



Children's Ministry Update

Advent

YEAR A:
MATTHEW
Volume1 Edition3: 2007

From the Editor

I am happy to present the third and final edition of the newsletter for 2007. It is difficult to believe that we find ourselves at the end of yet another year and taking the time to look back on all the wonderful things that have happened along the way.

Since the last newsletter we have had significant gatherings of catechists in the Archdiocese, these being the 'Expo Day' and the 'Thanksgiving Mass'. I was delighted to have been involved in both and to have been given the opportunity to meet many of you at these gatherings.

The Expo day was a great way to bring people up to date with current news happening within the Archdiocese, to offer relevant programs and provide 'hands on' resources to support people's ministries with children and their families. The workshops were varied and gave practical ideas on working with children. It was a successful day and our way of thanking you for your generous spirit in all you do.

The other significant event was the Thanksgiving Mass where many catechists received awards in recognition of their years of service in their Parish ministry. It was a joyful coming together of catechists, pastoral associates and Parish Religious Education co-ordinators from the Adelaide Archdiocese. Archbishop Wilson celebrated this event with us encouraging us to continue our work to break open God's Word with children and their families in our local Parish communities.

Finally, I would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome in my new role and I am thrilled to be doing God's work with you all.

May you find renewed energy as you travel into the Christmas season and may God shine upon you and bless you as you continue your ministry.

Wishing each of you a Merry Christmas filled with love, joy and peace... with God's Blessings, Carmen

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Diary Dates

- Reflection Day
:29th Nov
- Blessing of the Cribs
:2nd Dec

CONGRATULATIONS

Mrs Carol Chislett, REC in the Mt Gambier Parish, was presented with a Papal Blessing at the recent Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated in St Francis Xavier Cathedral. Carol has served the children and families in the Mt Gambier Parish for 25 years and is a well known personality throughout the South East Deanery. Carol has made a considerable contribution in a range of ministries in her parish and beyond and is a thoroughly deserving recipient of this honour.

Papal Blessing recipient, Carol with Archbishop Philip



ADVENT

The season of Advent is a prime time for catechists to reflect on the following: How can we help our students to see their own story in the scripture stories? How can we show them that the season of Advent and Christmas is relevant in their lives today? A good place to start is to look closely at the readings during the season that focus on the message of anticipation and waiting and invite the children to respond to the message. Included are prayers for lighting the Advent wreath each week.

FIRST WEEK: Matt:24:37-44

'Coming of the Son of Man' (Mt: 24:39) You do not know what to expect so stay awake and be ready! Listen to God, trust in God and live righteous lives. Act now by living

justly, tenderly and humbly.

LEADER: May this light help us to remember Jesus who gives each of us light, love and peace. Let us ask him to help us to prepare for his birth.

ALL: Jesus, you are the light of the world!

SECOND WEEK: Matt:3:1-12

'Prepare the way of the Lord' (Mt: 3:3) Prepare a path for God, repent and be converted to the ways of peace and justice. This invites us to live and love like Jesus.

LEADER: May this light help us to remember Jesus who is the light of our world. May his light shine on us as we prepare to celebrate his birth in our world.

ALL: Jesus, you are the light of our world!

THIRD WEEK: Matt:11:2-11

'Good News' (Mt:11:5) What is the nature of good news? The blind see,

the lame walk, the deaf hear and the dead are raised to life! Take courage, believe and do not be afraid.

LEADER: Jesus, in your light we see how to be truly happy. Help us to bring happiness to one another.

ALL: Jesus, you are the light of the world!

FOURTH WEEK: Matt:1:18-24

Emmanuel—God is with us' (Mt:1:23) The unexpected occurs again. The word becomes flesh. God embraces humanity a woman gives birth to the Son of God!

LEADER: Jesus, we are close to the time of your birth. May your light shine in our lives.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world!

TEACHING IDEAS

WEEK 1:

Draw a symbol for 'stay awake' and write a prayer to explain it.

Research the history and significance of the season of Advent

WEEK 2:

Make a list of ways you can change to be more affirming and positive to others.

Draw a straight path of discovery and paste pictures of peace and harmony on to it.

WEEK 3:

Find headlines, stories, images or words that depict Good News.

Discuss what a prophet is and name a current day 'prophet'.

WEEK 4:

Write the word 'EMMANUEL' on a poster and illustrate it.

Discuss how God is present in your daily life and write a reflection or illustrate it.

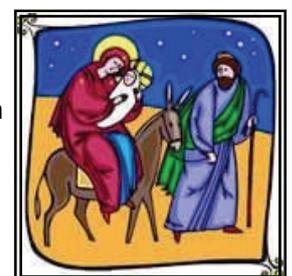
CHRISTMAS

The gospel of Matthew was written to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah who would teach people about the kingdom of God. Matthew's story of the nativity focuses on Mary as a great model of discipleship. She shows us what it means to follow and to believe. Her doubts many but her faith sustaining through times of pain and turmoil. How surprising that God would choose a simple young woman to be the bearer of good News—

to be the mother of the Messiah!

For each of us this Christmas we should seek God's presence in people and in events that are part of our daily life experiences. Think about those people you know who are loving and supportive, who make you smile when you are together. Reflect on the times when you feel the hand of God at work, those times when you have been ill or when you

have enjoyed a success. Take the time to let God know just how grateful you are for God's unending love and guidance, manifested in your day to day living!



PARISH STORY

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING MASS:

We joined together to celebrate and to give thanks to the catechists within our Archdiocese. It was an opportunity to acknowledge the wonderful, tireless work that pastoral associates, catechists and RE coordinators do in their Parish ministries with children and their families.

Adding to the significance of this celebration was the awarding of the Papal blessing to Carol for her 25 years of service and also the presenting of numerous Archbishop awards to commissioned catechists with 10, 15 & 20 years of services respectively.

The shared lunch in the Cathedral hall proved to be a warm and inviting time with both Archbishop Philip and Emeritus Archbishop Leonard enjoying the festivities with those who were there.



ANNUAL EXPO DAY:

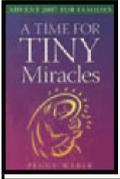
Our annual Expo Day offered to those involved in children's ministries was indeed a great success. The theme was: 'Scripture, Prayer and Mission' and each of the workshop sessions followed this theme throughout the whole day. The presenters were experienced, informative and dynamic in their delivery and left the group with practical ideas on how to work with the information in their particular Parishes. It was our way here at the Office for Family and Parish Based Catechesis to acknowledge and thank you for your generous spirit in working with the children and their families in your local context. We were pleased to hear your positive comments in that the day met your individual needs!



Resources



MY FAVORITE ADVENT & CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY BOOK: 1585955167 : **ERIKSON, Jenny** This book offers fun riddles, mazes, colouring pages, crosswords and crafts for the Advent, & Christmas. It offers prayers and activities for New Year, Feast of the Holy family and Epiphany. Learn about seasonal symbols, traditions and scripture. **\$32.95 (available at www.johngarratt.com.au / ph:1300650878)**



ADVENT 2007 FOR FAMILIES: A TIME FOR TINY MIRACLES: 158956418: **WEBER, Peggy** "If we wrap ourselves with quiet and prayer, then we are able to prepare ourselves more fully. When Christmas finally arrives, it will burst with joy". **\$2.00 (available at www.johngarratt.com.au / ph:1300650878)**

Both titles also available from PAULINE BOOKS&MEDIA...ph:82232735

OUR GOD IS NEAR: Children's hymns& songs for Advent & Christmas:

MONICA BROWN This delightful CD draws upon the scripture imagery of Advent & Christmas in a language & melody that children can appreciate. The CD includes instrumental backing tracks of all tracks. **(available from Emmaus Productions: www.emmausproductions.com / ph:02 94840252)**

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We're on the web

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

Detailed Diary Dates 2007

- **REFLECTION DAY**
Thursday 29th Nov 10am-2:30pm
Venue: Lefevre Parish Centre,
253 Military Rd, Semaphore
BYO lunch
- **BLESSING OF THE CRIBS**
Sunday 2nd Dec 11am Family Mass
Venue: St Francis Xavier Cathedral,
Wakefield St, Adelaide.
Everyone welcome!

LENTEN RESOURCE:'08 Lent to Easter: Year A

This is a resource for family prayer. It focuses on the Sunday scripture readings during Lent and includes Holy week, culminating with Easter Sunday. It is a simple and easy resource for families and it features : parent reflection, adapted Gospel story, discussion points, prayer and guided meditation. A CD with the adapted Gospel stories and guided meditations is also available to assist you to pray as a family.

To preview a sample and order online go to:

www.bne.catholic.net.au/lentprog08



BLESSING OF THE CRIBS

From its very nature Christmas is a graced community time, since the birth of a child is always a celebration of life. A new child brings all the family together. The proud parents and all, stand in awe of the newborn.

Just imagine the awe that young Mary experienced at the birth of her first-born, knowing Jesus is the Son of the living God!

Recapturing the awe of a young Mary and Joseph and the devotion of the simple shepherds is a powerful inspiration to start off Christmas. What better way to inspire our imagination than by a traditional crib and nativity set?

In our parish, each family in the sacramental program is given an empty crib at the third Sunday family Mass in November. Then at Sunday Masses during Advent and through to the feast of the Epiphany, families continue to collect new statues each time, thereby building up the community that welcomed the birth of Jesus. Children will learn that it takes time and effort to build a community.

We hope and pray that the blessing of the cribs will be a time of grace in our parish. Lord may we be blessed with new 'births' in our Eucharistic community!

John Micallef

Flinders Pk/Hindmarsh Parish

