

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEAM

Children's Ministry continues to grow in our diocese, with many congregations striving to share the love of Christ with the youngest members of the household of God.

As determined by the Listening Committee, 30 of our parishes report having children in the congregation. Additionally, two parishes have teens, but no children younger than age 13, bringing the number of parishes with young people to 32.

Twenty-nine of our parishes have some form of ministry with or for children ranging from Sunday School, to VBS, to various outreach programs for children in their communities. Three of these congregations do not have at present any children in their parish, but they still offer ministry for children in their communities.

The Children's Ministry Team (CMT), comprised of lay and clergy, paid and volunteer children's ministry practitioners, continues to work to provide inspiration, support and resources to all children's ministry initiatives in the diocese. The CMT planned and organized a three-day Godly Play Core Training for 19 participants. After the core training, the CMT held three Godly Play Materials workshops where parishes could make the hands-on materials that are used when telling the Godly Play stories. At these workshops, members of the CMT also demonstrated Godly Play storytelling for people who had not attended the Core Training. Twelve parishes sent individuals or teams to one or more of the three Godly Play Materials workshops.

Additionally, at last year's diocesan convention, under the coordination of the CMT, every parish was given "Pray & Play" bags assembled by Girl Scout Troop 57003. These bags contained welcoming prayerful activities to be used by any children visiting or attending worship. Parishes could customize the bags by adding additional materials.

The bimonthly *Feed My Sheep* newsletter and the monthly Children's Ministry lunches continue to offer ways to network with one another and to highlight some of the interesting children's ministry initiatives occurring around the diocese.

All parishes in the diocese need to be aware of the changes in the Pennsylvania laws regarding youth protection and prevention of child abuse. A task force comprised of the Rev. Leslie Reimer, the Rev. Michelle Boomgaard, Joyce Donadee and Lisa Brown have recommended revisions to the existing diocesan policy covering child protection. The task force also assisted in publishing resources regarding compliance with the recent changes in law. These are available in the Safeguarding section of the diocesan website.

Joyce Donadee has stepped down as the CMT Coordinator, however she will remain an active inspiration to all of us! Lisa Brown, Director of Children's Ministry and Communications Coordinator at St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, will assume responsibility for continuing Joyce's good work.

Submitted by
Lisa Brown, Coordinator