
A.W.E.SOME News

The Newsletter of The Children's Ministries for The Diocese of Bethlehem

Lent: Preparation, Reflection, Growth & Change

In her wonderful book, *Before and After Easter* (Augsburg Press, 1992), Debbie Trafton O'Neal says, "The word *Lent* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word that means "spring" or "springtime." Taken literally, the word means that this is the time of the year when the days *lengthen*. This season of the church year is a time of preparation, reflection, growth, and change.

As God's people take the time to learn more about God and their relationship to God and to others, the season before Easter can be seen as the springtime of the soul - a time of growth in faith and a time to nurture the faith that is already theirs.

The Lent/Easter/Pentecost seasons begin very early this year. Ash Wednesday is February 6th and Easter is March 23rd. This issue of *AWESOME News* offers various ideas for Lent, many of which are aimed at you, the Christian Educator, to prepare, reflect, grow, and change. We need to be sure we, our children's educators, are taking note of our own spiritual growth and nurture. If your parish is forming Lenten studies, join one. If there is nothing formally prepared, consider joining with your fellow educators and studying together. Or, set aside time in your own busy schedule for Daily Devotions. Use the Daily Office or the Sunday readings throughout the week.



January
2007

Lent,
Easter,
and
Pentecost

A.W.E: Children's Ministries is planning a Christian Educator's Retreat, *Pampering Martha...to nurture the Mary in you*, in early May. Mark you calendar for this nurturing event which will begin on Friday, May 2nd and end on Sunday morning, May 4th. Specific details will be available soon.

The summer date for *Bishop's Day with Kids* is Saturday, July 18, 2008.

Theme: Peace Village (6 major religions at stations)

Place: at Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem

Time: 10 -3/3:30

For: Children alone or with family

Buses: In north and south...suggested donation \$5 per adult, free for children

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It's Not Too Late to Join the Cruising to Equity Campaign

Join our *Cruising* Parishes

St. Peter's, Tunkhannock
Cruise Director:
The Rev. Vivian Bennett

St. Thomas, Morgantown
Cruise Director:
The Rev. Ellie Hart

Prince of Peace, Dallas
Cruise Director:
Jennifer Martin

Church of the Good Shepherd, Scranton
Cruise Director: Beckie Lance

St. Anne's, Trexlertown
Cruise Director:
The Rev. Judith Snyder

Christ Church, Reading
Cruise Director: Kim Alarcon

Trinity, Bethlehem

Epiphany, Clarks Summit
Cruise Directors:
Amy Flemming & Linda Rogers

St. Peter's, Hazleton
Cruise Director:
Barbara Harris

Trinity, Easton
Cruise Director:
Dorothy Viglione

Cruising to Equity is an advocacy and prayer vigil project that invites congregations throughout the Diocese of Bethlehem to join in a *Sabbath Season of Prayer for Children*. It began with Diocesan ECW's collection of **Personal Care Kits for Children at Risk** at our Diocesan Convention.

In the months that follow congregations throughout the Diocese can unite simultaneously in witness for children through prayer, education, and worship using the **Cruising to Equity**

Itinerary below. Join the cruise at any Port along the way. Our goal is to provide for the children at risk in our Diocese and no time is too late to start!

Launching the Ship

- Make a row boat out of a refrigerator box or purchase a small rubber life boat to collect items throughout the year at the various Ports of Call. Parishes are to give their collections to a shelter or program for Children at Risk of their choice in their community.
- Celebrate the Children's Sabbath in your parish the way you always have - only this time use it to kick off the **Cruising the Equity Campaign** too!
- Sunday School Curriculum resource (available on-line at www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbath to those who purchase a Children's Sabbath manual)
- Download the Cruising to Equity Participation Guide from www.diobeth.org

The Participation Guide includes:

- ◇ • Educational Resources to help you learn about children's needs
- ◇ • Suggestions of what to collect to fill your boat
- ◇ • Suggestions of who to call in your community to donate collected items
- ◇ • Community Action suggestions
- ◇ • Worship Suggestions: Bulletin Inserts, Hymns, Prayers, and Decorations



Port of Call #3 A Head Start

Season: Season after Epiphany
(Jan. 7 - Feb. 5, 2008)

Collect:

- Children's books
- Tablets
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Washable Markers
- Puzzles
- Stimulating toys
- Paints

Port of Call #4 A Moral Start

Season: Lent
(Feb. 6 - March 21, 2008)

Collect:

- Children's Books, Games & Videos that promote positive values such as: Ungame, Veggie Tales, Penguins, Box Car Children, Frog & Toad, Magic Tree House, Kids Chatter, Junie B. Jones, Babysitters Club, Safe Am I, Safe Harbor
- Parenting books and videos

Port of Call #5 A Safe Start

Season: Easter Season
(March 22 - May 11, 2008)

Collect:

- Items for children going into foster care.
- Duffel Bags
 - Suitcases
 - Cuddly toys
 - Nightlights
 - Nap blankets
 - Small pillows
 - Card & travel games
 - Activity books & Word Finds
 - Phone Cards
 - Used or Disposable Cell Phones



Kids Pledge of Nonviolence

Encourage the children of your parish to examine their role in bringing peace to the world.

Discuss each section of the Pledge. Display a copy of the Pledge in your classroom.

Make this an on-going topic in your classroom. Examine the **Kids Pledge of Nonviolence** provided below.

Offer students the opportunity to sign the Pledge. Send the signed Pledge home with the student to share with his/her family.



*Let there be peace on Earth,
and let it begin with me.*

Kids Pledge of Nonviolence

Making peace must start with me. I commit myself as best I can to become a nonviolent and peaceable person:

To Respect Myself and Others

To respect myself and other people and to keep from saying or doing mean things to others.

To Communicate Better

To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to talk and act when I'm angry, and to work at solving problems peacefully.

To Listen

To listen carefully to others, especially those who disagree with me, and to care about others feelings and not always demand to have my own way.

To Forgive

To say I'm sorry and mean it when I have hurt another person, to forgive others when they have hurt me, and to keep from holding grudges.

To Respect Nature

To treat the environment and all living things, including my pets, with respect and care.

To Play Creatively

To play in fun ways and not mean ways, and to keep from using toys, watching TV programs and playing games that make violence look exciting or funny.

To Be Courageous

To challenge violence in all its forms whenever I see it, whether at home, at school or in the community, and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

Signed by _____

Date _____



Lenten Materials Available

Beulah Land Starter Kit and Curriculum. You can see it and pull info on it from: <http://beulahenterprises.org/store/scripts/prodList.asp?idCategory=40>

Institute of Peace and Justice K-6 Starter Kit available thru: <http://www.ipj-ppj.org/>

Nest Learning OT series: DVD curriculum extension materials for Moses, Abraham & Isaac, Solomon, David & Goliath, Ruth, Elisha, Esther, Daniel, Elijah, Samuel, Joseph in Egypt & Joseph's Reunion. See more at: <http://www.nestlearning.com/Joseph-in-Egypt--Joseph's-Reunion-DVD-2-Pack-P897.aspx>

You may borrow these materials from the Diocesan Resource Library.

For more information contact:
The Rev. Debra J. Kissinger,
Missioner to Children & Child Advocate
800-358-5655 or 610-691-5655, ext. 237

Pampering Martha...to nurture the Mary in you

Educators' Retreat
May 2-4, 2007

Kirby House, Mountain Top, PA

Mark your calendar for this special event for educators.

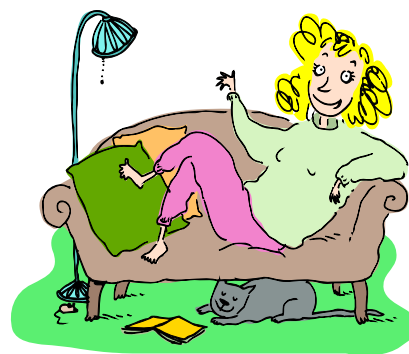
Among the activities we hope to offer:

- Mary & Mary Meditations by our Retreat Leader
- Massage and/or manicure
- Movement (perhaps Tai Chi)

- Meditation opportunities
Labyrinth
Prayer Beads
Art/Stress Relief
- Quiet Time built into sessions
- Music
- "M & Ms" = Chocolate

As you can probably tell, this is an "M&M" retreat designed to nurture educators. It should include spiritual nurture and teaching, as well as provide tools and treats for those who attend.

Watch for more information to come with specific times, cost, and activities.



Prepare Yourself with Daily Devotions

Preparation Time - Prepare physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Find a comfortable location and bring any resources you may need.

Waiting Time - Take time to listen for God. Allow him to Love You, Search You, Show You.

Confession Time - Unconfessed sin is a roadblock to answered prayer.

Bible Time - Reading the Bible daily will do awesome things to your walk with God.

Meditation Time - Meditating on God's Word is simply thinking about it with the desire to discover its truth and apply it to your life.

Intercession Time - Intercession is praying for others.

Petition Time - Once you've spent time listening to God, confessing your sins, reading and meditating, and asking him to bless others, you are ready to ask God to see to your personal needs.

Application Time - Listen for what God asks of you.

Faith Time - Faith prayer is a verbal expression of faith, confirming the expectation that God can and will bring about desired results to accomplish His purposes.

Praise and Thanksgiving - Praise recognizes God for who he is and Thanksgiving recognizes what he's done.

Adapted from *Partners in Prayer*
by John Maxwell pp. 34-49.

Malachi 3:3: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver"

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining Silver

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver." She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.



The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy -- when I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

Pass this on right now. This very moment, someone needs to know that God is watching over them.

And, whatever they're going through, they'll be a better person in the end.

"Life is a coin. You can spend it anyway you wish, but you can only spend it once."

How to Stay Young

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctors worry about them. That is why you pay them.



2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down. (Keep this in mind if you are one of those grouches).

3. Keep learning: Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain get idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." And the devil's name is Alzheimer's!

4. Enjoy the simple things.

5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and lots of time with HIM/HER.

6. The tears happen: Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is yourself. LIVE while you are alive.

7. Surround yourself with what you love: Whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.

8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.

10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

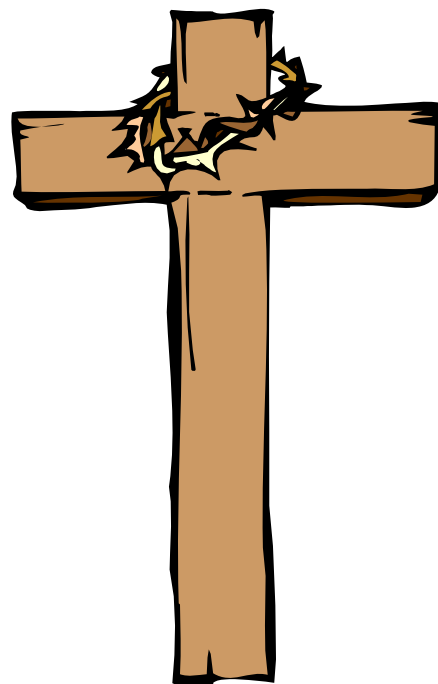
Crown of Thorns

Begin with frozen bread dough (saves time). Follow directions for thawing. Twist it into a braid and then into a circle making sure the ends are together. After it has risen the last time help the children place sharp round toothpicks all over the braid. Don't stick them in too far as you want it to look like a crown with thorns sticking out. Then bake the bread.

As the children are caught being good, carrying out a work of mercy, or other good works allow them to pull a thorn out of

Jesus' crown and place it in a jar. Remind them that every time we do these things we are truly aiding Christ but when we do the opposite we are wounding Him again so children will try a little harder to be able to remove thorns from His "crown".

At the end of Lent count the "thorns" in the jars and last year give a dime for each thorn. Ten percent of this money should go to the support of our parish. Encourage the children to use the rest for a good purpose



A Lenten Fair

Adapted from
Best of Blessings by Ginny Arthur, ed.

One 3-hour session for all ages

Focus: Lent

A selection of activities help participants focus on the meaning of Lent and on the events of Jesus' passion.

Purpose

To bring members of the parish together for some creative experiences that will enhance their understanding and observance of Holy Week and Easter.

Background: First appearing in the spring 1987 issue of *Blessings*, this program was developed at St. Barnabas Anglican Church, a parish of about 100 families in St. Catharine's, Ontario. The liturgical life of the parish centers on the Eucharist, which was, at the time this unit was

produced, celebrated daily and twice on Sundays. Many of the children were communicants. In the early 1980s, St. Barnabas placed considerable emphasis on all-age events. These usually took place on Sunday evenings and consisted of games, a pot-luck supper, and a short (1 to 1-1/2 hour) program on a topic such as family observances of Advent, the healing ministry, stewardship, baptism, and new liturgies. Occasionally an event took place at a time other than Sunday evening. The Lenten Fair took place on a Saturday afternoon.

Planning

The Lenten Fair was planned and implemented by the parish Christian Education Committee using *Welcome to the Lenten Fair*, by Jeanne C. Mueller as a basic resource. The fair was

scheduled for the Saturday two weeks before Easter. Activities were to include painting, baking, storytelling, pen and pencil games, and banner making. Each planning team member took responsibility for organizing one or more of these areas. The group also considered ways in which fair projects could be incorporated into Holy Week observances.

Preparation

Publicize the event with posters and notices in the weekly bulletin. You will need to set up tables for most of the activities in a general space or "hall." Baking will take place in the kitchen, but place the decorating table was in the hall. Use signs to identify the activity tables. Decorated with posters, church school banners, etc. Have drinks and snacks set up at a refresh-

Lenten Fair continued

Set Up

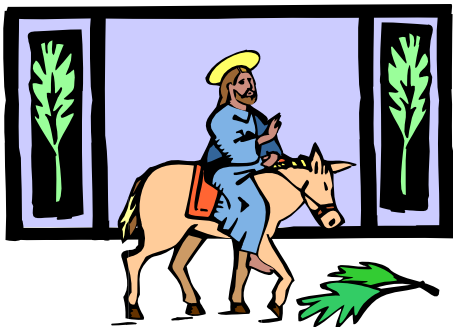
The Lenten Fair should be scheduled for 3 hours. People should be free to come and go as they wish. Make sure that someone is always attentive to arrivals throughout the Fair. Make sure each activity is supervised by a leader who explains the tasks and guides the conversation.

Activity Ideas

Seven Stations of the Cross Painting. Set up one table for each Station. At each table participants read the scripture passage (see below) and design a picture to represent that particular station. Make the pictures fairly large (about 36" x 24"), so several people can work on each one at the same time.

Scripture for Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus Is Condemned to Die
Luke 23:1-25
2. Jesus Carries His Cross
Matthew 27:27-32; John 19:17
3. Jesus Is Helped by Simon
Mark 15:21
4. Jesus Falls
Luke 23:27-32
5. Jesus Is Crucified
Mark 15:22-39
6. Jesus Is Buried in the Tomb
Mark 15:40-47
7. Jesus Triumphant
Matthew 28:1-10; Ephesians 1:20-23



Palm Branch Painting. Have participants paint large palm branches freestyle on sheets of paper. Direct conversation to the events celebrated on Palm Sunday.

Banners: Provide each participant with a 1-foot square of felt to design as a small banner incorporating a symbol of Lent or Easter. Center discussion on the identification and explanation of such symbols. Participants can use available patterns or make their own. When finished set the banners aside to dry. Ask creators to leave them until after Easter.

Baking. Engage participants in shaping dough for hot cross buns. As the buns are baked and cooled, mark them with icing crosses. Other ideas might include decorating cupcakes with symbols drawn with icing. Discussion should revolve around symbols and Lenten customs, such as fasting.

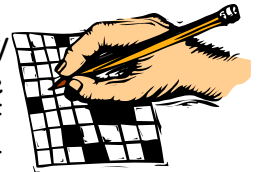


Crown of Thorns: Ask participants to think of a personal action, omission, or shortcoming for which they feel a need to repent and to write it on a "thorn," which they cut out of cardboard. The leader should help to explain the concept of sin and suggested examples, but the actual writing should be done privately. String the thorns on the twine with a knot tied be-

tween each. At the end of the Fair, join the ends of the twine to make a circle. Make penitence the subject of discussion.

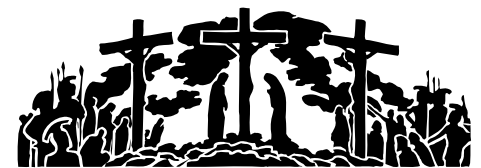
Pen and Pencil Games:

Provide a variety of games for various age levels that can be worked on during the Fair or taken home to use later.



Storytelling. At two or more points during the Fair, invite participants to leave their activities and assemble in a storytelling area, where the rector (or others) tell a story relevant to the season.

Music: Practice some of the music to be sung during Holy Week and Easter. Learn some songs appropriate to Lent. Write a song by which to process to the stations at a "Good Friday Walk." Play some music suitable for Lent as a background, as a basis for reflection in a "meditation" room or corner, or for children to listen to while drawing or painting a response or illustration.



Drama: Role-play or mime Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Jesus' trial, etc.

The Cross

Leader: The cross...
All: We shall take it.

Leader: The bread...
All: We shall break it.

Leader: The pain...
All: We shall bear it.

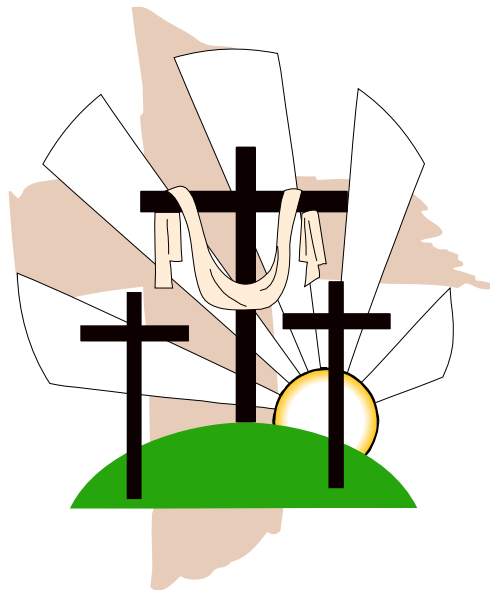
Leader: The joy...
All: We shall share it.

Leader: The gospel...
All: We shall live it.

Leader: The love...
All: We shall give it.

Leader: The light...
All: We shall cherish it.

Leader: The darkness...
All: God shall perish it.
Amen.



In Thy Hand

In thy hand, we see the whole
cosmos,

Heaven and earth reflect the
mystery of thy handiwork.

In thy hand, we see a little child,
Men and women are recaptured
by the event of Bethlehem.

In thy hand, we see the scar of
the cross.

Sin and death are vanquished by
thy suffering on Golgotha.

In thy hand, behold a new light,
Day and night are transformed
in the glory of Easter morning.

*Masao, Fumiko, Makoto
and Yukako Takenaka, Japan*

Rolled Away

Rolled away, rolled away, rolled away,
Ev'ry burden of my heart rolled away!
Rolled away, rolled away, rolled away,
Ev'ry burden of my heart rolled away!
Ev'ry sin had to go
'Neath the crimson flow, hallelujah!
Rolled away, rolled away, rolled away,
Ev'ry burden of my heart rolled away!

Traditional gospel song.