

St Therese Faith Formation Committee
8-11-09 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Michelle Pellman, Tammy Badger, Sheila Conrads, Cathy Anderson, Twyla Steinberger, Nancy Seaman, Father Hal Barber, John Faundeen, Bridget Dahlin, Mike McInerney, Eric Schmidt, Barbara Lockwood

Not Present: Pat Starr, Karen Heiling

Prayer – led by Father Hal Barber.

Minutes - Approve as written and submitted to the Parish website.

Communication

Pastoral Council Report – Twyla Steinberger indicated that there has not been a meeting since our last one and so nothing to report at this time.

Welcome Task Force – Michelle Pellman reported. Julie Derner is the chair. The group plans to really get going after school begins. They have begun going through the current Parish welcome packet. They are also working on what the actual welcoming process should be. Once they get going the FFC will engage them to see how we can assist their needs.

New Business

Sioux Falls Catholic Schools System Report – Provided by Barbara Lockwood and Mike McInerney. Barbara handed out a packet representing St. Lamberts School including a school improvement plan. Starting this year, the school encompasses four Parishes – St. Lamberts, St. Therese, Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Josephine Bakhita. Pre-school through 6th grade are served. The school belief statement is Community, Faith and Excellence. The school began in 1958 under the old Parish of St. Therese. Barbara has been at the school for ten years. Full-day kindergarten is now supported along with pre-school at St. Therese. An after-school program has also been started which helps out parents schedules. A new pre-school program for those kids just missing the kindergarten age was initiated and includes 14 kids. A before-school program and Title-1 are also offered this year. Title-1 is a Federal grant program serving kids based upon where they live. Thus, not all kids can be served under the grant. Mike McInerney added that the Title-1 grant monies only came about through Barbara's initiative. Mike also asked how many kids are participating in the St. Therese pre-school program. Barbara relayed eight on Tuesday and Thursday while five take part on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Barbara is pleased with the amount of technology available to the school indicating that smart boards are in the classrooms. Class sizes average 17 with the most being 28 and the fewest being 12.

St. Lamberts School participates in Safe Environment. One challenge Barbara passed on was making parents aware of the school and it's benefits. A packet that parents of children attending the school receive was handed out. The packet tries to introduce St. Lamberts School. Barbara also relayed the competition that exists between the pre-schools in the area, especially Apple tree and Messiah New Hope. All parents that have children go through the pre-school program are surveyed and the results have always been overwhelming positive. Tammy Badger commented that when they joined the Parish and asked about the actual cost of the pre-school program only estimates from previous years were provided. Without having the actual cost to budget to, they

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chose a different program. The FFC members felt this situation should be addressed. Pre-school maximums are 16 kids at St. Therese and 20 at St. Lamberts based on space and teachers.

Adding Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Josephine Bakhita Parishes this year will be a big effort. Several welcoming and introduction meetings have already been provided plus an open house held one evening. Parish Feast Days corresponding to the four Parishes will be held throughout the year. A full-time Academic Coordinator is on the wish list as only half-time is supported now. Having more advanced degree faculty is also desirable. Additional K-6 enrollment would be welcome as well as diversity training with the addition of the two new Parishes.

Every other month the St. Lamberts Advisory Board meets. Mike McInerney is on this board and the Sioux Falls Catholic Schools System (SFCSS) Board representing the St. Lamberts School. Sheila Conrads asked if the St. Lamberts Parish-specific school numbers are going down due to aging of the St. Lamberts Parish neighborhood. Mike McInerney replied that is exactly what is occurring, but he expects the neighborhood to rebound as other Parishes have gone through similar transitional periods and the eastside of Sioux Falls is expected to grow.

Barbara posts school notices and happenings in the St. Lamberts and St. Therese bulletins both to inform parishioners and as an outreach tool for prospective parents of school-age children. Catholic Schools Week will be different this year with the four Parishes to cover.

Barbara and Mike explained an organizational chart of the SFCSS. Mike relayed that Bishop Swain is playing a more active role with the schools than previous Bishops. He also relayed that the SFCSS Board agendas have been dominated by budget topics the last two years revolving around the OGHS construction and school consolidation. Tuition assistance funding is derived from Little Flower Foundation dividends and private donations. Investments in all sectors fared very poorly this past year so this year the support for the ten students attending Catholic schools and requiring assistance has been dependent upon private donations.

Mike let the FFC know that the 19th of September will be the OGHS open house. Mike indicated that he recently walked through the school and was very impressed. Sheila Conrads asked if the voucher program could work in SD. Both Mike and Barbara relayed that until the Blaine Amendment is overturned, a voucher program cannot be established to provide assistance to private schools. The amendment is named for a Mr. Blaine who very anti-Catholic, though Mike indicated that there is some general public opposition to a voucher program from the public, too. Barbara informed the FFC that 50% of our Parish income supports the SFCSS. The store certificate program brings in 5% of the value purchased and is a very good program for the schools. The FFC discussed if we need to re-advertise the program at all of the Masses. It was suggested that it be promoted to advertise the Little Flower Foundation as an option for memorial gifts. These gifts would then contribute to an endowment whose proceeds would help tuition assistance be less dependent upon annually soliciting private donations.

A new discussion initiated by Mike on some parishioners telling him they feel disjointed by belonging to the St. Therese Parish while their kids go to St. Lamberts School. He concluded by suggesting better information flow both to and from St. Lamberts would help. Barbara suggested that both Bridget Dahlin and Eric Schmidt visit St. Lamberts religious education classes as one

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way to address Mike's point. Michelle Pellman described how some parents told her children do not need to sign up for Parish religious education if they attend a Catholic school. The FFC discussed the value of building the Parish relationship through our religious education programs. Twyla Steinberger suggested having all, i.e. not just those attending Catholic schools, kids from their respective Parishes help plan Parish feast days. FFC members felt this was a good idea.

Old Business

Survey – Michelle Pellman indicated no report to pass on yet.

Children's Ministries – Bridget Dahlin provided the following report via email:

Totus Tuus:

Details:

Attendance for 1st – 6th grades: 24 (Attendance 7th-12th: 7)

Registration fees: \$25/child

Total amount raised (1st-12th): \$525.00

* 6 students applied for scholarships

Total number of volunteers: 14 volunteers (11 adults/3 youth)

Feedback: No evaluations done at this time.

Director notes:

Aside from the first year that we did Totus Tuus, this is the lowest attendance we have ever had. This is our 4th year inviting the Totus Tuus program into our parish. The program, in my opinion, is superb – it absolutely beats our VBS as far as content goes and combines solid catechesis, music, games, and fun with a great opportunity for our children to see young adults living their faith and building relationships with them. These teams are trained amazingly well and have such an incredible amount to give to the kids. Totus Tuus does offer something for both age groups, which is a plus. It is an expensive program to bring in to our parish and essentially, that is the only reason (and perhaps not even a good one) to reconsider this program's place in our year's line up.

Vacation Bible School:

Details:

Attendance for Pre – 4th grades: 47 children enrolled

Registration fees: \$20/child (\$15/child for volunteers)

Total amount raised: \$875.00

* 2 students applied for scholarships

Total number of volunteers: 23 (11 adults/12 youth)

Feedback: No evaluations done at this time.

Director notes:

This is the first year since I've been here that we tried to do a 5-day Vacation Bible School in the evenings Monday thru Friday. It was do-able but certainly not ideal. All VBS programs are built

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around a 5-day model and hang together in that way, which is why I wanted to try to do a 5-day VBS. However, because we do the evening times (6:00 pm – 8:30 pm), Fridays in the summer are not good – we had a number of children and several volunteers who could not attend the last day. All in all, great week – the kids had a good time and the program was fantastic! Next year I plan to go back to a 4-day VBS and I already have a volunteer to direct the music portion.

Religious Education:

Registration: In progress – slow starting, but it always is – on par.

Volunteers: Still have a need for Catechists in K-5th grades. Most of the volunteer positions for Wednesday evening classes are filled – right now we're still looking for 2nd grade teachers for Wednesday night. Sunday morning teachers is slower in coming together – there are huge gaps in volunteers for this program at this point. We lost the majority of our Sunday AM teachers from this past year – several are moving up with their children in the program, one is no longer a member at St. Therese, one went to college, one is taking a year off, etc. Most of the new recruits prefer Wednesday nights. I think there are only 2 volunteers for Sunday morning that are confirmed at this point. I will address this need at our parent meeting on August 23rd.

Calendar “Extras”:

Aside from regular classes, the K-5th grade program will include the following:

- BYOBP classes for each grade (once throughout the year)
- Children's Adoration class for each grade (once throughout the year)
- Catholic Cranium contest (weekly)
- Cupcake Rosary class in October
- Holy Souls Challenge in November
- St. Nicholas comes in December
- Advent retreat in December
- First Reconciliation retreat in December
- Celebration of First Reconciliation in December
- Family Mardi Gras event in February (youth-led)
- Coloring contest in the spring
- First Communion retreat in April
- Celebration of First Holy Communion in April
- May Crowning in May
- Totus Tuus in June?
- VBS in July

Youth Ministry – Eric Schmidt relayed that he has 10 confirmed Catechists which is workable, though he would appreciate more. His school plan was completed as of today, though the FFC did not review it. A question was raised as to how many chaperones were provided on the Wild Water West trip and what is the Diocesan guideline. Eric responded the Diocese doesn't have real firm guidelines, but one chaperone per eight students is the general rule. He had two for the Wild Water West trip thus exceeding the guideline which we have generally done to date for other events, too.

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Adult Ministries - Sheila Conrads shared that the Adult Prayer Group meets the 3rd Monday of each month and the Faith Sharing Group meets the last Monday of the month.

Cathy Anderson reported on what she has learned by asking what other Parishes have done for adults. Christ the King responded that they don't do any thing specific. St. Michaels indicated that use special topics. Cathy came in contact with Dr. Chris Burgwald, the Diocesan Catechist, who relayed a number of suggestions including:

- Poll your Parish to find out what they want, what days work, etc.
- Advent and Lent are good first year topics.
- Bribe with food and snacks.
- Offer child care.
- Use Confirmation students for service work.

Cathy Davis at Holy Spirit is yet to be engaged, but phone tag has occurred. St. Lamberts stated that CDs have gone over well there. Several FFC members indicated they like this approach.

Mike McInerney relayed that Bishop Swain will now be doing all of the TV masses.

Vocation Ministries – Twyla Steinberger and John Faundeen have not had a chance to get going yet and thus no report is provided.

Closing Prayer – led by Twyla Steinberger.

Next Meeting is 9-8-09 at 6:30PM