



Feed My Sheep

Support for Formation Ministry
in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

January 2013 Joyce Donadee & Lisa Brown, Editors (jdjdonadee@gmail.com & lcbrown@stpaulspgh.org)

Sunday, February 10, 2013 is Children's Charter Day !!

Celebrate the Children's Charter

Bishop McConnell has proclaimed February 10, 2013 as the Episcopal Children's Charter Day. Every parish is encouraged to observe this day by promoting the Charter and to learn more about how we as Episcopalians can nurture, minister to, and receive ministry from children.

Some suggestions for implementation include:

- Copy the Children's Charter and include it in that day's bulletin.
- Invite the children to serve as greeters, ushers, readers, and chalice bearers, or have them assist the adults in their duties that day. Have all children be part of the processional.
- Invite children to do a skit or reenactment of the gospel story for that day.
- Have all adults introduce themselves to children sitting near them during the Peace.
- Invite all children to gather at the Lord's Table while the priest prepares the sacraments.
- Invite the children to assist with the Coffee Hour or social time after the service.
- Offer to take neighborhood children, friends' children or grandchildren to church with you that day.
- Look at Implementing a Children's Charter for the Church to see if all churches in our diocese can become more intentional in bringing children closer to God.

Child-Friendly Ash Wednesday Service

If you are looking for an Ash Wednesday service that is adapted for young children and their families, we have permission from Rev. Shawn Schreiner from Grace Episcopal Church in Oak Park, Illinois to use theirs. We also have another Ash Wednesday Episcopal service from St. Bart's in New York City from Wendy Claire Barrie who also gave us permission to use. If you e mail mjdonadee@yahoo.com they can be sent to you as attachments.

Road to Jerusalem Lenten Activity

This activity encourages children and adults to reflect on and explore the Lenten story. If you are studying the life of Christ, the teachings of Jesus, the events of Holy Week, or similar concepts this hands-on activity can engage participants in a very tactile manner.

On Ash Wednesday, or the first Sunday in Lent, begin by making a Road to Jerusalem. Create a long, winding road on the floor or on the top of a long table using fabric, brown wrapping paper, or similar material. Allow enough room on the road to make six or seven stories to be placed along the way. For this first lesson, your group could make Jesus, who will be moving down the road during the weeks in Lent from one story to another.

Each week have plenty of art/craft materials on hand such as markers, paper (colored and white), glue, clay or playdoh, paint, poster board cut into pieces, small pieces of yarn etc. You can also have simple objects already made to use such as stones, popsicle sticks, and Legos (painted beige to look like structures in the Holy Land). Use whatever materials you have readily available.

Each week after you share the curriculum story about Jesus and discuss it, have each person decide what figure, animal, hill, tree, etc. they want to make. Make sure that the objects include the critical parts of the story. Each person makes their own object and then places it at the beginning of the road as they visualize and talk about where it might be located, or the role it might play. People, trees, and animals can be drawn on paper, cut out, then they can stand up by placing them in large binder clips or for a three dimensional road or pasted down for a two dimensional one.

As each week's story is explored and more objects are made, add the stories along the road, each story getting closer to Jerusalem. When you get to the stories of Holy Week, make an architectural piece such as an arch to signify entering

Jerusalem on your road. For Palm Sunday, for example, they can make palm branches, people, cloaks, and a colt, or anything else that the learners heard in the story. If you are teaching details of Holy Week, you can make the Garden, the tomb, the Upper Room, Gethsemane, and Golgatha, etc. The idea is to recreate the story visually.

On Easter morning, display your road and share it with the congregation at coffee hour! For pictures, look at my Pinterest board under Joyce Donadee, Sunday School, Easter Garden.

St. Paul's Youth Mission Trip OPEN TO ALL IN THE DIOCESE

*Lisa Brown, Director of Children's Ministry,
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Although it seems early, now is the time to plan for summer Mission Trips. All high-school aged youth are invited to join the youth of St. Paul's on our mission trip to McDowell County, West Virginia on June 16-22. Our work will be coordinated through the Highland Educational Project, an Episcopal Outreach organization that is part of Appalachian Ministries. This is a very appropriate trip for first time missionaries. Please encourage youth in your congregation to join us. The following is a glimpse at the experience of one of last year's work groups.

Rural McDowell County is the poorest county in West Virginia, and one of the poorest in the nation. In addition to home repair projects and assisting at the food bank, one mission group volunteered at the McDowell County Humane Society, a no-kill shelter run on hope and prayer and precious little else. Their miniscule volunteer pool is comprised mainly of work-release inmates. The shelter staff welcomed our missionaries with tremendous gratitude.

Anyone who has volunteered at a shelter knows both its joys and futility. For teens used to thinking of pets as beloved family members, the rosy image of working with shelter animals was immediately dashed. As we pulled into the hillside gravel drive, our first sight was of a group of inmates burying the remains of a dog who had been dumped barely alive the night before and had not survived until morning. Needless to say, our little group of do-gooders was shaken to the core.

The missionaries bravely soldiered on. They cleaned the cat areas and helped assemble new, sturdier dog kennels. They bleached the various puppy rooms where new litters of pups lived. Two girls spent days grooming two cocker spaniels - beautiful friendly little creatures whose coats had been allowed to grow so matted they had dreadlocks. Finally, the missionaries made a point of petting and socializing with as many animals as they could. Although the shelter participates in pet-finder websites, for the majority of these animals, the shelter will be their permanent home. The love and attention they get from the small staff and groups like ours is the only love and attention they will ever know. They will not be adopted, not because they aren't wonderful animals capable of years of companionship, but because McDowell County just doesn't have the resources to provide for pets or animal shelters.

Our work was bittersweet. Unlike the other teams, who had something concrete to show for their efforts - two renovated homes and new shelving at the food bank - the animal shelter crew did not. We had cleaned kennels that would again become befouled; we had assembled new pens that would quickly become occupied; we had cuddled dogs who would still break into a frenzy of hopeful barking every time a car pulled down the drive. What sustained us was the trait which makes animals such wonderful companions - the ability to find joy in the moment. We took with us the absolute knowledge that every moment we spent with the animals was a good one. When we took little leaping Dolly the dachshund for a walk, it was a GOOD DAY for Dolly. When we cuddled cats, scratched dogs' bellies, and brushed fur until it shone, every moment was real and miraculous and beautiful. Also, our parting was helped by bringing home a new friend. One young woman in our group chose a slinky black cat who had spent the week perched on her shoulders. He adapted well to his new home and was even rather good-natured about being sprinkled with holy water at St. Paul's Blessing of the Animals. We can't wait to go back.

Won't you go with us? For more information about the Mission Trip and upcoming fundraisers, please contact Paul Barker at pbarker@stpaulspgh.org or 412-531-7153. Scholarships are available

SWPA Lutheran Synod Resource Center

Remember: every EPISCOPAL Parish in our Diocese is a Member for free! For materials, contact Beth Caywood at beth.caywood@swpasynod.org or call 412-367-8222.

Resource Center New Purchases: These materials for adults often include a DVD and a leader's guide. They have all been recommended by Episcopal Christian formation leaders, members of Forma, and from various Dioceses in the Episcopal church. Many of these resources have been used for adult formation on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evening dinner series, small groups, and women's groups. You can borrow these materials and have them mailed out to you to use in your parish.

Focus on Luke by Robert O'Neill

The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus 24 Hours That Changed the World (The last 24 hours of the life of Jesus) by Adam Hamilton

Final Words From The Cross by Adam Hamilton

The Disciple Short Term Series - Gospel of John by Morehouse Publishing

Luke for Everyone by N.T. Wright

What Wonderful Love-Holy Week in Word and Art by Swenson (beautiful lithographs and commentary from Biblical scholars which encourages group discussion with its study guide)

The Resource Center also has many Vacation Bible School curriculums that you can borrow to use this summer.