

Transfiguration Parish Pastoral Council  
Wednesday, January 2, 2008

Formation Report

Our Sunday morning GIFT programs seem to be going well. All the children participated in an Advent Jesse Tree program and presentation. Attendance is steady, with the larger number of families attending the 10:45 program and only a few families for the 8:45 program. The catechists seem to like the materials and they supplement the materials with videos when appropriate. Parents seem pleased with the program and the children seem to enjoy the many hand-outs and take-home materials they receive week to week.

Our Middle School GIFT process continues to be well attended; we get 15-20 children every time we meet. In November we had 3 sessions—one session on morality, one on Advent (signs and symbols of the season) and the final session was a speaker from Just Creations spoke about Fair Trade and how different people throughout the world deserve to make an honest living. That evening we had 19 youth attend, and our guest brought various items from different countries that are made by native people.

On December 8 we visited the Cathedral of the Assumption to help out with their soup kitchen. We had 22 youth and 12 adults attend. Our youth, with the help of the parish community made 150 scarves to hand out to the homeless guests of the Cathedral. The children helped decorate the dining hall, chop, cook and prepare the meal, do the dishes and also serve the meal. Carolyn Denny, the Formation Leader at the Cathedral, gave us all a short talk in the beginning to set the stage with what they needed help with, then at the end had a follow-up session to help the kids digest what they had just experienced. Fr. Bill, the pastor, came and greeted us and welcomed us to the Cathedral. At the very end we had a small tour of the crypts in the basement and a little history of the Cathedral was given. All in all, it was a worth-while experience for both the youth and adults who attended. Our youth behaved like young ladies and gentlemen, and we received very positive comments on their hard work and openness to the new experience.

Transfiguration's First Reconciliation process took place on December 1<sup>st</sup> with 20 children making the sacrament at that time. Two children received reconciliation at a regional Advent Penance Service a few days later at Immaculate Conception Parish in LaGrange and one child received reconciliation at a regional Advent Penance Service at Mother of Good Council Parish a week later. Fr. Herb came for the service at TOOL to help Fr. Bill. Fr. Bill was very gracious to Fr. Herb. The families were glad to have both priests there. A reception followed and I received only positive comments.

Our confirmation process here at TOOL continues to meet twice a month. They met on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. On the 16<sup>th</sup> we had a session for the candidates, their sponsors and parents. That session focused in on the beginning of our new liturgical year, and also the signs and symbols of Advent and Christmas, specifically the advent wreath, Jesse tree, Christmas crèche and 12 days of Christmas. This session helped everyone understand a few of the signs of the season better.

For the most part, the confirmation process is going fine and most of the kids come all the time. There are a few who have some issues with meeting some of the requirements such as regular attendance, which I am dealing with on a case-by-case basis. Hopefully all this will change for the better within the next month. Just to let everyone know, confirmation is set for Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at Transfiguration church with Bishop Boyle, CP. Since Archbishop Kurtz will be here on Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup>, he asked if Bishop Boyle could be the confirming bishop on April 29<sup>th</sup> and Fr. Bill said that would be fine.

Our RCIA process here at Transfiguration continues with the Bailey family and their daughter coming faithfully to all the scheduled classes. They have been faithful to coming to both our sessions and the regional sessions. To remind you, both parents (Steve and Rebecca) and their 10 year old daughter Reese are coming into the faith as a family. They recently took in two foster children, ages 7 and 9, and they plan to adopt these children later on. It is unusual to have a family come into the faith like this all at one time. While I am working with the adults, my wife has been working with the children. We will continue with the dismissals as mass with the Bailey's during January, February and March during the 9:00 mass. This process has been an interesting dynamic, and I look forward to having this family join the faith during the Easter Vigil on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Our second year for our revised Fifty-Five and over group is very well received. We have anywhere between 12 and 20 people for each session, depending on the weather. At the last session we had George Kassaih from the Cathedral and he spoke about the history of the Hebrew people in Israel. Everyone enjoyed the session. We had a great lunch to go with it, and George sold his religious art from Bethlehem there. Our parish warmly accepted his wares, and people bought about \$600 worth of articles from George on Saturday and after the masses on Sunday. George sells these hand-carved items for about 38 families in the Holy Land who cannot make a living any other way. George was pleased and I know the people enjoyed hearing his talk.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Sugrue  
Director of Faith Formation