

DIOCESAN NEWS

Volunteers, puppets teach art of cooperating

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Preschool teacher Teresa Gerhardt has noticed more pint-sized conflict mediators popping up around Holy Rosary School these days.

For example, she noted, sometimes when a confrontation will break out between two children, another child will often appear and ask, "What's the problem here?"

Communication and problem-solving skills are something the students have picked up in part through the Judicial Process Commission's "Peaceful Problem Solving" workshops at several Catholic schools, she noted.

"We work on cooperation, affirmation and communications," explained Lois Davis, a JPC workshop coordinator. Ten-week preschool workshops were begun late last fall at Holy Rosary, St. Monica, St. Andrew and Holy Family schools.

As part of the program, the children see examples of conflict resolution enacted by hand puppets.

Take the Dec. 12 program at Holy Rosary. Max the dog told Marigold the rabbit that he didn't like "green things," and that included Sparky the green turtle. Sparky had just finished playing hide-and-seek with Marigold and had gone home.

"I'm glad he's gone. He's green, you know, and I don't like green things," Max told Marigold.

To which one 4-year-old in the audience shouted, "I'm not green."

But by the end of the program, Marigold had begun to change Max's mind. She explained that Sparky was born green and was proud of it. She also pointed out Sparky was quite good at building with Lego blocks. The two then went off to find Sparky.



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

From left, Lois Davis and Edith Thoburn lead John Vulaj, 4, and Christian Cenzi, 4, and other participants in the conflict resolution program as they dance to "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush" Dec. 12 at Holy Rosary School, Rochester.

At the Dec. 12 program, Edith Thoburn also reviewed the previous week's puppet show. The children remembered that Max had called Marigold's watercolor painting "yucky" — after all, it was green. But in the end the two discussed their feelings. They shared each other's paints and reconciled, one boy recalled.

Davis, who is in charge of the presentations, writes the scripts. A member of Lake Avenue Baptist Church, she and Thoburn, of Seneca United Methodist Church, are one of three teams presenting the workshops at the schools. Each adult presenter first takes training in conflict resolution through JPC.

By February the teams plan to be presenting workshops for 3-year-olds at Holy

Rosary and Holy Family schools — both fall workshops were for 4-year-olds at the two schools. They also will be working with 3- and 4-year-olds at St. Boniface and Corpus Christi schools.

A Title IV Safe and Drug Free School Program grant provided money for the preschool workshops in the six inner city WIN schools, and the income goes to support the Judicial Process Commission. The commission offers negotiable fees, charging \$50 an hour for workshops sponsored by churches, schools and community groups. Workshops for older children follow similar formats, Davis said, but incorporate more games than puppets.

Shelley Cochran, workshop trainer and coordinator for JPC, commented, "We re-

ally feel that with the messages that are out in the culture about violence and conflict, the earlier we can reach children with alternative messages about peace-making and cooperation and that kind of thing, the better off we'll be."

JPC works to counter the "glorification of violence," she said, and the message that one has to use violence to fight violence.

"We work our tails off to say that's not the only way to do it, and in fact is not the most effective way to do it," she said.

Davis is in her 26th year with the Judicial Process Commission. She began training adults in a Rochester neighborhood to be conflict mediators 16 years ago. Some of those adults then suggested she teach the younger generation. Her first venture with children was at School 14, in 1985. Her first presentation at a preschool was at St. Monica's in 1986.

The JPC workshop presenters travel throughout the city and some suburbs, going wherever they're invited.

"We've been to almost all the elementary schools," Davis said. "The people who have us back again, who want us back again say it helped children to get along better."

But the workshops need follow-up by people involved day-to-day with children, she said.

"Mrs. Gerhardt is the ideal teacher," Davis said. "She takes what we do and works with it in the classroom. ... Then it becomes effective."

Gerhardt, too, has long had an interest in teaching children to handle conflicts, although without a formal program.

"I'm really big on conflict resolution," Gerhardt said. "I don't solve problems for the children; I let them themselves."

"It doesn't solve things easily quickly," she said. "But they do start answering things for themselves."

Obituary

Father John A. Reddington, 84; was pastor, Navy chaplain

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Only five days after he had celebrated a Christmas liturgy marking St. Louis Church's 40th anniversary, Father John A. Reddington died of cardiac failure at the Pittsford parish rectory on Dec. 30, 1997. The retired pastor of the church — who administered the parish from 1953 to 1983 — was 84.

As pastor of St. Louis Parish, Father Reddington oversaw the building of its current church, school, convent and rectory, according to Father James A. Schwartz, the parish's current pastor. Father Reddington was also a great spiritual builder, Father Schwartz said.

"He's been the heart and soul of this parish community for the last 40 years," Father Schwartz said. "He was a person who knew how to get things done, but he was also with people during the hurting moments of their lives."

In particular, Father Reddington enjoyed serving children, Father Schwartz said. Several years ago, the pastor recalled, Father Reddington traveled to the Holy Land to celebrate Mass in Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus, and a baby began crying during the liturgy. Father Schwartz recalled what Father Reddington told him about that moment.

"He had this wonderful sense that he was hearing the Christ-child," Father Schwartz said. "Children fussing at Mass never bothered him during the liturgy."

Father Reddington also helped children during World War II when he served as a U.S. Navy and Marine chaplain. On board a ship stationed off Italy, Father Reddington arranged to have excess food taken ashore and given to hungry chil-



dren. Such service on behalf of the Italian people earned the priest an award, the Corona D'Italia, from the Italian government, according to Father

Robert F. McNamara, diocesan archivist.

"He was a prince," Father McNamara said of Father Reddington. "He was really a thorough gentleman, and a dear pastor."

Father Reddington was born in Rochester, and grew up in Blessed Sacrament Parish. He was ordained in Rome on March 19, 1937, where he attended North American College and Gregorian University.

Father Reddington was professor of dogmatic theology at St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester from 1939 to 1942. His naval service during World War II enabled him to attend several audiences given by Pope Pius XII for U.S. troops in Rome after the allies liberated Rome.

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After returning to the United States, Father Reddington served as assistant pastor at St. Francis DeSales Church, Geneva, from 1945 to 1950, and at St. Ambrose Church, Irondequoit, from 1950 to 1953. He then became pastor of St. Louis.

After retiring in 1983, Father Reddington stayed on at the parish, saying Mass on a daily basis up until the day before he died, Father Schwartz said. In fact, since he was having shortness of breath on Dec. 30, Father Reddington called another retired priest at the parish, Father James F. Slatery, and asked him to say 11 a.m. Mass in his place. Father Reddington died shortly after making sure Father Slatery could say the Mass, Father Schwartz said.

"He was conscientious to the end," Father Schwartz said.

Richard Lenio, a daily communicant at St. Louis, often acted as an altar server for Father Reddington. Lenio said the priest was known for his highly reverential approach to the Mass, especially his thoughtful recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer.

"You could hear in his inflections what

he was putting into it," Lenio said of Father Reddington.

Father Reddington was predeceased by his brothers, Richard and Father Thomas Reddington. He is survived by his sisters, Margaret Webb and Dorothy Appelby, both of Rochester.

About 450 people attended a Mass of Christ the High Priest that was celebrated for Father Reddington on Jan. 1, Father Schwartz said. The pastor added that 500 people attended Father Reddington's funeral Mass, celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark, on Jan. 2.

Interment took place at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

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