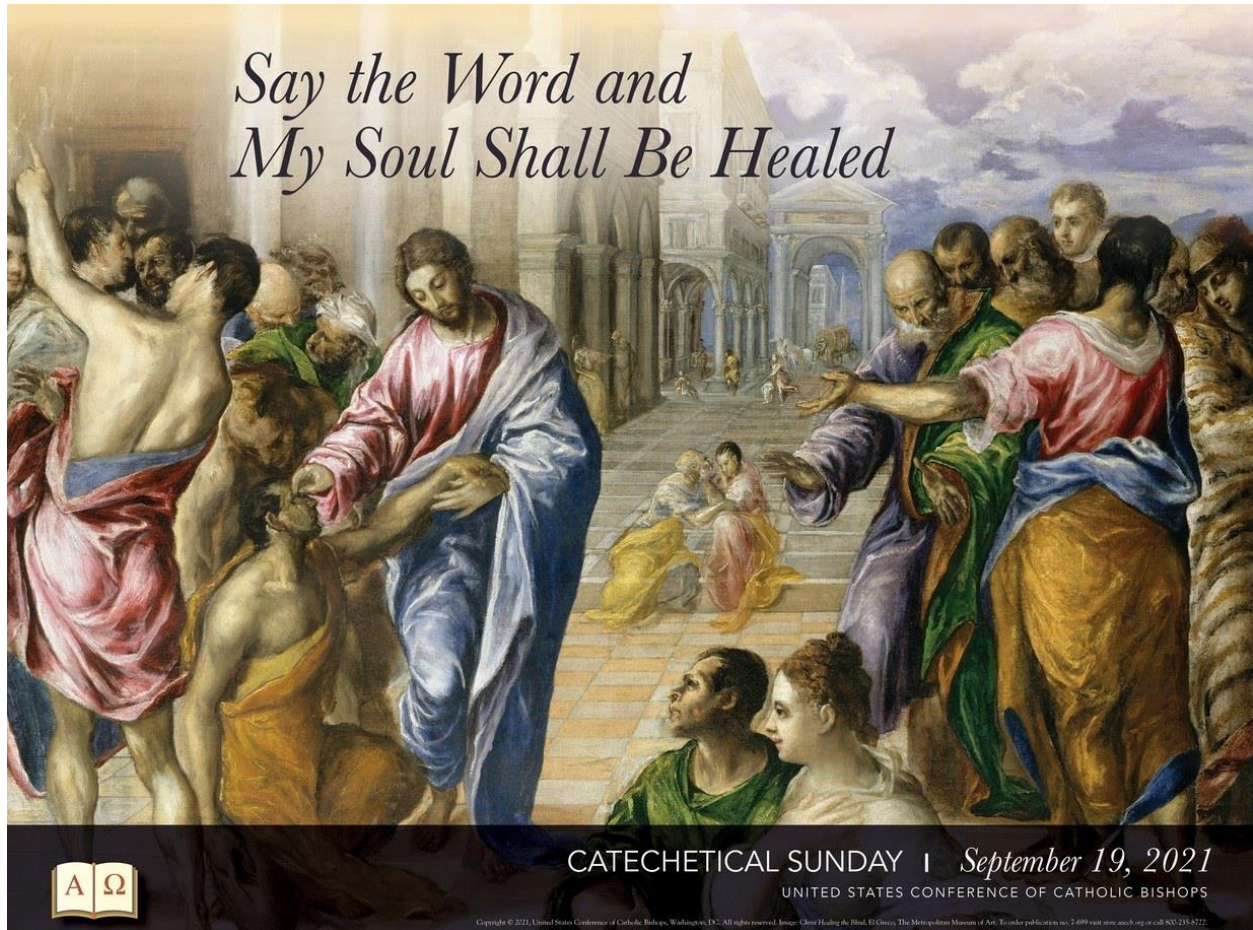
Got writer's block? Here are a few prompts to get you started:

1. Tell us about a significant spiritual experience you've had in recent years, and how that experience shapes you as a witness to this faith.
2. Share about how you were called to be a catechist. Who formed you or mentored you in this vocation?

3. How have you experienced hope in Jesus Christ? And how does that experience influence your role as an evangelizer?

To submit a story click [here](#).

Catechetical Sunday



Catechetical Sunday is an opportunity to recognize those who have answered the Baptismal call and have been witnesses to the faith either in formal or informal settings. Catechetical Sunday will be held September 19, 2021. The theme for the year is "say the word and my soul shall be healed." The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have a few resources available to help parishes make the most of this special Sunday. To view the resources click [here](#).

Perhaps on this day your parish could consider having a special blessing for all the catechists who will be teaching this year, or maybe the names of the catechists (with their permission of course) could be printed in bulletin with a thank you message and/or a note reminding parishioners to pray for them. Or perhaps you could feature a story about how your catechists came to be catechists throughout the whole month of September.

October--Respect Life Month



October is traditionally known as Respect Life month. The USCCB has resources for priests and deacons, those leading faith formation, those who teach in Catholic schools, those in youth ministry as well as those in Catholic media. This toolkit includes posters, sample activities, reflection questions, intercessions, homily helps and more.

May God grant us the wisdom and courage to lovingly protect His gift of human life at every stage, in sickness and in health. Amen!

Inspiration



One of my favorite spiritual writers is Henri Nouwen. Henri very poignantly and powerfully describes the human experience. As I was pouring through quotes from my favorite spiritual writer, I came across this quote which I found very inspirational and applicable to our job as parish or Diocesan leaders.

"Ministers are tempted to join the ranks of those who consider it their primary task to keep other people busy... But our task is the opposite of distraction....how to keep them from being so busy that they can no longer hear the voice of God who speaks in silence."

I was inspired by this quote because sometimes our focus becomes doing instead of being. We focus on tasks like recruiting volunteers for different ministries in the parish, revamping the youth ministry program, coordinating ministry schedules etc., all of which is good and necessary, but our first and most important task is to help our parishioners encounter God and recognize His voice. It is a lifelong skill and once they discern what God's voice sounds like then they will be more able to follow wherever He leads them. Who knows He just might lead them to be a catechist, or leader of Children's Liturgy of the Word, or to become involved in youth ministry.

We as leaders must also take the time to hear the voice of God who speaks to us in silence. I know that can be difficult when there is so much to do, but it is essential. Look at the past week and assess how much time you spent in silence just listening to God. If it hasn't been much think about how you can add more time spent in silence to your daily routine.

Prayer



(Pope Francis' intention for the month of August is for all those who live and work from the sea, among them sailors, fishermen, and their families)

Star of the Sea, Great Mother of God, and our Mother, you know all dangers of soul and body that threaten seamen. Protect your sons and daughters who sail the seas, and protect also their families that await their return. Star of the Sea, Mother of the Church, give light and strength to those priests, deacons, religious, and laypersons who bring the love of your Divine Son among seamen and women. Fill their hearts with a supernatural and life-giving zeal for the apostolate. Star of the Sea, light shining in the darkness, be a guide to those who sail amid the storms and dangers of life. Stir up in their midst the hearts of ardent apostles and bring us all to the safety of Heaven's port. Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on all those who sail the seas. O Star of the Sea help and protect us from the danger of hurricanes, floods, piracy and all the perils of nature. Amen.

Taken from: [Catholic Maritime News](#)