

On the MOVE



Jeremy Jagla of Holy Name of Jesus Church in Greece practices his lector skills during a workshop led by Sister Kathleen Wayne.



Called to Serve

How does the idea of becoming a lector or eucharistic minister grab you?

Jared Marx, for one, finds lectoring at Mass both pleasurable and spiritual. "I enjoy public speaking, and I like to have the chance to proclaim God's word in that atmosphere," said Jared, 16.

But wait a second, you say. Aren't adults the only people who can do those things?

Not true, said Michael Theisen, diocesan coordinator of youth ministry. Any Catholic who has been baptized, he said, "has a right to serve in any liturgical ministry in the parish."

Theisen quoted Chapter I of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which Christian people ... have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism."

In other words, you shouldn't have to wait until your confirmation if you wish to be an usher. Or until you're 18 years old to get on the list of eucharistic ministers at your church.

"Whatever is open to adults should be open to our young people by virtue of their baptism," acknowledged Joan Workmaster, director of the diocesan Office of Liturgy.

Some parishes already offer these opportunities for teens. For instance, Jared serves as lector at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Painted Post. The church is part of the Corning-Painted Post Roman Catholic Community cluster.

"I'm glad the parish community is open to this," Jared said. "Mass is supposed to be a celebration for everyone."

However, Theisen said, there's still a long way to go. Many parishes have longstanding policies where children's liturgical involvement begins and ends with traditional roles such as altar serving.

"There is a struggle, because this is a change," Theisen said.

Therefore, Theisen and the diocesan Office of Liturgy have launched an effort to include youth in all phases of liturgy at all diocesan churches.

Theisen and the liturgy office are developing specific guidelines on this subject. Theisen expects that the guidelines will be finalized, approved by Bishop Matthew H. Clark and distributed to all diocesan parishes by this summer.

In the meantime, events are being staged to help prepare youths and their adult leaders for all phases of liturgy. One example is "Call to Ministry," a daylong series of workshops held April 27 at Guardian Angels Church in Henrietta.

The program was attended by 100 youths and 50 adult leaders from 20 diocesan parishes. It offered guidance for virtually every type of liturgical minister: lectors, eucharistic ministers, ushers, altar servers, greeters, musicians and even liturgical dancers. Youths listened to lectures by diocesan experts, performed run-throughs of their ministries, and also participated

Heather Hilton, fol instructor

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