

RESULTS FROM DIOCESAN CONVOCATION ON EIGHT TOPICS

Families

Issues

- Parents haven't appropriated faith
- Narrow definition of Family – no such thing as “traditional”
- Lack of information/welcoming RE- Annulment
- Priesthood of all – “I am Church”
- Loss of “Catholic Culture” – How minister in changed society?
- Church is a Circle of Diversity not hierarchy We Thirst for Dialogue
- Accepting parental roles
- Lack of invitation
- Competing priorities
- Lack of collaborative leadership. Priests leadership is crucial.
- Willingness of priests to work with and empower others

Directions

- Offer a variety of activities to build communities
- Provide and/or identify Catholic materials
- Provide family opportunities on spiritual and moral development
- Liturgy as family catechesis
- Opportunity at Sacramental Prep – Family Catechesis
- Intergenerational Programs (e.g. F.I.R.E.)
- Scheduling to support family life
- Look forward not backward – recover the treasures and go ahead
- Educate Adults with/and Children
- Educate for sense of sacrifice vs. materialism

Catechists

Issues

- Sacraments, unfortunately, seen by many as cultural event, family expectations, and as milestones, rather than faith events to help you in life
 - Confirmation is not a graduation
- (Underlying Causes)**
- Catechists not equipped to deal with behavioral and/or educational need of children/ more issues than ADD/ADHD
 - illiteracy of children's reading ability – difficulty of Religion books

- Lack of teaching of morals
- faith education a low priority for families
- lack of invitation to practice ministry
- No mentoring opportunities (mentor or protégé)
- No “family” education
- In some, there is an underlying lack of confidence in sharing our faith and discipling our children
 - Inconsistencies in ongoing development
- Catechists/Religious Education teachers in parish School not formed in faith
 - Imbalance among knowledge of relationship with Jesus (role models)

Directions

Parents

- Offer coffee, breakfast, resources, socialization opportunities
- Website
- Take-home literature

Parish

- Develop pride in Catholic faith
- Build sense of “parish family” (e.g. presentations by children, celebrations)

RE Staff

- Better communication
- Opportunity for small group interaction (in addition to coordinating with large group)
- Connect as spiritual community (social, prayer)

- Consider some possible paradigm shifts:
 - To family Catechesis experience
 - Faith & Life together
 - Primacy of adult faith formation in as many areas and ways as possible
 - Toward Team Teaching and Catechist formation prior to teaching
 - Involve youth in wider community of parish life
 - Pastor support

Catholic Schools

Issues

- Parents may be missing some experiences of faith formation that needs to be provided by Church
- On going education for all and opportunities for relationship in the context of Church
- The school may be the only faith community for children & families
- Parents need to be held accountable
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Causes

- In college, young adults tend to move away and they want to return as they start a family. They seem to be uncertain/ unsure of *how to do this*.
- Church has to be about more than just getting to church on Sunday.
- Parents are not invited to the “more” of church membership
- Break down of Families causes new challenges for belonging and faith traditions of families can be interrupted.
- Lack of connection for parents, sponsors
- It is presumed that Children are catechizing the adults
- Content is being taught, but are we passing on what is essential to a faith community?
- Parents need help as primary faith educators of their children.
- Lack of sensitivity to all the places where adults may return to the practice of faith
- Lack of connection between faith and life. This is what keeps people involved or sets them free to drift.
- Lack of teaching by Word and example.
- Liturgy is not meaningful.
- Religion belongs to the Mom only in some instances. Lack of ways that involve both Moms and Dads in faith sharing and faith development.
- Parents are not invited to school on a regular basis

Directions

- Attention to Relationships as critical to the experience of Church
- Clear catechesis – Catholic Identity – Attention to developing a common language of faith
- Empower all to speak the language of faith
- Cultural/ Social changes must be integrated with church teaching meaning that church teaching must touch the issues of the day
- Children have a higher level of moral development than adults – Ways to encourage and cement this moral development need to be considered

- Liturgical form vs. need – If Liturgy is the work of the people, than it should reflect the needs of the people.
- Emphasizing connections between people, rituals – appropriation
- Faith needs to be taken in at the center – People want more talk about around what makes a person claim faith as their own
- Develop /Reestablish common language
- Children see school as family. Busy times; Schools may need to provide more of what used to come from families: basic care, empathy, wisdom, problem solving, etc.
- Education& relational must be tied together
- Connect with the hunger that people feel.
- A sense of openness to all that may come
- People have been pushed away. We have to intentionally invite them back.
- “Lavishness” of the sower...there is enough for all. . .Make sure our schools are open to hospitality.

Children

Issues

- Parents have not appropriated teachings/faith, therefore not a priority
- Non-traditional families
- Get families involved from Baptism forward
- Don't blame parents

Directions

- F.I.R.E as model
 - Multigenerational
 - Total parish forms our children
 - Be gentle to parents
 - Child friendly liturgies
 - Inspire parents/guardians as models to children

Whole Parish

Issues

- Culture: Challenges – erosion of the family, victims of systems, competition for time
- Church: our own identity disconnect between our teachings and our practice
- Welcome

- Size of pressure
- timidity

Directions

- evangelizing through public media, websites, celebrations of the community, crisis moments
- more tools, less mandates
- respond to (opportunity and) needs of people is an opportunity
- tell our stories
- don't just plan "for" but plan "with"
- take the long view
- be persistently inviting
- utilize naturally occurring parish groups
- facilitate collaboration

Adolescents

Issues

- priorities of youth and parents
- education/ignorance
- lack of collaboration
- lack of authority
 - territorial
 - equals in ministry
- fundamental courses
- lack of attendance – How do we address their needs
- Youth Ministry is a natural progression of a parish relationship with adolescents

Directions

- Building awareness (i.e. – “Dialog” – parish life page)
- Diocesan guidelines that are uniform and followed
- YM as relationship with all young people; having YM leaders all at same table
- Shift to “It’s everyone’s responsibility”
- INVITE (and response is NEVER forced)
- Recognize the challenges and gifts the youth offer

Young Adults

Issues

- Young Adults (YA) not involved in decision making
- Lack of inter-parish communication
- Transience of YA population
- Appeal to different stages in life of YA's
- Lack of invitations for YA's to get involved in the parish
- Church needs to be more than just a Sunday activity
- YA's process information differently (bullet point summaries with opportunities for deeper reading) – layered approach
- Lack of understanding of Mass/Real Presence/Catholic teachings
- Homilies need more relevance and/or catechesis
- YA's look for authenticity

Directions

- Personal invitation is key
- Understanding of who YA's are (married;single;20's;30's)
- Account for post-High Schoolers who don't go onto college
- Greater availability & flexibility of catechetical opportunities
- Intentional in scheduling of Sacraments/Mass/other activities – coordinate between parishes

New Members

Issues

- Need to internalize the process of initiation as opposed to implementing a program of initiation
- Need for continual formation on the team, sponsors, faith community-at-large, and the neophytes
- Uniformity-NON-uniformity from parish to parish of the PROCESS not RITES
- Lectionary based catechesis vs. Catechesis of the Catholic Church – should complement each other – Topic vs. Lectionary
- Sponsor Formation/Development
- How to incorporate community (at large) into the process

Directions

- Deanery RCIA Team Group Meetings
- “Beginnings and Beyond” (with financial assistance)

- Knowledge of the RITES – read The Study Editions
- Celebrate Mass and the Rites to the best of our ability so as to allow them to catechize and form us
- Sharing of resources; the need to see ourselves as a local diocesan church
- Need for some continuity in the way we initiate adults in the Diocese
- Focus on creative methods of evangelization
- Provide opportunities for ongoing involvement after RCIA