

St. James NetWork



Celebrate!

Parish offers many ways to observe Lent and Easter

St. James parish offers a variety of activities to help you pray and celebrate during the Lent and Easter seasons. Here's a look at what's available.

Ash Wednesday

Feb. 9
Mass with distribution of ashes:
6:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
Liturgy of the Word with distribution of ashes: 9 a.m., 12 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Generations of Faith

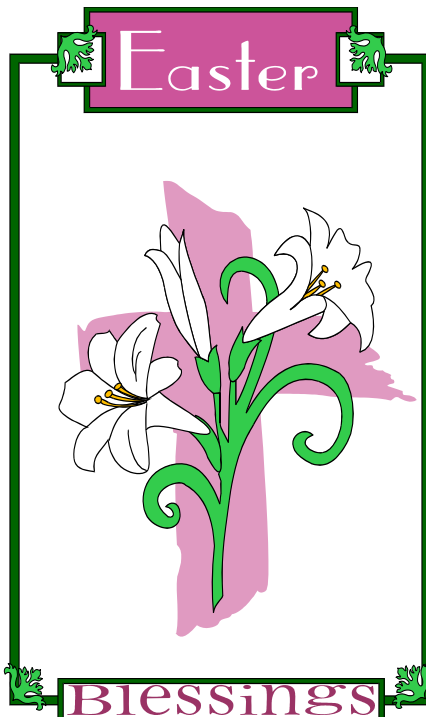
Feb. 16, 6-8:30 p.m.
Feb. 20, 12-2:30 p.m.
Learn about the three practices of Lent and how to work them into your family's lives. (More information on page 3.)

Knights of Columbus Fish Fries

Feb. 18, March 4 & 18, 5-8 p.m. in the school gym (More information on page 5.)

Soup Suppers

Feb. 23 & March 2: 6-8 p.m.
March 9: 6-7 p.m.
Enjoy a soup buffet and listen to lively presentations about Lent for the whole family. (More information on page 5.)



Communal Penance Service
March 9: 7 p.m.

Easter choir
Anyone who would like to participate in the Easter choir, contact Sr. Mary Jo Quinn, 781-4343.

Palm Sunday Mass Schedule
March 19: 5 p.m.
March 20: 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m., 6 p.m. (Note different Sunday morning schedule.)

Holy Thursday Service
March 24: 8 p.m.

Good Friday Service
March 25: 12:15 p.m.

Easter Vigil
March 26: 8 p.m.

Easter Sunday Mass Schedule
March 27: 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. (Note different Sunday morning schedule and no 6 p.m. Mass.)

From the pastor's pen

For many people Lent is remembered as a time of "giving-up" something. It can be a time of "doing" something and a time of prayer as well.

Lent is really a positive time, a time of free choice in which we are called to carry our own cross. It is a time for new life to appear and old attitudes to disappear. It can be a time to seek healing of relationships, but this part of Lent demands an openness to God working in our lives. As spring unfolds where an old season ends and a new season begins (nature rises from death), Lent invites us to die to destructive ways of life and be open to new ways of life.

Let us enter the season of Lent with a positive attitude of how we, as St. James Parish, can grow as a community. We are invited to come and see with an open heart a new vision of how God is working with us as individuals and as a parish. We, as parish, are trying to discern what God is calling us to do to bring God's message to each other and to the area community. How is God calling us to reach beyond our comfort zone and to grow in our relationship with God and our fellow human beings?

In the Catholic Church, there are three avenues to help us journey through this holy season of Lent if we choose to do so: prayer, fasting (giving-up something) and almsgiving (doing something).

May God be our guide as we, as a parish, journey this season of Lent. Have a holy Lent!

Love and prayers,

Fr. Joe Miller, C.P.P.S.

Looking back

Learn some of the history that led to our current Lenten practices

by Sr. Mary Jo Quinn, SCL

In the history of the liturgical year, the first feast was Sunday. Every Sunday, those who believed in Christ's resurrection gathered to celebrate the Eucharist. There was little thought of commemorating the actual events of Jesus' life, only the idea of continuing his command: "Do this (the Eucharist) in memory of me."

Only as the growth of the early Christian community moved in time farther away from the actual chronological birth, death and resurrection of Jesus did the particular events come to be remembered.

The first such events celebrated were the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil), followed by the preparation for the Triduum — Lent.

Lent and initiation into the Church

Lent was first understood as a time

when those being prepared for baptism were "purified." The community prayed with them that any impediments to their being able to embrace fully the Christian life would be overcome.

Thus, following the Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent, the catechumens now are referred to as "the Elect" and they are "scrutinized" on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent. During those liturgies, after reflection on the Gospels, all of the assembly prays that the elect — and all of us — will be aware of our sinfulness and will do all that is necessary to put that sinfulness behind us. The practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving take on particular importance during this season because they are seen as the means to putting away our sinfulness.

In the early Church, as the community watched the "scrutinies" of the Elect, they began to participate in their preparation. Each year, Lent came to



be a further reflection on baptism for the whole community.

Eventually, although the practices of Lent still remained, the Church no longer initiated adults during the Easter vigil. Adults who were baptized were prepared privately and baptized apart from the community until the reform of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) after the second Vatican Council.

The practices of Lent

Make prayer, fasting and almsgiving a special part of your Lenten preparation

by Sr. Mary Jo Quinn, SCL

The life of all Catholics, year-round, should be one of "prayer, fasting and almsgiving." These age-old practices reflect our most fundamental concerns: our relationship with God (prayer), with our bodies (fasting) and with each other (almsgiving). In Lent the Church challenges us to perform these practices in creative ways, going beyond simply "the letter of the law."

Prayer

Our minimal obligation to prayer is celebrating the Liturgy on Sunday. But we are encouraged to look for other opportunities for prayer within

the family and personally.

Fasting

The minimal obligation regarding fasting reads: *"Catholics who have celebrated their 14th birthday are bound to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and each Friday of Lent. Catholics who have celebrated their 18th birthday, in addition to abstaining from meat, should fast, i.e., eat only one full meal on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Smaller quantities of food may be taken at two other meals but no food should be consumed at any other time during those two days. The obligation of fasting ceases with the celebration of one's 59th birth-*

day." What other opportunities are available to us to fast — from entertainment, from gossip, from eating out, etc.

Almsgiving

Considering all the human needs that are around us, it ought not be too difficult to find extra ways to give. Our parish provides rice bowls from the Catholic Relief Services, and we support Love, INC., an agency that can always use our funds. Many other agencies in greater Kansas City need our assistance. We also can give alms by giving our time, a commodity that often seems much more difficult to give than money.

Lenten help is on the way

Generations of Faith sessions help you focus on the three practices of Lent

*by Cecilia Richardson,
Religious Education Coordinator*

When I was teaching fourth grade Religious Education, I would ask my students to name the three practices of Lent that the Church recommends to make Lent a meaningful season.

Hands would shoot up, and I would get dozens of variations on "Oooh, ooh, I know! Giving up stuff!"

When I would say, "Okay, that's one way, but what are the others?" I'd get a room full of blank faces. The correct answer was "Prayer, fasting and almsgiving."

Nobody had a clue what almsgiving was (other than the one kid who'd come back with "Giving alms?") and they weren't too sure how to fit prayer into the mix. But boy, they remembered that giving up stuff — except they weren't too sure why they were doing it.

Try some "soul cleaning" this Lent

As adults, I'd guess that we're probably not all that much farther along in our journey than those fourth graders were, we're just less open about it. We all remember the "giving up stuff" part from our childhoods (because who can't remember the supreme sacrifice of giving up dessert for a whole 40 days?). But the big picture often eludes us.

Lent offers us 40 days to kind of dust off our souls — to spruce the place up a bit before Easter. Finding the time and the focus to take advantage of that self-improvement opportunity is often beyond our individual abilities.

Generations of Faith provides practical ideas

That's one way our parish's Generation of Faith program can help. Our focus this season is on the three



practices of Lent, and we'll feature some discussion of what they mean and why they are important. We'll also offer practical methods to put those ideas to work in your day-to-day life.

For those who missed the first Generations of Faith opportunity during Advent, or for those who are new to the parish, Generations of Faith is a concept wherein all ages come together for a meal, fellowship and some learning. It gives us the opportunity to eat together, talk together and learn together. It takes religious education from being relegated to just the children's classrooms and puts it into what is the heart of our church — all of us.

Sessions offered Feb. 16 & 20

This year we will offer two gatherings to accommodate our many varying schedules:

- 6-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 16.
- 12-2:30 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 20.

Unlike the Advent Gathering, we will not break off into age groupings, but will remain together in two large groups: families with children, and families of adults only. Participants are free to choose whichever group they would prefer — the Families with

▲ *Many parishioners turned out for the Advent Generations of Faith program held last November.*

You can attend the Lenten Generations of Faith gatherings on either of the following dates:

- 6-8:30 p.m., Wed., Feb. 16
- 12-2:30 p.m., Sun., Feb. 20

Registrations are taking place after Masses each weekend leading up to the events. For more information, contact the parish office, 781-4343.

Children group will offer ideas suitable for the entire family. Families of Adults Only will offer suggestions more appropriate for adults.

If you would like to volunteer to help this time, we'd love to have you — just call the parish office at 781-4343 to sign up.

Register after Mass

Watch for registration tables in the Narthex after all the Masses in February. There will be a small fee charged to help cover the costs of the food and the take-home materials. We hope to see all of you there!

The way of the cross

First stations of the cross were erected in 1686, but Christian pilgrimages came long before

by Fr. Keith Branson, C.P.P.S. Associate Pastor

Shortly after the Edict of Milan in the year 313 made it legal to practice Christianity in the Roman Empire, the practice of pilgrimage to Jerusalem began. Within a century it became so popular that outsiders thought the Christians were required to make the journey, which is ironic since Christianity is one of the few religions of the world that does not require pilgrimages.

Churches were built at various sites to commemorate events in the life of Christ that were associated with those places, and pilgrims would meditate on the event as they visited the place. The Catholic Church later attached indulgences for visiting the Holy Places. By the 15th century, Christian pilgrims were visiting the places of Christ's passion and death.

Franciscans erected the first stations of the cross

The number, content and order of the stations of the cross were unsettled for three hundred years. In the year 1686, Pope Innocent IX gave the Franciscans permission to erect the fourteen stations in their churches, attaching the same indulgences to praying the stations there as pilgrims received going to the Holy Land since access to the Holy Places was limited at that time by the Turks. Within a century, universal permission was given to put the Stations of the Cross into Catholic Churches around the world.

Connecting Jesus' trials to our own

Praying the Stations of the Cross is a useful pilgrimage of faith. By walking the Way of the Cross with Christ, we gain insight into Jesus' humanity and suffering and can make connections between Jesus' last journey and

our own trials. It can teach us compassion; it can help us let go of anger and fear; it can help us to understand how we are called to reach out to others who are suffering. In touching Christ's wounds, we touch our own wounds and the wounds of the world.

There are many ways to pray the Stations of the Cross. My favorite book based on the Stations of the Cross is Joe Nassal's *Faith Walkers*, although there are many good reflections and good books on the Stations out there. One important thing we are called to remember as we reflect on the Stations is that we embrace Jesus' passion and death so that we may grasp Jesus' resurrection more fully.



▲ *A formal prayer service isn't necessary to pray the stations of the cross. Using a book such as Faith Walkers by Joe Nassal, you may follow the way of the cross using the stations located throughout the church or in the prayer garden located directly behind the church.*

Planning for the future

by Mike Klamm, Parish Pastoral Council

You are invited to a discernment session 7 p.m. Feb. 22 for all parishioners to express their thoughts on God's call for our parish.

The ideas and thoughts that came out of this session will be crystallized and presented to members of the parish for review. Feedback from the entire parish will be used to refine the plan. The final ideas will form the basis for our next long-range plan much like the Project 2010 plan did some five or six years ago. The final version will be pre-

sented to the various committees within the church and the parish as a whole via a booklet for each household. The booklet will also be published on the parish Web site.

We are pleased that many of the 2010 objectives have been met, and we look forward to answering God's call for us to serve him and the greater Liberty community in the future.

Sign-ups to attend the session will be held after Masses. Check the Sunday bulletin for additional details.

Soup's on!

Soup Suppers provide tasty way to observe Lent

by Cecilia Richardson, Religious Education Coordinator

It's almost time for our second annual round of Soup Suppers sponsored by the St James Religious Education families. The suppers are open to the entire parish, and parishioners of all ages are welcome.

Soup Suppers will be held 6-8 p.m. on the following Wednesdays:

- Feb. 23
- March 2
- March 9

We will meet in the Social Hall for a delicious buffet of soups and hearty breads, followed by a short talk by an informative speaker.

This year our featured speakers are our own Father Keith Branson, and Josef Walker, director of adult faith formation at St Mark's parish in Independence. The topics will focus on the practices of Lent — prayer, fasting and almsgiving — which we will have first learned about at our Lenten

Gatherings on Feb. 16 and 20.

Our third Soup Supper will not feature a speaker, but instead will be the soup meal followed by our parish's Communal Penance Celebration in the church.

We had a lot of fun with these last year, and this year's speakers promise to be equally amazing. Look to the weekly bulletin for info on how to reserve a spot so we'll know how much soup to prepare. Put these dates on your calendar right away so you don't miss out!



▲ *After a choosing from more than a dozen varieties of soups and chili, the Perez family enjoyed Lenten learning activities during last year's Soup Suppers.*

These men can cook!

Knights of Columbus offer delectable dinner options

by Clark Kelly, Grand Knight, St. James Knights of Columbus



**THE KNIGHTS
OF COLUMBUS**
IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.



A warm start to a cool month

The annual St. James School Chili Supper and Pie Auction will be held following the 5 p.m. Mass, Saturday, Feb. 5, in the parish social hall.

This event assists St. James School teachers and school personnel in raising funds for required continuing education.

Everyone is invited!

Let the fryers begin

Last year's annual Lenten Fish Fries showed record attendance, and we're looking forward to the same big crowds this year.

This year the events are held 5-8 p.m. in the school on the following dates:

- Feb. 18
- March 4
- March 18

This is our largest social event. Please come and enjoy!

▲ *The Knights of Columbus invited Santa himself to visit with St. James Religious Education students last December.*

Called to witness

Forty-five young men and women from St. James parish will be confirmed April 19

by Cynthia Eslick,
Youth Director

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains that "Confirmation imprints on the soul an *indelible spiritual mark...*, which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of His Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be His witness" (CCC 1304).

How then, are we witnesses for Christ? By the very meaning of Confirmation! Confirmation, is the sacrament by which young adults complete their Baptism and are initiated into the full life of our Christian community. In sharing their God-given gifts by participating in our community's ministries (both Christian and secular), the newly Confirmed witness for Christ by their actions.

Several of our Confirmation candidates already enjoy participation in some St. James ministries: Eric Adams, Beth Krogmeier, Brooke Lindsey and Katie Scassellati work with the Religious Education classes while John Mohr, Ben Nordhues, Aaron Smitka, Louis Angles and Sean Hughes serve as ushers. We thank them and support them in their witness for Christ.

On April 19, we will initiate 45 young men and women into our Christian community through Confirmation. We ask that you pray for them as they begin their journey as witnesses for Christ, and welcome them as full members of our faith community.

We associate a dove with the Holy Spirit because of the story of Jesus' baptism: "After Jesus was baptized, He came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for Him], and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon Him" (Matthew 3:16).

2005 St. James Confirmation Candidates

Eric Adams
Brett Agee
Louis Angles
Melissa Clark
Max Curnow
Whitney Danze
Mary Dexter
BreeAnne Doehring
David Dolphin
Kevin Dunn
Jason Eichler
Alec Eslick
Chris Ferguson
Amy Flanigan
Jordan Harmon

Sara Harris
Kyle Henry
Charlie Hernandez
Sarah Holt
Sean Hughes
Megan Jones
Jonathan Klamm
Beth Krogmeier
Michael Lackey
Kirk Lakebrink
Brooke Lindsey
Alex McLain
Thomas Meyer
Andrew Miller
John Mohr

Rachel Mundhenke
Andrew Mutchler
Ben Nordhues
Shawn Phillips
Anastasia Potter
Lyndsey Riley
Katie Scassellati
Stephen Scheer
Zachary Slater
Chris Smith
Aaron Smitka
Zachary Sobba
Pete Urkevich
Andy Venneman
Kyle Vivanco

Did you know?

The cross in our sanctuary is an original painting in the "icon" style. It was created for our church by Brother William Woeger, FSC of Omaha, who was commissioned by the parish. The artist modeled the image from a 12th century Byzantine icon.

There is a certain mystery and depth in the world of iconography. The artist is required to fast and pray before and during the actual creation of the image, calling upon the Holy Spirit to inspire the work.

Icons are considered mirrors in which the world is reflected. That is why almost all icons use both earth tones (the human dimension of Christ) as well as the traditional back-illumination of metallic color (reflecting into our eyes that which God can see). The use of silver leaf lights the icon from behind the image, surrounding the figure of Jesus with an aura of light, and projects the image into the midst of the worshipping community.



Building walls, building relationships

Team of parishioners is headed on a mission trip to El Pinar, Peru, in February

by Vicki Vinton, Mission Committee

Much of what we see and hear in the news are the negative images of happenings in the world, such as the Iraq war, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, or the tsunami in Southeast Asia. We begin to feel that there is not much positive occurring in our world.

At St. James, we have chosen to take a step toward reaching out to our brothers and sisters in El Pinar, Peru. Our relationship began in April 2003 with a commitment to share our faith. A group of six parishioners including our former pastor, Fr. Ron Will, traveled to Peru in November 2003 to bring our dreams of a twinning relationship to life. During the past year, we communicated by e-mail, telephone and letters from the school children. The people of El Pinar celebrated St. James' feast day on July 25, and we offered prayers on their parish feast day, Feast of the Captive Christ or *Cautivo Christe*, Oct. 13.

We are excited to announce that we're furthering our relationship this year when a team of six parishioners, will be traveling to Lima in February.

Through your generosity in buying Peruvian Fair Trade coffee from the parish and other monetary donations, they will be giving \$1,000 toward assisting the people of the parish at El Pinar, build a wall around their property. This officially marks the property as their own. The group also hopes to visit the sick and housebound there. The enthusiasm required for such a trip comes almost automatically with the desire to be with people from another part of God's earth — to see how they live, what they eat, how they pray and what they dream tomorrow can be.

Please pray for those traveling, not only for their safety, but for a produc-

tive journey, productive in building faith and friendship and in building walls!

P.S. Fair Trade Peruvian coffee is for sale through the parish office and whenever the Knights of Columbus serve breakfast.



▲ *Vini and Tony DeMarco, youth representatives, Susan and John Stolwyck, Mary Loy Brown and Jeri Flowers will be travelling on a mission trip to El Pinar, Peru, this February to help build a wall around the El Pinar parish property. Their work is another step in our "twinning" relationship, which began in April 2003.*

Give someone the gift of life

Next St. James blood drive is March 29

by Joe Barry, Blood Drive Coordinator

Beginning this year, and continuing forward, St. James will host six annual blood drives for the Community Blood Center. Six is the maximum amount of times that an individual may donate blood in one year. An individual may donate at each of the blood drives that we have scheduled.

Our first drive was Jan. 25. The remaining dates for 2005 are:

- March 29
- May 24
- July 26
- Sept. 27
- Nov. 29

The Community Blood Center recognizes St. James as one of their major donation centers. They set our goal for 2005 to collect 170 units (pints) at each drive. Since we average 15 deferrals at each drive, we need a minimum of 185 registered donors for each drive. Would you please ask one other family member or friend to come with you to each drive?

If you have any questions, or want to make an appointment, contact Joe Barry, 781-6441, or jbarry@kc.rr.com.

Cutting costs

Staff members at St. James School employ several strategies to reduce their budget

by Molly Doherty, Assistant Principal,
& Ed Fierst, Principal

We at St. James School are very fortunate to be part of a supportive parish. Our parish families take care of us with their thoughts, hard work, prayers and financial support. As we are a large ministry of the parish it is probably no secret that the school budget is a major portion of the parish budget. But what may be a secret is how closely the school works with Fr. Joe and the administration committee to keep the school budget in line with parish projections and expectations.

We put forth a lot of effort to be conscientious regarding school spending. In fact, we began preparation for the 2004-05 school year attempting to cut our portion of the budget in several areas to handle the increased cost of salaries and benefits without additional increase to the budget.

Our answer was to reduce salaries by changing Spanish from full- to half-time, and our principal from full to 4/5 time for this year. Many items that used to be in our school budget are now taken care of by our PTO budget. This helped us to cut costs without cutting the quality of our programs. Our PTO is extremely supportive and works hard to help us maintain our excellent educational services. Not only does their financial support help us with our school budget, but they make donations each year directly to the parish, the endowment fund and the guardian angels fund. Your support of our PTO's school auction allows this to happen.

We are aware that every little bit helps. We have numerous volunteers that are always helping us in one way or another at school. It would be im-

possible for us to even guess the cost savings that they provide to us with all of their work. We have also tried to cut the cost of utilities by a conservative use of air-conditioning, lights, and heating, which is something most of us do in our own homes. In all of our classrooms and in the office we recycle paper and use donated paper in the copy machines. We stopped using

hand-outs at Mass in order to save about \$10 a week.

In short, the school is very aware that the parish budget is stretched, and we are doing everything possible to help the situation. We thank you for your continued support as we educate our parish children.

Students convert storage room to studio

by Julie Miller, St. James School Computers Teacher

St. James middle school students were blessed with a wonderful opportunity to attend a summer workshop with JIT (Journalist In Training). The workshop was lead by broadcast journalism professionals such as Aubrey Williams, Natalie Moultrie and Bruce Moultrie.

The students had a week of intensive training, which included study trips to Channel 9 News and UMKC Channel 18. They worked with professionals in the field and created brief movies. The students gained so much from the experience and have become leaders in broadcast journalism.

Currently they are working on morning announcements and special features for the school. Morning announcements include student trips, assemblies, and music programs. They also presented a proposal to the parish council to reno-

vate an old storage room into a studio, and the project began over Christmas break.



St. James School students Meghan Doherty and Alex Wheeler (front), Morgan Anderson and Jessica Olson (middle), and Alec Caine (back) converted an old storage room into a broadcast journalism booth over the Christmas break. The first broadcast from the new studio was Jan. 12.

What's in it for me?

Parents reap the benefits of their children's Religious Education classes

by Cecilia Richardson,
Religious Education Coordinator

"What's the point?" "Why do I need to do this?" "Don't you people realize how busy I am?"

Well, nobody actually says these words to me, but I quite often get the feeling that maybe they're thinking it really, really hard. So, I thought I would talk a little bit about why your child's Religious Education classes are important for *parents*.

First off, let's be honest here. Sending your child to a weekly religion class can be a pain. You have to get up early on Sundays when you could be sleeping in, or you have to squeeze it in on Wednesday nights along with all 900 other things that go on in a family's evening. You have to wait around to pick them up in a crowded hallway rife with the pandemonium of kids zipping in and out. There are all these "special" dates to remember — first they have class, then they don't. Who can keep that schedule straight? So why bother?

Peer power

What is the payoff for parents? There's the obvious benefit of regular religious instruction — but that's something that you could do yourself at home. Of course, it would require a lot of work and effort. And, as long as we're being honest here, sometimes kids pay better attention to someone who is not their parent.

They also spend that class time in the company of their peers — kids they go to school with, kids they will have continuing relationships with as they enter those dreaded teen years. This is a truly great benefit. Sharing a faith connection with other kids is a powerful motivator.

Parent-to-parent support

Parents also have the benefit of the support of other parents; you're not

the only mean parents making their kids go to religion class. You have the benefit of the example of other adults — from your child's classroom teacher to the parents who volunteer for special projects.

When you get to the teen years, those years when your approval of something is sure to make it BOR-ing, it helps to have other, "cool" adults as good examples. Speaking as a parent who has lived through the teen years, the more support that you can surround yourself with, the easier you have it.

More than just sacraments

Sometimes, families participate in religion classes just through the sacrament prep years, and then they drift away. While there are, I'm sure, strong motivations for handling their child's faith formation that way, I'm always sad that the family will miss out on some wonderful learning experiences.

Our faith is about much more than just the sacraments. But even if that was all that we were about, a child's understanding grows with every time they take another look. Keeping them enrolled in weekly classes gives them the opportunity to revisit the sacraments every year and to deepen their understanding. What a 7-year-old "gets" from Reconciliation is not nearly as rich as what a 10-year-old understands, not to mention all the other things they'll learn along the way.

You might just learn something, too

And yeah, all those meetings are a pain, but you never know what you are going to learn from someone else. There have been many times when something I heard another parent say caused me to rethink my outlook. Just that chance remark caused me to see something from a different perspective. Being a follower of Christ is a tough journey, but it can be easier

when you have your church family to draw upon.

Another look at your own faith

Finally, there is the most important benefit — you get to take another look at your faith through the eyes of your child. In participating in the catechetical journey of your children, you get to re-examine the guiding principles of your life. What is it exactly that you believe?

Being an active participant in our weekly religion classes has benefits that more than compensate for the time spent...and the meetings...and the hassles...and that schedule!



▲ *Parents, such as Jackie Lang and Michelle Allen-Asbury have found that getting their children to weekly Religious Education classes is worth the extra effort.*

Becoming Catholic

RCIA guides Christians to the Catholic faith

by Toni Ferro Arthur

Although St. James parish's RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) program is year-round, it's never more on our minds than as we prepare for Easter. And it *should* be on the minds of every Catholic, not just those who are preparing to join our Church, according to Sr. Mary Jo Quinn, parish liturgy director.

"The whole experience of RCIA is liturgically based and involves the entire parish community," she says. "The parish is what gives the process life. The parish has an obligation to journey with the catechumens — to pray with them and to do penance with them. The catechumens are asking the questions about faith that all Catholics should be asking in their hearts all the time."

This year, approximately 20 people from ages 14 to 70 are taking the RCIA journey into the Catholic faith with St. James parish. They may join the program at any point during the year, and traditionally are initiated into the faith at the Easter Vigil.

A life-changing experience

"Throughout the years I've been involved with RCIA, I've seen it as a life-changing experience for most people," says Bro. Steve Ohnmacht, a member of the St. James parish RCIA team.

"It's similar to a 'Good Samaritan' type attitude. They see the same things they've always seen before, but react to them in more loving and tender ways. It gives more meaning to the things they become involved with, such as helping at St. Mary's food kitchen."

It begins with an inquiry

When someone inquires about the RCIA program, they first attend an interview with Sandy Landuyt, our

parish RCIA director. Sandy helps the person assess where they are on their faith journey and provides valuable information about the program.

Getting answers

Those who decide to join RCIA spend time studying scriptures from Sunday Masses, listening to presentations about the Catholic faith (topics such as the sacraments and the beatitudes), participate in discussions about faith, and find answers to their many questions about Catholicism.

"When someone has a question, we stop the class right there and answer it," Bro. Steve explains. "It's very important that we encourage questions because others in the group might be wondering about the same things."

Sponsor walks the steps, too

Each person in the RCIA program has a Catholic sponsor who walks the journey with them. Louie Wingo sponsored his wife, Carrie, last year. This year, both Louie and Carrie are sponsors.

"Carrie had really good questions about the Catholic faith," Louie says. "I could say, 'yeah we do that,' but I couldn't explain why. I went to RCIA with Carrie so I could learn, too."

For more information about the RCIA program — whether as a participant or as a sponsor — contact Sandy Landuyt, 781-1958.



▲ Last year, Louie Wingo sponsored his wife, Carrie, in the RCIA program. This year both Louie and Carrie are sponsors.

Being a sponsor doesn't require a major time commitment, Louie explains. "The person you're sponsoring may only need you to be silent support or they may need hands-on help," he says. "But either way it doesn't take a lot of your time, and most importantly, *you don't have to know all the answers*. You just have to be willing to go out and find the answers for them."

The chance to learn about your own faith

Louie highly recommends the experience of being an RCIA sponsor.

"Even if you only do it once," he says, "I believe every Catholic should serve as an RCIA sponsor. Do it for yourself. You learn so much about your own faith — things you may not remember from Catholic school or catechism classes. It's been a great experience for me."

Parishioner Spotlight: RCIA program unites Falleri family in faith

by Loretta Shea Kline

A desire to share her faith with others was a motivating factor in parishioner Marianne Falleri's decision to become Catholic. She is participating in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) process, and will be received into the Church at the Easter Vigil at St. James Church in March.

"I'm working to better understand my faith and what kind of person God wants me to be," Marianne says, "and to better relay that to my kids, so they can understand what kind of person God wants them to be."

Journey began as St. James Religious Education instructor

In addition to growing in faith with her children, Timmy, 9, Julie, 7, and Jenna, 6; and her husband of 14 years, Tim, Marianne looks forward to getting back to teaching in the St. James Religious Education program. She took a year off from teaching to concentrate on RCIA.

Marianne, who works as a home-based child-care provider, enjoys sharing stories of Jesus and His life, doing crafts, and singing songs with the pre-kindergarten children in Religious Education classes.

"I find it very rewarding," she says. "I enjoy being able to bring Christ's love to them through stories and activities."

Son's First Communion provided motivation

Raised in the Baptist tradition, Marianne decided she wanted to learn about the Catholic faith on a deeper level after preparing with her son for his First Reconciliation and First Communion. Though she and Tim, a cradle Catholic, were married in the Catholic church, and the family attended Mass together, Marianne

had a desire to know more about the Mass and the Catholic tradition.

"I thought it was important for my family to grow together, and to be unified in our faith," she says.

Whole family benefits from being active in the parish

RCIA has been an enriching experience for Marianne. She leaves class thinking of ways to better serve God and to be thankful for what God has given her.

The importance Catholics place on Mary as the mother of Jesus, the universality of the Church, and the strong call to care for the poor through the Church's social teachings are aspects of the Catholic faith that especially appeal to Marianne.

On a personal level, she most looks forward to receiving the Eucharist with her family. She is also eager to get back to the classroom.

Being active in the parish through the Religious Education program and other activities helped Marianne and her family grow together in their faith. They enjoyed going over lesson plans for the pre-kindergarten class, and participating in special events such as the family Advent Gathering and Lenten Soup Suppers.

"I felt like my whole family benefited," she says, "because our increased involvement in St. James parish reminds us of the importance of our faith in our daily lives."

"I thought it was important for our family to grow together and to be unified in our faith."

— Marianne Falleri



▲ Marianne Falleri took a year off from teaching preschool Religious Education at St. James to go through the RCIA program and convert to Catholicism. The Falleri family, shown above, includes parents Tim and Marianne and their three children, Timmy, 9, Julie, 7, and Jenna, 6.

In this issue...

Celebrate Lent and Easter From the pastor's pen	Page 1
The history of Lent The practices of Lent	Page 2
Next Generations of Faith presentation: Feb. 16 & 20	Page 3
The way of the cross Planning for the future	Page 4
Soup suppers provide tasty way to observe Lent Knights of Columbus offer delectable dinner options	Page 5
Youth to be confirmed April 19..... Did you know? (information about the cross in our sanctuary)	Page 6
Parishioners headed to a mission trip in Peru St. James to host six blood drives this year	Page 7
St. James School news.....	Page 8
Parents reap the benefits of their children's Religious Education classes.....	Page 9
RCIA guides Christians to the Catholic faith	Page 10
Parishioner spotlight: RCIA program unites Falleri family in faith	Page 11

The St. James NetWork team includes Toni Ferro Arthur, editor (with the assistance of The Holy Spirit); Daryl Johnson, Loretta Shea Kline, Mary Rose Lowman, Sharon Stauffacher and members of the parish staff.

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LIBERTY, MO.
PERMIT NO. 117

St. James NetWork
St. James Catholic Church
309 S. Stewart Road
Liberty, Missouri 64068