

# Office for Evangelization & Faith Formation

Deepening faith in Jesus and sharing Him with others

December 2017 Newsletter



## New Website for Training and Certification Records

In 2010, the Diocese of Greensburg Office for Evangelization & Faith Formation created a web portal for individuals who hold catechetical roles within our parishes, Catholic Schools, and other settings where catechesis takes place. This extranet portal, known as Halo, provides catechists with a personalized record center to view and create records for courses taken within the Training and Catechetical Certification Process. The portal also provides catechetical leaders with reports of certification levels and course records of their catechists.

Over the last few years, the diocese has updated the underlying technology for its public website and employee portal, myHalo. Recently, we performed the same process with the Halo extranet portal, which includes the Certification Record website. We are ready for all catechists and teachers to utilize the new HALO Extranet Portal. Please review the following information.

### Information for Non-Employees ([click here for instructions](#))

- Non-Employees will create their own accounts within the new Halo portal. These individuals will complete a registration process to create their account, providing their name, current e-mail address, parish or school location, and contact information. Once an account is created and approved, the individual will receive an e-mail with instructions to establish a password for his/her account. After the password is established, the user will be ready to access the Halo portal (i.e. Certification Record website). Non-employees only need to register an account one time. After registration is complete, the account will be used to access the HALO portal going forward.
- All existing course records from the original web application will be transferred to the new user account after the account is created and the user accesses the Certification Record website. The existing course record migration will be conducted by the Diocesan Office of Information Technologies.
- Although the Halo portal has a new look, the process for entering new course records will closely match what has been done in the past.

### Information for Employees ([click here for instructions](#))

- Diocesan employees will continue to use their organizational account to access the Certification Record website (Halo portal).
- All existing course records from the original web application will be transferred to the employee after he/she logs into the new Halo portal. The existing course record migration will be conducted by the Diocesan Office of Information Technologies.
- The process for entering new course records will closely match what has been done in the past.

In order to complete the migration of existing course records, we would like all catechists to access the new Certification Record website at least one time by December 31, 2017. The user must access the site to initialize the migration of existing records.

## The Star – The Story of the First Christmas

Recently Sony Pictures Animation released "The Star." In The Star, a small but brave donkey named Bo yearns for a life beyond his daily grind at the village mill. One day he finds the courage to break free, and finally goes on the adventure of his dreams. On his journey, he teams up with Ruth, a loveable sheep who has lost her flock and Dave, a dove with lofty aspirations. Along with three wisecracking camels and some eccentric stable animals, Bo and his new friends follow the Star and become unlikely heroes in the greatest story ever told – The First Christmas. Catholic News Service has given the movie its A-1 rating for general patronage.

The National Conference for Catechetical Leadership and the Federation for Catechesis with Hispanics have worked collaboratively to provide various faith sharing sessions. This Catholic Curriculum is available at [thestarmovie.com](#). We are encouraging Catholic schools, parish faith formation programs, parish youth ministry programs, RCIA programs, and adult faith sharing groups to arrange to see and then discuss the movie using one of the faith sharing sessions. In the alternative, parishes or schools are also encouraged to make parents and other parishioners aware that the sessions can be downloaded at the movie's home page or to distribute a session in their regular communication with families.

## Save the Date: Family Conference June 2, 2018

The Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation is experimenting with a new gathering for this coming year. Following Pope Francis' call to form the faith of the entire family, The Office will be sponsoring a family conference on Saturday, June 2, 2018 at Hempfield Park, just off Business 66, Greensburg. We are still working on some major details, but please [click here to see a "Save the Date Ad" for your parish bulletins/parent newsletters/take home announcements for the remainder of November and December.](#)

## Winter Retreat Registration is Open

All youth of the Diocese in grades 9 -12 are invited to join us for the [Diocesan High School Winter Retreat - I Am the Vine, You are the Branches](#), sponsored by the Diocese of Greensburg Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation. Come pray, share, learn, and take time to be with God. Join us February 23-25, 2018, at Laurelville Retreat Center in Mt. Pleasant. Register now with your parish youth ministry leader or faith formation office. [To register online click here.](#) This event is eligible for [Francis Fund](#). The total amount eligible is \$62.50 (half of the cost). [The application for Francis Fund must be submitted by January 2, 2018.](#) Those who received a scholarship for NCYC are not eligible for scholarship and must pay the full amount.

## Bishop Edward C. Malesic Releases Pastoral Letter on Opioid Crisis; Lesson Plans Released by the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation

Addressing the opioid epidemic that killed more than 300 people in the four counties of the Diocese of Greensburg last year, Bishop Edward C. Malesic released a [pastoral letter June 29 that outlines the Catholic Church's local response to the crisis.](#)

In "A Pastoral Letter on the Drug Abuse Crisis: From Death and Despair to Life and Hope," the Bishop calls on people in the diocese to take action against the opioid scourge, and he outlines efforts that focus on prayer, education and cooperative efforts with government and social service agencies that are already engaged in the fight against addiction.

To that end the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation is releasing a set of lesson plans that can be used for elementary students, middle school students, or high school students. **It is suggested that these lesson plans can be used in January during a month dedicated to pro-life activities.**

[View the Elementary Lesson Plan here.](#)

[View the Middle School and High School Lesson Plan here.](#)

They are suitable for parish faith formation programs, Catholic schools, or parish youth ministry programs. Lastly these lesson plans can be used in a large group setting or in grade level classrooms. If you have any questions, please contact [Bob Sherwin](#) or [Christie Smith](#) in the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation.

## Trainings And In-Services For 2018

The Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation is proud to announce its Training and In-Service schedule for 2018. More information on registration, speakers, and sponsors will be forthcoming. Please see the note beside the dates to see the equivalency credit you will be given for attending the in-service days. Also, please mark your calendars for these trainings and in-services. Additionally, please consider giving your catechists in these grades the day off on these Saturdays to attend these critical in-services, if your formation takes place on Saturday. Finally, [check out our full schedule of certification classes for 2017-18.](#)

- Friday, March 2, 2018 – Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ for Grades 3-5 – Visitation, Mt. Pleasant Equivalency Credit: Christology
- Saturday, March 3, 2018 – Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ for Grades 3-5 – Visitation, Mt. Pleasant Equivalency Credit: Christology

## 2017-2018 Missionary Childhood Association (MCA)

### Christmas Artwork Contest

Our diocesan participation in last year's contest was overwhelming—we received more than 254 qualifying entries from 9 schools/parishes/faith formation classes. Of the twenty (20) that were selected for submission to the National Office, *TWO of our students were winners again!* Their artwork will be displayed at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC during Advent 2017 along with twenty-two (22) other national winners. Nationally, there were nearly 15,000 entries last year from 53 dioceses!

The Contest is open to students in grades K-8. However, past years' winners are not eligible to submit an entry. The Mission Office would especially like to encourage all children in those grades to participate. Parish and school Faith Formation children, Home-schooled children, and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd participants are all eligible. [Details for this year's Contest are here. Please follow the instructions and guidelines that are on these two \(2\) pages.](#)

**Please mail all entries to: MCA Artwork Contest, Diocese of Greensburg, 723 E. Pittsburgh Street, Greensburg, PA 15601. All entries must be postmarked by January 31, 2018.**

## Stop Sending Out RCIA Press Releases

A press release is a general announcement that companies and event organizers send to media outlets in the hopes that the newspaper or the radio station will give them some free publicity. When e-mail became ubiquitous, the old-fashioned press release morphed into something else — spam.

I got a dozen of these spam messages in, just the last couple of hours, promising that I could control costs, lose weight, protect myself with a wilderness knife, and a few that I can't mention in public.

The thing that all these messages have in common is that they're generic. The people who send them are hoping that if they blanket the Internet with their press releases, someone in the universe will reply. I fear that a lot of RCIA teams are doing the same thing with announcements in the bulletin.

[Learn more](#)

## Join NCCL

Members of the National Conference of Catechetical Leaders are leaders who want the latest information, developments, and resources for enhancing their catechetical leadership. They are networked and connected, motivated lifelong learners, and committed to faith formation for all ages. As a member of NCCL you receive the following resources and benefits:

- **RESOURCES** - Resources for catechists at all age levels
- **ANNUAL CONFERENCE** - An annual national conference to refresh, renew and reinvigorate your ministry
- **ADVOCACY** - Advocacy for catechetical ministry with the USCCB
- **DISCOUNTS** - Discounts on annual conference fee and products
- **ACCESS** - Access to exclusive member content & community on nccl.org
- **LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** - Drive the vision of catechesis through a variety of leadership and service opportunities
- **CATECHETICAL LEADER MAGAZINE** - Annual subscription included in membership
- **MEMBER EMAIL** - A regular email with news and updates from the frontiers of catechetical ministry

To join the National Conference of Catechetical Leaders log on to [www.nccl.org](#)

## Contact Us

[Robert Sherwin](#), Managing Director  
[Christina Smith](#), Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministry  
[Greg Petrucci](#), Director of Evangelization  
[Rich and Leeanna Ryba](#), Marriage Preparation & Enrichment Trainers  
[Father E. George Saeltrik](#), Chaplain, Catholic Committee on Scouting  
[Jackie Fignogna](#), Secretary  
[Tina Moore](#), Secretary

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## Upcoming Events in the Diocese

1/2/2018 [Francis Fund Deadline](#)

1/18-19/2018 [March For Life](#)

1/20/2018 [Catholicism In America](#)

1/20/2018 [Church History](#)

1/20/2018 [Catholic Social Teaching](#)

2/18/2018 [Rite of Election](#)

2/23-25/2018 [Youth Winter Retreat](#)

2/25/2018 [Rite of Election](#)

3/1/2018 [Francis Fund Deadline](#)

3/2/2018 [Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ for Grades 3-5](#)

3/3/2018 [Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ for Grades 3-5](#)

5/6/2018 [Scout Convocation](#)

**JUNE 2, 2018**  
**FAMILY CONFERENCE**

[View the 2017-2018 Calendar](#)

## Calendar For 2017-2018

[Click here to view the 2017-18 calendar for the Office for Evangelization and Faith Formation.](#)

We are excited about this year's calendar as we have added some new and exciting events. On June 2, 2018 we will be sponsoring the first ever Family Conference for the Diocese of Greensburg. More details will be forthcoming on this new and exciting family-friendly community event.

## Catholic Engaged Encounter

Catholic Engaged Encounter is an in-depth, private, personal, marriage preparation experience within the context of Catholic faith and values. Catholic Engaged Encounter is a weekend retreat away with other engaged couples with time alone together to discuss honestly and intensively about their future lives together-- their strengths and weaknesses, desires, ambitions, goals, attitudes about money, sex, children, family, and their role in the church and society. The next weekend in Greensburg is February 2-4, 2018. For more information please contact George & Pat Ziringer (724-335-4966)

[ziringer@comcast.net](mailto:ziringer@comcast.net), or [www.engagedencounter.org](http://www.engagedencounter.org)

## Natural Family Planning

[The key to successful NFP use is cooperation and communication between husband and wife. CM-BBT is a sympto-thermal medical model of Natural Family Planning.](#) There are one-time instruction sessions held on Monday evenings or Saturday mornings at the Catholic Charities' main office in downtown Greensburg. The next scheduled CM-BBT Instruction Session is scheduled for Monday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 6pm. For more information contact Mary Ann Newhouse at 724-837-1840, ext 1658.

## Nar-Anon Family Group

**In The Connellsville Catholic Community**

Please join us every Wednesday at St. John the Evangelist, Connellsville Social Hall from 7-8:30pm. Open to the public.

What is Nar-Anon?  
Nar-Anon is a twelve step self-help program offering recovery and support for families and friends of addicts. The Nar-Anon Family Group is for those who have known a feeling of desperation due to the addiction problem of someone close to them. This includes those who have addition lost someone due to an addiction.

Nar-Anon helps families and friends of addicts learn the following:  
Addiction is a family disease.  
Those closest to the addicts are deeply affected.  
Families and friends can also benefit from a recovery program.

Nar-Anon offers tools for coping with these issues:  
Isolation from feeling misunderstood by family and friends.  
Guilt, shame, and embarrassment brought on by legal consequences of addiction.  
Lack of trust and financial uncertainty.  
Marginalization and victimization.

Group Meetings are held every Wednesday at St. John the Evangelist Social Hall from 7-8:30pm. To join, simply attend a meeting. There are no dues or fees. This group is open to the public. Nar-Anon is a spiritual program, not a religious one. Confidence of anonymity are respected by Nar-Anon members. Members bond and learn through sharing their experience, strength, and hope. Meetings are a safe place to share.

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Sampey at the parish office 724-628-6840 ext. 108 or email at [msampey@dioceseofgreensburg.org](mailto:msampey@dioceseofgreensburg.org).

## A Prayer for Lighting

### The Advent Wreath

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe. You send your Son, to be the Light of the world and to spread his light of love to all. As we light the candles of this wreath May its growing brightness remind us of the approaching nearness of your Son. So that the day of His coming may find us prepared and filled with joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.