



Diocese of Austin

Office of the Bishop

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To: Pastors, Directors of Religious Education and Vacation Bible School Directors
From: Bishop Gregory M. Aymond
Date: February 3, 2007

Many parishes have inquired about a Catholic Bible Study program.

I did some research and am pleased to provide you with “Vacation Bible School” Resources.

I believe that these resources will be of assistance to you as you continue to search for Catholic programs to enrich our young people during the summer.

Enclosed you will also find a flyer from one of the companies.

As a reminder, all volunteers in our VBS programs must be in compliance with the diocesan Ethics and Integrity in Ministry policies. This includes completion of an application for ministry, so that a criminal record check can be completed, and attendance at a Protecting God’s Children workshop. Information on how to schedule a Protecting God’s Children workshop is available at our diocesan Website and in each week’s Friday e-pistle. A 30 day notice is requested, so that we can obtain a trainer to accommodate your schedule.

Also, the diocese does not recommend that middle-school students be allowed to participate in unsupervised care of children. This would include such responsibilities as taking children to the bathroom and providing nursery care. Middle school students who participate in volunteer work with children should be supervised by an “EIM-certified” adult over 21 years of age at all times. Since this is a serious responsibility, and a liability issue, the adults in charge of an event (the pastor, DRE, youth minister, etc.) are responsible for the actions of a minor who is assisting in a church event. This recommendation is based on recognition that most middle-school students are not sufficiently mature and have not had enough life experiences or skills-training to know how to respond in an emergency situation or to monitor a child’s inappropriate behavior. Therefore, middle-school students who participate in VBS, nursery care or other ministries as “junior helpers” do not need to attend a Protecting God’s Children workshop. High school students’ roles should be based on the maturity level of the high school student. If the high school student has direct, unsupervised care of children, he or she must be treated as an adult and be “EIM-certified” as well. Some will be critical of this stance, saying this is “over-reacting.” But I would rather protect God’s children than be sorry later. I hope that you share my sentiments.

Encl.

“VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL” RESOURCES

Growing with the Saints, Saint Patrick and the Holy Trinity, 1 864 599-5697 or www.growingwiththesaints.com

Catholic Kids Net, Circus of Stars: Spotlight on the Father, 1 877 KIDSNET

Traditions of Roman Catholic Homes, Following Jesus through the Church Year, 1144 Mt. Torrey Rd., Lyndhurst, VA 22952

Liguori, Son Treasure Island (Catholic kit), 1 800 325-9521

Harcourt Religion Publishers, Fiesta (Catholic edition), 1 800 922-7696

Creative Communications for the Parish, Treasure Cove (Catholic kit), 1 800 325-9414

Catholic Heritage Curricula, The Household of God, 1 800 490-7713