

The Ascension Weekly

December 3, 2017

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

In this second of three segments, we continue to read the testimonies of our parish catechists. Perhaps we will be inspired by their stories to consider that we, too, might one day be called to this ministry.

Elaine Mitchell, Catechist, Grade 8

My name is Elaine Mitchell. 2017 is the beginning of my ninth year as a catechist at Ascension. I began this wonderful journey with the 1st grade in 2009 when I heard the request for people to discern whether they were being called to this ministry. I made my decision at that very moment. I loved teaching the young children as their hearts were filled with the love of Jesus and their minds were like sponges – they wanted to know everything about God. As my reward, I realized each week that they too brought joy to my heart and a smile to my face and I was so blessed to have the opportunity to teach them. During this first year, I also helped with the 8th Grade Confirmation Sessions.

The following year the 8th grade needed a co-teacher and, after enjoying my time immensely with them the previous year, I felt the Holy Spirit was calling me to teach this grade. I love the energy of the teenagers. I love how much they questioned everything about their faith and I love that I was (more often than not) able to answer those questions and, when I couldn't, I knew I could send them to a higher power (the DRE or Pastor) to help them. What I didn't realize was how much my knowledge of the Catholic Church and my faith were also going to grow!

As a revert to the Catholic faith, my main reason for wanting to be a catechist was to be able to connect

with the kids and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit teach them the things I didn't know (or remember) from my teenage years. As an adult, I realized that I had not been catechized very well in my teenage years. I hope and pray that I am giving them a foundation that will help them grow in their faith -- even if it's just one seed that the Holy Spirit plants through me and they remember.

If you've ever considered this ministry, please continue to do so. If you feel the same pull that I felt all those years ago, please pray on it and consider volunteering. The time that I devote to teaching brings such fruitfulness to me as well as the children. After all these years, I know that the rewards I have received are far greater than the time I give.

Teresa Bauer, Catechist, Grades 3-4

My name is Teresa Bauer, and this is my second year teaching 3/4th grade CCD. For as long as I can remember, I have wanted to be around kids. I always wanted to hold the baby, was the "mom" when we played "house," babysat all the neighbors! It took me awhile to realize that teaching was the right career path for me. My first year teaching CCD was also my first year as a teacher for DCPS. Teaching CCD was a natural step for me. I teach kindergarten in public school, but I am not able to really discuss my personal faith as a Catholic with my students. Becoming a catechist at Ascension was an obvious step for me to fill that void in my teaching. One of the things I really enjoy being able to teach 3/4th graders about is the rosary. Praying the rosary was something that my family did together, particularly during times of upset between my sisters and myself. It's amazing to be able to pray the rosary with the 3/4th graders; they take some serious tests this year (PAARC anyone?) and being able to provide a religious meditation to help them achieve success is very rewarding.