Like grooming the backyard or tilling the garden, spring is also a time to prepare for the next catechetical year. Our Spring Institute courses are numerous and will meet your needs whether you are simply wishing to deepen the knowledge of your faith or in need of some practical applications to your ministry involvement. We are especially pleased to have Fr. John Horgan back at Institute with his affirming and insightful course on morality as well as Bro. Bill Bolts with an educational and fun look at the heritage of Catholicism in Europe.

Recently I was looking at a parish website where it stated their motto for adult faith formation as “Cor ad cor loquitur” or “heart to heart” and I thought what a wonderful description of the relationship that many of the ‘elect’ have experienced with their sponsors. Archbishop Emeritus Exner frequently turned the familiar ‘Know, Love, Serve’ to “Head, Heart, Feet” to explain the path of adult faith formation. Our experience in catechetical ministry teaches us that a deeper knowledge of the faith can inflame a greater love of the faith which in turn encourages us to put our faith into action.

The Archdiocesan Spring Institute for adult faith formation will be held on April 18, 2009 at St. Patrick Regional Secondary in Vancouver. We are all on the path to home and all of us need to till our soil whether it be for the head, the heart or the feet. The Institute has something for everyone, both the seasoned catechist and the explorer of the faith we cherish.
Lookin’ for Adventure...

ADULT FAITH FORMATION: by Kyle Neilson

“I can’t believe I didn’t know this.” “Finally, all of the parts fit together.” “For the first time, I can make sense of the Bible.” Comments like this can be heard around the archdiocese in the thirty parishes that have begun The Great Adventure: A Journey through the Bible.

Perhaps you’re like many Catholics, familiar with the Scriptures through hearing them at Mass, but you find the prospect of reading the Bible daunting: it’s big, it’s intimidating, it’s confusing. You may not know how all of the parts fit together, or how they apply to your life. Or maybe you’ve encountered difficulties in life, and are wondering if God is still with you.

WELL, CONSIDER YOURSELF INVITED to a parish near you to finally make sense of the Bible. And your life.

A colour-coded bookmark simplifies the complexities of the Bible.

Over the past year, our office has been introducing and equipping parish teams to run this adult faith formation program, so that normal Catholics can discover the richness and beauty of their faith. Developed by Catholic author and teacher Jeff Cavins, the study consists of home reading, DVD presentation, and group discussion. Participants receive a fold-out Bible timeline and colour-coded bookmark (see image above), so they can master the big picture of God’s plan in a short period of time. What results is a foundation on which average Catholics can build a lifetime of understanding, loving, and handing on God’s Word.

To view an introductory video, find out about parish study locations, or discover how you can start this study at your parish, visit our website at www.rcav.org.

Why did Jesus need help to carry the cross? Was there a dove at my Baptism too?

LITURGY OF THE WORD WITH CHILDREN: by Leanne Penco

Children have many questions. Liturgy of the Word with Children gives young children an opportunity to ask those questions in a friendly and child friendly environment.

So, what exactly is Liturgy of the Word with Children? What do the children do after they file out of the sanctuary on Sunday?

There are two main parts of the Mass – the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. Liturgy of the Word with Children (LWC), as the name suggests, encompasses in a simpler form, all of the liturgy of the Word including the Readings, a reflection, the Creed and Prayers of the Faithful.

After the Opening Prayer, the LWC leader escorts the children to a nearby room where they hear the Word of God from the Children’s Lectionary. The leader then directs the children in an interactive talk, song, skit or other activity to help the children understand the Gospel message. Together, they recite a simple creed and offer their prayer intentions.

The Gospel is explained and questions are answered, all in a welcoming, and interactive environment. That is the beautiful ministry of Liturgy of the Word with Children.

For more information, please contact your parish pastor or ORE at ore@rcav.org.
By Giving We Receive
MARRIAGE PREPARATION: by Tim Diewold

Recently on YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dXguc9U1dc) I saw that “Engage”, a new Australian Marriage Preparation program is being adopted by an English Diocese. I was also given a colourful flyer promoting a similar type of program in development by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Orange County. Both are modeled on local “in parish” delivery and provide a structure to accomplish this goal. Both utilize combined DVD video, printed material and mentor couple sharing… coincidence?

Our program is large scale and uses a “one size fits all” lecture hall delivery model. It is a good program overall, benefiting from the dedication of a number of reliable and inspiring presenters who deliver a comprehensive curriculum developed over the past thirty years. Presenters have found that sharing is its own reward. It forces them to take time and objectively consider their own vocation. Hosting chores also are vital; many Mary’s and Martha’s are needed for success and sustainability. We are grateful to “Couples for Christ” who have provided volunteers at several of our fifteen series this year.

This is what Christians do best, the personal presence of real live human beings sharing time, knowledge, experience and in a subtle, but real way, displaying love. It can be evangelical, life changing. In a culture where we easily turn to electronic resources, and good presenters are harder to find, it may be necessary to use some ‘ready to use’ video product along side the living and breathing, maybe in smaller groups, close to the ground, allowing more flexibility of time and location as well. But, we continue to seek and prefer the live and virtuous to the digital and virtual.

Please keep the engaged couples and us in your prayers and if you could share in this ministry, contact us by phone 604 683 0281 or email: ore@rcav.org

RCIA — Is that some kind of electronics company?
RCIA: by Kyle Neilson

Actually no, nor does it stand for Rental Cars in Abbotsford. Rather, it is the acronym for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the process by which adults gradually journey towards becoming Catholic.

The purpose of this brief article is to provide a basic understanding of RCIA for those unfamiliar with it. To do so, an analogy from marriage may be helpful.

Consider a young man and woman who move, over time, through a series of stages and steps in their relationship. After meeting, they casually get to know one another and perhaps go on an occasional date. At some point, they may choose to intensify their relationship and enter into a courtship. Eventually, considering his lady friend “marriage potential,” the gentleman takes a knee and “pops the question.” After the “yes” of his bride-to-be, they will soon say “I do” on the wedding day.

And so it is in RCIA. An adult is drawn to Jesus Christ by the grace of God and begins to discover who He is through the Gospel He proclaimed. Then, he or she may decide to pursue a relationship with Christ in a deeper way through a sacred ceremony, or rite. The rite, in turn, marks the progression into a new, courtship-like stage of the journey.

Eventually, following another rite and stage, it’s wedding time: the mystical marriage of the person with the eternal Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, through the sacraments of initiation.

But as with the marriage of man and woman, this marks only the beginning: knowing and loving the Lord is a daily and life-long adventure, the goal of which is eternal life.

To find out more about RCIA, visit our website: www.rcav.org.
PREP Through the Years...

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM: by Murita Chua

I watched several old videos from our resource library to decide which ones to discard or retain. Along my review process, I realized that the same message of love, hope, charity and the beauty of our Catholic faith were wonderfully proclaimed by passionate people.

Who are these passionate people? They are the catechists who love the Church and willingly echo the good news. They are ordinary men and women who responded yes to the great call, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations…” (Matthew 28:19) Through the years, the good news remains applicable to circumstances in life and is being passed on to future generations by these catechists.

From the old videos, most of what catechists said was basically the same about grace, the Sacraments, Ten Commandments, and the basics of our Catholic faith.

What’s different? Only few things, the fashion or clothes people wear, the presentation styles and the use of technology from old VHS machine, cassette tape recorders to the DVDs nowadays. In any decade, catechists aim to present our Catholic faith in relevant manners to children and adults so that they too will know it, embrace it, make it a part of their lives and continue to pass it on to the next generation in response to our baptismal call.

That’s exactly what we aim for in Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) up to now. We are mandated to provide religious instruction for children who attend the public or independent schools and to assist the parents in their role as primary religious educators of the faith. Guided by the pastor, PREP programs are organized by a Coordinator and implemented by catechists in local parishes.

The passing of faith needs to go on. This will be possible only with the help of faithful, creative and dedicated catechists who are eager to say ‘yes’ to the call.

If you feel like you need to share your faith or maybe to know more about it, then try volunteering as a catechist. Maybe you can start as an assistant catechist. It will be a baby step towards a deeper relationship with God, by knowing more of the faith and responding to your baptismal call. God will give you the grace for He will do His job through you.

For more information about the PREP Ministry, contact ore@rcav.org or your local pastor.

Coming Events

Spring Institute
Acquire skills to help you minister to adults, youth and children alike! Join us for our Archdiocesan Spring Institute. For a complete list of courses visit: www.rcav.org
Saturday, April 18th 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
St. Patrick Regional School
115 East 11th Ave., Vancouver

Resurrection Retreat
For those involved in parish, youth or school ministry. Journey with St. Paul and the joy of Easter.
Saturday, April 25th 8:30 AM -12:00 PM
Our Lady of Lourdes
828 Laval Square, Coquitlam

Youth Day 2009
Our annual rally for high school teens, will take place on May 1 and 2 at Archbishop Carney Secondary. Join us for a dynamic weekend of fun, faith and fellowship. Our theme is “Set Our Hope on the Living God” (1 Timothy 4:10). Cost is only $40 which includes t-shirt, meals, snacks, and admission to all sessions. For more information please visit: www.youthmin.com
Friday, May 1 & Saturday, May 2
Archbishop Carney Secondary School
1335 Dominion Ave., Port Coquitlam

Summer Institute
Friday, Aug. 28th & Saturday, Aug. 29th
10 AM - 4 PM
Holy Cross Secondary School
16193 - 88th Ave., Surrey

Western Conference of Catholic Religious Educators
November 12 - 15, 2009
Victoria, B.C.
“The Word of God” – For all persons involved in catechesis at the various levels.

www.rcav.org