

Education Commission Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2010

In Attendance: Jane Carroll (Staff Member), Katie Gebhard (Staff Member), Mary Zielinski, Tom Nathe, Mary Powell, Sherry Campeau, Lisa Zastoupil

Absent: Pat Bredenkamp (Staff Member)

Electronic handouts distributed prior to the meeting: February 2010 Principal's Report, February 2010 Faith Formation Report, Recommendations regarding faith formation programs:

1. Meeting called to order at 7:20 pm
2. January meeting minutes approved via email.
3. Recommendations for the Faith Formation program.
Commission members discussed the list of recommendations for the Faith Formation program (attached at the end of these minutes). Members discussed how best to get parents involved in the faith formation of their children. Providing more consistent curriculum in middle and high school between Sunday and Wednesday sessions was also discussed. All religion curriculum must have an Imprimatur.

Beginning in the Fall 2010, Tuesday night faith formation is moving to Wednesday (no more Tuesday nights). Wednesday night schedule as follows – grades 1-8 at 5:00 pm, grades 1-10 at 6:45 pm.

4. School physical environment.
Jane reported on meetings she has had regarding how best to enhance the attractiveness of the school environment. More information is included in the Principals report in the "Marketing Progress" section. Some initial changes have been initiated and initial feedback is positive. There is a lot of positive energy and excitement surrounding this initiative. Improvements will be ongoing over the next few years.
5. Catholic Schools week follow-up.
Jane reported that this years Catholic Schools Week was a smashing success. The basketball game between staff and Jr. high students was a blast for all. The talent show on Friday was also well received.
6. Parish mission: February 21-23.
Members discussed some of the final items regarding the parish mission. CD's of the talks will be for sale in the gift shop.

7. Education Commission Action Plan (begin to review and update)
Tabled till March
8. Reports: Advisory Committees, Faith Formation, School, Parish Council
Advisory committee's member terms and rotations was discussed by the
committee members. The next rotation starts in May/June.

Notes regarding the professional development for school staff is in the Principals
report

Faith Formation and Principals report are attached at the end of these minutes

9. Adjournment with Prayer at 8:25 pm

Next meeting: March 9, 2010

February 2010 Faith Formation Education Commission Report

The Faith Formation Department has been very busy conducting sacramental preparation programs for Eucharist and Confirmation. Our teens were also experiencing Confirmation retreats and both Middle and High School teens just completed an overnight/weekend retreat.

Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Our Sunday and Elementary children will be collecting socks, T shirts, pajama pants and underwear for homeless and needy children and families. Collected items will be distributed by the Franciscan Brothers of Peace in St. Paul. There will be a large sock and T shirt on the Faith Formation bulletin board by the youth room depicting the generosity of our families.

Our Middle and High School teens will be involved in a 30 Hour Fast on March 20-21. Teens get contributions which will be donated to Catholic Relief Services. During their 30 hours, they will be giving service here and in the local community, learning more about Catholic Social Teachings and experiencing Praise and Worship. It will conclude with a dinner and the 5:30 Sunday Mass.

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) participants will be going to the Basilica on February 21 for the Rite of Election with the archbishop. They will be joining RCIA parish groups from around the Twin Cities. We will celebrate a 'Rite of Sending' with them at the 8:45 Mass that day.

We are only 2 weeks away from our Parish Lenten Mission with Fr. Jim Deegan. Families should have received a special mailing in January and there are articles in the upcoming newsletter. There will be outdoor signs and I have sent notices to local parishes, the Coon Rapids Herald and the Catholic Spirit. It should also be advertized on the local TV channel and at the HOM store on Highway 10. The mission schedule is:

Sunday, February 21:

5:30 Mass (normal) followed by about 15 minutes of music by the LifeTeen Choir
7:00 – 8:00 Presentation in the church for adults. There will be activities for children grades K – high school. Childcare is offered to those who contact Katie by Feb. 18.
8:00 – Hospitality hosted by the Community Commission

Monday, February 22:

10:00 – 11:00: Presentation by Fr. Deegan (summary of Sunday/Monday talks)
6:00: Regular Mass followed by music with one of our parish choirs
7:00 – 8:00: Presentation for adults in church
8:00 – Hospitality hosted by the Knights of Columbus

Tuesday, February 21:

8:00: All School Mass – Fr. Deegan presiding
10:00 – 11:00: Presentation (summary of Monday/Tuesday talk)
6:00: Regular Mass followed by music with one of our parish choirs
7:00 – 8:00: Presentation for adults in church

8:00: Hospitality hosted by the Education Commission

Clyde will be taping each night and cds will be available over the weekend.

Our staff are also working with catechists to review various religion curriculum.

Principal's Report to the Education Commission February 9, 2010

Catholic Schools Week

I'm writing this at the close of Catholic Schools Week, and it's been a joy-filled week.

Highlights include:

- We hosted an Open House on Sunday from 10:00-12:00. We had a steady flow of guests that included current families, those checking out the school for the first time, parishioners, and residents of the Pines. The school looked beautiful and it was a very positive marketing initiative.
- The school was visibly present "in uniform" at all Masses throughout the weekend.
- Students and families participated in Sunday's liturgy as greeters, usher assistants, lectors, and gift bearers.
- A brief testimonial was given at each Mass by a parent and child.
- Epiphany's PTO hosted hospitality after masses on Sunday.
- The week featured numerous fun activities for students---out of uniform days, buddy activities, a celebration of talent at an assembly, a pep fest, etc.
- Over 600 gathered for breakfast on two mornings!
- Many sixth grade junior high parents joined us for a "Nothing Fest" on Wednesday. The spirit was high and parents had an inside glimpse at learning at Epiphany. We heard many positive comments from parents.

All in all, it's been a great week of celebrating and marketing!

Marketing Progress

The Marketing Committee continues to make progress on many fronts. One initiative I'd like to share is our review of "first impressions" when visitors come to the school. A small sub committee made up of Mike Kraft, Gail Mikolich, Cathy Sullivan, John Awalt, Shawn Dub, Mike Lentz and I have met several times to discuss ways that we can enhance the attractiveness of the school environment. One of the resources we agreed we needed was someone with expertise in marketing through environmental statements. Fortunately, Mike Kraft has a colleague who has joined us for two meetings. He is helping us identify focal points throughout the school and brainstorm possible enhancements. One of our tasks for the next meeting is to identify everything that is on walls right now and prioritize messages we would like our environment to convey. The good news is that most initiatives probably won't cost a lot to improve.

Kindergarten Enrollment for 2010-11

I'll have a status report for you on Tuesday evening.

Professional Development

During January the faculty participated in two in-services:

1. The Six Traits of Writing presented by Charon Tierney, MN Department of Education
2. Mental Health Issues of Children presented by Dr. Steven Kahn

Trimesters

Next year District 11 will move to a trimester calendar, instructional pacing, and progress reporting. We have been supportive of this movement for a number of years for a variety of reasons. Epiphany plans to use this model in the 2010-11 school year.

Lent

We plan to use the parish mission theme, “Change Your Heart”, as our focus throughout Lent. Jeri Mehr, counselor, and our interns have planned weekly school-wide activities to support the theme.

Internet Safety

We have an internet safety assembly planned for students in grades 5 through 8 on March 16. Karina Berzins, from the MN Dept. of Public Safety will cover topics such as email, instant messaging, My Space, Facebook, texting, etc. Parents will be invited to attend.

Student Service

Within the past two weeks (led by the students, Mrs. Wilkie & Mrs. Day) over \$1780.00 was raised to respond to the people of Haiti.

Registration 2010-11

Our tentative timeline for registration is as follows:

February 18	Registration materials sent to families
March 12	Materials due to be eligible for incentives
March 31	TADS applications due
Early May	Financial aid awards communicated

Recommendations regarding faith formation programs:

1. Provide more opportunities for parent enrichment
2. Provide something for 4th-5th grade parents to assist with 'Family Life' education/values
3. Provide additional and ongoing catechist/core team formation on facilitating discussion groups, handling behavior/discipline issues, prayer models, learning styles and deepening their spiritual life.
4. Engage children/teens at all levels in more social justice/service opportunities
5. Engage teens more in the life of the parish (have them 'shadow staff/volunteers... assist with Food Shelf, Basket Programs, Springfest, ushers, sacristans, VBS, etc.)
6. Provide more consistent curriculum in middle and high school between Sunday and Wednesday sessions
7. Develop a different model for our high school teens that addresses their learning, social, spiritual, developmental, family and work needs (e.g. have 4-6 week sessions 4 times a year with breaks in between)
8. Provide additional youth ministry opportunities – times for a youth group, more 'issue nights with teens or teens/parents, peer ministry training, etc.
9. Collaborate more with the 8th graders from the school to better meet their needs as they enter the high school program
10. Provide more opportunities for intergenerational experiences (Advent, Lent, etc.)
11. Look into ways to better meet the needs of children/teens with special needs
12. Explore more ways to provide support to parents with our youngest children (big gap between Baptism and beginning of school)
13. Evaluate the current Baptism Preparation Program to better meet the needs of parents returning to the church or who are non-practicing.

Given feedback from various groups we would like to proceed with offering the same structure for children aged 3 – grade 8. We are reviewing different models for high school.

These comments/recommendations are from our faith formation team after consultation with parents and catechists. They also include recommendations from Jane Hilger and Sharon Horgan who did an 'outside evaluation' 1 ½ years ago.