



SPRED

Archdiocese of Chicago



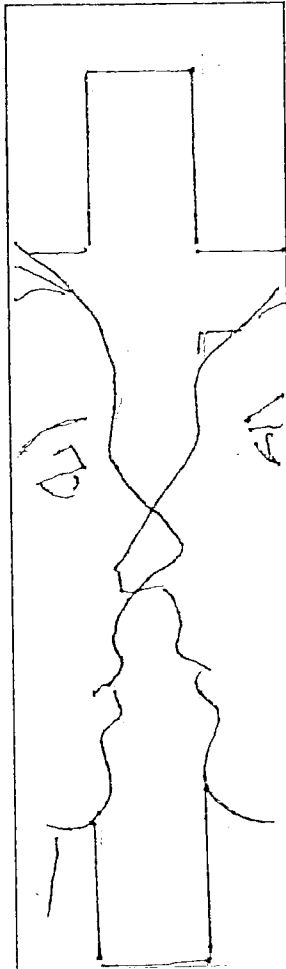
SPECIAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

2956 South Lowe Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60616

312-842-1039 www.spred-chicago.org

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**MISSION
ARY**

Cardinal Cupich and his teams have been working hard on the process of Renew My Church to revitalize parishes of the Archdiocese of Chicago. The goal is to support everyone to become missionary disciples. Parish Spred communities are all working to make this vision a reality, so Spred has developed some of its own missionary disciple building blocks.

The Method Vivre

Designed by Fr. Mesny of the Diocese of Lyons in France, this method has helped the Spred communities of faith to develop a process to be used when coming together for faith development.

Recently, forty-five of us Spred catechists gathered from around the world for a five day conference in the retreat house of Drumalis on the outskirts of Belfast, Northern Ireland. We focused on the use of the Method Vivre. We deepened our competence with the method by writing our own sessions. We gathered in small groups of seven or eight to share our sessions each day. The method develops in us a sense of the sacred, a sense of church, a sense of God. By using the method we become more comfortable in sacred settings when we celebrate Mass, the sacraments and when we come to our Spred sessions.

In August, Spred core team members of the Archdiocese of Chicago gathered at the Portiuncula Center for Prayer for a day of reflection and prayer centered on deepening our understanding of the Method Vivre. We took time to reflect and write a session based on the topic of love, a fruit of the Holy Spirit. There was background material on love of nature, love of a father or mother, love of a spouse, love of a pet, etc. Later in the day we gathered to share our sessions. What a powerful and meaningful experience!

At each adult catechist preparation session, we gather to pray, using the Method Vivre. We look at the goal of the evening and begin to reflect on some element of our life experience. After sharing our stories, the leader catechist evokes a liturgical experience and then reads a passage from Scripture that is in keeping with the goal as we connect with the Lord of Life. We give clear focus through the message, "Jesus says to you..." A song is then sung to celebrate our awareness of the Lord who is with us.

At a workshop for leader catechists, I invited them to write a session based on celebrations of the Easter Triduum. As they reflected on their experiences, they developed more precise liturgical evocations, a Scripture passage, message and music. This is one way to develop our capacity to become aware of God's presence in our lives using the Method Vivre.

Spred Standards

Another building block that we rely on in the Spred ministry is the Standards. The seven standards are to support the Spred communities to have reasonable expectations of one another as well as for planning and accountability.

Standard One

This standard presents the roles within a community so that expectations are clear. This is to respect the time and talents of each volunteer catechist. The community needs a parish chairperson, a leader catechist, an activity catechist and five other helper catechists. The parish chairperson is also the sixth helper. When a parish inquires about Spred, they learn from the first standard that the pastor is to appoint a Spred chairperson who takes two courses to learn the role. The chairperson finds the families whose children, teens, young adults and adults can benefit from Spred. The chairperson also finds the needed adult volunteers as well as a space that can become the Spred environment. They see to it that all the catechists take the Virtus training as well as the Spred training for the role they choose.

Standards Two, Three, and Four

These standards break up the total community session into its three phases. Standard 2 focuses on the preparation phase with our friends with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It can last from 45 minutes to one hour and a trained activity catechist is responsible for the quality of this period. The activity catechist is responsible for preparing the room to be used with age appropriate materials. Standard 3 focuses on the need for a trained leader catechist who leads a catechesis that is age appropriate using the Method Vivre. The leader catechist prepares the room to be used. Standard 4 focuses on the fellowship table close to the end of each session. In Spred it is called the Agape. It follows the catechesis so the activity catechist prepares fabric tablecloth or mats and napkins, glassware, silverware, candles, and flowers. This beautifully prepared table is set for simple food and drink brought by others.

Standard Five

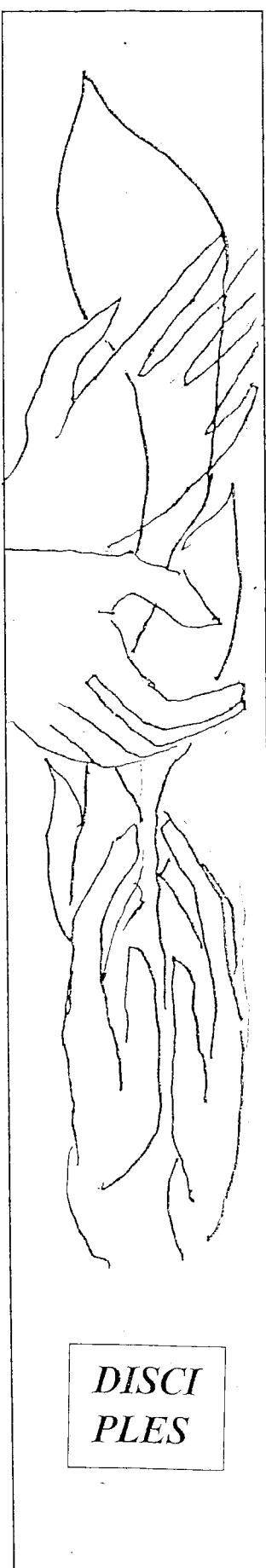
This standard focuses on the need for an adult catechist preparation on a day and time that is different from the session with our friends with disabilities. It is a time for the volunteer catechists to prepare themselves and the community to prepare itself to become authentic missionary disciples. This provides an opportunity for the catechists to slow down, reflect on their lives and pray. This session also closes with a beautiful agape table to savor the friendships being developed.

Standard Six

The goal of Spred is to belong to parish liturgies. As a support to this goal, sometimes the parish community may have their Spred family liturgies where they let the general parish assembly know that they exist and have their own contributions to make. At this liturgy they may make some adjustments to suit their slower pace, their ability to prepare the altar and have an impact on the music used as well as gestures.

Standard Seven

Spred fosters area collaboration by spring planning sessions. This becomes ever more important with the changes expected through the Renew My Church process.



DISCIPLES

Vision for Spred

Divine Renovation ** by Fr. James Mallon is the reference book for the Renew My Church process in the Archdiocese of Chicago. In his book Fr. Mallon speaks of leadership between the parish staff and the leaders of various ministries in the parish. Spred can only benefit by this collaboration.

In the process of being missionary disciples, the quality of the Sunday liturgy is most important according to Fr. Mallon. Key elements are hospitality, music, hymns and homilies. The effort by Spred parish catechists to always work hard on the Spred family liturgies contributes to the parish effort to offer significant liturgies.

Pope Francis writes in the Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium) “I dream of a ‘missionary option’ that is, a missionary impulse capable to transforming everything so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.” (#27)

He also presents his vision for every parish : “It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a center of constant missionary outreach.” (#28)

“If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much to our friends and wealthy neighbors, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, ‘those who cannot repay you’ (Lk 14, 14) There can be no room for doubt or for explanations which weaken so clear a message. Today and always, “the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel, and the fact that it is freely preached to them is a sign of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish. We have to state, without mincing words that ‘there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor.’ May we never abandon them. (48)

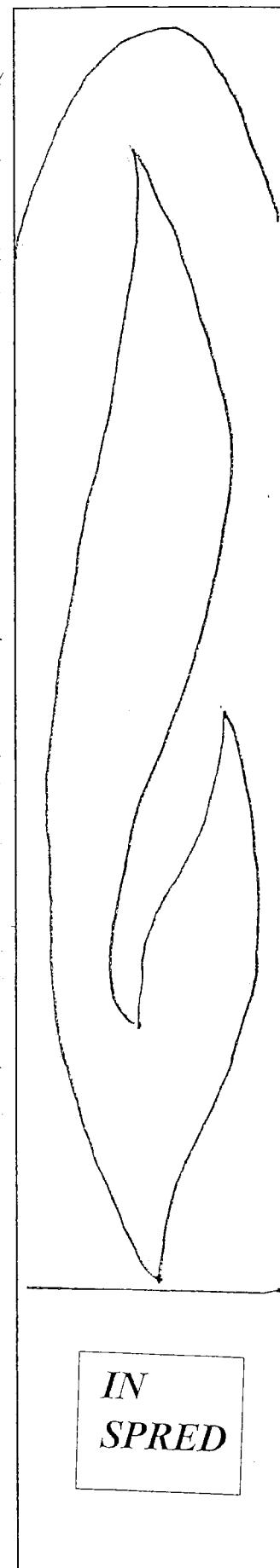
“Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries’, but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’.” (# 120)

All Spred catechists, as missionary disciples, are willing to grow in faith within their parish community. They are willing to give witness to others, to reach out to others with intellectual and developmental disabilities living at home or in a residential setting to invite them into the Spred community of faith, they are willing to bask in God’s love. This is a way of life. Live it! Treasure the gifts of the Spred ministry.

Joe Quane and Elizabeth Sivek
Spred Chicago

*Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, Liberia Editrice Vatican City, 2013

** Fr. James Mallon, Divine Renovation, Bringing Your Parish from Maintenance to Mission, Twenty Third Pulications, 2014, pgs 95-127



SPRED CALENDAR

Spred Training

Helper Catechist Training

Nov. 3 English, Spred Center, 30th and Lowe Chicago
1:00 to 6:00 pm

Spred Family Liturgies, 30th & Lowe, Chicago 11:00
Nov. 4, Dec. 2, Feb. 3, Mar. 3, April 7, May 5

Observation

6-10, 6:00 pm Monday Nov. 5, 19, Dec. 3, Feb. 11
11-16, 7:00 pm Tuesday Nov. 6, 20, Dec. 4, Feb. 12
17-21, 7:00 pm Tuesday Nov. 6, 20, Dec. 4, Feb. 12
22+, 7:00 pm Monday Nov. 5, 19, Dec. 3, Feb. 11

Mamre Dinner Dance Fundraiser, Nov. 10, 2018
Crystal Sky, McCook

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Workshop for Helper Catechists/Spred Sponsors

Wed. Nov. 14, 7:00 to 9:30 pm Spred Center 3rd fl.
RSVP Elizabeth Sivek 312-842-1039

Workshop for Parish/Church Persons

Sat. Dec. 8, 9:30 am to 12 noon, Spred Center 3rd fl.
RSVP Elizabeth Sivek 312-842-1039