



Children's Ministry Update

Ordinary Time

YEAR B: MARK

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From the Editor

Hello and welcome to this edition! It has been a busy time here in the office organising and facilitating events to support your ministry. It has been wonderful to meet up with you all and many thanks for attending. Both Val and I want to do our best to provide days that are beneficial in helping you to build up your resources, give you chances to network, voice your concerns, share your stories and ultimately meet your needs as a catechist. If you doubt me then read the reviews about our events and make up your own mind about making time to be at the days we offer.

There are only a few opportunities left for us to help nourish you in your ministry with three significant events remaining for the year! On Friday 6th November we are offering a sharing of ideas for the season of Advent & Christmas with the Share'n'Swap day. It is only a fortnight away so please enrol ASAP! A retreat day will be held on 24th November and the annual Blessing of the Cribs will happen at the Cathedral on 29th November. To coincide with this event we are urging that all parishes celebrate their own Blessing of the Cribs in their local context over that same weekend to mark the start of the Advent. We will send out support materials to assist you in this in the near future. It is important that you begin advertising this in your parish bulletin so that the community has time to organise to bring their cribs along to be blessed.

As we approach All Saints day I have included some theological background for your understanding of the saints in our Catholic tradition and have kept the theme of saints for the catechist's prayer page. I wish to congratulate Val who launched her first official publication 'Thirsting for Reign'. I hope that this edition nourishes you in your wonderful work!

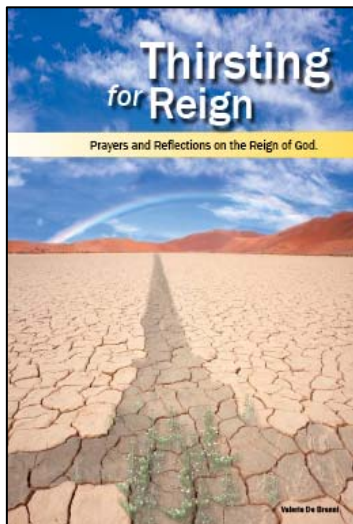
In God's Blessings, Carmen Balales

Hot off the Press! *Thirsting for Reign* by Val DeBrenni

As we sit with the Gospels it is clear that Jesus lives out of a vision of what he calls the 'Reign or 'Kingdom' of God'. This insight grows out of the deep 'Abba' relationship that he has with God and through his ministry he invites others into that relationship.

This book assists the reader to explore the 'Reign of God' through prayer and reflection. It is written for all those involved in Christian education, catechesis, spirituality and other church ministries. It helps the reader to learn how to pray more deeply and offers some different methods of prayer. It is a book that you can come back to again and again. Its fifteen themes, created to be used in an open, flexible manner can be easily adapted for prayer for a meeting or series of meetings in a variety of settings.
Val DeBrenni

Available from Mediacom ph: 83711399
RRP: \$29.95 (1copy) or \$24.95 (5or more copies)
also available at Pauline Books & Media ph: 82232735
RRP: \$29.95



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Diary Dates

- ADVENT SHARE'n'SWAP 6th November
- RETREAT DAY 24th November
- 'BLESSING of the CRIBS' MASS 29th November

ADDING FUN TO THE LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN

A training session organised by the Salisbury Catholic Parish

facilitated by Val DeBrenni and Carmen Balales

Sunday 16 August turned out to be a memorable day for the 25 catechists and leaders of Children's Liturgy gathered at Siena Hall beside St Augustine's Church in Salisbury. In one stimulating afternoon workshop, creative energies were released and information and ideas clarified and simplified. Why are we proclaiming the Word of God to the children? How are we doing it? Has the liturgy become alive and exciting for us and for the kids? Thanks to the diocesan coordinators who animated and led the training session, the catechists of the two parishes of Salisbury and Elizabeth now have much to reflect upon.

From their office at Thebarton, Carmen Balales and Val DeBrenni prepared an interactive and "hands on" session for the group of 25. Carmen demonstrated how a 20-minute Liturgy of the Word could be conducted with optimal impact on the kids and alerted the group to some of the changes emerging from the new liturgical guidelines. One of these is that catechists will now be leading children's groups in pairs; they will be the ones to carry the lectionary to and from the lectern and the liturgy will be an experience of God for the children rather than a lesson about God.

Val, instead, introduced "Godly Play", a creative way of dramatizing the gospel with the use of wooden figurines, animals and other simple props. She invited the catechists to try out the props for themselves in small groups, each group telling a different gospel story, viz. the Prodigal Son, the Annunciation, the birth of Jesus, the loss of Jesus in the Temple, Zaccheus, etc. From the experience of the groups, it seems that the adults would have as much fun as the children in watching the gospel story come alive with simple animation and involvement.

Comments overheard from the catechists included:

"I must practice more of this to become more confident in telling the story."

"What can we use to improvise basic accessories?"

"Can we share this with the other catechists and leaders who are not present today?"

"This is certainly a more creative and interesting way of presenting the Sunday gospel!"

The afternoon ended on a note of appreciation and satisfaction as catechists renewed their commitment to this vital ministry to the church community and went off fired with the innovative ideas they had gathered from the day!

Sr Liz Tham fdcc Pastoral Associate, Salisbury Catholic Parish



SAINTS

How Do We Understand the place of the Saints in Catholic Tradition? By Val DeBrenni

The Communion of Saints is a Christian symbol of profound relationship. It points to an on-going relationship between the living and the dead. Being part of the Christian community means participating in the holy life of God. We are all part of this community, not through our own effort, but because of the gift of the Spirit, given to all. St. Paul writes, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi" (Phil 1:1), "To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints" (Rom 1:7). In the New Testament there is no assignment of degrees of holiness to different saints. It is clear however that from the very earliest days of Christianity the dead have been honoured and remembered in prayer.

In late 1st Century Christianity there are examples of venerating the memory of ancestors in the faith but a significant situation arose in the 2nd & 3rd Centuries when some Christians died as martyrs. As this persecution intensified and as the number of martyrs increased, they began to form a distinct group within the memory of the Christian people. They become ideal disciples because they follow Jesus even to his death on the cross. They become icons of Christ. Small shrines were built on or near the martyr's graves, which became places of pilgrimage and prayer. On the yearly anniversary of their death, nightlong vigils would be kept at the graves ending with the Eucharist at dawn. Gradually the custom of calling upon the martyrs for prayer arose. Once the period of persecution had passed other holy women and men whose lives had given witness in the church were also honoured.

In particular Mary is the Church's model of faith and the Church honours her with special devotion. She is honoured as being the Mother of God and Mother of the Church.

In the Western world after the Vatican II Council there tended to be less emphasis on the veneration of Saints. Yet the Council spoke of the Church as the "People of God," that is, the church as a community now stretching across all times and places. We as Church are a community of memory, one that does not forget its past. In order not to forget, a community is involved in telling its story, and in doing so it offers examples of the men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of community. The Vatican II Council also speaks of the call of the whole Church to holiness.

The Council called for the correction of abuses which had crept in relation to the veneration of saints. It says, "Let the faithful be taught, therefore, that the authentic cult of the saints consists not so much in multiplying of external acts, but rather in the intensity of our active love". *Lumen Gentium*, no.51.

We recall that the saints intercede for us and for the whole world and through the example of their lives we too are called to be people of prayer.

As catechists we need to avoid teaching in ways that make the saints too perfect, too other-worldly or too eccentric to have anything useful to say to young people today. It is important that we remember that the memory and hope of the Christian community of faith is grounded on the foundational story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Yet interwoven with this story are the stories of countless women and men who have responded in vastly different ways to the Spirit's call to discipleship.

We need to be aware of our use of language and images in relation to saints because student's self-identity is shaped by the representations these portray. The saints should therefore be understood and placed within their historical contexts.



Resources

'GODLY PLAY' WOODEN DOLLS

The dolls used in retelling the gospel stories using the technique of Godly Play are solid wood and cost \$8.00 each. They are available by ringing Ken at **South Australian Wooden Academy, 133 Payneham Road, St Peters. Phone: 83632288 or Fax: 81320056**



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We're on the web

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

'The optimist is wrong as often as the pessimist, but has a lot more fun' anonymus

carmen.balales@ceo.adl.catholic.edu.au

Your Parish Story

The Office for Family and Parish Based Catechesis recently held another very successful Expo Day. It was cold and wet outside, but inside 22 catechists from parishes across Adelaide were treated to a warm welcome and information and ideas on developing children's spirituality.

Madeleine Brennan from the Child Protection Office presented their Policy for the Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children and Young People.

Val De Brenni and Kate Ordon presented ideas for setting up sacred spaces and presenting scripture, and activities to help children break open and understand the story. Kathy Horan presented her latest books on Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist, a great resource for sacrament preparation and Pauline Books displayed a selection of resources for purchase.

We all left much richer for the opportunity to share, learn and experience ways to present scripture to our children, to help nurture and develop their faith.

Judy Fernandez, Family Faith Formation Coordinator,
Lefevre Catholic Community

Detailed Diary Dates 2009

- **Advent Share'n'Swap Day**
When: 6th November
Venue: Catholic Resource & Information Service (CRIS)
112 Kintore St,
Thebarton
- **Retreat Day**
When: 24th November
Venue: Lefevre Parish Centre,
253 Military Rd,
Semaphore
- **Blessing of the Cribs Mass**
When: 29th November
Venue: St Francis Xavier Cathedral,
Adelaide



Catechist Personal Prayer Page

Reflecting with the saints

On this day let us also remember not only those canonised saints but the great host of 'anonymous' people who the world forgets but who are held in love by God. The poor and little ones who were great only in the eyes of God.

Psalm 113

We your servants praise you!
Blessed be your name, O God,
from now and evermore!
From the rising of the sun
To its setting
Your name is to be praised.

You are high above all the nations,
And your glory above the heavens!
Who is like unto you, O God
who is seated upon the heights
who looks far down upon us
upon the heavens and the earth?

You raise the poor from the dust
Lift the needy from the ash heap
to set them in the company of rulers
with the rulers of the people.
To the barren you give a home,
and gladden their hearts with children.

O Lord, Help us to draw courage and inspiration from the lives of those we call saints. They lived faithfully despite their own failure and fear. May the hope they give us encourage us in our own journey of faith. Raise up saints in our own day so that Your Gospel may shine forth into our world. Give us the desire to strive always to proclaim Your mercy and love to those we meet.

We ask this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

