

## **Descriptions of the Break-out Sessions for the Witnesses for Christ Conference**

### **1) A Compelling Resource for Parish Small Groups**

Fr. Brian Konopa, Susan Halter, Peter Schmitz, Lisa Doering, Linda Schwartz  
Mary, Mother of the Church Parish, La Crosse

Would you like to become a parish of Missionary Disciples? One excellent way is through the Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) Faith Study Series. This series is more than just an opportunity to add to your knowledge of the Catholic faith. It calls for a conversion of heart and mind and, according to the CCO objectives: "Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, it is designed to bring participants to a real and effective encounter with Jesus Christ and to progressively build them into the Missionary Disciples the Church needs them to be." This workshop will provide an overview of CCO's mission, objectives and goals as well as the learnings and experiences of those who have facilitated CCO faith-sharing groups over the past two years.

### **2) Fostering Holiness in Children – Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**

Carolyn Kohlhaas, Formation Leader for CGS; Peg Klinkhammer, Coordinator of CGS Atrium in  
Wisconsin Rapids & Rosemary Hokamp, CRE at Our Lady Queen of Heaven in Wisconsin Rapids

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a Montessori-based method of Catholic faith formation through which children ages 3 to 12 can grow in their relationship with God through a deep engagement in Scripture and liturgy. Utilized by schools, parishes, and religious communities, the work of CGS is "catching fire" and spreading throughout the US and the world. Join us for an overview of CGS, the developmental needs of children, and a look at how this Method can be a gift to you and to the children and families you serve.

### **3) Theology of the Body: A Basic Overview for Forming Youth**

Christopher Ruff, Director for Ministries & Social Concerns, Julie Studinski, Youth and Adult Ministry  
at St. Bronislava Parish in Plover and St. Francis Parish in Knowlton and Cassie Thayer, Catechetical  
Leader at St. Patrick Parish in Mauston

Chris Ruff, who studied Pope St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body extensively at the JPPII Institute in Rome, will present an overview of what it is and why it is so vitally important for young people today. He will drill down to the heart of it and explain why it is about so much more than just human sexuality (though it certainly includes that). Julie will focus on equipping and energizing facilitators to present Theology of the Body to our youth using the very best programs, such as *YOU* for High School and *Theology of the Body for Middle School* from Ascension Press. She will introduce you to approaches that will help you feel comfortable presenting this important and necessary topic. Cassie will introduce Ruah Woods Resources, which present the gift of each person as a child of God through hard-bound beautiful story books. She can speak from fruitful experience to these Theology of the Body Resources being used in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, revealing that the children greatly enjoy the stories and engage well.

### **4) Effectively using Conversion Stories to Catechize Youth**

Clare Ruff, Catholic Liaison, Director of Events and Outreach – Hosea Initiative; Chris Rogers, Director  
for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Our Lord repeatedly used parables to convey truths that were challenging. Stories have the power to inspire and motivate precisely because they are personal and non-confrontational. This workshop will explore the art of effective storytelling as an impactful tool for evangelizing people of all ages. As part of the presentation the speakers will tell the powerful conversion stories of 3 modern individuals (2 of them saints) who grappled with issues relevant today and became vibrant witnesses of the Gospel.

## **5) Partnering with Families in Youth Ministry**

Bill Keimig, Assistant Director of the Catechetical Institute; Bob Rice, long-term youth minister and teacher at Franciscan University of Steubenville; Steve Allgeyer, President of Ministry Advancement for Life Teen Inc; Joel Stepanich, Director of Resource Development for Life Teen International.

Parents are the hinge-point of *successfully* and *consistently* reaching most teens. It is therefore *essential* that those in youth ministry understand their role is to provide support, empower, and partner with families. Franciscan at Home provides engaging and beautiful online workshops at [franciscanathome.com](http://franciscanathome.com). These four, lively presenters will engage participants to encourage, excite, and empower action to practices and principles which actively partner with parents. Cost for the workshop is \$5 per month or \$300 a year for 90 workshops available for all parishioners under one pastor.

## **6) Addressing Confusion about Identity and Gender**

Fr. Paul Check, Rector of St. John Fisher Seminary in Connecticut; Chris Rogers, Director for Youth and Young Adult Ministry; Chris Ruff, Director for Ministries and Social Concerns

In the midst of a confused culture, how can we affirm and teach God's fundamental design for the human person as male and female, created in His image and called to a life of self-giving love? How can we do this in a way that is sensitive to the ears of our young people (and their parents) and to their sincerely-held though often misled beliefs? And yet in a way that is also unafraid to speak the truth -- because we know God has written that truth deep within every human heart? These are the questions that Chris Ruff and Chris Rogers will address as they consider the most common misconceptions about identity and gender.

## **7) Fostering Communication and Collaboration between the Pastor and Parish Leaders**

Fr. Kizewski, Pastor of Holy Ghost Parish in Chippewa Falls and St. Bridget's Parish in Springfield; Paula Hanson, Catechetical Leader at Holy Ghost Parish

In this presentation, we plan to share stories of high points, low points, successes and epic fails in communication and what we have learned from them. We will share resources that have helped us with the hope that it will help others. At the very least, we should be able to laugh at ourselves.

## **8) Relationship, Intentionality, and Accompaniment: The Cornerstones of Ministry**

Jennifer Kulzer, High School Faith Formation, Confirmation Preparation and RCIA at Blessed Sacrament Parish in La Crosse & Andrew Brueggen, Youth Minister at St. Patrick's Parish in Onalaska & Cassie Thayer, Catechetical Leader at St. Patrick's Parish in Mauston

The Gospels show us that when Christ would teach He did it in a way that imparted knowledge and evoked a personal response from each of those He encountered. As our youth are feeling increasingly isolated because of the effects of today's culture, we need to become more like Christ and let each person we encounter know his or her worth as a son or daughter of God. This session will give practical tips on how to become intentional in your ministry for accompanying people of all ages.