

A Look at Sunday School – Children’s Catechetics

Most people say that “*things are not the way they have always been*” or, at least, “*once were*” for a period of time. And we can say this, as well, about church and the life of faith. For example, in the Province of Nova Scotia 30 years ago, 4% of our people described themselves as having no religious affiliation ... today that has increased to 25%. What we once took for granted, we cannot assume anymore. And what once worked ... even 30 years ago ... doesn’t seem to work today. And within our Church, we can **see this most profoundly** with our Sunday School programs, with our Children’s Catechetics.

A brief synopsis of not only our local area but throughout the Archdiocese and even further shows us that the number of young people participating in Sunday School is only a fraction of what it once was. Yes, it is true that, in general, the number of young people in rural Nova Scotia is declining but there is even a greater decline in the number connected with church.

So, as a result, we have fewer children participating in Sunday School and even with these fewer numbers there is an increasingly high percentage who are not regular participants. As well, a growing percentage of those registered, and their parents, are not connected to other aspects of parish life – especially Eucharist. In other words – more and more young people are being *dropped off* for Sunday School and *picked up* afterwards with no connection to the liturgical life of the parish (ie. Mass) or anything else. To go along with this – it is becoming increasingly more difficult to find adults or older youth who are willing to help as catechists in the Sunday School program.

Our present approach, seems to be just “*spinning its wheels*” ... “*not going anywhere.*” So, maybe it needs to change. What have we got to lose? As Archbishop Mancini quotes Albert Einstein: “*What’s the definition of insanity? When we do the same things over and over again and we expect different results.*”

What can we do? Well, we do have some ideas. But we would like **your feedback** as well. And rather than rushing into this or that, I would like to propose that we take a breather and reflect ... so that if we don’t “have it all together” by September 1st that’s okay.

So, if you have any thoughts on what I have written – please send me your feedback in the mail or email me at fj@ns.aliantzinc.ca.

Thank you,
Fr. John MacPherson