

the Christ'

His disciples left for the
 id Caesarea Philippi. On
 out this question to His
 to do people say I am?"
 him, "John the Baptist,"
 thers Elijah, others again,
 rophets." "But you," he
 do you say I am?" Peter
 said to Him, "You are the

Mark, 8: 27-29.

As a person of faith, the religious educator has already grappled with the question of meaning and purpose in his or her life. The life-giving message of salvation as embodied in the words and deeds of Jesus have initially been accepted. This is not to say that new challenges to faith, a deeper commitment to the person of Jesus and renewed reliance on the Spirit in the face of greater risks will not be elicited from the catechist.

The person of faith is one who perceives life and the world with a new vision. The person of faith sees "a beyond" in the midst of human experience. The person of faith sees a "something else," a "more than" in daily situations. Because "no-one has ever seen God, it is the only Son who is nearest to the Father's heart" (John 1: 18), the catechist assumes the position of the poet, struggling to discover the right words to articulate the experience of the Father's gift of love and salvation. The catechist communicates the message of our Christian heritage through the power of his enthusiasm and deep personal conviction.

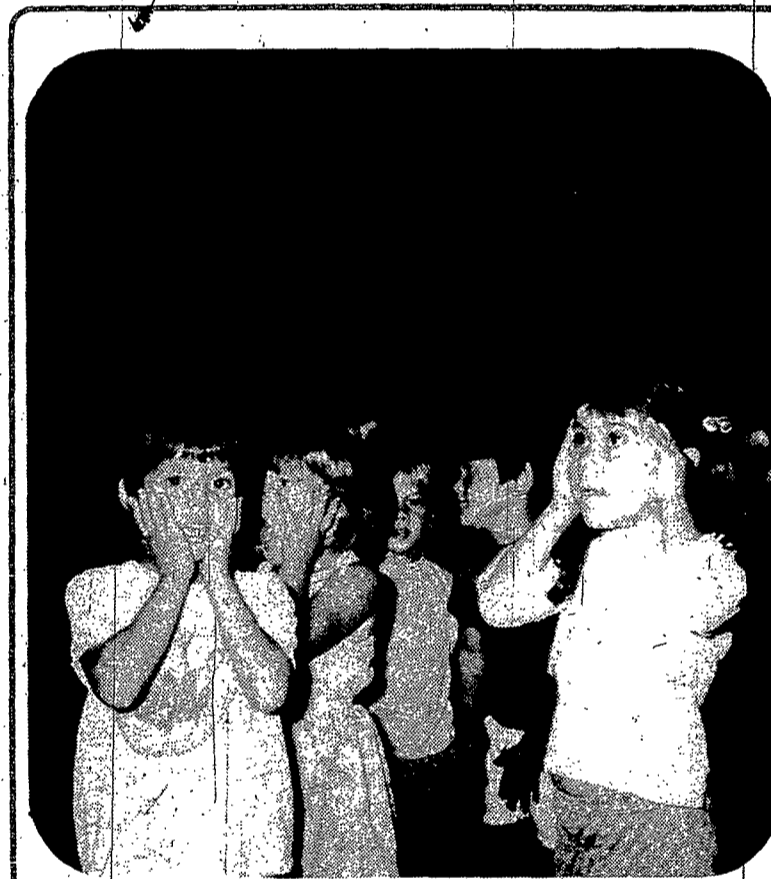
There are many challenges which face a religious educator who is knowledgeable and skilled in communicating. Perhaps, the most significant skill a religious educator can exercise is that of authentic and faithful interpretation of Church teachings. As a member of the community of believers, the catechist must try to clarify the content of the faith. In this effort, there must be attentiveness to the pedagogical temptation to equate Christian education with indoctrination. The catechist is alert to the fact that salvation does not come through a thorough knowledge of doctrine but through a person's active response to God's gracious presence in one another and the world.

As a believer, the religious educator must try to express, interpret and grasp more adequately the Christian heritage and place in the context of our present day world. The primary concern is to make Christians' commitment to the Gospel and to the Church more meaningful more reasonable and more consonant with everyday life. The dichotomy between the lived experience of our faith and our daily lives will be bridged when we can identify and proclaim the Christ in the midst of our work, our sufferings and our joys.

We are grateful to religious educators and catechists for their service to the Church.



Sister Michael Lappetito center, diocesan director of religious education, holds meeting with religious ed office staff, from left to right, Sister Elizabeth Hughes, Sister Marie Brown, Sister Joan McAteer, and Martin Palumbos.



What It's All About

Young pupils at the Bible School operated during the Summer at St. Paul's in Webster are among those benefiting from the diocesan Religious Education programs. Above, they portray a favorite song in music class. Below, first and second graders display bookmarks.



line Meagher, Rene Walters, Kathy Maslanka, and Peg Smith, religious ed teachers at Holy Spirit, share ideas.