

## **Religious Education + Youth Ministry = Faith Formation** *By Susan Collins*

Some of you may remember the term CCD, or you may still use the term for religious education for children. Remember what it stands for? The answer is Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. The Church did such a good job to teach us this term that we are still having a difficult time of growing beyond it. After the Second Vatican Council, the Church has been emphasizing a different set of words in relation to faith formation or religious education. The catechism is a written summary of the Church's understanding of God's word as revealed through Scripture and Tradition. It is the WHAT of our Catholic belief. Catechesis is the process of transmitting the gospel and is the HOW to help us understand. The term CCD refers to something that one completes after a given time of study. Catechesis is a broader mission of the Church to proclaim the gospel to all people: adults, youth, and children. It is a lifelong task. Our religious education for youth here at Notre Dame combines with youth ministry to become a well-rounded faith formation program. Even the fun and games have a catechetical component!

### **National Catholic Youth Conference**

Last November, eight youth and two adult chaperones traveled about sixteen hours by bus to Kansas City. The highlight was the Eucharistic Procession through the streets of Kansas City from the Sprint Center to the Convention Center with over 20,000 Catholic youth from all over the United States! The next NCYC is in November 2011 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

### **March for Life in Washington, DC**

In January, thirteen participants from Notre Dame joined the Diocese of Knoxville Youth Ministry and Chattanooga for Life on another all night bus trip. They visited the Holocaust Museum, celebrated Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine, stayed at Catholic University of America, and joined a pro-life march down the streets with a few hundred thousand people!

### **Search 40 in Morristown**

In February, six youth experienced a weekend retreat called Search. It is a Search for Christian Maturity put on by the Five Rivers Deanery of the Diocese of Knoxville. Four of our high school youth were participants and two were on the leadership team. Many weeks of planning make up the preparation for this weekend experience. With the completion of our new building, Notre Dame will be eligible to host a Search Retreat weekend next year.

### **Roller Skating Family Night**

In February, our parish hosted a roller skating party at Hot Wheels sponsored by the Ganz Fund. There was no cost for our youth, and it included shoe rental and pizza. Over 100 youth and adults enjoyed this event.

### **Sleepless in Pigeon Forge**

In March, David Place, Dylan Jones, and Ethan Lott, with chaperone Susan Collins participated in an overnight Diocesan event at Pigeon Forge Community Center with over 150 others. Activities included swimming, bowling, basketball, volleyball, ultimate frisbee, foosball, ping-pong, racquetball, walleyball, card games, board games, and videos. Mass was celebrated by Fr. Chris Riehl followed by adoration and confession.

### **Confirmation Class**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of April, ten youth (Savannah Ayers, Alexa & Gabby DiBella, Brennan Hollowell, Daniel Michaud, Mary Ann Murphy, Marshall Nagy, Brandon Van Leer, Ivan Vazquez, and Patti Woods) will be attending a confirmation retreat at the Oaks Retreat Center in Greene County. Their catechists are Lauren and Wes Lott. Confirmation is scheduled for Tuesday, May 18, at 6 p.m. with Bishop Richard Stika.

### **First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion**

On April 24, twenty-two young people will be making their first confession at 10 a.m. followed by a luncheon. First Holy Communion will be on Saturday, May 1, at the 5 p.m. Mass. Sandy Alter, Alicin Sahr, and Irma Vazquez are the catechists.

### **High School Senior Recognition and Brunch**

On May 16, our seniors will be recognized by the Knights of Columbus during the 11 a.m. Mass. The Council of Catholic Women will provide a brunch for the seniors and their families. The students will wear their cap and gown during Mass. Notre Dame has ten graduating seniors.

### **Summer Service Project**

Each Tuesday In June, our high school students are invited to attend morning Mass followed by a day of service. Service projects will vary each week including service in the community as well as here at Notre Dame. Lunch is provided.

### **Vacation Bible School**

All Wednesday nights during the month of June from 6 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. will be Vacation Bible School. This is open to youth of all ages with adults and high school students needed for various activities: crafts, session leaders, food, games, etc. More info to come!

### **Youth Leadership Institute**

In July, the Diocese of Knoxville conducts a youth leadership institute. This year it will be held at the Oaks Retreat Center in Greene County. Notre Dame has sent a male and a female high school student, each year. The date is Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> until Thursday the 29<sup>th</sup>.

