

Why Catholic? reveals constantly evolving faith

Susan Dobrzykowski tells Our Lady of the Fields parishioners that there is always something to learn about Catholicism.

"I'm learning too," the coordinator of adult faith formation at the Millersville parish is prone to say.

She knows there is perhaps no better way to peel back the layers of the church than Why Catholic?, a program that will unfurl in many Archdiocese of Baltimore parishes in the next week.

The four-year, small group program is entering its final year of promoting exploration of the church's practices and beliefs. The current session will run for six weeks from October through November. A final six-week session will take place during Lent.

Sharon Bogusz, the archdiocese's coordinator of evangelization and adult faith formation, said this year's session will focus on Christian prayer as an essential element the life of discipleship.

She added that 2,000 adult Catholics have participated in Why Catholic? Groups over the last four years.

"I've seen the energy, enthusiasm and confidence that men and women gain when they come to a better understanding about faith and how it can make a difference," Bogusz said. "As a result, participants feel a sense of liberty to witness their faith in all aspects of their lives - at work, home, with family and friends."

Before the start of every session of Why Catholic? Our Lady of the Fields invites a speaker to set a tone for the six-week program.

Joanne Cahoon, of the local organization In-Spirited, directed a workshop with 65 parishioners Sept. 27. Cahoon wanted to help people have a deeper encounter with

God each day.

“When she talked about encountering God, she talked about how he bends down to talk with us,” Dobrzykowski said.

Many people stayed afterward to talk about issues in the workshop that hit home with them. Eleven small groups have been set up at Our Lady of the Fields, while many others are being formed in parishes throughout the archdiocese.

“We make sure all are invited,” Dobrzykowski said.

“Faith development is an ongoing process,” Bogus added. “Every Catholic can benefit from an ongoing study and discussion of faith. As adults mature, our ability to understand and critically reflect upon issues of faith evolves and naturally leads us to explore issues of faith and belief with further depth.”

Bogusz said such reflections equip people “for living the Christian message in our daily life and helps us bear witness to Christ with greater confidence.”

The Catholic Review will run weekly columns during this Why Catholic? Session, from Archbishop Edwin F. O’Brien; Monsignor Robert J. Jaskot, Director for Worship, Scott Miller, Dr. Diane Barr, Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski and Bogusz.

“Each year we try to lead off the year with inspiration from the archbishop,” Bogusz said. “These men and women are well versed in the faith tradition and practices of the Catholic Church and are themselves faith-filled clergy, religious and lay ecclesial ministers who, like each of the readers of the Catholic Review, work hard to live their faith well and build the kingdom of God as a disciple.”

How to get involved:

Individuals interested in joining Why Catholic? Can still join. Contact the Division of Evangelization and Catechesis at 410-547-5406 to get connected with a nearby parish.