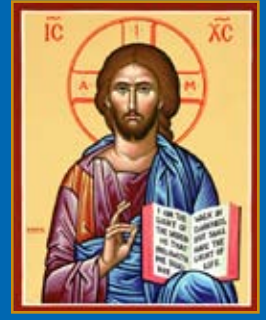


ELEMENTARY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 • No. 5 • April 2010



NATIONAL
CATHOLIC
EDUCATIONAL
ASSOCIATION



NEWS

As announced at the NCEA Convention, SchoolReach Instant Parent Contact has generously sponsored the 2010 edition of *Financing the Mission: A Profile of Catholic Elementary Schools in the United States*. This is a must-have book to assist you with your annual budgeting and planning needs that NCEA ordinarily sells for \$20.00.

Many attendees were able to pick up a complimentary copy at the SchoolReach booth. If you did not receive a copy or were unable to attend and would like to receive the 2009 edition of *Financing the Mission*, you may register to receive your complimentary copy directly from SchoolReach at <http://www.schoolreach.com/ncea.html>.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Prin cipals and assistant principals are often asked to begin their ministry of administration with little background and are often overwhelmed by the diversity of requirements needed for the position.

In order to meet the needs of beginning principals and to support and encourage experienced principals, the NCEA has developed a summer workshop which will provide ongoing formation and support and at the same time reinvigorate those who already face the daily challenges of administration. Those teachers who are considering the ministry of administration will find the program a valuable opportunity to share their ideas and learn from experienced administrators.

The goals of the Institute are to:

- Encourage and support experienced principals;
- Provide assistance to new principals to learn various aspects of their ministry;
- Help assistant principals and competent teachers discern their own future in the ministry of administration;
- Network with principals and candidates from other parts of the country.

For more information, please go to: http://www.ncea.org/events/event.asp?event_id=140. Bro. William J. Campbell, S.M., Ed.D., Associate Executive Director, NCEA, Department of Elementary Schools, 1005 N. Glebe Road, Suite 525, Arlington VA 22201; PH: 571-257-0026; FX: 703-243-0025; wcampbell@ncea.org



Year for Priests

June 19, 2009–
June 19, 2010



“Saint John Mary Vianney taught his parishioners primarily by the witness of his life. It was from his example that they learned to pray, halting frequently before the tabernacle for a visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. ‘One need not say much to pray well’ – the Curé explained to them – ‘We know that Jesus is there in the tabernacle: let us open our hearts to him, let us rejoice in his sacred presence. That is the best prayer.’”

— Pope Benedict XVI, Letter Proclaiming a Year for Priests, 16 June 2009

2010 TOYOTA INTERNATIONAL TEACHER PROGRAM

The application is now available for the 2010 Toyota International Teacher Program to the Galapagos Islands, a fully-funded, professional development program for U.S. educators. Funded by Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc., and administered by the Institute of International Education, the program aims to advance environmental stewardship and global connectedness in U.S. schools and communities. The program will take place **November 20 – December 4, 2010** and the deadline to apply is **May 26, 2010**. Full-time classroom teachers and librarians of all subjects for grades 6 – 12 are eligible to apply! Please go to www.toyota4education.com for application instructions, FAQs, and to apply online.

FYI

To make it easier to apply for our grants, scholarships, and awards, please note the following:

- The NCEA Social Justice Education Grants application is available at: http://www.ncea.org/UserFiles/File/Elem/2010_Social_Justice_Application_form_online.pdf.
- The NCEA/Catholic Daughters of the Americas Scholarships for Teachers of Students with Special Needs is available at: http://www.ncea.org/UserFiles/File/Elem/2010-2011_CDA_Application_form_online.pdf.
- The NCEA Distinguished Graduate Award application may be accessed at: http://www.ncea.org/UserFiles/File/Elem/Distinguished_Graduate_Award_application_online.pdf.
- The NCEA Commendation application is available at: http://www.ncea.org/UserFiles/File/Elem/Commendation_form_updated_2006.doc.

SAVE THE DATE!

**The Fourteenth Annual
Catholic School Principals Forum
November 11-13, 2010
Hyatt at Fisherman's Wharf
San Francisco, CA**



FOSTERING THINKING SKILLS IN THE YOUNG CHILD

Developing thinking skills and teaching children how to apply them is one of the most valuable gifts we can give to our students. As teachers, we encourage our students to analyze information, solve problems, and think creatively and logically, but often children are not taught how to do this effectively.

The process of thinking involves using a variety of skills to analyze and make sense of information, solve problems when confronted with new challenges, and develop creative ideas using logical processes. Acquiring knowledge and how to use this knowledge is what thinking is all about.

Thinking skills need to be nurtured and developed to help students understand the world around them, communicate their thoughts to others, form ideas, and discover how they can use these ideas.

Helping children to develop thinking skills is necessary for children to succeed in school and to be able to solve problems throughout their lives. Children need thinking skills to be able to survive and adapt to our ever-changing world. Children need to be independent thinkers.

Asking questions is the easiest way to develop thinking skills in children. Students enjoy being part of discussions that make them think because it makes learning fun and exciting. By asking and answering questions, the student takes an active role in the learning process while developing thinking and reasoning skills.

To help develop thinking skills:

- Invite students to ask questions.
- Always respond enthusiastically to their questions.
- Begin by asking questions that students can answer easily to reinforce a feeling of success.
- Make the questions more and more challenging. Children will not know the answers, but they can be guided to finding them.
- Encourage further inquiry when wrong answers are given. Use wrong answers as new learning experiences.
- Enjoy and have fun with the students!

Bloom's Taxonomy divides thinking skills into six categories. The first three categories, knowledge, comprehension, and application, involve the more concrete thinking skills.

Knowledge focuses on the rote memorization of facts usually dealing with right or wrong answers. Some questions and key words to use to develop this skill include:

- When? Where? How many? List. Tell.

These types of questions test what a child can recall.

Comprehension focuses on understanding or developing meaning. Some questions and key words to use to develop this skill include:

- Explain. Identify. Describe. What could happen next?

Application focuses on using previously learned information to solve a new problem. Some questions and key words to use to develop this skill include:

- Apply. Show. Solve. Sort and classify.

The final three categories of Bloom's Taxonomy, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, involve more abstract thinking skills.

Analysis focuses on analyzing information and separating it into parts. Some key words to use to develop this skill include:

- Separate. Arrange. Compare. Analyze.

Synthesis focuses on using previously learned information and skills to create new information. Some questions and key words to use to develop this skill include:

- Design. Create. Invent. What if?

Evaluation focuses on making judgments and decisions based on a set of standards or criteria. Some key words to use to develop this skill include:

- Measure. Conclude. Summarize. Decide.

An easy way to develop thinking skills in children is simply to be aware of the correct way in which to use words in questions. When asking questions that stimulate children's thought processes, learning can be fun as well as beneficial.



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STRATEGIC ANCHOR FOR ADHD

Last time, we looked at the *ADHD State of Mind Sports Metaphors*.^{*} For a student with ADHD, school can be like NASCAR, with everything spinning in a circle and elements crashing into each other. Or, school can be like football, using the clock to get the job done and throwing in a Hail Mary. Or, it can resemble hockey, where you skate and skate until a fight either gets you what you want or you are ejected from the game. This month, we will look at Strategic Anchors for ADHD.

As we know, our educational model comes from a time when teachers were preparing students to work in the factory: students sat in perfectly straight rows, with eyes up front, listening as the teacher instructed them. Decades later, educators are challenged to prepare students for a world where individuality, creativity, and ingenuity are valued. When approaching a student with ADHD, it helps to remember the world which awaits him or her. Your goal is not to cure the ADHD or “get the ADHD out of him.” Rather, your goal is to help the student to negotiate the ADHD so he or she can learn media arts, calculus, world history, and Shakespeare. Here are a few strategies that can help.

Strategic Anchors for ADHD.*

Without an anchor, a ship will float aimlessly toward disaster. The following steps can help a student with ADHD to take that “scattered and racing” feeling which prohibits him or her from learning and anchor it, feel grounded and able to focus.

Fill the Hands

Imagine you are holding heavy grocery bags when someone asks you for directions. As the bags slip, you shift your weight or try to get a better grip. You are frustrated and cannot focus on giving directions. The reverse is true with students who have ADHD. This student cannot focus unless his hands are full. Give the student a stress ball, clay, or any other object that will occupy the physical impulses. That enables the brain to focus. Students with ADHD absorb more of what they hear when they feel anchored.

Have a Plan

After you pose a question to the class, have three different students repeat the question. This will give the student with ADHD the processing time he or she needs to formulate an answer to the question.

Use clear, readable and uncluttered test forms. Cut the test in thirds from top to bottom and give the student one third at a time.

Reduce assignments into manageable parts with due dates, time-limit challenges, and instructions such as: “*It could take you 15 minutes to complete this section. Set a timer and see how you do!*” The ability of a student with ADHD to focus improves when the task is presented as a competition or a race.

A Handy Man

Students with ADHD figure out early on that they are different and their self-esteem suffers. They want to know they belong and having a classroom responsibility enables them to feel useful and part of the class.

The Lay of the Land

Give the student clear instructions on what areas are open to him or her. Some teachers place all students with ADHD at the front of the room, when many students with ADHD need to sit in the back and need to use more than one desk or more than one space. Let the student stand. Let the student move from desk to desk. Mark the floor with colored tape if you find it helpful.

It is not right to judge a person on how well they can focus and give directions with their arms filled with heavy groceries and yet, we do it to the student with ADHD every day. Students with ADHD feel those heavy packages slipping from their grasp all the time and all we do is tell them to “focus harder.” The strategies above will enable them to take a moment... anchor...and focus.

**Created by Dr. Ellen M. E. Wedemeyer*



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ACTION ALERT REGARDING ESEA REAUTHORIZATION

The Obama administration has outlined its goals for reauthorization of NCLB/ESEA in a “blueprint” (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/>) that establishes the framework of programs that depart significantly from past approaches.

The new ESEA will focus primarily on improving underperforming public schools. The private school lobbying efforts continue for the equitable inclusion of its students and teachers in all programs that have served them well in the past. The challenge will be to create pathways for inclusion that will respect the uniqueness and independence of the Catholic school and avoid having to compromise and/or adopt public school mandates.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is the official lobbying organization for the Church. They are organizing a campaign to remind the legislators writing the reauthorization bill of the importance of retaining the equitable inclusion of our students and teachers in the new law.

These are some of the talking points that could be included:

- Since 1965, and in each subsequent reauthorization, ESEA has required the equitable inclusion of Catholic school students and their teachers. Currently, 80% of Catholic schools have students and teachers who participate in some ESEA programs.

- Private school students should be included in all programs available to public school students similarly situated. Funds generated by private school students should be spent on them.
- Discuss the importance of improving access for Catholic schools students and teachers to participate in federal education programs, especially in Titles I-A and II-A (professional development).
- The extra value of your comments rests in your ability to provide examples of your schools’ experiences, both positive and negative, with regard to the timeliness and effectiveness of consultation and implementation of services for your students and teachers.
- If your school has experienced a steady decline in the amount of funding available for services, then describe the negative effects of the inadequate funding. If your allocations have remained steady and adequate, describe the progress made by students over the course of the year.

The assistance of our schools is very important if we are to influence decisions to continue our equitable inclusion in ESEA. Please make every effort respond to this request. Comments are due to the Senate HELP (Health, Education, Pensions and Labor) committee by

Friday, May 7. ESEAccomments@help.senate.gov

NEWS FROM THE YEAR FOR PRIESTS

The Holy Father is giving a new series of Easter catecheses on the priestly ministry. The following is the first one (14 April 2010):

Dear friends,

In this Easter time that brings us to Pentecost and also to celebrating the closing of the Year for Priests on June 9, 10 and 11, I would like to dedicate more reflection to the subject of the ordained ministry, dwelling this time on the fecund reality of the priests’ configuration to Christ the Head, in the exercise of the three duties (*munera*) that he receives - namely, the three functions of teaching, sanctifying and governing.

In order to understand what it means to be ‘*in persona Christi capitis*’ - in the person of Christ the Head - on the part of the priest, and to understand also what consequences

derive from the task of representing the Lord, especially in the exercise of these three functions.

It is necessary to clarify above all what is meant by ‘representation’. The priest represents Christ. What does it mean to ‘represent’ someone? In common speech, it generally means to receive authority from a person to be able to be present in his place, speak and act in his place, when he who is represented is absent from the concrete action.

We ask ourselves: Does the priest represent the Lord in the same way? The answer is No, because in the Church, Christ is never absent - the Church is his living Body, and he is the Head of the Church, present and operating in her.

Christ is never absent - rather, he is present in a way that is completely free from the limitations of space and time, thanks to the event of the Resurrection which we contemplate in a special way during this Eastertide.

Therefore, the priest who acts *in persona Christi Capitis* [in the person of Christ the Head] and in representation of the Lord, never acts in the name of an absentee, but in the Person of the Risen Christ himself, who is rendered present through his truly effective action.

He acts and makes real that which the priest cannot do: the consecration of the bread and wine so that the presence of the Lord is real, the absolution of sins. The Lord makes his own action present in the person who carries out these gestures.

These three tasks of the priest - which Tradition has identified in the words of the Lord's own mission - to teach, to sanctify and to govern - in their distinction and in their profound unity, are a specification of this effective representation. They are, in fact, the three actions of the risen Christ, the same that today, in the Church and the world, teaches and therefore creates faith, reunites his people, creates the presence of truth, and truly builds the communion of the universal Church; and sanctifies, and leads.

The first task that I wish to speak of today is the *munus docendi*, namely, the duty to teach. Today, in the middle of an educational emergency, the Church's duty to teach, exercised concretely through the ministry of each priest, is particularly important.

We live in great confusion over the fundamental choices in our life and the questions on what the world is, where did we come from, where are we going, what should we do in order to do good, how should we live, what are the values that are really pertinent.

About all this, there exist so many conflicting philosophies that arise and die, creating a confusion about those fundamental choices - how to live - because we no longer know, generally, of what and for what we were made, and where we are going.

In this situation, the Word of the Lord is realized, when he expressed compassion for the crowd because they were like sheep without a shepherd (cfr Mk 6,34). The Lord made this observation when he saw the thousands of persons who followed him to the desert because, in the diversity of currents at that time, they no longer knew the real sense of Scripture, what God said.

The Lord, moved by compassion, interpreted the Word of God, he himself is the Word of God, and thus he gave



them orientation. This is the function *in persona Christi* of the priest: to make present, in the confusion and disorientation of our times, the light of the Word of God, the light that is Christ himself in our world.

Thus the priest does not teach his own ideas, nor a philosophy that he has invented himself, that he has found or that he likes. The priest does not speak of himself, does not speak for himself, nor to gain admirers perhaps, or his own game. He does not say things of his own, his own inventions, but in the confusion of all the philosophies, the priest teaches in the name of Christ who is present, he offers the truth which is Christ himself, his word, his way of living and moving forward.

For the priest, what Christ said of himself is valid: "My doctrine is not mine" (Jn 7,16). Christ did not offer himself, but as the Son, he is the voice, the word of the Father. Even the priest should always say and do the same: "My doctrine is not mine, I am not propagating my ideas or what pleases me. I am the mouth and heart of Christ and I make present

this one and common doctrine which created the universal Church and which creates eternal life".

This fact, namely, that the priest does not invent, does not create and does not proclaim his own ideas since the doctrine he announces is not his, but Christ's, does not mean, on the other hand, that he should be neutral, like a spokesman who reads a text which perhaps is not his own.

Even in this case, the model of Christ is valid, who said: "I am not of myself and I do not live for myself, but I come from the Father and I live for the Father." Thus, in this profound identification, the doctrine of Christ is that of the Father, and he himself is one with the Father.

The priest who announces the word of Christ, the faith of the Church, and his own ideas, should also say: "I do not live of myself nor for myself, but I live with Christ and from Christ, and therefore whatever Christ told us become my words even if they are not mine."

The life of the priest should identify itself with Christ and in this way, the words that are not really his nonetheless become profoundly personal. St. Augustine, on this subject, speaking of priests, said: "And we, what are we? Ministers [of Christ], his servants; because what we distribute to you is not

ours, but something we draw out from his cupboard. Even we live from it, because we are servants like you” (Discorso 229/E, 4).

The teaching that the priest is called on to offer, the truth of the faith, should be internalized and lived in an intensely personal spiritual way, so that the priest enters into a profound interior communion with Christ himself.

The priest believes, he accepts, and seeks to live, first of all, just as the Lord has taught and the Church has transmitted, in that process of identifying with one’s ministry of which St. Jean Marie Vianney was the exemplary witness (cfr Letter to decree the Year for Priests).

“United in the same charity,” St. Augustine further affirms, “we are all listeners to him who is the one Master in heaven” (Enarr. in Ps. 131, 1, 7).

The voice of the priest, consequently, can seem not uncommonly “the voice of one who cries in the wilderness” (Mk 1,3), but it is precisely in this that his prophetic power consists of: in not being ever homogenized nor homogenizable to any dominant culture or mentality, but in showing the only novelty that is capable of working an authentic and profound renewal of man - namely, that Christ is the Living One, he is the God near us, the God who works in the life and for the life of the world, and who gives us the truth of how to live.

In the careful preparation of the sermon on feast days, without excluding that on weekdays, in the effort at catechetical training in schools, in academic institutions, and in a special way, through that unwritten book which is his own life, the priest is always a ‘professor’ - he teaches.

But not with the presumption of one who imposes his own truths, rather with the humble and joyful certainty of he who has encountered the Truth, who has been gripped and transformed by it, and can therefore do no less than to announce it.

In fact, no one can choose the priesthood for himself, it is not a way to achieve any security in life, or to conquer a social position. No one can give it to himself nor seek it by himself. The Priesthood is a response to the call of the Lord, to his will, in order to become announcers not of one’s personal truth but of his truth.



Good Shepherd from the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna.

Dear brother priests, the Christian people ask to hear from our teachings the genuine doctrine of the Church through which they can renew the encounter with Christ who gives joy, peace, salvation.

Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, constitute, in this respect, references that are indispensable in the exercise of

the *munus docendi*, so essential for conversion, the journey of faith and the salvation of men.

Priestly ordination means: to be immersed... in the Truth (Homily at the Chrismal Mass, April 9, 2009) - that truth which is not simply a concept or an ensemble of ideas to transmit and to assimilate, but which is the Person of Christ, with whom, for whom, and in whom we live and thus, necessarily, also gives rise to the actuality and comprehensibility of the announcement.

Only this consciousness of the Truth become Person in the Incarnation of the Son justifies the missionary mandate: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature” (Mk 16,15). Only if it is the Truth which is destined for every creature, if it is not an imposition of something, but an opening of the heart to that for which it was created.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord has entrusted to priests a great task: to be announcers of his Word, of the Truth that saves; to be his voice in the world to bring that which serves the true good of souls and the authentic path of faith (cfr 1Cor 6,12). May St Jean Marie Vianney be an example for all priests. He was a man of great wisdom and heroic strength in resisting the cultural and social pressures of his time in order to lead souls to God: Simplicity, fidelity and immediacy were the essential characteristics of his preaching, the transparency of his faith and his holiness.

The Christian people were edified by him, and as with other authentic teachers in every age, they recognized in him the light of Truth. They recognized in him most decisively what must always be recognized in a priest: the voice of the Good Shepherd.

To follow the entire series on the ordained ministry, please go to: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20100414_en.html.

