



# Feed My Sheep

Support for Formation Ministry  
in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

April 2013 Joyce Donadee & Lisa Brown, Editors ([jdjdonadee@gmail.com](mailto:jdjdonadee@gmail.com) & [lcbrown@stpaulspgh.org](mailto:lcbrown@stpaulspgh.org))

## The Light of Easter! The Light of Christ! Lorena Ringle, Christ Church, North Hills

Easter is not a single day but a season of 50 days, the Great Fifty Days of Easter. Easter is a feast and a season for endless rejoicing beginning with the Great Virgil of Easter and concluding on Pentecost. For these 50 days we celebrate the joy of the Resurrection of our Lord. We may wonder how to convey this joy with the children in our Sunday school classes in a meaningful way. As Bishop McConnell expressed in his Easter message, [www.episcopalpgh.org/bishop-mcconnells-2013-easter-message/](http://www.episcopalpgh.org/bishop-mcconnells-2013-easter-message/) the symbols that we use, like the butterfly, fall short of expressing what happened in the Resurrection of our Lord. We must however, not shy away from helping our children to contemplate the Paschal mystery. If we are to help our children to more fully know Jesus as the risen Lord of all, then we have only to focus on the Gospel stories throughout these 50 days. The Gospels [www.lectionarypage.net](http://www.lectionarypage.net) from Easter 2 through Easter 4 focus on the disciples encountering the risen Jesus and how they express their awe at the sight of him. Easter 5, 6 and 7 share how we are to prepare ourselves to follow Jesus in this new life.

We can celebrate the Great Fifty Days of Easter in the Sunday school by simply sharing these Gospel stories with the children in lieu of our regular lessons or in addition to them. Light a candle and read from the gospel, then have the children respond to the story either through discussion and/or by drawing or writing what they remember onto large sheets of paper or create a skit or play of the Gospel. Either display the drawings and writings in the classroom or compile them into a "Great Fifty Days of Easter" scrapbook that can be kept in the classroom.

**The Paschal Candle** – A Powerful Symbol of Christ's Triumph over the darkness of sin and death, is introduced each year to the congregation at the Easter Vigil. A new fire is kindled and the paschal candle is lit. Before lighting the

candle, it is inscribed with a cross, an alpha & omega, and the current year. This symbolizes that Christ is present among us now and throughout eternity. We will light our "gospel" candles from the paschal candle in the Nave each Sunday during the Great Fifty Days of Easter.



## Pinterest Boards

For more resources and ideas look at the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh Children's Ministry Pinterest Boards at <http://pinterest.com/edpchildrensmin/> You can find many children's ministry ideas that include prayer, crafts, food, Godly Play materials, Sacraments, games, Faith at home, etc.

## Father Matthew Presents

The Rev. Matthew Moretz, an Episcopal priest, has produced a number of You Tube videos and DVD's for elementary aged children and youth. Sometimes he includes his puppet friend Jehosephat and other characters. His explanation of Ascension compares the Ascension of Jesus with the story of Mary Poppins to explain the coming and going of Jesus. His other videos include Holy Baptism, Why Be Religious, Making the Sign of the Cross, The Book of Common Prayer in Four Minutes, The Collect, and Table Blessings.

## CandlePress Gifts to Children's Ministry

We would like to thank Candlepress.com for their gifts to our children's ministry program in our Diocese. All Christian education directors were given the opportunity to use CandlePress' Easter "To Go" resources so that they could email the materials to families in their Sunday schools. The CandlePress booklets written for young Episcopal children explaining the Holy Eucharist were given to the Sunday schools at Church of the Redeemer and St. David's.

## New Courses Donated to the Resource Library by the Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh.

[www.rqmweb.com/search.asp?swpa](http://www.rqmweb.com/search.asp?swpa)

These courses are products of The Teaching Company and each has its own course guidebook.

**Introduction to the Study of Religion**, Professor Charles B. Jones, The Catholic University of America (12 lectures, 2 DVD's)

**Mystical Tradition: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**, Professor Luke Timothy Johnson (36 lectures, 6 DVD's)  
**Jesus and the Gospels**, Professor Luke Timothy Johnson, (36 lectures, 6 DVD's)

**From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity**, Professor Bart D. Ehrman, University of North Carolina, (24 lectures, 4 DVD's)

**Lost Christianities: Christian Scriptures and the Battles over Authentication**, Professor Bart D. Ehrman, University of North Carolina (25 lectures, 4 DVD's)

**The Old Testament**, Professor Amy-Jill Levine, Vanderbilt University Divinity School, (24 lectures, 4 DVD's)

**The New Testament**, Professor Bart D. Ehrman, University of North Carolina, (24 lectures, 4 DVD's)

**Science and Religion**, Professor Lawrence M. Principe, Johns Hopkins University (12 lectures, 2 DVD's.)

**Skeptics and Believers: Religious Debate in the Western Intellectual Tradition**, Professor Tyler Roberts, Grinnell College, (36 lectures, 6 DVD's)

## It's almost time for Vacation Bible School!

If your parish is running a VBS program this summer, please email Lisa Brown the following information:

- Parish (with address)
- Dates, times
- Theme
- Cost
- Ages accepted
- Any other pertinent information

Our goal is to create a comprehensive list of all of the VBS programs going on in the diocese. Make sure your church is a part of it!

## Church of the Holy Cross Acolyte and Christian Education Training

Lyle Wood, Acolyte Trainer, Church of the Holy Cross

Holy Cross's Acolyte Corps consists of eight Acolytes ranging in age from 8 years to 15 years of age. Along with the Acolyte Director and assistant Acolyte Director, a second year college student, both former Holy Cross Acolytes, the ministry of Acolyte is gloriously alive and well every Sunday morning at Holy Cross.

Holy Cross Acolytes train every Sunday after our 10:30 service, where all of the basic skills required of an Acolyte are reviewed and corrections are issued for any errors made during the service. Holy Cross Acolytes are required to know the jobs of all other Acolytes, no matter how senior they may be and to be able to step in at a moments notice to perform any responsibility. After nearly a year and one half together our Acolytes can "mix and match" skills as well as anyone and are beginning to instinctively know what task needs to be performed to assist the celebrant during the service. Learning the correct way to walk, how to process, how to carry a torch or a cross, how to light and extinguish the candles, how to ring the sanctus, how to use a Thurible and how to assist in setting the Altar for the Eucharist are only the entry level "physical" skills that we teach our Acolytes. The real challenge comes from learning the historical significance of the Acolyte ministry, reviewing and understanding the Catechism, discussing the liturgy taught during the service, and the importance of celebrating the Eucharist. We consider this portion of the training the "how" (things work) and the "why" (things work) of the Acolyte ministry.

But probably the paramount portion of our training is the absolute requirement that we work together as a family, a team, who shows humility, love and respect for one another. We watch out for one another and always stick together. We teach what it means to maintain a proper reverence and demeanor, proper etiquette, appropriate speech, esprit de corps, and leadership skills, but above all we have fun while we serve. During our training it is not at all unusual that there will be "bonus questions" ranging from world history, film noir, classic movies and Star Trek trivia for prizes ranging from giant candy bars to books that encourage the Acolytes to quickly research and find the correct answer. Many times they will work together as a team to answer the question and share the prize. A dedicated Acolyte room further helps them bond into a cohesive group. I see God in their eyes every time we serve together and feel his pleasure when we train them. We currently have two new novice Acolytes who have just begun their training and some day they may become better Acolytes than their teacher!

While it is exceedingly difficult to summarize how Holy Cross Acolytes are trained, I cordially invite all interested parties to be our guests at Holy Cross to observe and participate in our training and join us in service to our Lord Jesus Christ and our ministry to all God's people. The thin red line of this generation of Acolytes has accepted the challenge and is marching forward.

*Editor's Note: I visited Church of the Holy Cross on Palm Sunday and saw the eight acolytes do an exceptional job during the service and then was invited to attend their weekly Acolyte/Christian Education meeting. It provided a creative model for a small to medium church to combine children and teenagers together in their faith journey and so I asked Lyle to write this article for all of us.*  
Joyce Donadee, Children's Ministry Team