

Week Catholic Schools Week Catholic Sc

Curriculum Update in Music Area

Cognizant of the important role music plays in the lives of children, an Interdiocesan Committee of Curricular directors have been supervising the development of music guidelines for the elementary schools. Music specialists, classroom teachers, and other music personnel have contributed specific objectives, learning experiences and suggested activities for the "Music Resource Book". The table of contents lists six main divisions: Fundamentals of Music, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Listening Experiences, Music as Prayer and an Appendix.

The Diocese of Rochester under the leadership of Sister M. Edwardine Weaver, assistant superintendent of Curriculum, has been assigned the area of Liturgical Music. This aspect of music focusing on the worship of God, has evolved into the general section of "Music as Prayer". Though an inspiring and elevating field to penetrate, it requires from teachers an unembarrassed and open

sharing of their personal relationship with God. Sister Nancy Burkin, liturgist, has stated in the introduction:

"This area is a demanding one since it asks from those who are to teach it not only an ability to teach music that can be used as prayer, but also, to develop a prayer life that allows them to be comfortable and relaxed praying in song and gesture."

To enrich and deepen this concept, children are led to experience various forms of response to music as prayer, including the use of instruments, voice, bodily motion, gestures, dance, mime, and illustration. Deeper appreciation of these types of prayer will be discovered in Old Testament references, and through recordings and singing of Gregorian chant melodies.

From the outgrowth of our musical heritage and the influences of our present environment, each person prays from a sense of "Who I Am". The child as a product

of parents, affected by the elements of race, education, religious beliefs, sex, and other factors, relates to God from these inherited and attitudinal characteristics. Closely allied with the way we pray is the culture within which we find ourselves. To further the understanding of this basic concept, the course will endeavor to expose children to music used in the prayer life of the Hebrew, the American Indian, the Black, and the Hispanic peoples. Since our culture affects prayer, students will be encouraged to choose music from their own experience which enables them to speak most authentically with God.

Emerging as central to our life with God as Catholic people, is our participation in the Eucharistic Liturgy. The resource book provides the teacher with meaningful material for discussion on the significance of processions, litanies, responses, and acclamations, while determining the type of music which should be used for each. Provision is made for children

to engage actively in planning Eucharistic liturgies, recognizing the important role music plays as the unifier of people and the determiner of atmosphere in the celebration. Hopefully, students will be aware of the places in the liturgy in which music is especially important and contribute suggestions for its inclusion.

The entire manuscript for the "Music Resource Book" is due at the printers in early October. Collaboration by the Catholic Directors of Curriculum Development and Music specialists in the dioceses of Ogdensburg, Syracuse and Rochester has produced music guidelines much awaited by teachers of grades one to six. Albany and Buffalo dioceses, originally interested in the project, had to withdraw in the early stages of development. However, their interest and full support have continued. All five dioceses will utilize the "Music Resource Book" in their Catholic elementary schools, grades one through six, in September, 1980.



Sisters Nancy Burkin and Anna Louise Staub are members of the committee overseeing the new music curriculum.

In the educational climate of the present day, where regular classroom teachers are expected to possess knowledge in specialized subject matter, the material should prove a blessing. To more effectively increase its utility, music

workshops for teachers will be offered next fall. With the combination of practical workshops, adaptable guidelines, and enlightened teachers, music should assume its rightful place in the heart of the curriculum.

Growing Together

In keeping with the theme, "Catholic Schools — One of the Family", Catholic Schools Week opens over at St. Thomas More School in Brighton with a Family Mass and closes with a family harvest supper and open house. Other events scheduled include a living rosary and a school talent show.

During September, St. Thomas More celebrated as a family with two events: A Eucharistic Liturgy for the student body that focused on the theme, "Help us to grow in God's love." Each

classroom was given a plant grown in the school's greenhouse and in relating the care of plants to human values. Sister Judith Whelan, SSJ, principal, reminded everyone to care for one another and watch one another grow.

The other events featured George Kinnamon, Church of Today pastor from South Carolina, who spoke to groups of students on self-affirmation.

"We are like sand dollars,"

he said, "each one has a perfect star inside."

Every group opened a sand dollar as part of a short prayer service that followed his talk.

In mapping out full and satisfying school days for the student body, interesting instructional materials as well as extra-curricular activities are an important aspect of St. Thomas More School. A new after school arts and crafts class is offered by Sister Francis Cabrini Mastantoe, SSJ. New also is the pre-school program for three and four year-olds.



Father Frederick Helfrich gives Beth Modaffari a plant.

Catholic Schools: A Freedom to Question

Answers were both profound and simply sincere. The most unusual responses came from a musician, the 23 year old brother of an eighth grader. The interview with verbal and musical correlations went like this —

"Who do you say I am?"
Mark 8:27-30

As an administrator, educator and teacher, I have been asking and answering questions for some twenty years. Recently, I have heard an excellent lecture by Dr. Theodore Weeden (pastor of Asbury First Methodist) and a well-prepared homily by Father Frank Falletta (St. Theodore's) on the above scripture passage. However, when my junior high students conducted an interview on this quotation last week, I was amazed.

Students in the seventh and eighth grades interviewed family, neighbors, parish priests and friends. Questions ranged from Who is God? Who is Jesus? Why do you pray? Why do you belong to a Church? — to What do you find to be most difficult or rewarding in leading a Christian life?

"Michael, Who is God?"
"Well I think God is kinda like a chord, a person who's composed of many different notes."

"Who is Jesus?"
"I believe Jesus Christ basically is the personification of the G7 chord. He is directly descended from the major chord which is God the Father."

"Do you pray?"
"Yes, I do everyday. I especially like to pray while I'm playing the piano."

"Why do you pray?"
"I dig it. I get into the mellow feelings of responses like those in a musical instrument."

"What is the Church?"
"I think the Church is an orchestra. You've got the bass players playing low notes and then you've got us guys, the musicians playing the high notes (in harmony of course) because it's a church."

The beauty of these questions and answers were not so much a matter of uniqueness, but basically, the freedom the Catholic School has to raise and respond to such questions in word, in truth and in deed.

Thanks... and... God bless our Catholic schools, our administrators, our teachers, our parents and students who (in harmony of course) challenge us to grow in wisdom, and age and grace before God and each other.

Sister Anne Marie Fehrenbach
(Sister Anne Marie teaches at Blessed Sacrament School in Rochester.)

St. John's Celebrates Week

St. John of Rochester parish has planned a week long schedule of events to celebrate Catholic Schools week beginning Sunday, Oct. 14 with an exhibit of religious mementos of the Catholic heritage in the school library following all Masses.

Other events include classroom visits, prayer services, a Mass for parents and students and a school Field day.

For further information about the week long celebration those interested in St. John's may contact the school at 248-8836. St. John

of Rochester is located at 16 Wickford Way, on the corner of Ayrault Road and Rt. 31 in Perinton.

Prosper the
WORK of
OUR hands
ON LORD!

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