

Dear Catechetical Colleagues,

Congratulations and blessings on the beginning of a new school year! As we begin another season of classes and faith formation activities there are several **upcoming events and resources** to share with you.



First of all, I would like to remind you about **Catechetical Sunday on September 21<sup>st</sup>**. Both our Archdiocesan website and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/index.cfm) can link you to multiple resources and blessings for this special day.



Another new feature this year, are our **newly revised Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Religion Standards for parishes and schools**. The two documents are very similar, however, each has outcome based language designed for the specific group of students. The parish version can be found on the Archdiocesan website (see the flying banner across the top of the home page) and the school version is on the Office for Catholic Schools website ([ocsww.org](http://ocsww.org)). Over the next several months, workshops will be offered across the Archdiocese on how to implement these new standards. Stay tuned for updates!

As you will see in this newsletter, Pope Francis' prayer intentions for September are for those with intellectual disabilities. In the Archdiocese, **we are excited to be offering three workshops this month on how to include all of God's children in our faith formation programs**. Deacon Larry Sutton, who is a psychologist specializing in autism will be our featured presenter and I encourage all of those looking for ideas and resources on faith formation for special needs to attend one of these workshops. Please see the flyer for more information!

Locally, we would like to let you know about several upcoming events:

- **September 17<sup>th</sup> is the Annual Youth Ministry Fall Gathering** (see [flyer](#))
- **September 23<sup>rd</sup> is the "Journey Through Advent" webinar** sponsored by our Missions Office with Catholic Relief Services on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. I would also strongly recommend you read the article from Dr. Caroline Woo on **"Teaching Children the Tenets of Our Faith."**
- **September 24<sup>th</sup> is the inaugural gathering of parish Life, Justice & Peace staff and Volunteers** (see [flyer](#))

- **September 25, 26 & 27 Special Needs Presentations in Vancouver, Lacey and Seattle**
- **October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m.** come to **Ignatian Spirituality 101** at St. Joseph Parish in Seattle (see [flyer](#))
- **October 10<sup>th</sup> is the High School Religion Teacher Networking and In-service Day** (see [flyer](#))
- **October 24 & 25 Cornerstone Conference at the Tacoma Convention Center.** This is a major event for all Catholics in Washington State and your presence is strongly encouraged! (see [flyer](#))

I hope you will find the following information helpful as we begin our journey into a new season of faith formation. In particular, you might want to **check out the short video on setting up a prayer space, learn about the quest of Kara Jackson, get ideas for beginning with new students from eCatechist, and participate in the USCCB Webinar on the New Evangelization.** We also want to send a special message of **congratulations to our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd community**, who have just opened a national office!

In Christ,

*Anne*

Anne Frederick, Ed.D.  
Archdiocesan Director of Religious Education

### **Pope's Intentions for September 2014**

The Holy Father's universal prayer intention for September is: "That the mentally disabled may receive the love and help they need for a dignified life".

His intention for evangelization is: "That Christians, inspired by the Word of God, may serve the poor and suffering".



# How to **Welcome, Include, and Catechize** **All of God's Children:** *Practical Suggestions for Serving Those with Special Needs*

**Presenter: Deacon Lawrence R. Sutton**

## **Dates and Locations:**

- Thursday, September 25<sup>th</sup> • Holy Redeemer, Vancouver
- Friday, September 26<sup>th</sup> • Sacred Heart, Lacey
- Saturday, September 27<sup>th</sup> • St. James Cathedral Pastoral Center, Seattle

**Time:** 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

**Cost:** **FREE** (Lunch provided)



In his book, Deacon Larry, a nationally recognized expert in the field of autism, provides the insights needed to build an effective faith formation program for all children. By sharing stories of success and inspiration that affect everyone – pastor, parent, student, teenager, and catechist—he delivers the unexpected: that catechizing children with special needs actually nurtures the faith of the entire parish. By the end of this workshop, participants will have an effective guide to offer religious education programs across cognitive, physical and developmental levels. Resource materials from Loyola Press will also be available for participants.

**RSVP by September 22<sup>nd</sup>** to [ocff@seattlearch.org](mailto:ocff@seattlearch.org) or 206-382-4096



New Advent faith formation resources from CRS Fair Trade are now available at [crsfairtrade.org/advent!](http://crsfairtrade.org/advent!)

Please join us for a webinar with guest presenter John Roberto, President of [Lifelong Faith Associates](http://Lifelong Faith Associates), on **September 23, 2014 at 1:00pm EDT** to learn about the connection between the season of Advent and Christ's call to care for the poor and vulnerable. Learn practical ways to connect Advent to the Church's social teaching, including tips for using CRS Fair Trade's Advent prayers, weekly reflections and activities for religious education classes and family faith sharing. Sign up for the webinar [here!](#)

Peace and blessings,

The CRS Fair Trade team

To learn more about the CRS Fair Trade Program, go to our website [www.crsfairtrade.org](http://www.crsfairtrade.org).

**Help us spread the word about CRS Fair Trade and join our growing online communities.**

**Find CRS Fair Trade on:**



Catholic Relief Services  
P.O. Box 17090  
Baltimore, Maryland 21203



Kara Jackson is a 16 year old altar server, who is on a quest to serve Mass in all 50 states. So far, she has done so in 18 states and her gifts and mission are featured in an article in Catholic News Service. Read the article to find out what makes Kara so special and her quest such a remarkable story of sharing God's love through the rich diversity of gifts and abilities in our Church!

<http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1403650html>

## Center for Ministry Development: Forgiveness Lesson Plan

Sr. Kieran Sawyer has prepared a lesson plan for high school youth based on the theme for Catechetical Sunday: **God's Gift of Forgiveness**. The lesson is available from the Center for Ministry Development subscription website, Youth Ministry Access. This session is being offered FREE to the readers of the NCCL's CL Weekly.

Links to the Forgiveness Session and accompanying PowerPoint Slideshow.:

<https://app.box.com/s/y5kkw3vx3hqnc48gzzgl>

<https://app.box.com/s/7tvbkgoer0bnzc13pkxd>

For more information, contact Sr. Kieran at [sawyerk@tymeout.org](mailto:sawyerk@tymeout.org).



## FREE Professional Development Webinar—Tuesday, September 9



NCCL is continuing its partnership with **Ave Maria Press** in presenting a series of free, online, professional development workshops for parish

Professional Development  
**WEBINAR**  
SERIES



ministers. Other partners are the National Association for Lay Ministry, and National Federation of Priests' Councils. The webinar, [Transforming Your Ministry in Just Three Moments of the Day](#) is presented by Christopher S. Collins, S.J., author of [Three Moments of the Day](#).

Date: September 9, 2014

Time: 3 p.m. EDT

Making an offering every morning, reviewing how that offering went at the end of the day, and being united to the offering of Christ's sacrifice everyday in the Eucharist lays out a path for our daily prayer as ministers of the Church.

These basic reference points, highlighted by some contributions of Ignatian spirituality, can be a great help in the faith formation of ministers, parishioners, and families in a common response to the universal call to holiness.

Sign up at: <https://www.avemariapress.com/webinars/parish/>





## Free webinar series: Building a Better Disciple

This fall the Office for Catechesis of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is hosting a free webinar series entitled “Building a Better Disciple”. The webinars explore what it means to be a Christian through the lens of Acts 2:42: “They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.”

The webinars will take place from 7:30-9:00pm CDT on five consecutive Monday evenings. Click on the links to register: *(Please note that you will need to register for each individual webinar.)* After registering you will receive a confirmation email with a link to the webinar. This is your individual link; do not share this link with others. *(If someone else uses your link to sign in to the webinar you will not be able to!)*

**October 13: Jesus: The Face of Discipleship.** Before understanding how to become a disciple we must first know what a disciple is. Through the person of Jesus Christ we will come to know what it means to claim the name “Christian.”

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/961033874>

**October 20: Scripture and Tradition: The Boundaries of Discipleship.** Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition – passed on through the biblical authors, the apostles, and their successors – form the deposit of our faith. As the basis for all of the Church’s teaching they also provide the boundary lines for discipleship by illuminating the path that followers of Christ must follow.

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/932598546>

**October 27: Christian Community: The Foundation of Discipleship.** Faith is nurtured and sustained in the context of a community of believers. This session will explore how the Church in various contexts (family, parish, school, etc.) sets the stage for a life of discipleship.

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/222598314>

**November 3: Liturgy and Prayer: The Engine of Discipleship.** In this webinar we will examine how the graces received in the sacraments, liturgical celebrations, and personal prayer fuel our capacity for embracing the call to discipleship.

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/359999938>

**November 10: Vocation and Mission: The Aim of Discipleship.** Faith that is not put into practice is sterile. Connecting the themes of the previous webinars we will explore how the faithful participate in the Church’s mission in the world through their particular gifts and calling.

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/432332978>

Additional information is available at <http://BuildingABetterDisciple.tumblr.com>, or contact Jonathan F. Sullivan, director of catechetical services, at [jsullivan@dio.org](mailto:jsullivan@dio.org).

## Pope in Interactive Digital Exchange With Young People

[http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-participates-in-interactive-digital-exchange-with-young-people-worldwide?utm\\_campaign=dailyhtml&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=dispatch](http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-participates-in-interactive-digital-exchange-with-young-people-worldwide?utm_campaign=dailyhtml&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dispatch)

Wondering how you can use the internet for faith formation? Take a lesson from Pope Francis! During the meeting of the educational charity Scholas Occurrentes, the Pope had a question and answer session with students who came from El Salvador for the Americas, Turkey for Europe, Israel, Australia, and South Africa. The exchange was conducted through “Google Hangout”.



In response to a student from El Salvador’s question, the Pope warned that communication can also be used in a destructive way, and exhorted them to “Be Careful!” The Pope urged the young people: “Do not be afraid! ... Go forward. Build bridges of peace. Play as a team and make the future better, but remember that the future is in your hands. While dreaming of the future, do not forget your cultural or religious heritage ... With courage! Build the future.”

## To Receive Jesus, Just Turn to the Gospel

[http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-at-santa-marta-to-receive-jesus-just-turn-to-the-gospel?utm\\_campaign=dailyhtml&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=dispatch](http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-at-santa-marta-to-receive-jesus-just-turn-to-the-gospel?utm_campaign=dailyhtml&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dispatch)



Addressing those gathered at his first daily Mass in Casa Santa Marta after a summer break, Pope Francis asked: “How do I receive Jesus Christ?”, to which he responded, “The Church tells us that Jesus is present in the Scriptures, in His Word.” This is why, the Holy Father stressed, it is so important to “read a passage from the Gospel during the day.” Do we do this just to learn? He responded, “No! To find Jesus! Because Jesus is right there in His Word, in His Gospel.” “Every time I read the Gospel, I find Jesus,” Pope Francis continued, “Yet how do I receive this Word? Well, you should receive it like you receive Jesus, that is to say with an open heart, with a humble heart, with the spirit of the Beatitudes.” The Holy Father concluded, urging everyone to buy a “cheap” pocket-Gospel, to consult often, if they hadn’t done so already

### Pocket Gospel Demonstration

Though this demonstration is done from the Protestant perspective, it is an interesting way of explaining our relationship with God and could just as easily be done using Catholic terminology. Click on the picture or use this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdLbACTAB54>



## New Leadership Institute Webinars: New Evangelization

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/leadership-institute/leadership-institute-webinars-new-evangelization.cfm>

Watch the first webinars in the Leadership Institute (sponsored by USCCB, NCCL, and NCEA) series, *"Engaging Catholic Disciples in the New Evangelization"*. Tom Quinlan, co-chair of NCCL's Evangelization Committee, is presenter of "Equipping Catechetical Leaders to Deliver Evangelizing Faith Formation". This webinar helps leaders to explore important aspects of catechetical ministry through the lens of evangelization. The topics presented are: Helping Catechists Take on the Mind, Heart and Function of Evangelizers; Sacrament Preparation as Key Evangelizing Opportunity, Starting with Baptism! and Evangelizing Families Today: Engaging Parents As Partners in Faith Formation. Tom provides both vision and practical suggestions in each segment for how to build ministry that is transformative.



"Engaging Young Adults in the New Evangelization" is presented by Mark Berchem, Executive Director of NET Ministries. In this dynamic presentation, Mark details six characteristics that should be present in an apostolate to enhance its attractiveness to young adults as well as five prerequisites that serve as good framework for designing formative training programs to prepare young adults for evangelistic service. **Webinars are available at no cost.**

## Catholic Family Faith: website resources

<http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/>

The website CatholicFamilyFaith.org has been created by catechetical and evangelization staff from the three Catholic Dioceses: Jim Kemna, Director of Religious Education, Diocese of Jefferson City; Diane Kledzik, Associate Director of Evangelization, Small Christian Communities, and Adult Faith Formation, Diocese of St. Petersburg; and Wendy Scherbart, Director of Catechetical Ministry, Diocese of San Jose. This curated site is designed to assist parish and school catechetical leaders in supporting and resourcing parents in their efforts to offer quality faith formation for themselves and their children. Catechetical leaders can glean ideas from this site to supplement current activities or to suggest specific links to families. Many of the resources would serve as an excellent complement to the parish process [Strong Catholic Families: Strong Catholic Youth](#).



## Fr. Bob Hater: “Catholics Come Alive!”

Father Robert J. Hater, has revised his book “What Can Catholics Learn from Evangelicals?” and introduced it with the title, “Catholics Come Alive!” The revision quotes the teachings of Pope



Francis that put a human face on the Catholic faith. This personalistic perspective is his hallmark and explains why he is popular as he enters into the nitty-gritty of life and rubs shoulders with prisoners, slums dwellers, the handicapped, disenfranchised, and marginalized. This book can be purchased from Visual Dynamics Publishing, <http://www.vdpublishing.net/>



### Creating a prayer table for classrooms

Creating a prayer table is a great way to center your classroom and center your students. Watch this short video from Digital Catechesis for tips on how to create a prayer table for classrooms

<http://bit.ly/NbpKqT>



Here is a video for using Pinterest to share and file catechetical resources. It is very informative, however, I do recommend you fast forward to 2:30 minutes into the video, which is when the presentation actually begins

<http://vimeo.com/76214700>

Webinar on using Pinterest for Ministry (approx. 53 min.)

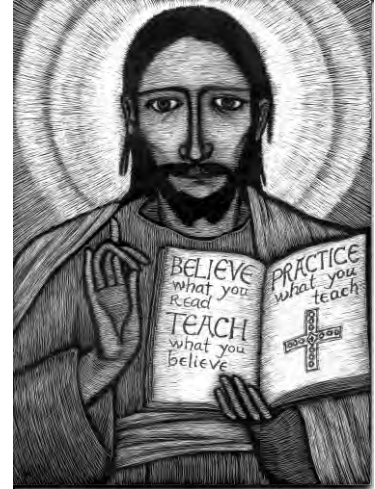
# FOUNDATIONS OF OUR CATHOLIC FAITH CATECHIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

- + Advent
- + Lent
- + Retreats

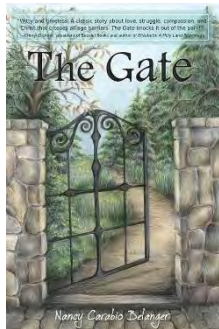
## CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

- + Faith Formation for Parish Staff
- + For Competent, Confident, and **Capable** Catechists
  - Certify at least one per grade level
  - Identify & Prepare Next Year's Catechist
- + RCIA team
  - Identify & Prepare Next Year's Team



**SCHEDULE AND REGISTRATION** at [www.seattlearchdiocese.org/ccp](http://www.seattlearchdiocese.org/ccp)

**New Books from the Archdiocesan Library Media Center** for you to check out!



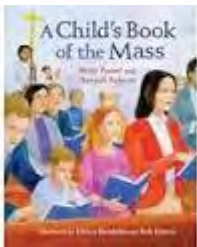
*The Gate* by Nancy Carabio Belanger

For smart-aleck Josh, being a Christian in the eighth grade is completely irrelevant, especially with the temptations that middle school can bring. For him, life is all about playing video games, getting money, and causing trouble. He doesn't need anybody and he makes his own rules. When his teacher assigns a pen-pal project, Josh meets Pie, a spunky senior citizen with a love of his Catholic faith, Saint John Bosco, and the New York Yankees. But much to Josh's surprise, Pie creates his own project for Josh, and Josh realizes that God has a plan -- even for him. In this inspiring novel that radiates the dignity of the priesthood and the discovery of God's calling for each of us, Josh is shocked to find himself fighting spiritual battles, but often for the wrong side. As the friendship with his new mentor deepens, Josh learns that God has more in store for him than he could have ever imagined. (I,J)



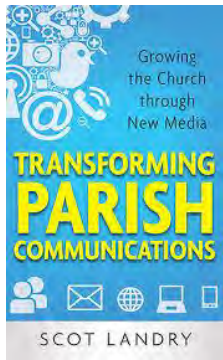
*Who is Sam Harrington?* by Rick Osborne and K. Christie Bowler ; illustrated by Dara Goldman

The answer to the question, “Who is Sam Harrington?” changed the town of Coledale forever—and might just change you, too! It was wonderful but mystifying...All over the sleepy little town of Coledale, children were doing nice things for each other—with the comment, “It’s what Sam Harrington would do!” In fact, so many kind deeds were being done that the adults of Coledale began to ask, “Who is Sam Harrington?” Surprisingly, however, none of the children seemed to know! Finally, one evening, the entire town gathered at Coledale Community Church to solve the mystery.



*A Child's Book of the Mass* by Betsy Puntel; Hannah Roberts

The writers have done an exceptional job of presenting the rituals of the Mass in a way that will engage children and enable them to reflect at their own level on the meaning of the parts of the Mass. Also throughout the text, children are presented with questions that will draw them into participation in the Mass and help them develop a Eucharistic spirituality.



*Transforming Parish Communications: Growing the Church through New Media* by Scot Landry

Pope Francis, like his predecessors Benedict XVI and John Paul II, is calling for Catholics to embrace the new evangelization. But there has been ongoing confusion about who is responsible, what it really means and what it looks like in practical application. How can we respond to the Holy Father's call, creating evangelization opportunities that help bring people back to the Church? By transforming Catholics into digital missionaries - ready and able to take the joy and warmth of the Gospel online via social media to infrequent, inactive, or ex-Catholics around the corner or across the globe.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 19, 2014

## **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Opens New National Office in Scottsdale, AZ**

SCOTTSDALE — The National Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is pleased to announce grand opening celebration and blessing for its newly constructed office at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish Life Center following the 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Aug. 24. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church is located at 7655 E. Main St., Scottsdale, AZ 85251.

“We are overjoyed that we have found a home for the National Office here in Scottsdale. Through the work of Fr. Greg Schlarb and the gifts of several generous donors, we have been literally given ‘an upstairs room that is spacious and furnished,’ and we are very grateful,” said Mary Mirrione, National

Director. The Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of Phoenix, will join the Rev. Greg Schlarb, pastor and Vicar of Stewardship, to offer his blessing on this new office. City of Scottsdale's Mayor W.J. Lane will also join in our celebration.

This newly opened office will be a place of work, welcome and legacy, providing space for the daily support of catechists, parents, and others in the Church and beyond, as they grow in their understanding of the religious potential of children.

The work of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is centered on nurturing the 3-to-12-year-old child's relationship with God. Over the span of 60 years of careful and loving observation and study, first by the work's founders, Dr. Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi, and then by trained catechists around the globe, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has become a respected voice on the spiritual life of children.

CGSUSA has published more than 74 books, journals and articles, and trained over 160 formation leaders around the country. Today, there are over 1,025 atriya operating in this country, serving thousands of children in parishes, homes and schools.



## eCatechist

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### Preparing for the First Session

Posted: 01 Sep 2014 12:47 PM PDT



During your first session or orientation process, spend time just getting to know your learners and introducing them to you and the classroom.

### **Play a Name Game**

- o Group Juggle – Stand in a circle with a ball. The first time around, each person simply says their name when they get the ball and then they toss **it to another person (someone who hasn't yet held the ball.)** After everyone has said their names once, the person with the ball says their own name and the name of the person to whom they are bopping or tossing the ball. (A beach ball is the most fun for bopping.)
- o Name Aerobics – Stand in a circle. Tell the group that each person has to come up with a movement to go with the syllables of their name. For example, my name is Cecilia – Ce – Cil – la – 3 syllables. I would come up with a 3-part movement. The first person shows their name and movement. The second person shows their **name and movement and then the first person's.** The third person

shows theirs, the second person's, and the first person's. Continue until you've completed the circle.

- o **"I like..."** – Have everyone stand in the middle of the room. Read some statements where participants have to choose between two things. **For example, "I like chocolate ice cream or vanilla ice cream."** Those who like chocolate ice cream move to one side of the room. Those who like vanilla ice cream move to the other side of the room. For the first couple of choices, have people introduce themselves to two or three people in the group.
  - Chocolate Ice Cream – Vanilla Ice Cream
  - Dogs – Cats
  - U of Michigan – Michigan State
  - Hockey – Baseball
  - Football – Soccer
  - Pop Music – Rap Music
  - See what other pairs you can come up with.
- o For more ideas, **Google "name games," or "getting to know you games."**

### **Introduce yourself**

- o Share your name and some information about yourself.
  - What are some of your hobbies? What do you do for fun?
  - What are your favorite movies, music, books, etc.?
- o Tell them why you are excited about being their catechist.

### **Help your learners become comfortable in the learning area.**

- o **Be prepared!**
  - Have tables and chairs set up ahead of time.
  - Cover bulletin boards with colorful paper, borders, pictures, etc.
  - Prepare your prayer space with a table, cloth the color of the current liturgical season, Bible, and symbols of the season.
  - Have all necessary supplies ready for use.

- Show and tell your learners what they should do when they first arrive.
  - Sign In Process
    - Parents should sign in their children. They will sign out their children when they pick them up.
    - Older learners can sign themselves in. **It's good to have a sign in sheet even with adult learners so you know who's attending and can follow up with** additional resources and conversations.
    - Learners can move a craft stick with their name on it from one jar to another to show their presence. (This not only helps with attendance, but helps them take responsibility for their presence.)
  - For younger learners, have them color a picture or do a puzzle or some other activity to keep them occupied while they are waiting for the session to begin.
  - Upper elementary, middle school, high school and adult learners will likely appreciate the time just to talk with one another while they are waiting for the session to begin.
    - Provide a process for learners to get to know one another while they are waiting.
      - Provide name tags.
      - **Provide a "Question of the Week"** for them to discuss with one another.

### **Inform your learners of your expectations**

- How do you expect them to behave?
  - Keep your instructions simple. **Three or four "rules" are enough,** especially for young learners.
    - Suggestions for Young Learners
      - Be quiet when someone else is talking.
      - Keep your hands and feet to yourself.

- **Share, but don't take.**
    - What other ideas do you have for rules of participation for young learners?
  - Suggestions for Pre-Teen and Teen Learners
    - Be quiet when someone else is talking.
    - Respect the person and property of others.
    - What is said here, stays here.
    - What other ideas do you have for rules of participation for pre-teen and teen learners?
  - Suggestions for Adult Learners
    - What is said here, stays here.
    - Everyone has a right to their own opinion. Different opinions help to create conversation and personal growth.
    - **What other ideas do you have for "Rules of Engagement" for adult learners?**
- Have a signal for the learners to know when it's time to be quiet or transition from one activity to the next.
- When they see or hear you make the signal, they stop what **they're doing, quiet down, and, with young learners, make a sign** showing that they are listening.
    - Ring a bell
    - Flash the lights
    - Time Out Hands
    - Hands folded, as if in prayer
    - Hands covering mouth (for those rambunctious groups of learners)
- What are the consequences of misbehavior?
- Green Light – Yellow Light – Red Light
    - This works well for preschool and elementary learners. When they arrive, they put their name sticks in

a green jar. If they misbehave, they move their name stick to a yellow jar. If they continue to misbehave, they move their name stick to a red jar. If their name stick is moved to the red jar, they and their parents will be required to complete a Student Responsibility Plan to amend and improve their behavior for the future.

- o What are the rewards for good behavior? How will you show those who are well behaved that you appreciate them?
  - Stickers
  - Smiles
  - Send home a **"Good Student Award"** certificate so they can show their parents. (This doesn't have to be fancy or big. A half sheet of paper with clip art, appreciative words, and a place for the student's name is great.)

### **Pray together**

- o Gather your learners around your prayer table or sit in your prayer space.
- o Make the Sign of the Cross.
- o Invite each person to say one thing for which they are thankful. After everyone has had a chance to share their thanksgiving, say **something like, "Thank you, God, for all the blessings you have given to us. Amen."**
- o You could pass around an object to help learners to focus. As each learner receives the ball, they say their prayer of thanksgiving (or petition or intercession). By using an object like this, if someone **doesn't want to speak, they can hold the object and pray their prayer** in their heart, then pass it on to the next person. (I used a small plastic ball one year and the students loved it. They called it their **"Prayer Ball."** Whenever we prayed, a designated student took the Prayer Ball off the prayer table, where it stayed as a reminder to all of us to pray always.)



- o Younger learners need to know that we and God love them. One of the ways we can do this is to bless them before they leave. A simple **Sign of the Cross on each learner's forehead with the words, "God bless you,"** can mean a lot. (I've done this with many classes and once the learners get used to it, before they leave they come up to me and stand in front of me until I bless them.)

C) Teri Burns, 2014

Teri is the Director of Faith Formation at **St. Robert of Newminster Parish, Ada, MI.**