

Youths 'tune in' to Christ at weekend retreat

Faith is depicted through amusing advertisements

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

LIVONIA — These commercials served their usual purpose — taking a break from the regular programming.

But there were no televisions or radios to be found, because these advertisements were "aired" at a weekend teen retreat.

Nearly 70 teenagers from around the diocese did a nice job tapping into their creative juices in coming up with "Commercials for Christ." The skits served as part of the Awakening Faith Retreat, held March 5-7, at Camp Stella Maris.

Given 30 minutes to prepare last Saturday evening, eight groups threw together some acts combining religious messages with elements of well-known commercials. Crew members then took turns delivering their sketches to their peers.

The teens' productions included:

- A group advertising "G.O.D. Securities."
- Two takeoffs on soda commercials. One mimicked Ray Charles as it proclaimed, "You've Got the Right God Baby, Uh-Huh!" and the other exclaimed, "God: The Choice of a New Generation."
- A skit played off the infamous,



Babetta G. Augustin/Photo editor
Mary Brubaker and Joe Morin, parishioners at St. Mary of the Lake in Watkins Glen, presented a skit entitled "God: The Choice of a New Generation," during the Awakening Faith Retreat at Camp Stella Maris March 5-7.

"I've fallen and can't get up" line. The "commercial" ended by delivering the message, "The Lord will help you rise."

• An advertisement singing the praises of "Christ Soap" concluded by saying, "You're not fully clean until you're Christ-fully clean."

• A "Christ Safe-Watch Home Security System," which could be pur-

chased for \$39.95 "with the Holy Spirit thrown in for free."

• A rap production in which members made the sign of the cross and chanted in Hammer fashion, "We've got to pray today."

• A skit in which "Madonna" threw herself at the feet of "the pope" and suggested "Truth or Dare?" At that point, the audience was "dared" to

learn more about the "truth" by calling 1-900-YES-JESUS.

Michael Theisen, diocesan coordinator for youth ministry, explained that these "commercials" were intentionally placed in the middle of the retreat's agenda to provide some light moments during a weekend of intense conversations and seminars.

"It's something that's fun — it breaks up the seriousness of the retreat and all the heavy talks," he commented.

One teen group leader added that the sketches also helped achieve the most important aim of any commercial — to reinforce a message.

"What's good is that everybody is going to remember the skits and then they'll remember Christ. They're also going to think about this retreat — all the talks, all the memories," said 17-year-old Chris Horrocks, a youth-group member from Church of the Assumption, 20 East Ave., Fairport.

Theisen agreed, saying, "The skits cut down to the basic theme. They were saying 'Choose Christ' in a lot of different ways."

Although it may have been unusual for many participants to treat religion in such a humorous fashion, Horrocks noted that the "commercial" approach was well-received because of its positive intent.

"I think that God accepts anything, as long as you have (a message about Christ) in there. And it's real easy to turn everyday things into religious things," remarked Horrocks, who coordinated the "Truth or Dare" skit.

McQuaid team reaches mock trial semifinals

BRIGHTON — Ten students from McQuaid Jesuit High School, 1800 Clinton Ave. S., recently combined to reach the semifinal round of the Monroe County Mock Trial competition.

The 16th annual event ran from Feb. 2 to March 2 at Brighton High School and the Hall of Justice in downtown Rochester. A total of 14 schools competed.

McQuaid team members included: "witnesses" — Chris Perri, Tom DeMott, Jeff Kuhn, Matt Turri and Garret Gildner; and "lawyers" — Kevin Morriss, Zach Nowak, Justin Cordello, Fred Bush and Bill Lavin.

This group was coached by Gary Jones, a science instructor at McQuaid. McQuaid's attorney adviser was

Shawn W. Monfredo from Pittsford.

Other diocesan high schools participating in the mock trials were Aquinas Institute and Bishop Kearney.

Rock-A-Thon this weekend at St. Helen's in Rochester

ROCHESTER — St. Helen's Church, 310 Hinchey Road, is sponsoring a 12-hour "Rock-A-Thon" fundraiser the weekend of March 13-14.

Young parishioners in grades 7-12 will sit in rocking chairs from 6 p.m. Saturday, March 13, until 6 a.m. the following day. A portion of the proceeds will go to a children's charity.

To participate, or to become a sponsor, call 716/235-2407.

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