

The Ascension Weekly

November 19, 2017

“My Testimony: Why I Became a Religious Education Catechist”

Each year, the call goes out for new volunteers who feel they may be called by God to become a catechist at our parish – a teacher to help guide our young students in grades K-8 in understanding the essentials of our Catholic faith. In this multi-part series, we will read the testimonies of the superstar volunteers who are the current catechists of our parish. Perhaps we will be inspired by their stories to consider that we, too, might one day be called to this ministry.

Joan Adesanya, Catechist, Grades 3-4:

Ten years ago when the call went out for catechists, I don't know why, but something urged me to stand up and answer that call and since then I have not been able to say no.

I feel like this is the least I can do to contribute to spreading the good news of our Lord which is what we are all called to do as Catholics and Christians. It has been fulfilling and rewarding for me just by saying "yes" to Jesus, I am trusting Him to continue to do the work of teaching His children be faithful disciples.

Jeana Barber, Catechist, Grade 7:

I first “volunteered” to be a catechist at the request of Fr. Calis, a previous pastor of Ascension. As you know, it's difficult to tell your priest no and so my journey began. For three years, I taught 3rd grade. After that, I took a short break from helping out with Religious Education to volunteer with the new youth ministry ACT (Ascension Catholic Teens). A few years later, when the call once again went out at the end of Masses asking for help with the Religious Education program, I fought the urge to

sign up to help. RE is a big responsibility and requires time to plan lessons and be at church for a few hours each Sunday – did I really want to give up that much of my time? The next week the same announcement and the same thought process. The third week I finally said to the Holy Spirit (who had been in my ear for two weeks now), OKAY, I will volunteer. So, I signed up to help with 8th grade religious education classes. I discovered that I love this age group of children! They have many questions about their faith and I like helping them discover their faith. I love being there when a student has their “ah ha” moment regarding the Church, God, Jesus, and their faith. Currently, I teach 7th grade RE. I enjoy having my own class and the connection I make with the kids. I also help Elaine Mitchell and Greg Rozanski with the Wednesday night sessions of Confirmation prep.

Ascension provides each catechist with a teacher's manual for their appropriate grade as well as handouts that can be used with lessons. As a catechist, I have the flexibility to plan my own lessons along with the physical resources I need to do my “job” well. Greg and Father Larry are also always willing to help.

Being a catechist is very rewarding. I get to see the kids grow in their faith and share that experience with them. I enjoy meeting other catechists and sharing ideas with them and love that I can contribute something to our community of Ascension. I would recommend this vocation to anyone that likes kids and being part of something bigger. Parents play a big part in educating their children in their faith; as a catechist, I can fill in some of the missing pieces and even learn from the kids when they share some of the traditions they have in their families.

(To Be Continued...)