


MORE GOOD NEWS



Teaching the faith

Catechists play major role in children's lives

Learning about faith begins in the home

This issue of "More Good News" identifies the wonderful gift of our parish Faith Formation team and the awesome volunteer catechists who regularly share their faith and love for the church with the children and young people.

Of course, the church reminds us that the first "school" for religion and upright living is the home. Parents and/or guardians are the most-important and longest-lasting influence on these young people. The home setting is the "domestic" church, any way you look at it.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has said, "When families bring children into the world, train them in the ways of faith and sound values and teach them to contribute to society, they become a blessing in our world."

Parents, grandparents and godparents have a holy duty to encourage and promote our precious faith by word and good example. An older priest once said that on the final exam standing before Jesus, just one question for those raising children will be, "Did you do your duty spiritually?"

Everything our children witness is forming them. What we do will either lead them to know what is right and good or teach them that

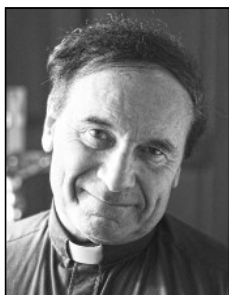
it's perfectly fine to make hurtful, immoral or other decisions that do not honor God.

When it comes to teaching and promoting our faith, there are so many openings, or portals, available. For example, online web sites and programs can be edifying and amazing sources for lifting and imaginations to the higher things. Unfortunately, also available is much evil, violence and that which simply is a waste of time.

Every Catholic parish is deeply grateful for those who make time and put in so much effort to teach those in our care, but we must not forget that all of us, no matter our stage in life, are invited to share faith — not make it a private possession unto ourselves.

Recent statistics show 70 percent of Catholics who attend weekend Mass are not engaged in any other part of parish life. Just imagine what might happen if many, many more among us also became engaged in teaching and sharing faith with family and friends in parish programs.

May Christ the Lord and best teacher of us all truly bless our volunteer faith teachers and their families.



FATHER JIM

CELEBRATING THE SAINTS

The Solemnity of All Saints

The earliest certain observance of a feast in honor of all the saints is an early fourth-century commemoration of "all the martyrs."

In the early seventh century, after successive waves of invaders plundered the catacombs, Pope Boniface IV gathered up some 28 wagon-loads of bones and reinterred them beneath the Pantheon, a Roman temple dedicated to all the gods. The pope rededicated the shrine as a Christian church.

According to Venerable Bede, the pope intended "that the memory of all the saints might in the future be honored in the place that had formerly been dedicated to the worship not of gods but of demons" ("On the Calculation of Time").

But the rededication of the Pantheon, like the earlier commemoration of all the martyrs, occurred in May. Many Eastern churches still honor all the saints in the spring, either during the

Easter season or immediately after Pentecost.

How the Western Church came to celebrate this feast, now recognized as a solemnity, in November is a puzzle to historians. The Anglo-Saxon theologian Alcuin observed the feast on Nov. 1 in 800, as did his friend Arno, Bishop of Salzburg. Rome finally adopted that date in the ninth century.

Reflection

This feast first honored martyrs. Later, when Christians were free to worship according to their consciences, the church acknowledged other paths to sanctity. In the early centuries the only criterion was popular acclaim, even when the bishop's approval became the final step in placing a commemoration on the calendar. The first papal canonization occurred in 993; the lengthy process now required to prove extraordinary sanctity took form in the last 500 years. The Nov. 1 feast honors the obscure as well as the famous — the saints each of us have known.

PARISH WEBSITE

Visit www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com for the latest parish news and announcements. There's even a mobile version for your smart phone. You can donate online and check out our social media sites and more.

PHOTO GALLERIES



BULLETIN

St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Blessed Sacrament

*A Community
on a Journey of
Faith*

Weekend Masses
Saturday 4:30pm
Sunday 8:00am & 10:30am
Reconciliation: Saturday 3-4:55pm

Weekday Masses
Mon./Tues./Thurs.: 8:30am
Friday: 8:30am - Mass or Communion Service
Rosary for the Unborn and Divine Mercy Chaplet
Thursday after Mass
Holy Days consult bulletin

BAPTISM
Congratulations! Please call the parish office to arrange a Baptism, see parents are encouraged to attend the parent class before the birth of your child.

MARRIAGE
Couples must make arrangements six months in advance.
We welcome to our parish family. We invite you to become an active participant of our parish community. Please be sure to register by using the parish office. Also listening assisted for hearing, required.

PARISH STAFF
Pastor: Rev. Jim Costa
Coordinator of Faith Formation: Lori Pannicci R-6
Coordinator of Faith Formation: Anne Carbone Elacqua 7-
In Residence: Rev. Luis Orsini
Music Director: Peter Elacqua
Business Administrator: Mary Beth LaNeve
Maintenance: Patrick Zano
Parish Publicist: Fran Perritano

CONTACTS
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Rel. Ed./Catechist: C. 735-3950 Fax: 735-9896
email: stmaryica@syndio.org

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9:00 AM - 3:00 PM Monday-Thursday 9:00 AM - Noon Friday 6:48 Jay St.
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www.mountcarmelblessedsacrament.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/mountcarmelblessedsacrament

... AND MORE

- Father Jim's "Wise and Otherwise"
- History of the parish
- Lector, minister, altar server schedules
- Mass schedules
- Parish news
- Ministries
- Event calendar
- Weekly reflection on Sunday's readings
- "More Good News" articles
- Links to our social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Catechists help lay religious foundation

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Parish.

Without the dozens of people who share their time and talents, our parish would not be as vibrant as it is.

One very important group of volunteers is the Faith Formation catechists, who — along with parents — teach our children about their faith and what it means.

This year's catechists are:

- Kindergarten: Graceann Guzski.
- First grade: Michelle Babbie.
- Second grade: Lisa Hyatt, Sarah Trunfio, Marylisa Vella.
- Third grade: Michelle Commisso.
- Fourth grade: Josette and Rick Bilodeau.
- Fifth grade: Leigh D'Agostino.
- Sixth grade: Patricia Rizzo and son Joseph Rizzo.
- First Reconciliation / First Communion: Terri Panuccio.
- The team of junior-senior high teachers are: Christine Gray, Jennifer Tran, Jackie Campese and Anne Elacqua.

"More Good News" wanted to find out more about those who play a big role in our children's lives. We asked them three questions: Why did you become a catechist? Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children? What is one thing the children have taught you?

Here are the responses from the elementary-education teachers.

Graceann Guzski

Why did you become a catechist?

My grandmother was very religious and a member of St. Mary of Mount Carmel. Fifteen years ago she passed away, and at that time I was approached to become a catechist. This is the way I honor my grandmother, and feel it was her calling to me to share our religion.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

Faith formation is important to me and the children because it plants the seed for the foundation of their religion. The children are so willing to learn and I am honored to have the opportunity to develop this foundation.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

The children have taught me to be creative and to always plan for a fun lesson. The children remind me each week of their innocence and I look forward to the fun we have.

Michelle Babbie

Why did you decide to become a catechist?

In lots of different places, and from lots of



Graceann Guzski teaches kindergarteners in the Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Faith Formation program. "My grandmother was very religious and a member of St. Mary of Mount Carmel," Graceann says. "Fifteen years ago she passed away, and at that time I was approached to become a catechist. This is the way I honor my grandmother, and feel it was her calling to me to share our religion."

different people, kids are shown so many examples of how NOT to be a good person. I chose to teach faith formation so that I could help children know that they are loved, know that they have a purpose and see that God isn't something distant and remote, but a close, constant presence.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

It's an opportunity for all of us, both me as well as the children, to share God's love in real and meaningful ways.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

That even when it seems the things you say and the things you do aren't sticking with your students, somehow, some way our time in class makes an impact.

Marylisa Vella

Why did you become a catechist?

I became a catechist to develop and nurture the youth of my parish.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

It is important to educate them in their Catholic faith to ensure a bright future for the parish community.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

Through teaching the children I had been shown the joy of our faith. The children are outward expressions of our faith and love displayed. They have shown me the presence of God's love.

Lisa Hyatt

Why did you become a catechist?

My involvement in the parish began a few years ago as a helper in the (First) Communion class. I thought it was a great way to be a part of the community and parish. When my children started attending faith formation classes, I knew I needed to take a more active role in their religious education. I felt as though I needed to practice what I preached. What better way to set an example than by showing all children, including my own, the joys of spreading God's word.

Please see FAITH FORMATION, Page 7

A CONVERSATION WITH ... CHRIS GRAY



The Gray family, from left: Steve, Chris, Jim and Taylor. Chris says her children know the importance of faith. "They definitely know church is always welcoming, loving, forgiving. When they are here, they know they are home."

Having faith in youth

Chris Gray had a bit of a late start in her faith, but since her teen years she has been guided by God and her faith. She now shares those beliefs with others, especially young people.

Mount Carmel was your parents' original parish. You really started to attend church when you were a teen and early 20s with your grandmother. What kind of influence did she have on you.

My grandmother was my influence in faith. She never missed Mass, attended several novenas and had a prayer corner in her house. She was in a Bible study group and was part of a prayer chain. She always encouraged me to pray and look to the Bible to help through difficult times.

You had your grandmother until age 97 and she shared her faith with your all your adult life. How have you passed along that influence to your children?

They definitely know church is always welcoming, loving, forgiving. When they are here, they know they are home. And they know I always have a prayer corner if they need it.

You've been very involved at Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament, teaching Faith Formation classes for nine years and serving six years on the Parish Council, in addition to other duties. Why are you so involved?

I enjoy sharing my faith with the youth of our parish. I was also called to serve on the Parish Council. Volunteering at church feels very rewarding and I am honored to serve when I am called to.

Chris Gray

Age: 54

Occupation: Radiographic technologist (X-ray technician).

Family: Husband Jim, son Steve (25) and daughter Taylor (23).

Things you like to do: Cooking, baking, reading.

Favorite movie: "Forrest Gump."

Favorite TV show: "Modern Family."

Favorite author: Jodi Picoult.

Has serving the parish changed you as a person and what have you learned from those experiences?

I definitely learned a lot from being involved in church. Being on Parish Council allowed me to understand the business side of how a church is run. I also became aware of the many committees, outreaches and ways the church meets the needs of our parishioners and the community.

You've also been involved with a program called Notre Dame Vision, in which teens travel to the University of Notre Dame for a weeklong faith experience. What was that like and what did you take home from those retreats?

The first time I attended Vision, I was profoundly overwhelmed by faith and the Notre Dame community. I realized continuing to learn faith is a lifelong process. I jumped in with both feet and have returned several times

to continue to learn my faith. I have also taken classes through the Syracuse diocese and within three years accomplished my Level II catechist certificate based on accumulation of classes at both Notre Dame and Syracuse diocese.

As a "side-effect" of those experiences, you've become a Fighting Irish fan, attending several football games and basketball games on campus. Tell us how that came about.

During Vision, many of our kids were able to meet the football players at breakfast. I have pictures of many players who now are in the NFL and NBA. There is a culture at Notre Dame that after faith come sports. I believe it goes, "God, country, Notre Dame."

You say your husband, Jim, claims your hobbies are "church and Notre Dame." Is he correct?

Yeah, pretty much.

You like to ride bikes, and helped organize something called "Ride for Faith." What was that experience like?

I had an idea for a youth events called "Ride for Faith." I wanted the high school youth to disconnect and ride bikes through the city and to visit other churches than their own. Every church is different. Their culture, their outreach, their vitality is all different. Many youth feel disconnected from faith. Maybe as adults, they remember seeing the other church or have a need and would reach back to their faith. It worked the first year; the second year weather prevailed, and it became a bus trip.

'I feel like helping people is such a good quality'

Mark leads a very active life in school and out. He's involved in being a leader at his school, participates in activities in the parish and hopes to have a future helping others.

You are very active in school. You're a class officer, work in the school bookstore, and are a member of Student Council and a Key Club officer. Why did you become so involved?

I become so involved in everything because I like to keep busy. I enjoy interaction with other people, not just in the school setting but in clubs and other activities. Being part of these organizations means a lot. I take pride in being an active participant in all of them.

What are your responsibilities as a class officer?

As a class officer, I am put in charge of coming up with fundraising ideas, representing the student body and letting our advisers know. Making decisions is a big part of it as well. It takes a lot of group planning and collaboration.

What does the Student Council do and how do you contribute to it?

The Westmoreland Student Council plans events and takes place in volunteer opportunities. They put on a blood drive, senior citizen bingo and prom throughout the year. They also fund the homecoming dance and work concession stands for various sports. They give out money for scholarships at the end of each year and make decisions that affect the school. All of these events I try and volunteer for. Last year, I volunteered for the prom and it was just nice seeing everyone have a good time and it felt good helping those who did a lot in the past.

Sounds like politics might be in your future. Do you take an interest in politics and do you think you might like to get involved in public service.

I do enjoy talking about politics. I like to be educated on what is going on around me. I feel like helping people is such a good quality. Some people might have a smaller voice and they need representing.

You also love sports, playing soccer, volleyball and tennis. How did you get involved in these activities and what do you enjoy about them?

It didn't start until about third grade. I really didn't get into sports until then. I played soccer from then and then I watched my sister play volleyball for six years so I have grown to like the sport. Tennis is something new to try so that I can stay after throughout the year. I

enjoy playing sports because it keeps me active and sharp.

Has sports taught you anything about life?

Sports have taught me how to be a team player. In any sports team you have to all work together to achieve a common goal. If you are not working together, nothing will go the way you want it to. It also teaches you that you have to work hard.

You have an older sister who just went off to college. What's the one thing you learned from her that you think is important?

One thing that I learned from my sister is never give up. She has been faced with altercations, whether it be in school or anywhere, and she tried to the best of her power to come up with solutions. She was also very involved in school activities.

Is there one person you really look up to and try to emulate?

One person that I look up to is my mom. She leads me in the right direction. She encourages and supports me through everything and never leaves my side.

You're very involved in our parish. You are an altar server, help at the festival and Breakfast with Santa. Why do you do what you do?

I like to be active in the community. When I get the chance to help out the church, I love to. It is good to help out. I find it fun to work with others to put on the spectacular things our church does.

Many teens come to our parish to make their Confirmation and then disappear. What would you tell them if you could about the importance of faith and remaining involved in the church?

Being involved in the church can be very beneficial. If you need something, there is always someone to talk to. It would always be a good thing to stay here and to carry on the traditions that your parents passed on to you.

How has your faith helped you?

My faith helped get through tough times. It guides me in the right direction and allows me to make better decisions.

What does Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament mean to you?

Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament is like a big family. Everyone knows everyone. It is a safe place that everyone can go to.

What do you hope your future holds?

I plan on attending college and go for either physical therapy or to be a civil rights lawyer.



Mark V.

Age: 15.

Things you like to do: Spend time with family, talk with friends, play sports (soccer, volleyball, tennis).

Favorite classes in school: Chemistry, math.

Favorite TV show: "Hawaii 5-0."

Favorite book: "A Long Way Gone" by Ishmael Beah.

Favorite musical genre: R&B, pop.

Note to readers

Diocesan guidelines prohibit the publication of last names, ages, parents and siblings names, and any other personal information for people younger than 18.

St. Mark and the lion that sleeps with his eyes open

The fourth, and final, evangelist in our quarterly series is St. Mark, the writer of the oldest and shortest of the Gospels.

He is referred to as John Mark in Acts 12:12. According to Catholic tradition, Mark was the son of Mary of Jerusalem (Acts 12:12) whose home became a meeting place for the apostles. He also is the cousin of St. Barnabas (Colossians 4:10).

In art, St. Mark is depicted holding a palm and with an open book of his gospel; often, a lion is nearby. The lion was believed to sleep with its eyes open, a reference to Jesus defying eternal sleep in his tomb. In Venice, and elsewhere, the lion has wings, another heavenly reference.

Some scholars believe Mark was talking about himself when he tells about a young man who followed Jesus to Gethsemane, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. When the Romans tried to seize him, he wriggled out of his linen and ran away naked (Mark 14:51-52). This second piece of evidence would place Mark within the sphere of Jesus but not as one of the 12 original apostles. He probably was one of the 70 apostles who later were charged with spreading the faith.

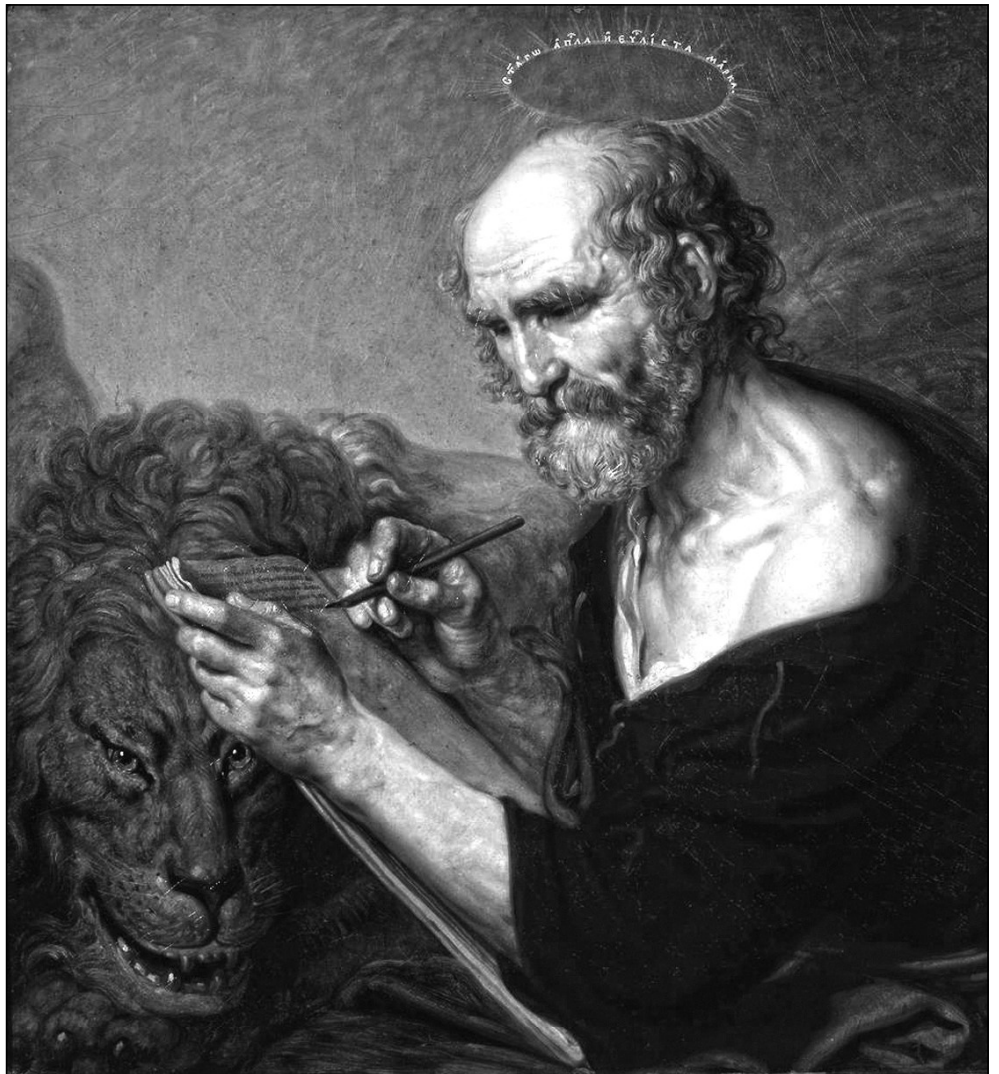


A.J. VALENTINI

Mark was close to St. Peter, who called him “his son” (1 Peter 5:13). He traveled with Peter as his interpreter and wrote down his sermons, which eventually would develop into his gospels. Those writings were addressed to the gentiles of Rome after Peter’s death, helping the unbelievers to understand how a Messiah could be cruelly murdered by his own people.

Mark also had a connection to St. Paul. In fact, he accompanied him and St. Barnabas on their first missionary journey to Antioch in 44 A.D. At some point, Mark left his companions to return to Jerusalem because he got homesick (Acts 13:13). That gave Paul doubts about Mark’s commitment as a carrier of the “Good News” and he refused to invite Mark on his second mission to Cilicia and the rest of Asia Minor. Paul’s anger did not last. When he was imprisoned in Rome, Mark came to visit him as one of his trusted companions (Col. 4:10).

We know Mark finally got his chance to preach in Asia Minor because Paul wrote to Timothy at Ephesus advising him to “take Mark and bring him with you (to Rome) for he



In art, St. Mark is depicted holding a palm and with an open book of his gospel; often, a lion is nearby. The lion was believed to sleep with its eyes open, a reference to Jesus defying eternal sleep in his tomb.

is profitable to me for the ministry” (2 Timothy 4:11). If Mark did accompany Timothy to Rome at that time he would have been there when Paul was martyred.

Though shorter than the other gospels, Mark’s writing and his experiences were a source to Luke and Matthew. Tradition says that around 49 A.D. Mark went to Alexandria, Egypt, and established the Church of Alexandria. The Coptic Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Catholic Churches of Alexandria are descended from that original congregation. Mark became the first bishop of Alexandria and is known as the founder of Christianity in Africa.

In 68 A.D. Mark was martyred by a mob in

Alexandria who objected to his teachings. A noose was placed around his neck and he was dragged through the streets by a horse until he died. His remains were buried in Alexandria but later divided. In 828, relics of St. Mark were stolen from Alexandria, covered with cabbage leaves and pork to avoid inspection by the Muslim guards of the Abbasid Caliphate, and taken to Venice, Italy. The Coptic Church maintains that his head still is in Alexandria. And Cairo claims to have another portion of his remains.

Sources: www.catholic.org, www.franciscan-media.org, <https://marktheevangelist.weebly.com/biography-of-st-mark.html>.

FAITH FORMATION

Continued from Page 3

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

My own faith began to grow and deepen as I became more involved in teaching in the Faith Formation program. Although I was an active member of the church growing up, I am still always learning about my relationship with God. This is why faith formation is so important. We are helping children have a greater understanding of God and what it means to have him and his love in our lives.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

The children have definitely taught me to continue to be curious and to not be afraid to ask questions. The children in class are so brave when they ask questions. They are not afraid to "ask the wrong things," make mistakes or look foolish in front of their peers. They simply want to know. What a great way to walk through life.

Sarah Trunfio

Why did you become a catechist?

Really, there are two reasons that I decided to become a catechist — one being that I missed teaching, especially about God. I use to be an elementary teacher, then I was a special education teacher and now I am an administrator. Teaching on Sunday still allows me to be in the classroom and teach young minds. Another reason I decided to become a catechist is that I attended Catholic school from kindergarten through high school. My first full-time teaching job was the Catholic elementary school that I attended. My mother worked hard and made sacrifices to pay the tuition so that my brothers and I could attend Catholic schools. It truly has been a beautiful foundation that I am so grateful for and want to share my love for God by educating kids on Sundays.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

Faith formation is valuable to me because it allows me to help young children of God understand their value and to value each other. If you build a community with children at a young age, they will feel like church is their home — their safe place — a place where they belong and are valued. It is also valuable to me because it has helped provide a solid foundation for my girls.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

The children have taught me that the best way to see faith is through the eyes of a child.

Michelle Commisso

Why did you become a catechist?

I decided to become a catechist quite accidentally. I happened to be filling out the registration form for my daughter (who was in kindergarten at the time). On the back of the registration form was a checkbox that asked if you were interested in volunteering (not re-

alizing that it meant volunteering to teach). I checked "yes."

Shortly after, Sister Linda called and asked if I would be willing to be a catechist. I quickly reminded her that my background was in retail management. I was the store manager at B. Dalton Bookseller until the store closed for business. She had much more confidence than me, assuring me that I could handle the task. I agreed and was assigned to teach first grade with Terri Panuccio. I absolutely loved it! The rest is history.

From that moment I realized that I was meant to teach. I went back to school to earn my bachelor's and then master's degree in education and have been teaching ever since. Although my children are grown, and our oldest daughter is now a catechist, I continue to teach. I feel it is my way of giving back.

If I hadn't checked "yes" to volunteer all those years ago, my life would have been much different. I love teaching and will be forever grateful to God for leading the way.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

Faith formation is important because my faith is so very important to me. Religious education was a part of my daily life as a child. I went to parochial schools my entire elementary and high school years, making practicing my faith easy for me. Faith formation is important because it gives children the opportunity to be an active part of their church community while learning about God. Children that are enrolled in, and continue to be a part of the program year after year, create lasting friendships and understand the importance of loving and serving others.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

Children are very intuitive and have taught me to be genuine and to be a good listener.

Rick Bilodeau

Why did you become a catechist?

Growing up, our religion was very important to my family. My mother was a Catholic school and religious education teacher. I remember seeing the joy it brought to her to teach children about faith. I felt this was a positive way to give back to our children, and hopefully they get as much out of it as I did when I was their age.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

I feel that with so much evil and hate in the world today that there is nothing more important than your faith. Hopefully, I can convince them that there is still a lot more good.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

The children have taught me a lot. I think the most important thing is that our church will be in good hands when these children grow into adults.

Josette Bilodeau

Why did you become a catechist?

To show our daughter that religion class is important to us, too, and not just for children.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

So that I can help to show that it is important to grow with the church and also make it fun so the children want to pay attention and not get bored and discouraged.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

To be curious. There is always more to learn.

Leigh D'Agostino

Why did you become a catechist?

When I was in grade 3, I was given a Bible at the end of our school year and was told by my teacher to share the stories of Jesus. This has always stuck with me, and my current classes always ask me why my Bible has duct tape on it. I became a catechist at Blessed Sacrament for the communion program for many years. When my family started attending Mass at Mount Carmel, the parish was looking for a teacher for the Grade 5 level program, which is based on the seven sacraments. With my previous experience, I was ready to explore another grade level.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

Many children come to our program for a foundation in our faith. Their parents do not feel that they have the knowledge to teach, which is not true. By attending Mass each week, we all are members of our faith formation program. Even as adults we can all continue to learn about our faith and strengthen our community.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

The children have taught me that we should not separate ourselves between young and old in our faith. I once challenged the children to do something that they have not done. After going around the room, the children asked me what I was going to do to challenge myself. The children always give me a new, fresh attitude about the teachings of our church which keeps me alive in my faith.

Patricia Rizzo and Joseph Rizzo

Why did you become a catechist?

We became catechists because we believe that it is important for children to know about their faith and to know God loves them.

Why do you think faith formation is important to you and the children?

It is important that the children know that they are not alone in their faith and to make friends with others who share the same religious beliefs.

What is one thing the children have taught you?

The children have taught us that there are no barriers between them and God and they are eager to learn about their faith.



Flock gathers at Communion Brunch

The fifth annual Mount Carmel / Blessed Sacrament Communion Brunch took place Sunday, Oct. 20, at Daniele's Banquet Facility in New Hartford. About 170 parishioners, family and friends attended. Guest speaker was the Rev. John Buehler. Father John, a classmate of Father Jim Cesta, spoke about what it means to be a pastor and the shepherd of a flock. He and Father Jim have been friends for 53 years. Father John is retired after spending more than 25 years at Historic Old St. John's, including many as pastor.

