

Stories of Shared Ministry: Children and Youth

By Mary Gibson

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When I came to Trinity in 1984 I was welcomed with open arms by many of our long time members. Little did I know they were just happy to have a “young” person around to help with all the events. I was the youth of the parish and was asked to help in many ways. Those friends I made were such a great example of service and shared ministry. Over the years I have volunteered in many ministries at Trinity but the one that has held my heart, helped me grow spiritually and continues today is my involvement with Trinity’s children and youth.

After joining Trinity, it wasn’t long before I was asked to help out in the church school. In those days we had a traditional church school program with very few children. Lillian Guthrie and I provided a program for five children at a round table in the guild hall. Over the years I have seen the program grow and change. As the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) program started for our youngest members, I maintained the traditional program until our children became youth group members. The transition to the CGS program took several years while those of us who are catechists were trained, materials were lovingly made and our church school building was reclaimed which had been rented by a Montessori school. Thanks to many, especially Carrie Brothers and Nancy Cline, the CGS program was started and is thriving today.

Training to be a Catechist was a long, wonderful journey. It was a time of learning and spiritual growth for me that continues in the atrium today. I am encouraged every Sunday by the spiritual focus of the children as they listen to presentations of parables, learn about the Eucharist or plan a prayer service. Even at their young age their insight into what Jesus is telling us is amazing.

Along with being a catechist I have volunteered on the Children and Youth Council since it was established. Our mission is to make sure that the children and youth are fully included members of our church today. We try to integrate the children and youth in all areas of ministry and encourage them to volunteer in a ministry that they enjoy. They have volunteered their time and talent for the Alternative Christmas Market and helped Angels Bearing Gifts, a community organization that provides gifts to adults with disabilities who have little or no family support by decorating gift bags. I am filled with joy when I see our young people helping with Dinner in the Park, playing games at an intergenerational game night or square dancing with friends of all ages. We are definitely a church who believes that the children and youth are important members of our parish family.

When I think of shared ministry I think of community, common interest, and joy. When we come together to make things happen, when we “share” our common interest or learn something new God’s light shines in our church and our community. I have always tried to find ways to reach out to others and help when and where there are needs. It’s what I was taught and what I try to share with the children and youth of Trinity.