

DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR CHILDREN

ISSUES THAT SURFACED:

1. Parental Involvement
  - Not a priority for families
  - Do not attend Mass
  - Lack involvement in children's catechesis
  - Need education
  - Time limitations
2. Resources
  - Use of technology
  - Better facilities
  - Instruction for Hispanic children
  - Liturgies with children as participants
  - Structure is not sustaining a vital faith experience.
3. Methods
  - Rote learning but not exclusively
  - Contact with people of strong faith in order to share faith.

DIRECTIONS THAT SURFACED:

1. Develop relationship between learned doctrine and behaviors
  - Family realities : whole family participation in learning
  - Daily living
  - Outreach ministries/ministerial leadership
  - Faith as a value system
  - Sunday Mass needs to connect with life
2. Catechists
  - Teaching styles
  - Meet parents' needs
  - Facilitate classes for catechists

3. Needs

- Website and more
- Structures that sustain long term ministry
- Adequate facilities for every age
- Integrate Hispanic speaking children
- Parents' organization
- Structure homilies throughout the diocese.

DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ISSUES THAT SURFACED:

1. Lack of family involvement in children's catechesis
  - Adult education
  - Parents need to be strengthened in their faith journey so they can be catechist
  - Children are evangelizing the adults
  - Faith development cannot be just on the institutions
2. Needs
  - Retreats for parent dealing with difficult issues
  - More inspiring child centered liturgies
  - That we understand the schools is not the primary Faith Community, the parish is.

DIRECTIONS

1. Family involvement
  - Attract families to liturgies and to religious speakers and presentations.
  - Re-educate parents, offer retreat times.
  - Activities for children that reinforce learning.
2. Methods
  - Interaction of small communities
  - Invite clergy to classrooms
  - Catechesis of the Mass
  - Parish Council invite connections with other parish organizations.

DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR CATECHISTS

ISSUES

1. As catechists we need strategies to :
  - Keep kids in religious education after sacraments
  - Get parents involved ; taking children to mass weekly; total family catechesis
  - Make religious education a priority not an extra curricular activity
  - Recruit catechists
  - Garner support of parents
  
2. Realities that impact the teaching /learning:
  - Most catechists work so there are time constraints
  - Changing family dynamics
  - Concern about spiritual development and prayer life of the teachers
  - Growth in knowledge of theology is necessary and continuous
  - Structure does not sustain an ongoing Faith Development

DIRECTIONS

1. With parents
  - Interact, communicate, involve
  - Make sure what is offered is welcoming and inclusive
  - Emphasize more and varied adult formation
  - Parent friendly education
  
2. With the parish
  - Help build community
  - Share resources/ even in the area or region
  - Liturgies need to be more educational/stimulating
  - Community celebrations of the mass should be the primary educational activity.
  - Find ways to value the professionalism of religious education

3. As a parish religious education staff:
  - Encourage team teaching
  - Start mentoring program
  - Textbook workshops given by the publisher
  - Shared prayer
  - Creative ways to offer certification
  - Share other parish schedules for classes.

DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR FAMILIES

ISSUES

Lack of family involvement in children's catechesis because

- Parents not equipped as evangelizers
- Non traditional families: not married, remarried without annulment
- Parish response to family life crisis
- TV and its impact on families
- Parents not accepting role of primary religious educators
- Time for Religious Education is not a family priority.
- Religious Education has become only sacramental preparation
- Structures do not support family life.

DIRECTIONS

Parents must be involved in children's faith formation

- Find ways to be more flexible in time and structure
- Educate adults instead of children
- Connect all catechesis to the Liturgy
- Community service projects for families
- Family retreats
- Parents involved in children's lessons with actual activities to do.
- Find ways to create a meaningful community
- Realize that children learn sacrifice from the model of sacrifice parents present.

DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR WHOLE PARISH

ISSUES

1. What is transforming our parishes?
  - Aging population
  - Multicultural populations especially our Hispanic Communities
  - Good programs but limited attendance
  - Meeting needs of diverse community; disabled and homebound
  - Lack of whole parish catechesis
  
2. What is lacking:
  - A welcoming environment
  - Lack of success with ministry involvement
  - Families do not attend mass
  - Lack of familiarity with Catholic beliefs
  - Adult faith formation
  - A conviction that everyone is responsible for catechesis
  - More inclusive sacramental programs

DIRECTIONS

1. Encourage community building:
  - Connect with parishioners
  - Parish visits
  - Meetings for new parishioners
  - Know ethnic customs
  - Be more welcoming
  - Small Christian Communities: ownership of parish community
  - Programs of conversion of heart ---parish based like “alpha”
  
2. Support the parish by:
  - Adult faith formation
  - Homilies that instruct about faith.
  - Panel discussions/small groups for faith sharing

- Families could visit nursing homes
- Teach about the mass
- Scripture/bible studies
- Priest being accountable for Catechesis
- Provide ongoing certification in parishes.



DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR ADOLESCENTS

ISSUES:

Context in which we find ourselves:

- Busy schedules
- Lack of volunteers
- Competition for space in our facilities
- Lack of continuing faith formation
  - Parental support
  - Pastor/parish support
  - Parish to parish involvement or collaboration
- Liturgies that are not inviting.
- Concern about Confirmation age not being consistent.
- Lack of parish Youth Ministry
- Youth Ministry is understood as only confirmation preparation.

DIRECTIONS

Youth involvement by meeting life experiences thru

- Engaging youth in all ministries
- Engaging them in liturgies
- Homilies that are true to life
- Consistent confirmation age
- Parishes with Youth Ministry
- Consistent class schedules
- Parent education and involvement
- Youth involvement.

DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR NEW MEMBERS

ISSUES

Processes/programs that would help:

- Team meeting for RCIA teams
- Ways to involve total community
- Education for team: formation, recruitment and development
- Sponsor development
- Extent Mystagogia
- Balance between new members and those returning to the faith.

DIRECTIONS

To develop the process we need to:

- Share resources/combine parish efforts in a deanery
- Small Christian cells
- Neophytes witness at mass during Lent or Easter season
- Bulletin notices sharing candidates journey
- After homily – facilitate five minutes dialogue with the people in the pews, breaking open the word
- Theology on Tap or the like

For the Team

- Adult education is needed
- Open to new volunteers: welcoming sense
- Involve family in the process

For the candidates

- Adult style learning
- Prayer partner from community
- Knowledge of catholic teachings and scriptures essential.

DIOCESAN CONVOCATION FOR CATCHESIS  
MARCH 27, 2004

GATHERING THE HARVEST

CONVERSATION TOPIC: OUR YOUNG ADULTS

ISSUES

Seek from the parish

- Variety of times for events
- Welcome in established ministries
- Engaging liturgies
- Meaningful homilies

DIRECTIONS

See a place to

- Participate in a meaningful and effective manner in life and ministries of the parish.
- Interest be respected
- Learn the values/meaning of everyday realities.