



Feed My Sheep

Support for Formation Ministry
in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

April 2014 Special Double Issue for Holy Week & Easter!

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Lent & Easter

at St. Michael's of the Valley

In preparation for Lent our teachers and students in the 3rd thru 5th grade class made a lovely felt Banner (from a kit) portraying the last days in the life of Christ. Each week during Lent Fr. Jim and students introduce a symbol through a short liturgy. This is done at the 10:30 am service. The Banner hangs in the sanctuary. The purpose of the project is to involve students in worship and bring the events of Jesus final days into our midst.

The Godly Play class is doing the Faces of Easter, which presents key events in the life of Jesus.

Our Sunday school teachers will host the annual Easter events. All children are encouraged to join in the activities, which will begin at 9:15 am. On Easter Sunday the children will hear a lovely story that tells the tale of how a child can lead the way to the Cross. The book is titled *The Flowering Cross* by author Beth Ryan.

Sharing the truths of Scripture helps our children to understand and remember the true meaning of Easter. They will then participate in the tradition of Flowering the Cross to celebrate new life in our risen Lord. We have a large wooden cross on a stand, it was made to hold oasis that holds the flowers. The cross is placed in front of our sanctuary under the letters of the ALLELUIA that the children made and buried before Lent.

Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will follow...our teens enjoy filling the plastic eggs with candy and then hide them for the young children to hunt. This year we are planning to send a personal invitation to the families who have children in the Pre-school that is housed in our building. We will invite them to join us for the children's activities and Easter services.

We have two fairly new families from the school attending our Sunday school. *Kimberly Payne*

Children at the Easter Vigil at St. Brendan's

The children at St. Brendan's will be presenting three Old Testament stories to the congregation at the Easter Vigil for the first time this year. Father Scott brought this idea from his parish in Virginia. Each of the three Sunday school classes will present their story either as a skit, or a Godly Play story, or they will help to tell the story. They will be doing Creation, Noah, and the Parting of the Red Sea. *Joyce Donadee*

The Easter Story with "Resurrection Eggs"

Children can add these objects to plastic Easter eggs and then learn to tell the Holy Week Story as they open up their eggs. *Adele Eley, Calvary*

Donkey – Jesus rode on a donkey to Jerusalem.

Coins – Judas was paid 30 pieces of silver to show were Jesus was so He could be captured.

Bread – Jesus and His disciples had their last supper together.

Praying Hands – Jesus went into the garden and prayed to God to make sure He was doing the right thing.

Leather Strip – Jesus was beaten.

Crown of thorns – The Roman soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head.

Cross – Jesus was hung to die on a cross.

Nails – A nail was placed in each hand and one in His feet.

Sponge – Jesus was given a sponge soaked in vinegar in drink.

Cloth – After Jesus died on the cross His body was wrapped in cloth and placed in a tomb. (a big cave)

Stone – A big stone was placed in front of the tomb. Soldiers guarded the tomb.

Empty – On Easter Day the tomb was empty. Jesus had risen.

Alleluia Banner at Church of the Redeemer

At the Church of the Redeemer we have a tradition for burying the Alleluias. The Church School makes signs with brightly colored poster board and glitter. The signs are hung in various places around the sanctuary before the service. At the recessional hymn, the Church School members collect the signs and put them in a colorfully decorated box - along with our Alleluia banner. The children join the process with the box and carry the Alleluias from the church.

Dyane Coyne

Evaluating Your Children's Ministry Program

"To proclaim the Gospel to children, in ways that empower them to receive and respond to God's love" is what we as Episcopalians are called to do as stated in the Children's Charter of the Episcopal Church.

Children's Ministry programs become dynamic if they reflect the changing needs of families who are presently enrolled in your children's ministry program. A review of the program should be done each year to make sure that a quality program is provided that supports the spiritual formation that your families want and need. If a program has been used in the past and worked well, it does not insure that it is the best one for your families today.

The parents are the primary spiritual leaders for their own children. What we do in a parish should supplement or guide the parents with their children's Christian formation. How can you find out what parents want? How to plan a program that meets today's needs?

Two questions to be asked of parents, Sunday school teachers and church leaders are:

1. What are we doing in Children's Ministry that we like?
2. What are our dreams for our Children's Ministry Program moving forward?

You can consider what curriculum would be the best for your parish, what are your purposes for the program, how many classes will there be, and what is the budget? You could ask for some of the parents and teachers to become members of a Children's Ministry Committee that meets two to four times a year to continue the dialogue. An updated comprehensive chart that compares all Sunday school curriculums from all publishers is provided to us from Sharon Pearson, member of Forma and an editor at Church Publishing. <http://rowsofsharon.com/2014/03/27/curriculum-choosing-season/>

How to review your Children's Ministry program:

Are children attending regularly?

Are children engaged?

Are children returning?

Is your congregation aware and involved?

Continue to review regularly and be ready to adjust with changes when indicated.

Joyce Donadee

Godly Play

The Godly Play Core Training was a success with participants from churches in the Diocese which included Christ Church North Hills, St. Andrew's, St. Brendan's, St. David's, St. Paul's New Kensington, St. Paul's Mt. Lebanon, and St. Peter's. Thank you to all of the participants who signed up and participated, learning a lot about how to do Godly Play and bringing back to their parishes. Thank you to everyone who helped out, especially from Lorena Ringle and many volunteers from Christ Church North Hills.

If your parish would like to have a Godly Play Materials workshop (where you are led to make some Godly Play story pieces) or would like to have a Godly Play workshop where Godly Play stories are presented to Vestry, the congregation, Sunday school teachers, or parents, contact Joyce Donadee at jdjdonadee@gmail.com

Absalom Jones

There is a correction from our last edition of Feed My Sheep. The article about Rev. Absalom Jones stated that he was a bishop which was incorrect. He was ordained as the first African American Episcopal priest in 1804. The first black bishop was the Rt. Rev. James Theodore Holly, 1st Bishop of Haiti.

Vacation Bible School

We would like to post information about your Vacation Bible School or summer children's music programs in our next edition of Feed My Sheep. Please send a short description of your program for this summer along with the ages of the children, any costs, and dates to Lisa Brown at lbrown@stpaulspgh.com or Joyce Donadee jdjdonadee@gmail.com

Safeguarding Online

Child abuse awareness and prevention training are essential to our ministry to all the children of God. Through the Church Pension Group and their partner Praesidium, this required training is now available online to members of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.

The training is offered in short, focused courses that can normally be completed in 30-45 minutes. They can be taken at an individual's own pace and on their own schedule, and from any location where a high speed Internet connection is available. Course completion is documented and recorded online for diocesan records. Participants can print a certificate of completion for their own records.

Our diocesan policy requires child abuse prevention training for all clergy and all employees of the diocese, diocesan institutions, and congregations. All adult volunteers who regularly supervise activities with children and youth in the diocese or congregations are also required to complete the training. Training is not required for volunteer Sunday School teachers who work with children during public church school hours in places where other adults are present, but it is recommended. Any adults serving as chaperones on overnight events (lock-ins, retreats, etc.) should also complete the training. Wardens, Vestry members and elected members of diocesan and parish committees may also find the training helpful in raising their awareness.



Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh Children's Ministry Pinterest Boards There is a section that gives many ideas for Lent and Easter. <http://www.pinterest.com/edpchildrensmin/>

Safeguarding Online also offers resources for the prevention of sexual harassment. Our diocesan policy requires all clergy and diocesan employees to have this training, along with employees of diocesan institutions and congregations. Again, Wardens and Vestry members may also want to have this information.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh has its own secure Safeguarding Online page. Training participants are given a user name and password for the site. The Rev. Leslie Reimer is serving as the Diocesan Manager for the Safeguarding Online program. To access the training resources or for more information, contact her at ltreimer@calvarypgh.org or 412-661-0120 x123. For churches in which multiple individuals need to complete the training, Leslie can establish a church administrator to set up user names and passwords. There is no charge for to use this program.

Online Training Opportunity for Anyone Interested in Children & Youth Ministry and Formation!

ChurchNext is thrilled to partner with the good folks at [Faith Forward](#) to offer a free class to all aimed at helping us better understand and nurture young people in the Christian faith.

Registration for [The Big Class: Reimagining Children's and Youth Ministry](#) is now open. [Click here for more information and to sign up.](#) The course will run from April 7 – April 14 and features talks with four of the most innovative and talented leaders in children's and youth ministry.

This is a free, pre-recorded class that will take an average learner about 45 minutes to work through. It features text, video, quizzes, discussion areas, as well as two free downloads: The Takeaway, which is a one-page synopsis of the class, and Discussion Questions, which can be used in face to face gatherings following The Big Class. There will be live moderating going on during the class (April 7 – April 14) so students will be able to ask the presenters questions. There is no special software required.

This is the first Big Class Church Next has offered in order to help get the word out about an upcoming conference. The class features four of the keynote speakers for the upcoming [Faith Forward conference in Nashville](#). Organizer Dave Csinos and I were thinking about a way to more widely expose the work of these conference presenters to those who were either coming to the conference and wanted to get a head start on what's coming up, as well as those who will not be attending the conference but have a keen interest in the subject.

The four teachers for this class are Dave Csinos, Melvin Bray, Ivy Beckwith and Danielle Shroyer. We will be releasing a moderator schedule shortly so that students can know when these live chats are happening. We are excited to be bringing this kind of resource to a wider audience and pray this class can be useful in faith communities around the world.

Notes: In 2012, Lisa Brown of St. Paul's attended Children & Youth a New Kind of Christianity conference—CYNKC is now "ChurchNext." If this class is anything like the conference, it should be very worthwhile and thought provoking!



What is happening in YOUR parish as far children, youth or families are concerned?
Please email Lisa Brown (lbrown@stpaulspgh.org) or Joyce Donadee (jdjdonadee@gmail.com).
We would love to hear from you!