

Story by Mike Latona • Photographs by Greg Francis

ON THE MOVE

For Cassandra Kenny, reading the Bible is an essential component of her Catholic faith.

"You have to be persistent about it. If you hear it more, then you take it in more and you understand it more," said Cassandra, 15, a parishioner at St. Theodore's Church in Gates. "You become closer to God and you understand what he wants us to do; why he gave us the laws that he did."

Cassandra is one of a number of diocesan teens who include Bible reading in their spiritual lives.

But as David Panter pointed out, you don't exactly flip open the Bible and breeze through its pages — the way you might, say, with a magazine article or romance novel. Rather, he found that comprehending Scripture passages from many centuries ago can be a stiff challenge.

"I started trying to read the whole thing," said David, 16, a parishioner at St. Ann's Church in Hornell. "But I've only gotten into Exodus (the second book in the Old Testament)."

David noted that some of writings are "pretty confusing," such as the genealogy of several Old Testament characters listed in chapters 10 and 11 of the Book of Genesis.

"Everybody's got sons and is part of a big family tree," David said. "I had to read it over a couple of times, then go back and read it again."

David said he will stick with his plan to read the entire Bible — although he doesn't expect to be finished any time soon.

"I can always say I at least tried," he remarked.

Cassandra and another St.

Theodore's teen, Rachel Leone, suggested that people not approach Bible study as an exercise in speed-reading.

"Some parts are so difficult, you have to read them over. There are parts that really make you think, and that's what I like," Cassandra said.

"Read it in small passages, because then you can really think about what it means," Rachel, 17, suggested.

Cassandra and Rachel enjoy attending Bible study sessions with their parish youth group. They are also part of a nondenominational student coalition that is forming an after-hours Bible study group at Gates-Chili High School. Many of those teens also take part in prayer sessions before school near the high school's flagpole.

Rachel remarked that she strives to read the Bible both in these group settings and privately.

"In a group, the leaders make sure you understand fully what they think it means. But when you're alone, you

Challenge

Words that



Cassandra Kenny, 15, is "persistent" about reading the Bible.

can relate it to your own life," Rachel said.

Cassandra agreed that interpretations of Bible passages may vary without anybody necessarily being wrong.

"When you get other people's opinions, you can kind of build your

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