

Feed My Sheep

Support for Formation Ministry
in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

April 2015 Lent Edition

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Experiencing Easter at St. Brendan's

This year at St Brendan's, children didn't just hear or read about the events of Holy Week, they experienced them. Jill Halapin designed a series of themed rooms, each representing a different day in the story of Christ's death and resurrection! On Palm Sunday, children and their families could walk the path of Jesus through Jerusalem.



Holy Tuesday was a busy day for Jesus in Jerusalem. He told many parables and was asked which commandment was the greatest.



This room told the story of Judas' acceptance of 30 pieces of silver. When given back to the Pharisees and Sadducees, the money could not be placed in the treasury because it was considered blood money. It was then used to purchase Potter's Field.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, September 25, 2015 for "Let Your Light Shine!" a diocesan-wide, hands-on Children's Ministry Conference designed for you! Our next Children's Ministry Lunch is Thursday, May 28 at 1pm at the Olive Garden on Greentree Road. Join us!

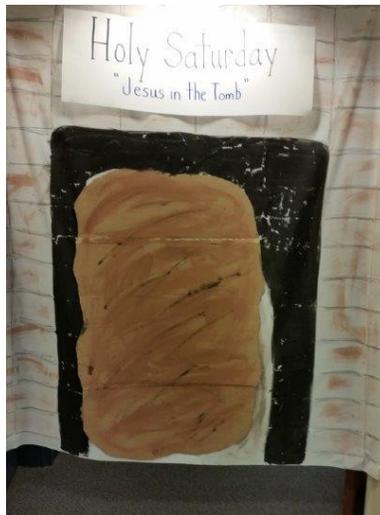
The "Holy Thursday" room depicted Jesus' last supper in the upper room with his disciples.



The story of Good Friday was shown using a video from The Jesus Storybook Curriculum DVD.



Below is the room that showed Jesus' tomb with the stone in front of the opening. It was hanging outside the Good Friday room.



What an amazing way for the children (and adults!) at St. Brendan's to live the Easter story!

Stay and Play

Fellowship is such an important part of our church life. In order to facilitate friendships in our pre- youth group age children, we added a no fuss no cost ministry which we call "Stay and Play." And that's all it is. A chance to stay after church and run around and play games inside and outside. A few young adults from the parish stay to facilitate and supervise activities. Kids can bring a snack for themselves and some to share if they wish. We may or may not provide a short devotional. Its pure fun and fellowship that our young parishioners may want to invite a friend to. This is an easy and accessible activity for parishes of all sizes. Children too young or volunteers to scarce? Turn this into a Stay and Play Family Style where families can bring a picnic lunch and enjoy fun and fellowship together.

Jennifer Yoon—St. David's, Venetia

Free & Low Cost Summer Children's Ministry

Children learn by doing. Their spiritual gifts can be discerned by learning about their skills and talents. As they show the interest and ability to be worship leaders, they can be asked if they would like to be acolytes, ushers, greeters, choir members, chalice bearers, lectionary readers, altar guild and coffee hour hosts. The summer can be a more relaxed time for them to try a new ministry. As they are participating as full members of our faith community they will be more engaged in learning about worship. Mentoring can be provided by more experienced adults. They will be learning what we do during worship, how we do it and – most importantly – why.

"Lesson Plans That Work" are free Episcopal lessons that you can get online if you Google "Lesson Plans That Work." These short lessons are organized for different age groups and reflect the lectionary readings.

Building Faith <http://www.buildfaith.org/> is a free blog from Virginia Theological Seminary which has many ideas of Christian formation activities and ideas for children and youth written by Episcopal Christian education leaders. You can put into the search bar the topic that you are looking for and will probably get many responses on a variety of subjects which include: Prayers for children, Pentecost ideas, Building Faith over the summer, and How to Make a Life Sized Bible Game.

If you want an inexpensive resource as the core of your Vacation Bible School or Family summer event, a new book written by Emily Given, an Episcopal Christian formation director is called "Building Faith Brick by Brick." It is available from Cokesbury or Amazon. If you have people donate Duplo blocks, LEGO blocks, and paint some small wooden peg people from Michael's, you have the elements to implement this book using an imaginative way to explore the Bible with children. There has been a lot of excitement from various parishes who have used it.

Children's Outreach in the Summer

If you have a summer time Sunday school program, Vacation Bible School, summer family events, or have coffee hour, you can fit in outreach activities with children. Summer is a time that families are sometimes looking for a church home and your outreach activities can be advertised to encourage new families to get to know you. The children (and their parents) are given the opportunity to put into practice "Jesus taught us to Love God and Love all People." Advertising can happen on your website, a large sign posted in front of the church, or through a flier that all members of the parish are encouraged to send to everyone they know. Recipients of the flier can be encouraged to resend those emailed-fliers to everyone they know who has children (neighbors, friends, co-workers, relatives, new neighbors, etc.)

For outreach activities children can "learn first" and then "do" later. There can be three parts. First there could be a Bible story told that relates to the theme of your outreach activity, then a mini lesson about the need for this outreach, and an actual outreach activity. A guest from that charity could be invited to speak to the children so that the children could be able to ask questions. It helps children to see people as their partners in their outreach work.

Children can write or draw prayers for an outreach activity that the parish is involved in. Those prayers can be hanging somewhere on or near the altar.

They can tie (older children can cut) no sew fleece blankets for Jeremiah's Place or for residents of a nursing home. They can talk to someone who works with homeless people and find out their needs that could be put into "to go" bags to give out to homeless people. These bags might include a granola bar, socks, water bottle, wipes and anything else that might be suggested.

Children can make birthday bags for food pantries. They can decorate the bags and inside put birthday candles, Jiffy cake mix, party hats or a banner, birthday plates, and some colored drawing paper and crayons.

They can make cards, decorations or placemats for residents of a nursing home.

They can learn about outreach activities that the parish is involved in. Speakers can come to talk to the children. After they learn about one or more groups, on a given Sunday they can be given coins. Each charity can have a picture, sign and information and the children will "vote" for their favorite one by depositing their coins where their heart takes them. *Joyce Donadee*

Changes to PA Laws

Saturday, May 16, 9:30 a.m. — 12:noon
Pennsylvania has updated its Child Protection laws affecting volunteers (House Bill 435, Act 153). A diocesan task force is drafting a new Diocesan Policy and procedures in conjunction with the changes to the law. The updated policy and steps for implementation will first be presented at a diocesan leadership day scheduled for May 16 from 9:30am to 12 noon at Calvary Church.

What is happening in YOUR parish for children, youth or families? Share your great ideas!
Please email Lisa Brown (lbrown@stpaulspgh.org)