

Creating a Middle School Ministry at St. Patrick - CIA (Catholics in Action)

Why we are moving Middle School Adolescents into a new program? Great question.

One of my favorite documents from the Catholic Church (besides the Catechism and Scripture) is "**Renewing the Vision**". A document written by the United States Bishops on The Growth and Development of the Church's Ministry with Adolescents." Here is the link for you to look at your convenience.

<http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/young-adults/renewing-the-vision.cfm#one>.

Our Vision - "**The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ.**" Youth will come to know Jesus through a variety of relationships, experiences, and commitments. This encounter will be strengthened by the ways in which they grow in knowing the doctrine and content of faith which they encounter through a systematic sharing of faith within parish religious education programs and "the catechetical formation that is a constitutive part of youth ministry programs." From: *Implementing the Adaptation of the Curriculum Framework for Youth in Parish Youth Ministry and Religious Education* By Tom East

I have been in ministry for 25 years now and received my National Certificate in Youth Ministry studies, as well as a Master Catechist Certification for Adult Faith formation to become a Director of Religious Education.

In all honesty the Religious Education Department wasn't planning on making this kind of change so soon after I arrived here. At first, we were just having a visioning discussion with some catechists and with Fr. Adrian. What can help our young people, especially 6-7-8th graders become more excited about their faith? How can we best help them put what they learn about being Catholic into action?

We believe that the Holy Spirit moved us in this direction at this time. (Even our name describes what our vision is- CIA – Catholics in Action). The team was formed and as we prayed we were moved with excitement to begin now.

Why did we choose Saturday? This is a very small parish and we didn't have room on Wednesdays. The team could do Saturdays, so we offered it on Saturdays.

- **For those middle schoolers who cannot make it on Saturdays, for whatever reason, I do have a Plan B.** I would like to train them to be "helpers" in the younger children classrooms. They would do especially well with 1st, 2nd or 3rd graders. It would be more than just passing out pencils or handouts, I would like to train them to lead opening/closing prayer, maybe share some of their experiences of living out their faith – receiving the sacraments and what difference it makes in their lives; helping younger children understand their faith better. Anytime we teach or share our faith – really does help us grow and understand our faith better! They would also be CIA – Catholics in Action!
- We may also need them at times for childcare when there is Parent Formation Nights.

- If your young teen would be interested in joining that team...let me know. I will need to schedule a training session.

- Plan C - I also have some materials that you can use to homeschool your teen!!!

If you have any questions or want to discuss this further, please contact me.

Blessings,
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