Building Community

One Body In Christ Together

Hello, Here to Serve You!

Hello to friends and colleagues in ministry, new and old. Here to serve you, the Office for Pastoral Ministry with Persons with Disabilities for the Archdiocese of Newark is located within the Vicariate for Pastoral Life and works with parishes and other archdiocesan offices to support individuals with disabilities participating meaningfully within all areas of parish life. St. Paul tells us that the many and varied manifestations of the Spirit occur within the interactions of each and all members of the body of Christ, for the common good (1 Cor 12, NRSV). Please reach out if you need help.

As in all things, this newsletter is a work in progress, and I would love to hear from you about what you like, don’t like or would like to see in the future. Noting the beginning of a new catechetical year, Eileen O’Neill from the Schools Office writes about fostering community within catechesis, promoting a culture of learning together to live our Catholic faith. Remembering that the object of catechesis is communion with Jesus (NDC 19), we realize that fostering community and relationship is a critical part of our task as catechists. As such, our catechetical groups become small Christian communities.

For resources and more information on the ministry

October Awareness: Mental Illness, Employment

In particular, please think of individuals with disabilities who do not have meaningful employment or engagement in their days and also for people who struggle with mental illness.

Tips for helping a person with mental illness; one woman’s story, employment statistics

Creating Community In Catechesis by Eileen O’Neill

“Let the “children come to me,” Jesus said, “and do not hinder them.”

Catechesis is an opportunity for children and adults to participate in a religious formation program that introduces all learners to the person at the heart of our faith and develops lifelong disciples. It is paramount in your catechetical groups (NOT classes), to build a community of love, acceptance, and trust. A welcoming environment is an important first step to creating the community. Greeting parents and children to welcome them to the meeting sets the tone for a positive experience! Afterschool and early morning weekends can be challenging for children… be an energetic, enthusiastic, and a motivating leader! Positive language and conversations ease the children into the meeting rather than immediate directives and demands. Have visual rules for arrival that are stated in the positive…what they SHOULD do! Make them basic and TEACH them! Model, discuss the expectations of arrival, and reinforce when children are making good choices! Use pictures as a nonverbal reminder of expectations and try to ignore attention seeking behaviors.

Tips for Community Building

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• Catechist Convocation

Inclusive Family Masses
Accompanying Families

Contact Information
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Eileen O'Neill is the Director of Special Education and Federal Funding in the Schools Office at the Archdiocese of Newark. She is a certified special and general education teacher, certified school counselor, professional licensed counselor, behavior analyst, and educational administrator. She has a comprehensive perspective and valuable experiences that have provided her with skills in effective therapeutic interventions, implementing positive behavior supports, supporting, guiding, and leading school staff in implementing best practice, developing counseling programs, and promoting family involvement and support. She has worked to develop TRYCAN, a mentor based recreation program in which she has trained hundreds of teen mentors to support children with disabilities. Eileen teaches in the Master's Program in Education at Caldwell University.

**Suggestions for Registration Forms about Support Needs**

I am often asked by concerned parish catechetical leaders, “Why don’t parents tell us their son or daughter has a disability?” It’s a fair question. When you ask for information, it would be nice to receive it, so you can provide the appropriate supports. A critical task for you as a parish catechetical leader is to establish relationships with the families and learners you serve. Parents need to trust you if they are going to share such information about their sons and daughters. Trust with you, your intent, and how you will use the information. Setting the stage for such questions will be important and is done through the way you present your program, how you talk about its purpose, what type of relationships you foster with the parents, and what their sons and daughters’ experience is like. All parents would be interested to know that you are seeking to provide an engaging environment to nurture lifelong faith development for their children.

[Read more on considerations and what to ask parents](#)

**Catechist Convocation 2019—November 16, 2019**

Paramus Catholic High School

Workshop #21 & 22 Being the Presence of Christ with All Your Learners, Part 1 & 2

Eileen O’Neill

**You don’t want your catechists to miss this opportunity!**

**Methodology / Best for PCLs and catechists serving grades K–8**

Christ is with us through the people in our lives. As catechists we are called to be the presence of Christ to the learners entrusted to us. Giving witness to Christ’s way of love we will explore strategies of ‘Positive Behavior Supports’ to nurture confidence, participation and relationships for ALL learners. We will also share a framework for actively engaging ALL learners in catechesis and adapting plans and expectations for each learner, fostering participation and a sense of belonging.

18. Encounter and Accompaniment in the Midst of the Ordinary

Anne Masters

**Methodology / Best for PCLs and catechists serving grades K—8**

Christ is with us through the people in our lives. How can we be the presence of Christ for the people in our lives, those we know, those we run into, and those we try to avoid? In this session, we explore possible answers using Catholic Social Teaching and Pope Francis’ writings.

[For more information on Catechist Convocation](#)

[Link for Mass schedules and parish](#)

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We are preeminently an Eucharistic community and a sacrament, a living sign of Jesus Christ’s presence. The Eucharist which we celebrate together is both the sign and the means of our present unity, as well as of the still greater unity to be achieved in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

**RCAN Mission Statement: As Church Constitution of the Liturgy, 2; Lumen Gentium, 1**

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**Inclusive Family Mass Schedule**

September 2019 –June 2020

Everyone is welcome in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Newark. However, some individuals and families living with intellectual, developmental and/or other disabilities do not feel comfortable attending their local parish liturgy. Please help them know that they DO BE-LONG and ARE WELCOME. Because we know that some people are still not attending their parish liturgy due to this, the Archdiocese of Newark also has Inclusive Family Masses that are particularly adapted for individuals with disabilities, their families and friends. They are shorter, some have no music, but at all of these liturgies, they are told they do not need to worry about any extra noises or moving around. We are just gathered together to celebrate God in our lives and to draw strength from this.
Accompanying Families

We currently have two groups for parents of individuals with disabilities that meet at St. John the Evangelist in Bergenfield, one for moms and one for dads. The groups provide a safe space to acknowledge the joys, hopes, and struggles of raising individuals with disabilities and launching them into the world, with other parents who understand their journey. It is also an opportunity for the Church to accompany the parents in their support of life.

Where
St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, Parish Life Center
15 North Washington Avenue
Bergenfield, NJ

“All A Child Shall Lead Us” 2019 - 2020
A Spiritual Journey For Mothers of Individuals with Disabilities to be nourished with prayer, food and friendship. Refreshments provided.

Typically the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM, unless there is Mass.

October 9: Welcome Back
November 13: It’s Good To Be Together
December 11: Advent Mass, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe 7:15 chapel upstairs in Parish Life Center

Questions:
St. John Religious Education Office:
201-384-3601

Anne Masters,
Pastoral Ministry w/ Persons w/ Disabilities
Anne.Masters@rcan.org or 973-497-4309

All Dads of Individuals with Disabilities:
Come join other dads who understand the joys and struggles you live with as the father of individuals with disabilities. Refreshments provided.

Typically the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM,

Sept 18 • Oct 16 • Nov 20 • Dec 18
Jan 15 • Feb 19 • Mar 18
Apr 15 • May 20 • Jun 17

Questions:
Deacon Jim Detura
201-747-0713 or jdeturaph@aol.com

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Pastoral Ministry w/ Persons w/ Disabilities
Anne.Masters@rcan.org or 973-497-4309

For more info on moms’ and dads’ groups

Thank you for ALL you do, for ALL of God’s people!
Yours in Christ,
Anne

To remove your name from our mailing list, please email PastoralMinistry.Disabilities@rcan.org
Questions or comments? E-mail us at Anne.Masters@rcan.org or call 973-497-4309