

PARENTING



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Mary Moore teaches children sign-language phrases from Psalm 40 during Children's Liturgy of the Word at the 9:30 a.m. Mass July 1 at St. Patrick's Church in Victor. Approximately 40 children from age 4 to 9 attend the children's liturgy every week during the summer. Attendance is higher during the school year.

Liturgy stresses relevance for children

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

VICTOR — How would a small child relate to Luke 9:57-61, in which people agree to follow Jesus only after attending to other matters? Mary Moore likened that Gospel reading to parents who ask their children to perform chores.

"Do we say 'In a minute?'" Moore asked the large group of youngsters gathered at her feet.

"No-o-o-o-o," the chorus came back.

Some participants fidgeted, others gazed intently as Moore taught the Children's Liturgy of the Word July 1 at St. Patrick's Church. Several responded eagerly to Moore's questions. Asked why the group had gathered, one youngster said, "To learn about Jesus." Another said a candle was being lit "because God is with us."

"I like God because he takes care of us," another child stated. And one girl earnestly waved her hand so she could announce to the group, "This is my first time here."

After some Bible reflections and sung prayers, the group ended its liturgy by responding "Lord, hear our prayer" to a series of intentions that included a father who had hurt his knee and a pet dog that's afraid of the water. The children then left the meeting room and rejoined their families in church.

Beth Knopf, children's liturgy coordinator for St. Patrick's, said the liturgy often draws 65 to 85 children during 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. The numbers are so

large, she said, that most weeks it's split into two sections — for ages 4-6 and 7-9. Knopf and Molly Bulman also coordinate a group of approximately 30 parent volunteers.

St. Patrick's is one of the few diocesan parishes to offer a children's liturgy during the summer. Knopf attributed the program's immensity to the growth of businesses and homes being built in the Victor area.

Children's liturgy teachers at St. Patrick's use the liturgical guide "Sunday," by Treehouse Publications. Youngsters leave Mass after the opening prayer and return in time for the offertory. The group reflects on that week's Gospel and one of the two readings. "You can take the reading which most closely coincides with the Gospel," Knopf said. "Sometimes, in the younger group, they will only present the Gospel because some of the readings are obscure for that age range, too hard to grasp as concrete."

St. Patrick's holds three children's liturgies and one children's Mass per month. "We're hoping to acclimate them to the adult Mass," Knopf said.

Not all of St. Patrick's young parishioners attend the children's liturgy, Knopf acknowledged. "Children don't want to be away from parents, or don't want to be part of a large group," she explained. "And some adults feel very strongly that part of attending Mass as a family is being there together."

Though she said these are legitimate concerns, Knopf feels the benefits of children's liturgy make it a very worth-

while option.

"Children can be a part of something they understand. If you don't have someone to explain it to you, the reading at the adult Mass would be meaningless," Knopf said. "And a lot of teachers will allow them to talk back, so it's a lot more interactive. It's appealing because they don't have to be quiet or sit still."

Connecting with real-life situations is a key to the children's liturgy, Knopf said. "For instance, is there something you can do to help people who are homeless? The dialogue portion is very helpful — 'What does this mean, why would Jesus say that?'" The children's intentions get them thinking "about the kind of things they should be praying for," Knopf said. Along with prayers for their pets, she has heard youngsters pray for "somebody in a depression, people who have died, and someone who lost a baby."

Samantha Larghe, 8, said she enjoys the St. Patrick's children's liturgy "because I can talk to God there, and listen to his words." Meanwhile, her brother Johnathan, 4, stated that he attends "because it's fun."

Millie McKernan, whose 5-year-old granddaughter, Deliah, lives with her, said that Deliah just recently began attending the children's liturgy. "She learns from the other kids, from them talking about God," McKernan said.

Maribeth Mancini, diocesan director of evangelization and catechesis, said parishes are not required but are strongly encouraged to offer regular Children's Liturgies of the Word.

"We support it as a very appropriate activity for local parishes. It's a wonderful opportunity," said Mancini, who noted that the diocese occasionally holds workshops on children's liturgy.

Describing children's liturgy as "a liturgical and not a catechetical expression," Mancini said that children's liturgy programs, ideally, are collaborative efforts between parish religious-education and liturgical leaders.

Family Events

● **JULY 13-15** — Festival: Village Park, Main St., Geneseo; July 13: 10 a.m.-10 p.m., RPO 8 p.m.; July 14: 8 a.m., pancake breakfast; Gary the Happy Pirate, noon & 2 p.m.; Skycoasters, 8 p.m., free; July 15: 8 a.m., pancake breakfast.

● **JULY 14-15** — Airshow: "History of Flight"; Tuskegee Airmen & P-51C "Redtailed" Mustang airshow debut; Geneseo Airport, Rt. 20A, Geneseo; free admission; parking \$5; 716/243-2100.

● **JULY 14, 21, 28** — Nature walk: join naturalist Bob Cooper on trip along trails; Cumming Nature Center, 6472 Gulick Rd., Naples; 11 a.m., 2 p.m.; adults \$4, seniors \$3, students K-12 \$1.50; Saturdays July-Aug.; 716/874-6160.

● **JULY 19, 26** — Concerts: July 19, "The Dady Brothers"; July 26, "Brockport Summer Jazz Ensemble"; Sagawa Park, corner Erie & Main Sts., Brockport; 7-9 p.m.; free; 716/637-3984.

● **FRI, JULY 20** — Cool Kids in the Park "Science Circus"; Sagawa Park, Main St., Brockport; 7-8 p.m.; free; 716/637-9984.

● **JULY 26, 27** — Walking tour of downtown Rochester, meet at City Hall, 30 Church St., Rochester; tour significant local and national history sites; noon-12:30 p.m., 4-4:30 p.m.; \$5; call Mariana Rhoades; 716/271-7868.

● **SAT, JULY 21** — Drama: "A Circle of Friends: An Abolitionist's Tour of Mt. Hope Cemetery in 1860"; relive Rochester's role in the Underground Railroad; North Gate House, Mt. Hope Cemetery, 791 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester; 10:11:30 a.m.; \$10 adults, \$5 children 8-18; for adults and children ages 8 and up; reservations recommended; 716/271-4552, ext. 342; also Aug. 18, Sept. 15, Oct. 20.

● **THRU JULY 25** — Film festival: "Whales"; RMSC Strassenburgh Planetarium, 657 East Ave., Rochester; 2-4 p.m. daily, 8-15 p.m. Tues-Sat; adults \$6, students, seniors \$4; 716/271-1880.

● **AUG. 14, 8-11** — Children's show: "The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood"; comedy by Mary Dobson; Bristol Valley Theater, 151 S. Main St., Naples; 11 a.m.; \$5; for ages 5/older; 716/374-6318.

● **FRI, AUG. 10** — Storytime: meet "Clifford"; for ages 3 & up; Kate Gleason Auditorium, Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County, 115 South Ave., Rochester; 2 p.m.; free; 716/428-8150.

● **THRU AUG. 31** — Summer Science Spectacles: interactive science demos; Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester; Mon-Fri, 10:11 a.m., 1 p.m.; Sat, 11 a.m., 1, 2 p.m.; free with museum admission; 716/271-4552, ext. 342.

● **THRU SEP. 3** — Kaleidoscope art studio on wheels; Strong Museum, One Manhattan Sq., Rochester; Mon-Thurs, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri 11 a.m.-8 p.m., Sat, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun, noon-5 p.m.; free; 716/263-2700.

Wegmans  now available at select stores

Your home for family entertainment!
try the convenience of...

5* DAY RENTALS
on every movie or game in the store, including new releases!



Mel Gibson Helen Hunt
THIRTEEN DAYS

What Women Want

* 5 Day Rentals on Popular Hit and Analog only at Closing store

Do You Have School Age Children?
Would Your Child Benefit From a Full Day Kindergarten?
BATES-RICH BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE
Now offers Full Day Kindergarten for younger 5 year olds or children who are ready for a longer school day.
Smaller groups foster early development of Kindergarten skills!
In addition to our wrap program for grades 1 to 3, Bates-Rich has added a wrap program exclusively for older children in grades 3-5!
We also offer wrap care for children in kindergarten thru Grade 5.
Call 244-3650 for details or enrollment information!
Accredited Center, Registered NYS Dept. of Education.