

Small Christian Communities Newsletter

Office of Worship, Diocese of Belleville, 2620 Lebanon Ave., Belleville, IL 62221

Build Your House on Rock with Small Christian Communities

“The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.”

Matthew 7:25

What sort of footing is your house — your life — built on? Were you like the wise man who built his house on rock or the foolish one who built his on sand? Living in a world that is in a constant state of change, like shifting sand, people seek stability in their lives and solid footing underneath. Our lives are so busy we seldom have time for family meals or vacations. We pass each other like “ships in the night” and yet deep down we recognize the growing need and desire to have concrete experiences of community.

Recently, the Diocesan Core Committee for small Christian communities spent the morning in a “listening session” at St. Joseph Parish



in Benton with representatives from each deanery in the diocese. It was an opportunity to hear the dreams, desires, strengths and challenges of small Christian communities in their parishes.

We took the information shared with us very seriously. Small church communities, serving as basic units of the parish were never more needed than they are today to animate and support the life of the parish.

Based on our conversation, we feel it is important to continue to offer you ideas

and suggestions of resources that can be used in parishes. It is also important for you to know that there are people available to help if there are questions. The diocesan core committee is happy to assist your parish in whatever way they can. Call on them if you need them. Their names will be included later in this newsletter. Please continue to support and nurture each other in this ministry.

We believe that small Christian communities help provide the solid “footing” or foundation that people seek.

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Fall 2009 Suggestions

- “Impact” Series from RENEW International
- *Quest* from the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut
- *Six Weeks with the Bible* from Loyola Press



In this newsletter, you will find the suggestions we have for Fall 2009.

Based on the needs of the people in your community, you will have a variety of options from which to choose.

For the fall season, each parish will be responsible for ordering their own materials.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Office of Worship at 235-9601 or at worship@diobelle.org or any member of the diocesan core committee.

The “Impact” Series — RENEW International

The first resource we would like to recommend is the *Impact* Series. Created by RENEW International, *Impact* is designed to connect faith to the fullest possible range of human concerns and personal issues. Participants are led by this series not only to prayerful reflection and fruitful sharing, but beyond to concrete actions that

positively influence attitudes and behaviors.

At the heart of the Series lies the social inquiry process: Observe>Judge>Act. Each book in the series proposes a set of sessions, so that across a period of time the participants have time to observe, to bring the fruit of these observations to their sharing; to measure these

against the Gospel; to reflect on how the Gospel calls them to respond, and to commit themselves to concrete actions both as individuals and as a group. The time between the meetings serves for putting these commitments into action, and for making further observations in preparation for the upcoming meeting.
(continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| “Impact” Series | 1-3 |
| <i>Quest</i> | 3 |
| Six Weeks with the Bible | 4 |
| Diocesan Committee Members | 4 |
| Suggested Timeline | 4 |

“Impact” Series

The *Impact* Series is divided into four families of human and spiritual concerns: **Spiritual Awakenings; Faith in Daily Life; Discipleship in Action** and **Sacramental Pathways**

The offerings are as follows:

SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS

At Prayer with Mary

John Phalen, CSC & James Posluszny, CSC
Presents a very accessible image of Mary, as one who strove to live as God asked. In reflecting on her true character — her deep faith, her humanness, her poverty, and her struggles — we are inspired to follow Mary’s example.

(7 sessions) Code: 16 IS \$3.50

Awakening the Mystic Within

Frank X. Tuoti

A clear, inspiring introduction to contemplative prayer that will fire the hearts and stir the souls of those beginning the contemplative journey. Learn more about this refreshing, meditative way to connect with the Spirit.

(6 sessions) Code: 17 IS \$3.50

FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

Making God Visible: Parenting Young Children

Kathleen O’Connell Chesto

Provides an opportunity to pray over and share the realities of parenting today with the age-old wisdom of the gospel. Excellent support for parents, grandparents, and others who want to share with children gospel values that often run counter to those promoted in our world.

(6 sessions) Code: 23 IS \$3.50



Finding God@Work

Gregory F. Augustine Pierce

In a convenient pocket size (8¼ x 5¼). Six faith-sharing sessions guide the participants

on a quest: can God be found at work? If so, how? The book encourages readers to consider their experience of work, both positively and negatively. These realities are then set in counterpoint to relevant passages from the Bible, and to principles of Catholic social teaching.

(6 Sessions) Code: 25 IS \$6.95

Make Media Work for You

June Dwyer Castano

TV, the Internet, Radio, Magazines... Find yourself complaining about the endless feed of information and images? The author presents many practical initiatives for small groups to maximize the media’s potential in the Christian life, and to recognize media as a communication tool used by people of both good and evil intent.

(6 sessions) Code: 13 IS \$3.50

Grieving the Death of a Loved One

Elizabeth M. Collier, M.S.

Contains topics related to the stages of grief and its emotional and spiritual aspects. Personal stories, including the author’s own loss of her husband when she was 29, illustrate the topics and are related to readings and suggested actions.

(6 sessions) Code: 24 IS \$3.50

Nurturing Our Commitment: The Early Married Years

Maureen S. Hagan

Encourages couples in the early years of marriage to cultivate their relationship through the fruitful sharing of feelings and emotions. Couples will discover how the graces from this sacrament flow through them as they live out their marriage vows.

(6 sessions) Code: 20 IS \$3.50

Strengthening Family Life

Catherine Martin

Offers hands-on exercises in prayer, reflection, and discovery of family life. Sessions progress from “Your Family” through “Families with Strengths You Admire,” ending with “Families Around the Globe.” (6 sessions) Code: 4 IS \$3.50

The World of Work

Edmund Flood

A close look at the complex reality of work — demand for increased skills, job insecurity, stress and work-family conflicts—to develop a genuinely Christian response.

(7 sessions) Code: 7 IS \$3.50

DISCIPLESHIP IN ACTION

Beginnings: Human & World Issues

Mary C. McGuinness &

Thomas A. Kleissler

Explores the integration of faith and action — Christian responsibility — in a variety of settings and situations. Acts as an excellent springboard for faith sharing and a vibrant call to action in various arenas of our world, including family, civics, work, and society.

(8 sessions) Code: 1 IS \$3.50

Ending Hunger in God’s World

Art Simon

A comprehensive look at hunger in today’s society, including its many causes and misconceptions about why people are hungry. Explores ways to help the hungry, and addresses contradictions between God’s intention for the world and widespread hunger. (6 sessions) Code: 8 IS \$3.50

Reflections on “Dead Man Walking”

Helen Prejean, CSJ & Lucille Sarrat

Coauthor Sister Helen Prejean, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and best-selling author of *Dead Man Walking*, presents a compelling exploration of the death penalty. Catholic social teaching and Jesus’ example serve as the lens for reflection. Popular with students, as well as with adults.

(6 sessions) Code: 21 IS \$3.50

Embracing Life by

Michael T. Mannion

A beautiful reminder that each person and all creation is sacred. Raises various life issues, such as abortion, euthanasia, domestic violence, capital punishment, and ecological responsibility, and calls us to respond in faith.

(6 sessions) Code: 15 IS \$3.50

Civic Responsibility: What’s It All About?

Mary Ann & Steve Jeselson

Encourages us to become more well informed about the important issues that touch our lives, and more importantly, impels us to take action in a wide variety of ways. (6 sessions) Code: 5 IS \$3.50

Beyond Black & White

Danny Duncan Collum

Unfortunately, racial issues still threaten the peace of our homes, communities, and nation. The author asks us to look at how Scripture can guide us in dealing with racial issues, and offers a reminder that religion

Series from RENEW has “Impact” on life

crosses racial boundaries.
(6 sessions) Code: 18 IS \$3.50

Discipleship of Nonviolence *Mary Elizabeth Clark, SSJ*

World events force us to recognize violence as a part of our society, but we don't have to accept it. Looks at the underlying causes of violence within our own hearts, as well as its effects. Explores ways to confront the culture of violence and seeks to follow Jesus as a true disciple. Session 7 speaks directly to the violence of terrorism.

(7 sessions) Code: 6 IS \$3.50

SACRAMENTAL PATHWAYS

Preparing for Your Child's Baptism *Catherine Martin*

Preparing to welcome a new child into your life? Whether a new or expectant parent, godparent, or grandparent, discover how you can best nurture the faith life of your little one — beginning with the sacrament of baptism. Explores the sacrament, its symbols, and significance in the faith formation of all Christians.

(6 sessions) Code: 10 IS \$3.50

At Home in the Catholic Church *Charles Pinyan*

Helps both new and longtime Catholics recognize and appreciate the many riches of the Catholic faith, celebrate what it means to be Catholic, and grow in awareness of the faith. (6 sessions) Code: 9 IS \$3.50

Forgiveness and Reconciliation by *Jean Marie Hiesberger*

An invitation to understand more profoundly people's desire to be forgiven and the steps we may want to take to live reconciled lives. In making the connection between the healing power of God and forgiveness, this book helps us see the reconciling richness of the sacraments and how to live in the freedom of God.

(6 sessions) Code: 26 IS \$6.95

In Memory of Jesus: Reflections for Parents Whose Children Are Preparing for First Eucharist

Maureen S. Hagan

Helps parents to prepare themselves and their children for the sacraments of first Reconciliation and first Eucharist. Offers thought-provoking suggestions of what parents might want to communicate to children as they grow in their faith.

(6 sessions) Code: 3 IS \$3.50

IMPACT SERIES SAMPLER AND DISCOUNTS FOR GROUP PURCHASES

Looking for engaging materials to guide faith sharing and lead it to action? The “Impact” Series offers a new way to join faith sharing with contemporary issues. So that SCC leaders and Core members can select themes for faith sharing that best suits the members of their groups and their interests, RENEW International offers an “Impact” Series Sampler: one copy each of 15 different “Impact” books.

“Impact” Series Sampler (pack of 15 different books) 1-15 IMS \$44.95 IMPACT Sampler: Set of 15 booklets

And because we know that most of you like every member in a group to have their own copy of faith-sharing resources, RENEW offers special prices for group purchases of single titles in the “Impact” Series. See below for the discount rates on packs of ten copies; these prices are valid only while current stocks last.

Code: IS 10 \$32.00 Pack of ten copies of any single title in the IMPACT Series, except those below:

25 IS 10 \$63.50 Pack of ten copies of Finding God@Work.

“Embracing Life provides a beautiful reminder that each person and all creation is sacred. The sessions raise various life issues, such as abortion, euthanasia, domestic violence, capital punishment, and ecological responsibility, and calls us to respond in faith.”

- Embracing Life, “Impact” Series



26 IS 10 \$63.50 Pack of ten copies of Forgiveness and Reconciliation.

You can place your order by calling RENEW toll free (for orders only/para pedidos solamente) at 1-888-433-3221.

For other questions or assistance, please contact the Office of Worship at 235-9601.

Fall “Quest” 2009

The second resource is familiar to many small Christian communities. *Quest* is published by the Archdiocese of Hartford in Connecticut. It is a lectionary-based reflection booklet that covers 18 weeks of readings from the Sunday scriptures. Each weekly unit offers the elements for a complete small community session: suggestions for creating a reflective environment, opening prayer, introductory focus question designed to tap into some basic human experience addressed by the week's scripture, commentary on one or more of the lectionary readings for the up-coming Sunday, several experience-based faith sharing questions, suggestions for individual or group response in action,

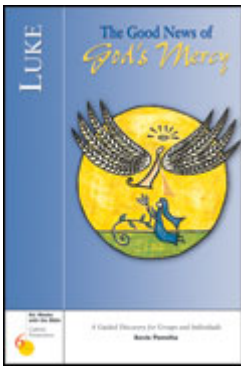
and a closing prayer.

The fall materials and their prices will be available in August and can be ordered by contacting the Archdiocese of Hartford at 1-860-761-7450. You can also visit the Quest website at www.sccquest.org.

Note: Prices have not been set as of this date. Cost last season—\$5.95



Six Weeks with the Gospel of Luke



As we approach the new liturgical year, our focus turns to the Gospel of Luke. Loyola Press offers a six-week Bible-study that is an overview of the key themes and messages of the book of Luke.

The offering from

Loyola Press is entitled *Luke: The Good News of God's Mercy*. The overriding message of the book of Luke, that God has acted through Jesus Christ to meet our deepest needs, encourages us to welcome God's actions throughout our lives and, in turn, to go out and offer God's mercy to the world around us.

For busy adults who want to study the

Bible but don't know where to begin, *Six Weeks with the Bible* provides an inviting starting point. Each guide is divided into six concise, 90-minute segments that introduce one book of the Bible. All biblical text is printed in the guides, which means no additional study aids are required. The Spanish version for adults, *Lucas: La Buena Nueva de las misericordia de Dios: Seis semanas con la Biblia*, is also available for purchase.

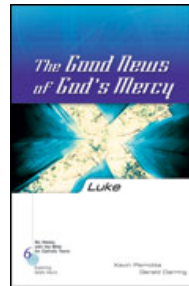
A Bible-study for the teens in your parish is also available. The book of Luke has been described as one of the most beautiful books ever written, and *Luke: The Good News of God's Mercy* brings this beauty to life for teens as they study

the life of Jesus and what Jesus can mean for their lives.

Designed as a guided discovery, *Six Weeks with the Bible for Catholic Teens* introduces high school students to books of the Bible by integrating the biblical text with insightful questions to help youth discern what Scripture means for their lives today. The series provides students with a clear explanation of Biblical text, opportunities for prayer, and a means to enter into conversation with God.

Each book is \$7.95 and can be ordered by calling toll-free 1-800-621-1008 or by visiting the Loyola Press web store at www.loyolapress.com.

For other questions or assistance, please contact the Office of Worship at 235-9601.



HELPFUL HINT: It is *very important* to continue to keep a Parish Core Committee and Coordinator for Small Christian Communities in order to maintain and encourage the communities in your parish. The Parish Coordinator and Core Committee should be individuals willing to promote and support the communities without impairing them.

Fall 2009

Suggested Timeline

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| August/September | Sign-Up Weekends* Bulletin and pulpit announcements* |
| September | Order materials from publishers |
| Suggested schedule for implementation of Fall parish program | |
| Week of October 18 | Week 1 of Program |
| Week of October 25 | Week 2 of Program |
| Week of November 1 | Week 3 of Program |
| Week of November 8 | Week 4 of Program |
| Week of November 15 | Week 5 of Program |
| Week of November 22 | Week 6 of Program |

* Dates for bulletin and pulpit announcements and sign-up Sundays are scheduled by the parish.

Members of the Diocesan Core Committee for Small Christian Communities

- Sue Huett, Director, Office of Worship
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(618) 632-1137
- Sister Annette Kaba, OSF, St. Mary Parish, Centralia
(618) 532-6291
- Carol Muckensturm, St. Teresa Parish, Belleville
(618) 235-1513
- Sister Theresa Markus, SSND, Cathedral of St. Peter, Belleville – (618) 234-1166 ext. 104
- Sister Angela Schrage, ASC, St. Mary Parish, Trenton
(618) 224-9335
- Pat Steinberg, Holy Childhood Parish, Mascoutah
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