



Children's Ministry Update

Year of Matthew

YEAR A : Matthew

Volume9 Edition1: 2014

From the Team

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the first Issue of the **Children's Ministry Update** for 2014! By now you would have already begun your wonderful work for the year in Children's Ministry in whatever form that takes for you and your Parish.

A very big welcome to all new ministers in this field. We hope that you will feel how worthwhile this work is for the children and their families as well as become aware of the benefits that this work has in your own spiritual life. Our reflection on our ministry, the preparation involved and the opportunities we take to nurture our life as a Catechist, can only enhance our Christian living.

In this Year of Matthew, you will find items in this issue to nurture yourself as a Catechist, activities and resources which can be used for children of different ages in various contexts in Children's Ministry as well a new double page addition called '**Making Connections**' on pages 4 and 5. Page 4 is offered as an assistance to further Parishes to make connections with families; page 5 is offered to assist Parishes to enable parents to further advance the enrichment of their children's faith life.

We encourage you also to claim some **Diary Dates** (listed on pages 1 and 8). You may also want to encourage anyone else in your network in case they are thinking about becoming involved in Children's Ministry and would like to 'Come and See'. They would be most welcome to give us a call also. Our details are on page 8.

We wish you every blessing this year and especially that the coming Lenten season will be one of great heart for you and your family, filled with the richest of blessings!

Carmen Balales and Jenny Seal fdnsc

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Diary Dates

- **Catechists Diocesan Commissioning Mass**
2nd March
- **Catechist's Reflection session**
11th March
- **Liturgy of the Word training**
13th March
- **Saint Joseph reflection session**
19th March

ARCHDIOCESEAN CELEBRATION of CATECHETICAL SUNDAY

Special commissioning and blessing by Archbishop Wilson to
Catechists and leaders in Children's ministries

Sunday 2nd March, 11am Mass

St Francis Xavier Cathedral

Wakefield Street, Adelaide

All Welcome! Please let Carmen or Jenny know that you have arrived.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

The **Office for Family and Parish Based Catechesis** supports those engaged in the Religious Education and the catechising of catholic children and their families within parishes in the Adelaide Archdiocese whilst promoting the partnerships between family, parish and catholic school.

The team also provides resources, consultation and workshops that support parish- school communities in the area of:

- Family catechesis
- Sacramental preparation and celebration
- Children's Liturgy of the Word

OUR MISSION and VISION

Centred in Christ and in the spirit of evangelisation, this office seeks to serve catechists engaged in Religious Education and catechesis of children and families within parishes in the Adelaide Archdiocese.

WE EXIST TO:

- Offer initial formation for new catechists engaged in children's ministries within parishes
- Provide opportunities for ongoing formation for catechists
- Provide consultation and support in Religious Education and sacramental preparation to parishes
- Develop resources to support the catechesis of children and families within various children's ministries
- Provide ongoing support to develop and nurture family catechesis within parishes

WE AIM TO DO THIS THROUGH:

- Formation for catechists
- Provision of workshops, seminars, retreats and in-services for catechists
- Parish visitation, pastoral care of catechists
- Consultation, support materials and suitable resources
- Ecumenical children's ministry network

OUR CORE WORK INCLUDES SERVICES THROUGH:

- Supporting the Archdiocesan vision of 'family centred church'
- Teaching and learning pedagogy
- Spiritual formation of catechists
- Catechesis
- Resources
- Consultation
- Pastoral support
- Fostering partnerships between family, parish and catholic school
- Collaboration with associated ecumenical children's ministries



WHO IS MATTHEW?

The Gospel of Matthew has a unique perspective on Jesus. Matthew was a Jew and was writing to the Jewish community. It is well known that Jesus loved everyone, including those on the margin and Matthew was part of that group of people rejected by most others for what they did for a living. He was a Jewish tax collector.

The Gospel of Matthew is actually called the Gospel "According to" Matthew. This is Matthew's chance to give his unique perspective to the tale of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. While the book possesses the same skeleton as the other gospels, it offers its own unique view of Jesus as a Jew.

Matthew was a Jew talking to other Jews about Jesus. It is why his story was chosen first. He provides a pivotal link from the Old Testament, where it's all about the Jewish people to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. During the time it was written, it would be likely that the Gospel would first be presented to Jews, then gentiles. Jews would also be considered hard to convince that Jesus was the Messiah.

Like the other Gospels, the book begins with Jesus' lineage. This lineage is important to the Jews, as it is part of the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. Yet he did not dismiss the importance of salvation to the gentiles, and makes a point of showing that salvation is available to all. The Sermon on the Mount is a highlight of this gospel.

It was also important to Matthew to point out that believing in Jesus not cause Jews to lose a sense of their traditions. By continuing to cite parts of the Old Testament and the Torah throughout the Gospel of Matthew, he points out that Jesus fulfilled the Law, but He did not come to destroy it.

Children's Activities relating to the Gospel of Matthew

THE BEATITUDES: These are promises made by Jesus that form a blueprint for our Christian living.

- Collect milk jug lids for this activity. On a poster board, write out the Beatitudes, leaving blanks for missing words. Write the missing words, one on each lid. Laminate the poster board so you can use it for a long time. Have the children place the lids with words in the correct blanks.
- Help the children write healing messages to those who are suffering in the parish community, at school or in their own families.
- Have the children write their own version of the Beatitudes after discussing, explaining and understanding the meaning of each one.
- Have each Beatitude written on a A4 card with a simple explanation. Have 8 props symbolising each saying on the card. Play a matching game with the children sorting through the pile of props and placing each one on the correct card. Examples of props: An inflatable swimming ring to symbolise relying on God's help (**poor in spirit**), A comforting cuddly toy (**mourning**), A gift bag (**humble**), Scales (**righteousness and justice**), Cross (**mercy and forgiveness**), Heart (**pure in heart**), Dove (**peacemakers**), Rope (**persecuted**).

- This Little Light of Mine: Have 3 shapes (flame, candlestick, background) on cardboard. Glue the pieces together, add a stick and glitter!
- Fishers of Men: Have 3 shapes (closed hand, fishing rod, fish) on cardboard. Cut a piece of string and glue the fish to it, glue the other pieces together. Read the scripture passage, discuss.
- Paper plate fish: Have 2 paper plates, googly eyes, streamer. Cut out to fish shapes from the plates and cut out a mouth to fill with suggestions on how they can be fishers of men. Attach the streamer to make a shoulder strap. Discuss what qualities are needed to be disciples.
- Use 'Godly Play' to tell some of Matthew's stories.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **The Catholic Toolbox:**
<http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com.au/>
- **Calvary Kids Pages:**
http://www.calvary-kids-pages.com/site_map.html



MAKING CONNECTIONS

'Making Connections' is a new section to the Newsletter this year. Here, we hope to explore Connections in the faith life in which families can make amongst themselves and in partnership with the Church community.

It is also about parish communities providing opportunities and engagement with families even in simple ways of providing resources, written or digital, activity ideas, bulletin inserts, quotes or other support in nurturing the faith of children and their families.

Essentially, as we know, parents are the first educators of faith. It is part of the mission of the Church to support parents in this role. Therefore, this section of the newsletter hopes to address and support the partnership between parents, parish and school in the faith engagement and living of children.

Connecting Families with Parish

On this page, we offer some ideas which Parishes could use to assist families to connect with the Parish in order to enrich the faith-life of their children.

Welcoming Sunday Mass initiated by the Parish to families from the school – especially to those who have newly started this year.

Some ideas:

- invitation to families via school newsletter
- prayer for the whole parish and especially the families who have joined us today
- prayer cards to take home
- expression to families of the hopes of the Parish for this year
- blessing and commissioning of the Parish Council and leaders of the various groups
- invitation to various Masses during the year and children's ministry within the parish
- provision of parish brochure or parish package
- details of the Holy Week/ Easter liturgies
- some of the above ideas may also be sent from the Parish to insert in the school newsletter at various times.

Resources can be borrowed from CRIS (Catholic Resource & Information Service) at Thebarton. Contact Susan or Mary on 08 8301 6869 or email cris@cesa.catholic.edu.au See Brochure **attached**.

Parish Representative at the School Induction for New Parents. Create a Parish brochure or parish Package with details of:

- welcome Letter from the Parish Priest
- groups within the parish, contacts and any brochures of the groups
- Sacrament details
- an invitation to volunteers
- the welcoming of new ideas and participation to enhance their child's faith life
- Parish bulletin/newsletter
- Details of the Holy Week/ Easter liturgies

Offer '**Conversations about Catholics: A Programme for Connecting People with the Catholic Faith**' to new parents and/or to parents who have children preparing for the Sacraments the following year.

This is a 4 week, one hour program written by Anne Mclean and Alice Sullivan rsj from the St Mary of the Presentation Parish Mudgee NSW. It can be borrowed from CRIS here at Thebarton. or bought from Alice Sullivan rsj, Mudgee Parish NSW

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Assisting Families to Enrich their Child's Faith-Life

On this page, we offer some ideas which Parishes could insert within their bulletin weekly, or create a 'Family Connections' handout periodically with ideas from these pages.



Birthday prayer for a child:

which can be placed on a card, prayed before meals or the cutting of the cake.

God our Creator, the birth of your child Jesus brought great joy to Mary and Joseph.

We give you thanks for this child... (name)...whose birthday we celebrate today. May she/he ever grow in your faith, hope and love. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

<http://www.godweb.org/prayer/prayersforchildren.htm>

Special Time with Your Child

- Observe your child for the day without him/her knowing.
- Jot down positive qualities you see in him/her and in his/her actions.
- At the end of the day, spend some time with your child letting him/her know how special they are to you.
- Let him/her know that they are special to Jesus too. Read the verse below from Matthew's Gospel.
- Give your child the opportunity to draw a picture. Put it in special place where it can be seen.

From Matthew's Gospel, chapter 19 vs 14-15:

"Jesus said 'Let the little children come to me...do not stop them...it is to these that the kingdom of heaven belongs'. And he laid his hands on them...."



'Family Catechesis offers a Christian education that is more witnessed to than taught, more occasional than systematic, more ongoing and daily than structured'

(General Directory for Catechesis #255)

Creating an Environment for Prayer:

Setting up a picture of Jesus which the child chooses beside his/her bed

In the bath or shower – a blessing of water and a sign of the cross on the forehead

Going to bed – thanking God for what has been that day, what the child would have liked to be different and closing with a sign of the cross and a hug and a kiss

A candle or lamp on the dinner table

A child's book of prayers in his/her room for each child in the family

A child's bible

A Special Book for the child to write his/her own or favourite prayers with colours or stickers etc to decorate

Parents modeling prayer both formal and spontaneous prayer

Encouraging prayer with no right or wrong way to pray

Having different coloured cloths, ribbons or symbols to set up as a focus point during the year. eg Lent , Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time.

Child can make his/her own symbol or picture to place on the setting

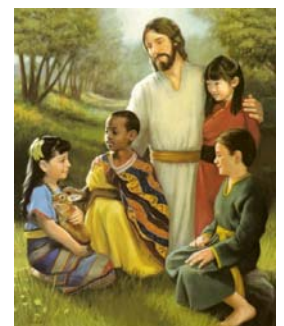
Digital Resources:

With prayers for children

<http://www.godweb.org/prayer/prayersforchildren.htm>

With ideas for family Lenten activities:

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com.au/p/family-lenten-ideas.html>



CATECHISTS PERSONAL PRAYER

The **Beatitudes** come from the opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount delivered by Jesus and recorded in Matthew 5:3-12. Here Jesus states several blessings, each beginning with the phrase, "Blessed are" bestowed upon a person resulting from the possession of a certain quality and receiving a gift of, for example, kingdom of heaven .

Let us take some time to reflect upon whichever blessing speaks to us personally and how it is effective in our life.

We begin by lighting a candle representing Christ, our Light, who shows us the way to live our life.

We take some quite time to centre ourselves by:

first focusing on what we see

and then letting it go by closing our eyes;

then we listen to sounds around us and then let them go to focus inward.

We listen to our breath and again focus inward more deeply

where we meet the scene of Jesus on the Mount with the crowds around him listening to his words.

We imagine Jesus slowly saying these words to us and allow a blessing to sit with us.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when people insult you,
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.
Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, f
or in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (NIV)*

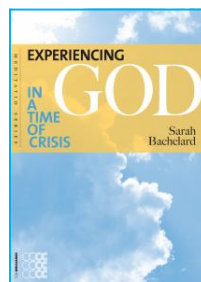
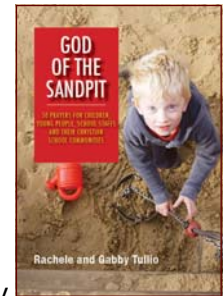
We thank Jesus for his time with us.

The present day Church near where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount.



RESOURCES

- ***God of the Sandpit*** by Rachele and Gabby Tullio
- ***Raising God-first kids in a Me-first World*** by Barbara Curtis
- ***50 Keys to the Bible*** by Marc Sevin
- ***Francis, a New World Pope*** by Michel Cool
- ***Francis of Assisi, the essential writings*** by Jon Sweeney
- ***Filling the God-shaped Void : a book of daily meditations*** by Penny Many Hauser
- ***Catholic Update Guide to Prayer*** by Mary Carol Kendzia
- ***Experiencing God in a Time of Crisis*** by Sarah Bachelard
- ***Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*** by Rev. Warren Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney
- ***Teen Sunshine Reflections : words for the heart and soul*** by June Cotner
- ***Tools for Rebuilding : 75 really, really practical ways to make your Parish better*** by Michael White and Tom Corcoran
- ***Prayer Services for Parishes and Schools*** by Michael Cymbala
- ***Social Media Guide for Ministry*** by Nils Smith
- ***Handbook for Today's Catechist*** by Ginger Infantino
- ***A Friendly Guide to the old Testament*** by Marie Turner
- ***Why Noah Chose the Dove*** (picture book) by Isaac Singer
- ***Oscar Wilde's The Selfish Giant*** (picture book) retold by Mary Hollingsworth



Each of these resources are currently available for borrowing from CRIS (Catholic Resource & Information Service) at 112 Kintore Street, Thebarton. Contact Susan or Mary on 08 8301 6869 or email cris@cesa.catholic.edu.au See Brochure attached.

OUR LATEST NEWS

This office is located at the Catholic Education Office and housed as part of the Religious Education Team. This is a wonderful place to be and we are fortunate to have access to all the consultants offer our Catholic Schools. On offer this year are various **Professional Learning Workshops** which may be of interest to you, which will be advertised in this newsletter this year.

The annual **Archdiocesan Commissioning Mass** will be celebrated next Sunday, 2nd March. This is an important event as it highlights the significant work of the catechist within the life of the Parish. You are most warmly invited to attend and come forth to be commissioned and blessed in your work for the year ahead. There will be a special certificate awarded for a significant achievement followed by light refreshments and a celebratory cake shared after Mass.

Our annual **Catechists Reflection morning** will be held at the Monastery amongst the beautiful Sacred Garden at the start of the Lenten season. This is a time for personal reflection as we walk with Jesus during his final days and spiritual nourishment in the hope to reinvigorate you in your ministry.

There will be a centrally located opportunity to participate and refresh your skills in **leading Liturgy of the Word with Children workshop**. It is being offered at the later time of 4pm so as to accommodate those people who find it difficult to attend in the mornings or in the evenings. It is important to attend especially if you have not been trained at all or during the last 2 years.

This office has committed to writing **new resources for leading Liturgy of the Word with Children and a Sacraments of Initiation Program for teenagers**. It has been years since *Join the Circle* was published and whilst it is still a very good resource, it is time for a new, updated resource to be developed for use in our Archdiocese. Also, there is a huge need in a program that assists catechists help teenagers understand and walk through their preparation of the sacraments. That tricky age where they are too old for the Parish sacrament program which mainly consist of primary school aged children and too young for the RCIA. It is our hope that both resources will be available for use in 2015.

See the Beatitudes as an invitation to a way of living that brings true happiness and both inward and outward peace

Children's Ministry Update

Office for Family & Parish Based Catechesis

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We're on the web



www.adelaide.catholic.org.au/sites/ParishandFamilyBasedCatechesis

Detailed Diary Dates 2014

- **Catechists Commissioning Diocesan Mass**
WHEN: Sunday 2nd March
11 am
VENUE: St Francis Xavier Cathedral,
Wakefield Street, Adelaide
- **Catechists Reflection Morning**
WHEN: Tuesday 11th March
9:30am – 12noon
VENUE: The Monastery,
Sebastian Centre
Cross Road, Glen Osmond
- **Leading Liturgy of the Word training**
WHEN: Thursday 13th March
3:45– 6pm
VENUE: Catholic Education Office,
CRIS, 112 Kintore Street, Thebarton
- **Joseph: What a Man!**
WHEN: Wednesday 19th March
1:30– 3pm
VENUE: Bethany Conference Centre,
High Street, Norwood