

Community of Disciples Faith Formation

*Submitted by Brenda Koppes
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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- **Curriculum** – Met with Sr. Connie to discuss extra books they had and the need for them at St. Mark. After discussion with the catechists, we have introduced some new video curriculums for middle school and high school. We will also be introducing Theology of the Body to those same grades later in the year. For those sessions, students will be divided per gender.
- **Parent Meetings** – Held annual meetings with parents.
- **"VBS"** – Our focus for this year was the virtues, spending one night each on faith, hope and love. We changed the format of each night, which went much smoother. The older students did a wonderful job of leading these sessions.
- **RE Classes & Masses** – Classes began the end of August for catechists and older students, then the beginning of September for everyone else. We are again having special Masses for the students, their families, and any other parishioners on the 1st Wednesday of each month. (Mass in November was for Rose VanDyke, a teacher from IFAHS and parishioner at St. Patrick, who passed away this summer.)
- **Catechist Blessing** – There was a special blessing for all catechists and parents at Mass on September 15. Due to an engagement retreat I was unable to be at the Mass.
- **Christian Concert** – The annual Christin Concert was held at Estes Park on September 26. We canceled RE classes for the night and encouraged RE families and other parishioners to attend the concert.
- **Youth Led Ministries** – We have continued the tradition of our RE students filling the liturgical ministry roles during Masses on the first weekend and Wednesday night of every month. Weekend Masses were held on October 6 & November 3. We have had some issues with some of the students assigned not being at Mass as 6:30pm does not seem to be a popular Mass time at St. Mark. Wednesday night Masses were held on October 3 & November 7.
- **Rosary** – Our annual. Youth led Rosary prayer service was held on October 24. We did a glowing rosary in the church and the youth liked taking their glowing items home.
- **Halloween/All Saints Day Activities** – Since Halloween trick-or-treat was on a Wednesday night this year, classes were canceled. We did offer that older students could still come to church and re-create the old Haunted Tunnel for any younger parishioners or others that wanted to come. As participants left they received candy bars and information about All Saints Day. We did not have a lot of people walk through the tunnel, but there is discussion for how to make this an annual event and possibly a NCYC fundraiser.
- **Totus Tuus** – I contacted the Pastoral Center in Dubuque to enter our cluster's requested dates for Totus Tuus next summer. I have not heard back but do know the cost went up a couple hundred dollars from this year. I will let commission members know when I hear back.
- **MagnifiKid** – These booklets, which help students better understand the liturgical year and Mass, are placed in the back of the church each week. I have heard wonderful feedback from families that are utilizing these materials.

Sacramental Prep

- **1st Reconciliation/1st Communion**
 - An informational meeting was held for parents of students preparing to receive the sacraments of reconciliation and eucharist this year. Books were handed out along with other information for them to begin teaching the lessons at home.

- **Confirmation**
 - Parent Meetings – Held informational gatherings for freshman & sophomore students and their parents. Sessions were held in both Iowa Falls and Eldora around Mass times to better accommodate our families.
 - Classes – Sessions are held twice per month, for 2 hours, rotating between Iowa Falls and Eldora.
 - Meals – I have been in communication with parents of students to take turns providing the meals for students, Confirmation team, and Alpha participants. We have been blessed with some very delicious meals.
 - Team Meeting – October 21 to discuss the retreat
 - Retreat – The day long Confirmation retreat was held on November 4 at St. Mary. Our time together was spent with Mass, videos, time for discussion, and prayer opportunities. The evaluations were very positive with most students feeling the day was worthwhile.
 - In discussion with Jolene Harms in regards to 2 of our students being confirmed in their cluster next weekend.

ST. MARK YOUTH MINISTRY Youth Gatherings

- **Middle School**
 - Monthly Gatherings – Held to discuss an array of topics including the importance of saints, vocations, and balancing life.
 - Youth Jam – Was held in Waterloo on November 20. Unfortunately, we did not have any students able to or interested in attending.
 - Mission Trip – Discussion has started to have a weekend mission trip with other area Catholic Churches in the spring.
- **High School**
 - Monthly Gatherings - Held to discuss an array of topics including the importance of saints, vocations, and balancing life.
 - Summer Trip – I have begun gauging interest in an archdiocesan trip to Colorado this summer. With other activities going on this may need to be traveled.
- **Gathered**
 - September 16 – Planning of fall events.
 - Movie Nights – Our last event of the summer was held on August 16. Some events we better attended than others, but great discussions came out of the movies the youth chose to watch.
 - Advent/Christmas – Following up discussion on September 16, the youth have chosen to have a display at the annual Festival of Lights in Iowa Falls. They thought it was important for others to see some positive coming out of our parish. Blessed with Fr. Kevin’s support, we will hopefully be having a magnificent display that we hope many parishioners as well as others in the community will enjoy. (Keep watching for more details in the future.)
- **NCYC**
 - **Interest Meeting** – A meeting as held on August 26 to gauge interest in attending NCYC in 2019. We have had a wonderful response so far, including chaperones.
 - **Meeting with Audrey** – Met with Audrey DeVilder of St. Mary on October 18 to discuss how to handle NCYC in 2019. We have decided to combine the groups into one clustered group and discussed ways to avoid issues that have come up in the past.
 - **Spots** – Reserved our cluster’s spots with the diocese. We are currently planning on 25 participants from the cluster with hopes that we may have more.

- **Fundraisers** – Will be kicking into high gear starting in December. Once we have a different Mass time we will be holding meals.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

- **Life-Sustaining Gathering**
 - Gatherings held in conjunction with Dan Hurt (St. Thomas Aquinas, Webster City) to better inform parishioners of the Church's stance on many end of life issues and handed out resources to help them and their loved ones make important decisions as they arise. There will be follow-up sessions in the new year to discuss after-death issues.
 - September 9 @ Webster City
 - September 17 @ Iowa Falls
- **Movie**
 - A special showing of "I Can Only Imagine" was offered at St. Mark on September 9. Unfortunately there was little response, but I hope to offer it again in the future.
- **Woman 2 Woman**
 - **Following a discussion of St. Mark FFC members at the August 2018 meeting, a group gathered to discuss ways we as Catholic women could grow in our faith. A book was chosen and we have begun reading it and discussing the chapters.**
 - **September 23**
 - **October 21**
- **Choir**
 - Our choir is returning! Practices will begin this week, and I have been working with Lisa Barnett and Jessica Lara with publicity. Practices will continue to be held during RE classes to help more parents be involved.
- **New Student Welcome**
 - I attended the annual student welcome at Ellsworth Community College to begin making connections with new students. I handed out church materials/books, promoted events/happenings, and gathered some contact information for students.
- **Conferences**
 - Christ Our Life –
 - Promoted this bi-annual Conference in Des Moines for our cluster and many others throughout the diocese.
 - Post COL Conference Gathering – Offered a night for attendees to discuss what they heard/saw and how we could bring some of that energy back to our parish. Many schedule conflicts caused us to postpone until next month.
 - Archdiocesan Women's Conference
 - I continue to help with planning and promotion of the conference being held in Cedar Rapids on January 26.

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

- **Movie Mondays** – These family-friendly events were held monthly on Monday nights following Mass. Snacks and drinks were provided. They were canceled once RE classes began.
- **Fellowship Mondays** – I have been contacted by parishioners to bring back these family-friendly (or sometimes adults only) events. Plans are beginning to have a trivia night in the near future.

FORMED

- **Publicity**
 - Community Page – Our community page is updated regularly with information and articles that are liturgically or locally pertinent.
 - Monthly Info - Information pertinent to each month has been put into our linkage bulletin and hung in each church.
- **Monthly Updates**
 - Information pertinent to each month has been put into our linkage bulletin and hung in each church.
- **Registered Members** (Total = 95)
 - St. Mary, Ackley – 13
 - St. Mary, Eldora – 20
 - St. Patrick, Hampton – 1
 - St. Mark, Iowa Falls – 29
 - Staff – 9
 - Unknown – 7

MEETINGS/CONFERENCES/CONTINUING EDUCATION

- **Archdiocesan Women's Conference Meeting** – August 21 (online), September 18 (Cedar Falls), October 24 (online), November 6 (online)
- **Archdiocesan Youth Jam** – August 30 (zoom), October 16 (Waterloo), November 5
- **Archdiocesan Digital Open House (all virtual)** – September 11 (FFL Day Follow-Up), October 9 (Safe Environment/Catholic Mutual), November 5 (Promotion of Vocations & Discernment)
- **Staff Meetings (all at Iowa Falls)** – September 13, November 8
- **Ministry Affiliated Cohort (MAC) Meeting** – September 25 (Clarion)
- **Pastoral Leadership Study Day** – October 16 (Waterloo)
- **Christ Our Life Conference** – September 28-30 (Des Moines)