

Parish Directors: Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers

Wouldn't it be nice to have all your catechists in place early every year and then have some waiting in the wings? Here are some tips to recruit catechists and to establish an on-going pool of people who will be satisfied in their ministry and will want to return:

- **Think twos for each group.** Recruit aides to work with an experienced catechist. They will learn and become comfortable as the year progresses. Be sure to place them with catechists who will encourage them as they go along. For those who find a whole year too much of a time commitment, take a unit or semester approach. This will provide children and young people with a variety of witnesses and methods. Ask an experienced catechist to mentor a new catechist. Meet with both of them in the beginning and suggest ways this relationship might work, such as, planning together, sharing discipline tips, or ideas for involving children in the content.
- **Be honest and upfront about the commitment** and your expectations for planning, formation, and participation in the community of catechists. While some recruits may go along with your expectations, others may feel they were not informed and feel misused. Many of these people will have a short term because they will eventually feel overwhelmed.
- **Always wear your recruitment hat.** When you meet people who you think will be good catechists, draw them into special events or catechist formation sessions.
- **Be informed about new parishioners.** Call or visit them and talk about the program and the wonderful people in it. Single

people and empty nesters, who are new to a parish, are often looking for a way to connect with others.

- **Be on the lookout for people with special talents**, such as musicians, storytellers, or artists and craftspeople, and draw them into catechist formation sessions to share. Or, plan ways they can be involved around liturgical and seasonal sessions.
- **Know your catechists.** Have face to face meetings with new recruits to find out where they would best use their talents. Continue to get to know catechists throughout the year. Find out what is happening both in their sessions with children and in their lives. Call them by name. Be available for them before and after sessions.