

CEC E-Newsletter

Catholic Education Center, llc

November—December 2010

www.catholiceducationcenter.com



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Thanksgiving and Prayers of Thankfulness

It's hard to imagine that it is already November, and Thanksgiving is right around the corner! For many years, Thanksgiving for me was a time of stress trying to prepare the perfect turkey, impressing my family with a beautiful table and hoping for good weather for a game of football in the back yard. Sometimes, the hustle and bustle of holidays can make us lose sight of what is most important.

As a child, I remember learning about Pilgrims and how the American Indians taught them all that was necessary to survive and sharing a meal together. Depending where you were raised, the location of this feast is disputed (Berkley Plantation is impressive, but I learned about Plymouth Plan-

tation). Of course, there was always the obligatory dramatization.

As a Catholic educator, I want to impress so much more than this upon my students! First, we are all pilgrims on our journey to our heavenly home. It is a good time to talk about what is necessary for our journey and our hopes for eternal beatitude. It is a good time to discuss the many aides God has provided us: His Revelation, the life of grace, the Church, the sacraments, the moral life and the many witnesses of the saints.

In a special way, it is important to focus on the Eucharist. "Eucharistia" in Greek translates as "Thanksgiving." We should be thankful for Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross and His

gift of Himself in Holy Communion.

The Mass is the perfect prayer, incorporating all forms of prayer (I use "ACTS" to remember: Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Supplication). So often in our prayers we focus on supplication (asking for things for ourselves and others) and we fail to offer prayers of thanksgiving. We have much to be thankful for; ask your students! They'll remind you of the many things that we take for granted.

This Thanksgiving, I suggest taking the opportunity to look at the many gifts we have received—especially those from God—offer prayers of thanks, consider what we can share with others, and if possible, to go to Mass on Thanksgiving.

Suggested Websites

Advent Activities:

http://www.catholicmom.com/advent_kids.htm

Christmas Activities:

<http://www.silk.net/RelEd/christmas.htm>

Advent Prayers:

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?s=57>

Vatican Museum:

http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Visite.html

Upcoming On Site Training Opportunities

During the Spring Semester, Colette Lienhard will be teaching EDUC 602: The Catechetical Tradition on Saturday mornings (10:00-noon) at Christendom Graduate School (Alexandria, VA). This three credit Education course provides students with an appreciation of catechesis through

the lens of Church History. The same course content is offered online through the Catholic Education Center, LLC, in CAT202-204 (The Teaching Church, Parts 1-3) and participants who have taken CAT202-204 may "upgrade" this coursework for academic credit. For information, call: 703-658-4304.

To book on site training at your parish or school, call Colette Lienhard at the Catholic Education Center, LLC at 703-785-2319 or book online at: www.catholiceducationcenter.com

Advent in the Classroom

It is not uncommon for teachers to be surprised that Advent is suddenly upon us. It seems like we had just begun the year, then it was Columbus day, Thanksgiving and all of a sudden it's Advent!

Advent is the beginning of the Church year, and is a penitential season. During Advent, we prepare for the coming of Christ—in His Nativity, at the Second Coming, and into our hearts.

There are a great number of Advent activities we can do to help us prepare for the coming of Christ. We can read the Old Testament stories and prophecies that foreshadow Christ and make Jesse Tree ornaments, we can light candles on a Advent wreath, or open "doors" on an Advent Calendar and say the suggested

prayers. Younger children can do good deeds to earn "straws" to cushion Baby Jesus' manger or become Advent Angels focusing on charity. There are so many things we can do!

It is not uncommon to "interrupt" our curriculum (or at least rearrange the chapters in our texts) so that we can spend time on Advent. I recommend looking at your textbook and calendar to ensure you can cover all the content; perhaps you will only be able to spend portions of each class during Advent on this liturgical season.

During the Advent season there are some wonderful feasts that are worthy of instruction and celebration. The Feast of St. Nicholas is on December 6

(often celebrated with the filling of shoes or stockings with treats—consider holy cards or medals). This is a great opportunity to discuss the relationship between St. Nicholas and Santa Claus—and the generosity of Christ. December 8 is the Feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception (not to be confused with the Virginal Conception of Christ). This is a Holy Day of Obligation, and the patronal feast of the United States of America! On December 12, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In this beautiful image, Mary is with child, and under this title, she is entrusted with the Pro Life movement.

In the Suggested Websites section of this newsletter (page 1), we have provided some wonderful links for educators for Advent and Christmas. Enjoy!

A New Look for the Catholic Education Center, LLC

Catholic Education Center, LLC
Your link to Catholic Education Resources!

Home Page
Catechist Formation
Online Classroom
Onsite Training
Upcoming Events
Arlington
Grand Rapids
Knoxville
Peoria
Teacher Resources
Classroom Materials
Consulting Services
Web Hosting Services
Book & Gift Store
Contact Us

Home Page
The Catholic Education Center, LLC, strives to meet your Catholic Education needs by providing:

- Online Faith Formation Courses** (Approved for "Catechist Certification" in the Dioceses of Arlington, Grand Rapids, Knoxville and Peoria) - **check to see if you qualify for discounts and scholarships!** Click on Online Courses for details! Many of these courses can be "upgraded" for academic credit.
- On Site Training:** Speaking engagements, conferences and retreats to meet your specific needs;
- Consulting Services:** for Parishes and Religious Education Programs;
- Hosting Services:** for Catholic and Education based e-groups and e-classrooms. We also design websites and blogs to meet your needs.
- Reference Materials for Teachers and Catechists** through our online Book Store and links to important websites and documents that every Catholic Teacher should know;
- Links to FREE Classroom Materials and other great free offers that are helpful when teaching**

Please enjoy our website and visit it often!

Colette Lienhard, Director
Catholic Education Center, LLC

The Catholic Education Center, LLC, has launched its new website with a fresh new look and lots of great features for Catholic Educators. We hope you will visit our website and take advantage of the FREE teacher resources and classroom materials. We also have links for important information in the Dioceses of Arlington, Grand Rapids, Knoxville and Peoria.

In addition, the Catholic Education Center, LLC, has created a new online classroom for its courses, which is attractive and user-friendly. If you are considering taking an online course, you can preview the classroom in the "user manual" found at the top of the Online Classroom, linked through our website.

As we continue to expand and offer resources for teachers, we welcome your suggestions and resources to be shared to be added to our site, just select Contact Us in the menu!

www.catholiceducationcenter.com

The Catholic Education Center, LLC, hosts online courses!

The Catholic Education Center, LLC, specializes in online catechist formation courses, which allow teachers and catechists to learn more about the Faith and obtain hours for Catechist Certification in various dioceses.

It is important for teachers of the Faith to continue their formation; finding opportunities, however, can be difficult. Finding conferences and talks to attend may be as simple as looking in your parish bulletin but it is usually much more difficult to find the time! Teachers and volunteers are busy! In addition, finding child care or worrying about parking add to the challenge. Online education really is a great way to learn from the comfort of your home at a time and speed that is convenient for you!

Many worry that taking an online course requires advanced experience with computers. The Catholic Education Center, LLC, has recently changed online classrooms to a more user-friendly format. A pictorial user's manual has been created to guide beginners through the online classroom (from how to get on to the internet to getting into the classroom, to all the various features of the site). We are also available Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30 to assist registrant—either by telephone or email.

Online courses have a great deal of flexibility. "Lectures" are read, and quizzes immediately review and assess the participant's knowledge of the course material. Forums (message boards) allow teachers to share their Faith and classroom ideas—this is a great way to see what other teachers are doing and expand your teaching methods and lessons.

The Catholic Education Center, LLC, also hosts online courses. Currently we host online courses for the Christendom Graduate School, which is building its Masters in Theology (in Catechetics) online. Many of these courses are Education Courses, which may be taken by teachers and used for licensure.

Colette Lienhard, the Director of the Catholic Education Center, LLC, is also an adjunct professor at Christendom Graduate School. She has worked with Christendom to "upgrade" some of the Catholic Education Center, LLC's, Catechist Formation

courses for credit through Christendom Graduate School. By upgrading courses, which can be used for catechist certification, students can then also use them for teacher licensure, since they are Education Credits. Currently nine Catechist Formation Courses can be upgraded for credit: **EDUC 630: Teaching the Faith (Part 1)** upgrades CAT101: Catholic Education: What Every Teacher Needs to Know, CAT102: The Creed, and CAT103: The Sacraments; **EDUC 630: Teaching the Faith (Part 2)** upgrades CAT104: The Moral Life, CAT105: The Life of Prayer, CAT201: The General Directory for Catechesis; and **EDUC 602: The Catechetical Tradition** upgrades CAT202: The Teaching Church (Part 1), CAT203: The Teaching Church (Part 2) and CAT104: The Teaching Church (Part 3).

Christendom Graduate School also offers other courses from its Masters program online. This Spring course offerings include: THEO590: Introduction to Theology (Prof. Joseph Arias); THEO603: The Holy Spirit and Ecclesiology (Prof. Joseph Arias); EDUC603: Catechetical Norms and Methods (Prof. Colette Lienhard).

The Catholic Education Center, LLC, also hosts courses for other educators. If you wish to offer an online education forum for your students, please contact the Catholic Education Center, LLC, and we can build a website or e-classroom to custom fit your needs. Whether you want a class for an individual grade/subject, or you want to create a catechist training program for your parish that every catechist can attend, we can create an interactive learning environment. We also build websites and can train you to maintain them—so you can be freed from relying on others, being dependent on expensive mailings and spending too much money on hard-copies. Online forums are a great way to save money and reach more people! Let Technology work for you!

www.catholiceducationcenter.com

The Catholic Education Center, LLC, plans to expand its course offerings this next year!
To offer suggestions for courses,
please email us at: catholiceducationcenter@yahoo.com

Online Courses:

CAT101:

Catholic Education:
What Every Teacher
Needs to Know

CAT102:

The Creed

CAT103:

The Sacraments

CAT104:

The Moral Life

CAT105:

The Life of Prayer

CAT201:

The General
Directory for
Catechesis

CAT202:

The Teaching Church
(Part 1)

CAT203:

The Teaching Church
(Part 2)

CAT204:

The Teaching Church
(Part 3)

CAT205:

Tools for Teachers

Watch for new

courses soon!

Christmas is a Season!

Teaching and celebrating Christmas in the classroom can be a real challenge. The Christmas break for most schools and religious education programs often means that classes don't actually meet during the Christmas Season. Many teachers compensate by teaching and celebrating Christmas during the last class before the break. Unfortunately, this often does not allow for adequate time for Advent—or for Christmas.

Christmas is more than December 25th, it is a season that begins with Christmas Vigil, and extends through Epiphany to the Baptism of our Lord (this year, Jan 9, 2011). During this time, we focus on the Nativity or our Lord, and marvel at His miraculous birth and self-gift.

Unfortunately, many children only see Christmas as a time of receiving. We are blessed to live in such a benevolent society. However, the message of Christmas in the media, and in the minds of many children, is that Santa Claus will come and bring great gifts. They seem to have it all figured out—that if you behave, or at least don't get caught, then you will be bestowed by gifts from Santa, made by his elves. My five year old niece summed it up quite well, saying, "I ask for small things for my birthday, and save the big things for Christmas, because Mom and Dad don't have to pay for them." Quite clever.

It's difficult to teach the joy of Christmas without addressing Santa, and the reality that for many children, Christmas is about what's under the tree. We've seen efforts made, with images of Santa kneeling at the manger of the Christ Child, or the story of St. Nicholas being told as the foundation for Santa Claus. In addition, we tend to celebrate in the classroom with a Christmas party of sorts, emphasizing the joy of Christmas, often with treats, sometimes with gifts.

My favorite Christmas celebrations include Nativity Plays. No matter how complex or who the stars are, Nativity plays are truly memorable, and are catechetical by their nature. I encourage you to read the Nativity accounts from the Bible (there are two: Matthew: 1:18-2:23, Luke 2:1-40), and have your students discuss them, make artistic renditions or act them out.

When teaching on Christmas, we can spend some time discussing the various traditions—like the Christmas Tree given to us by St. Bonaventure, the Nativity Scene, given to use by St. Francis of Assisi, the Candy Cane as a symbol for Jesus, and other great traditions—from cookies to feasts, to carols and plays, from gifts to charities.

When celebrating Christmas as a class, the temptation will be to celebrate before Christmas. Is it possible to celebrate during Christmas Season itself? Not only is this liturgically correct, but it gives the students something to look forward to when they return to class.

Christmas is a good time to thank God for our many blessings, including family and friends, the gifts we receive, and most especially for the gift of His Divine Son.

As a child, I remember learning the Christmas song, The Little Drummer Boy, who brought his talent as a gift to the Christ Child. Perhaps this year, you can challenge your students to use their talents and good behavior as a gift to Christ. Teach them the Morning Offering, to encourage them to offer their sacrifice of love to our Lord, in return for His great sacrifice of Love.

*O Jesus,
through the Immaculate Heart of Mary,
I offer You my prayers,
works, joys and sufferings of this day
for all the intentions
of Your Sacred Heart,
in union with
the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
throughout the world,
in reparation for my sins,
for the intentions
of all my relatives and friends
and in particular
for the intentions of the Holy Father.
Amen.*

Christmas is a wonderful time to learn the greatness of giving, not just physical presents, but spiritual gifts, as well: prayers for those in need; sharing the Faith; giving love to our families; and love to God in return for the Love He has given us, especially in the Christ Child.

Have a Blessed Christmas
and a Holy New Year
From the Catholic Education
Center, LLC

The Catholic Education Center, LLC will be closed from
December 17, 2010-January 3, 2011.



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