

Fairport seminar open to youth coordinators

FAIRPORT - An in-service program on "Creative Gaming and Group Dynamics" will take place Friday, March 17, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at St. John of Rochester Church, 18 Wickford Way.

George Steel, an Amsterdam, N.Y. resident, will offer presentations on new games, group dynamics, and creative and learning styles of youth. This program is open to any adult who works with young people and is in need of new ideas and strategies for erasing barriers and building community with youths.

Cost is \$10, with a registration deadline of March 14. For registration information, call Michael Theisen at 716/328-8210 ext. 279, or 1-800/388-7177, ext. 279.

State chess tournament slated for March 17-18

BROCKPORT - Entries are still being accepted for the New York State Scholastic Chess Championship, to be held March 17-18 at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

This event is open to students in grades kindergarten through 12. Competition is divided into four sections: primary, elementary, junior high and senior high. Awards will be presented for players and teams at several levels. All entrants must be 18 years of age. In addition, the Rochester Chess Center will host a tournament for beginners.

Those wishing to register for the tournament should call in with the Rochester Chess Center, 221 Morris Drive, Rochester, N.Y. 14610, at 716/442-2430 or 716/442-2430.

Fire safety kits offered

ROCHESTER - A new children's fire safety kit is available through the Rochester Fire Department.

Titled "Play Safe! Be Safe!" the kit is designed for trained professionals to use with children ages 3-5. Materials help educate youngsters in the basics of fire prevention, as well as how to respond to specific fire situations.

Preschool teachers who wish to obtain a copy of "Play Safe! Be Safe!" should call the Rochester Fire Department at 716/428-6326.

Teens tune in with special liturgy

By Mike Latona Staff writer

ROCHESTER - For the most part, age and attention span increase at similar paces.

Which means that when it comes to teenagers at Mass, organizers often have to go the extra mile to grab their attention.

"Grades 9-12 is such an important age group. They sit and listen with their parents, but they're not really listening," said Diane Scheible, youth-ministry coordinator at St. Mary's Church, 15 St. Mary's Place.

To help overcome this dilemma, Scheible offers a special program for teens two Sundays per month. The group spends the first part of 10 a.m. Mass in a small basement meeting room, conducting its own liturgy. Meanwhile, a similar program for grades 1-6 is held weekly during 10 a.m. Mass in another downstairs room.

Fourteen teenagers - seven boys and seven girls - gathered with Scheible this past Sunday, March 5. Participants took turns delivering the day's two readings, Gospel, and prayers of the faithful before returning to the main church for the conclusion of Mass.

A chief component of these liturgies is the opportunity for teens to take part in intimate discussion and reflection. For example, St. Mary's youths used their March 5 meeting to compare their lives with the Gospel passage recounting Christ's temptation in the desert.

"The temptations you're starting to experience are things we, as adults, experience every day - drugs, sex, power," Scheible pointed out to the small congregation.

When Scheible asked participants about temptations they've grappled with, 17-year-old Siobhan Conley replied with a smile, "I've been tempted to take my sister's clothes when she's not around."

The teens then talked resisting temptation through making Lenten sacrifices. For Brett Wolfe, 15, this meant that "our whole family has to give up TV." Nikki Lyons, 14, said her family is "fasting on Fridays and donating the money to charity." Chris Widmaier, 17, is "going to try not to procrastinate as much on (college) forms and applications."



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer Diane Scheible (top right), youth coordinator for St. Mary's Church in Rochester, leads a discussion of the Gospel during a March 5 gathering for teens.

Scheible began teen liturgies shortly after she became St. Mary's youth minister in October of 1994. According to Diane Kannel, the parish religious-education coordinator, these services were among the top requests by teens during the hiring process for a youth minister. Kannel explained that a similar program had previously been conducted at St. Mary's, but was in hiatus at the time Scheible began her duties.

Chris Widmaier is one of St. Mary's teen liturgy "veterans," and he said he's glad to see the program return to the

downtown Rochester parish.

"I get more out of it because it's a little more casual and comfortable," said Chris, a senior at Rochester's Wilson Magnet High School.

"Here, you get to go more in-depth," commented Siobhan, also a Wilson Magnet senior. "Not that I don't like it upstairs, but down here it's more interesting."

"I talk to my friends who don't have teen liturgies, and they look at going to church as a chore," Siobhan added.

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