New Coordinators' Orientation Day 2010

On Thursday 4 March eight intrepid new coordinators met with the team to learn more about their role of coordinating the mandated Catechist program in their parish.

After discussing the many facets of the role, the group was introduced to the updated sacrament policies in the Archdiocese of Perth and tried their hand at planning a year's program. After lunch Robyn Valli from the Catholic Library spoke to the group outlining the many services and resources now available to Catechists.

Attendees:
- Marj Cosentino, Liz Balm (Lockridge)
- Sandy Coelho, Connie Mratovich (Ocean Reef)
- Kylie Phillips, Marina Haywood (Yangebup)
- Connie Carroll (Redemptorist Monastery)
From the Coordinator

Our year at the Catechist Service began rather fulsomely with preparation for the Catechist Conference in October and plans to rewrite and update the Catechist Program, *The Truth will set you free.*

We are also delighted to welcome a long awaited new member to the team, Stephen Harris. Stephen looks forward to meeting you and I know you will make him feel very welcome as well. You can read more about Stephen and our ventures for the year in the pages that follow.

I trust that you will find the articles in this edition of REgrowth informative and stimulating. Please contact us if there are stories or information that you would like to share with other Catechists.

May your teaching be a source of joy to you as you continue to make known the God of mercy and compassion to the children in your parish. I was struck by the simple truth of the following – which I think applies especially to Catechists:

“I cannot imagine what else a teacher or preacher should do, except to remind people of their capacity for the infinite.”

Leon Tolstoy

Pina Ford
Coordinator

Sacramental Preparation: The Role of Catholic Schools

One of the developments that have occurred in sacramental initiatives in the Archdiocese of Perth in 2010 has been the promulgation of the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia policy on the role of Catholic schools in supporting sacramental preparation.

The policy begins by affirming the indispensable role of the parish:

*The parish is the Christian faith community that children and young people need for their religious development. It is where they are inspired and nurtured by other members of the community to experience what is needed to develop their faith....It is where initiation into the faith is celebrated and nurtured; it is where people learn to live as a community of the faithful.*

The policy goes on to clarify the role of the Catholic school in complementing the work of parishes:

*By the nature of their mission and mandate, they have a direct responsibility to support families and parishes in the preparation of children to receive the sacraments.*

The policy reiterates the principle that preparation for sacraments is ‘family-focused, parish-based and school supported’. It identifies that there are important procedures required of the school, including: representation of school leadership on sacramental teams; supporting parish based celebration of sacraments by providing resources and personnel; and collaborating with the Parish Religious Education Program.

This clarification of the important role that Catholic schools play in sacramental preparation provides another valuable step towards ensuring that parents, parishes and schools work together as a unified community of faith to benefit the children who are being prepared.

Catechist Conference 2010

*Remain in My Love: Nurturing the Ministry of Catechists*

We are fortunate to have distinguished author and Australian Catholic University lecturer Dr Maurice Ryan as the keynote speaker for our Conference for Catechists on October 13 and 14. Ms Michele Jones, who is well known for her expertise in Spiritual Theology and who is based in Perth, will be the co-speaker.

The theme of this year’s conference is taken from ‘Jesus, the True Vine’ – the discourse in the Gospel of John 15: 1-17. The keynote speakers will teach and inspire us as they delve into this very rich theme which sums up the Christian vocation in general and the Catechist vocation in particular.

We look forward to sharing these two days with you, including all the elements that make the conference so special:

- speakers
- workshops
- liturgies
- camaraderie
- ambience of the Catholic Education Centre

Do remember to cancel your Catechist classes for the week.
Newest member of the Catechist Service Team

My name is Stephen Harris and I grew up in the Scarborough area, having attended both Catholic and state schools during my education. I have been lucky enough to have studied at our own Catholic University, Notre Dame Fremantle in recent years.

I come from a school background, having taught in three Catholic schools in Perth over the last 20 years and have held various leadership positions. I have a strong commitment to parishes in my work. I am also a Catechist and this year I will be teaching the Confirmation Program at St Simon Peter Parish in Ocean Reef.

I have always had a commitment to evangelisation and take the words of Jesus in St Matthew's Gospel to heart.

I am very happy to be of service to you all and to continue the good work that is already in place. One of the projects that I am currently involved in is to be part of a team, along with Camel Suart, to re write the Archdiocesan Catechist Program, *The Truth will set you free*. This is a large project and will take up to two years to complete. In the end I am sure you will be pleased with the final product.

I will also be involved in Family Catechesis, presenting courses and other aspects of the Catechist Service team’s work, sacrament meetings, coordinators’ meetings, the Commissioning Mass and the Catechist Conference.

I hope to be able to meet up with you at the various events held this year.

My contact details are as follows:

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*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations and baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always until the end of time.*  
Mt 28:16-20

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Theology in the Classroom

Participants attending the final session of IFC part two, Theology in the Classroom, gathered in the north transept of the chapel the day after Perth’s big storm. Everyone had stories to share about shattered windscreen and flooded houses. Despite these personal anxieties we were soon hard at work exploring the evolving theology of Mary in the church by examining the Gospels and Acts, a variety of historical and current images of Mary and the document of Vatican II. The end of this session marked the completion of the journey through the initial formation course part one and part two for over 20 Catechists. These Catechists will be commissioned for the Archdiocese of Perth at a special Commissioning Mass celebrated by the Most Reverend Barry James Hickey on August 4th at the Catholic Education Office.

A great achievement!
PREP is alive and well in Kulin

In October 2009, Michele and I took a drive into the country and headed to the small farming community of Kulin, in the southern part of the Archdiocese. Here we found a PREP program that was thriving. We asked each other what it was that made the program so. After some discussion we concluded that three factors contributed to the success of the program.

First, we noticed how well the program is structured. Brenda Hitchcock, the coordinator, understands the importance and sees the wisdom of following the mandated program. She does not see the sense of creating something new when all that is needed is in The Truth will set you free file.

What further delighted us was the enthusiasm and the support of the parish priest, Fr Rainier Fernandez, and the mothers. The mothers expressed their gratitude for the work and the preparation that Brenda puts into the program for their children. They are more than willing to step in when Brenda is unable to teach a class due to work commitments.

A third factor which we believe contributes to the success of the program is the parents’ commitment to the program. One of the mothers shared with us that sacramental preparation was a priority for the children in town and that the children would have to forgo other extra curricular activities even though this meant that the town might be short of players for a particular sporting competition. We believe that for a country town this is truly a courageous step but at the same time children come to understand and value Religious Education.

As Michele and I left Kulin we were convinced that the Spirit is at work in this community and we pray that the program will continue to flourish and that the Catholic community will be further strengthened.

Carmel Suart

Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

St Francis of Assisi

Children’s Ministry Network (WA) presents...

Passing the Baton

Children’s Workers’ Training Day and Expo
News from Kellerberrin and Merredin

When Carmel and I recently visited Kellerberrin we first met with Jonelle, Ann and Audrey, three mothers who were really keen to set up a Religious Education program for the local Catholic children, including their own. They had already successfully introduced a children’s mass in their parish with the wholehearted support of Parish Priest Fr Stan. Now they were ready to prepare their children for receiving the sacraments. We were able to offer them a variety of resources including the PREP home program, Catholic Library resources and some powerpoint presentations for use during their children’s masses.

With the mercury rising we next headed off to Merredin where Sr Eleanor and Fr Stan offered us some very welcome country hospitality. That night Fr Stan introduced us to the parents of children preparing to receive sacraments at St Mary’s School. The school principal, Martin Major, and school staff also attended the gathering. Carmel facilitated a workshop which refreshed parents’ and teachers’ knowledge of the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance and Eucharist and we enjoyed supper with the group afterwards.

The wonderful thing about the trip was that the lines of communication had been strengthened with the parishioners in Kellerberrin and Merredin and we were very happy to have experienced such a dedicated Catholic community.

Stephen Harris

A conference-style training day was held on Saturday 13 February 2010 to encourage children’s workers as they pass the ‘baton of faith’ on to the next generation. Catechists from many faith traditions gathered at Churchlands Christian Fellowship Hall in Balcatta to learn about one another and to gain new insights into their varied ministries.

The event was organised by the Children’s Ministry Network. This is a group consisting of representatives from many Christian denominations including our Catechist Service Team.

Twenty one of our own Catholic Catechists from 14 parishes joined Stephen and I on the day and enjoyed listening to the keynote speakers and elective presentations. Session topics included Answering Kids’ Questions, Connecting With Boys, Storyboarding and Using Music and Drama. We were also able to view and buy some interesting resources from the stalls during the breaks.

Michele Purcell
It is good educational practice to update programs in order to keep abreast of changes in educational trends, especially in this age of rapid change. Well our turn has come! The Truth will set you free is under reconstruction. Writing has begun and by 2012 a new and updated program will be in all parishes.

The new program will follow the directives outlined in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and all content will be cross referenced with the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1994). We are also able to include all the liturgical changes brought about by the new missal, so the time is right.

Conversion in Lent prepares us for the new life of Easter which then propels us on to Pentecost when we receive the strength of the Spirit. At Pentecost we celebrate the gifts we have been given which help us to bring the message of Jesus to today’s world.

Ideas for Celebrating Pentecost

The Lenten Easter season concludes with Pentecost.

Pentecost is a day we don’t want to let slip by. It is the birthday of the Church and considered the second most important feast day of the liturgical year after Easter.

Exciting Times Ahead

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There will be different levels of consultations throughout the writing phase. Grateful thanks to all Catechists who participated in the first phase of consultation with the survey. Your responses have been very valuable to us and will continue to guide us in our decision making.

All we ask is: do not panic! We believe the new program will further enhance the wonderful work that you so diligently carry out in your parishes. Our aim is to make the new program more user friendly. We pray that the Spirit will be at work in both the writing and the delivery phase of the program.

How can we help our PREP children celebrate Pentecost?

Each of The Truth will set you free levels has a lesson on Pentecost which can be found in the Feast Days Module. In every Pentecost lesson the scripture passage, Acts 2:1-4, which describes the coming of the Holy Spirit, is included to be read or told to the children. One way to engage their interest while listening is to hand out a paper ‘flame’ for each child to hold before the passage is read. Instruct the children to hold the flame on top of their heads for a few seconds just as they hear the words, ‘Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there.’ (Acts 2:3) If the Catechist has time before the lesson, paper flames can be cut out and taped to a ring made of card. The rings can then be slipped on each child’s finger before the reading.

At the end of the lesson encourage the children to ask their parents to help celebrate Pentecost at home in simple ways. On Pentecost Sunday suggest they could:

- Wear something red.
- Place a red table cloth or runner on the table at meal times.
- Write a menu for dinner on flame-shaped or dove-shaped paper.
- Write a special Pentecost grace before meals.
- Make a birthday cake loaded with candles to celebrate the birthday of the Church.
- Make a happy Pentecost card for each member of the family wishing them one of the gifts of the Spirit, for example, the gift of wisdom, for the year ahead.
- At mealtimes or bedtime, pray for the needs of the whole Church.
Old Testament Quiz

1. What did God do on day five of the creation story?
2. What was the promise God made to Noah?
3. What was the name of Abraham’s wife?
4. What were the names of Isaac’s two sons?
5. How many sons did Jacob have?
6. In what country did Joseph become a leader?
7. Who ordered the baby Moses to be rescued from the river?
8. How long were the Israelites in the desert?
9. What answer was Moses given when he asked for the name of God?
10. What covenant did Moses receive from God?

See answers beside >

Daffy
Dictionary Definitions
for Catechists

Amen: The only part of a prayer that every child in your class knows.

Hymn: A sacred song that is usually sung in a key three octaves higher than anyone in the congregation can sing.

Choir: A group of people whose singing allows the rest of the congregation to lip-sync.

Pew: Medieval torture device still found in Catholic churches.

Entrance Procession: The ceremonial formation at the beginning of Mass consisting of altar servers, the acolyte, the celebrant and late parishioners looking for seats.

Recessional Procession: The ceremonial formation at the conclusion of Mass led by parishioners trying to beat the crowd to the parking lot.

Answers to Bible Quiz

Old Testament Quiz

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10. What covenant did Moses receive from God?

Score: 10/9 Bible Scholar
8/7 Excellent Knowledge
6/5 Good Memory
4/3 A Good Try
2/1 Well done for being honest!
Reminders

In the Beginning Was the Word
The Story of Jesus in Four Voices
Date  Friday 21 and Monday 24 May
Time  9.30 am – 2.30 pm
Venue Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Facilitator Stephen Harris

Retreat Day
That Your Joy May Be Full
Date  Friday 4 June
Time  9.30 am – 2.30 pm
Venue Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Facilitator Pina Ford

Sacraments
Encountering the Sacred
Date  Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 June
Time  9.30 am – 2.30 pm
Venue Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Facilitator Stephen Harris

Coordinators’ Session
Date  Friday 25 June
Time  9.30 am – 4.00 pm
Venue Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Facilitator Jan Grajczzonek

Enhancing Your Teaching Skills
Use Simple Art Ideas to Delight the Children in your PREP Class
Date  Tuesday 20 June
Time  9.30 am – 2.30 pm
Venue Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Facilitator Michele Purcell

Thanksgiving and Commissioning Eucharist
Date  Wednesday 4 August
Time  7.30 pm
Venue The Chapel of St Michael the Archangel
Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Principal Most Rev Barry James Hickey
Celebrant Archbishop of Perth

Applications for Certificates close on Monday 5 July

Leadership Course
Date  Fridays 6, 13 and 20 August
Time  9.30 am – 3.00pm
Venue Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Facilitator Pina Ford and outside presenters

Companions in Hope
Saints and the Tradition of Holiness for us Today
Date  Wednesdays 25 August – 15 September
Time  9.30 am – 1.00 pm
Venue Catholic Education Centre
50 Ruislip Street, Leederville
Facilitator Pina Ford and Michele Purcell

Our First Twelve Months!!
Holy Spirit Parish – City Beach

The idea for a Parish RE program came from one of our parishioners, Janine Hart. Being a teacher and having children who attended a government school, Janine saw the need and opportunity for a program at Holy Spirit.

With support from Fr Don Kettle and the Catechist Service Team, Janine started the first class in 2009. Soon after, the role of Catechist Coordinator was advertised in the Parish newsletter. Having no experience, but keen to get involved, I jumped on board.

Our first task was to plan for the future and recruit some Catechists! After advertising and speaking at weekend Masses, there were four of us ready to start training. Thanks to the Catechist Service Team for a course that is both inspirational and informative. We are now having an interesting time applying it all in the classroom!

With a growing team of Catechists (we now have five teaching, three relief and one training) we set to work planning. From early on we realised that some rules and regulations were important to help the program run smoothly and effectively. We sat down with Fr Don to tease out a few issues and set some guidelines and dates for the following year.

Once the administrative details were finalised, the marketing began! Local schools were contacted, and notices put in their newsletters and notice boards. We also informed surrounding parishes. Families already in the program are our best advocates and help spread the word.

To help keep the energy alive, we publish term newsletters – mostly informative, but a bit of light entertainment too! Plans are for a spotlight on a Catechist segment to share a bit more of the lives of our amazing team.

Twelve months on, we are settling in to 2010 and scribbling notes for what we’ll do differently next year!

Andrine Terry
Catechist Coordinator
City Beach

Part of our first communion class with Toni Jenkins