

on the MOVE

Story by
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Photographs by
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John Niziurski attempts to treat everybody with respect, whether he knows the person or not.

"I try to be cordial, no matter what," said John, 15, a parishioner at St. Jude's Church in Gates. "Opening doors for people, I would just do that anyway."

"Basically, manners should be used all the time," agreed Tim Perrotta, 18, from Church of the Assumption in Fairport.

Tim's brother, Matt, said that his parents have worked hard to instill good manners in them.

"They constantly do it. When I'm at the table, my mom will always tell me not to eat with my mouth full and to get my elbows off the table," Matt, 16, remarked.

Katie Miskell, also, said she still practices the manners that her parents instilled in her over the years.

"No elbows on the table; don't eat until you've said your prayer; wait until it's your turn to talk," recited Katie, 18, from St. Mary's Church in Geneseo.

However, Matt observed that some members of his age group occasionally forget to practice the manners they've been taught at home.

"When you're a teen, your life's a little more social and a little less structured. When you're an adult, you have a little more responsibility," Matt said.

To reinforce the importance of good manners in teens, Church of the Assumption youth minister Marie Claus began hosting tea parties at her home about a year ago.

"To say I do this to teach young people manners, is to assume they don't have manners to begin with. They do — but I don't think they have too many places to practice other than home," Claus commented.

Claus explained that although her youth-group members are generally well-mannered, some of those manners slip when they're around other teens in casual settings.



Sarah Haggett, 15, sips tea at the Perinton home of Marie Claus during a tea party Nov. 6.

On a recent Thursday, Tim, Matt and four other Assumption teens gathered at the Claus residence to sip tea from fancy cups and eat food served on silver platters. Comments of "Thank you" and "May I" and "Please" filled the air while classical music played in the background. The formally dressed teens conscientiously passed food and beverage around the dining table — and, of course, napkins were spread across their laps.

"I love this," Tim exclaimed.

He noted that the tea party was quite different from when he and his

friends consume "garbage plates" — rather messy combinations of hot dogs, home fries and condiments served at Nick Tahou's, a popular Rochester eatery.

"That's a free-for-all. People are just digging in, and nobody has their napkin on their lap. If this was a garbage plate, I would have eaten five times as much," Tim remarked between nibbles of his finger sandwich.

Other participants, also, said they enjoyed the tea party — even though they found it unusual to practice their

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