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EDUCATION

Young adult group helping youth on their faith journeys with faith text

Confirmation, catechism go hand-in-hand

By Mike Krokos
The Catholic Spirit

Jason Adkins is quick to admit he did not know what the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” was until he got to college.

Now the University of St. Thomas graduate and teacher and a group of young adults are doing their part to make sure young people in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis have a copy of the catechism (the book of Catholic Church beliefs and doctrine) as they continue their formation and faith journeys within the church.

Adkins, 24, Annamarie Cumpston, 25, Stephen Maas, 24, and the group of young adults, with an assist from Bishop Frederick Campbell, have formed the Corpus Christi Catechism Fund, an all-volunteer initiative that presents paperback copies of the catechism to people, especially youth, when they are confirmed.

The group’s ministry is in response to “Pope John Paul II’s call for a new evangelization,” Cumpston said, and “the Catechism is a physical representation of the church.

“It [the catechism] can teach and inform them,” added Cumpston, a recent convert, who along with Adkins attends Nativity of Our Lord in St. Paul. “It has endless gifts.”

Adkins, who teaches at Trinity School in Bloomington and is in the University of St. Thomas masters program, said the effort evolved from a group of 10 to 12 young adults who met weekly and were looking for a way to get “Catholics excited about the faith.”

Although the group has supported some parishes with books for catechists and others to be used in RCIA classes, young people — particularly teens — are the prime target of the Corpus Christi Catechism Fund.

“Kids are searching for answers, and we can provide a systematic account,” said Maas, who



Jason Adkins, Stephen Maas and Annamarie Cumpston are eager to spread the faith. The Corpus Christi Catechism Fund provides a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to all confirmands in the archdiocese.

Dick Rohland/The Catholic Spirit

also is in the masters program at the University of St. Thomas.

For those who think the ministry effort is small, think again. The group and its volunteers handed out 1,500 catechisms last fall, 200 this winter and will distribute 6,500 more during confirmation ceremonies at the Cathedral of St. Paul and Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis this spring. Confirmands are presented the catechism during the initiation rite.

Each box shipped from New York contains 24 paperback copies of the catechism, and Dick and Helen Murphy have allowed the boxes to be stored at their business (Murphy’s Warehouse) in Minneapolis, Adkins said.

The grassroots catechism effort is totally donor-driven and is a \$32,000-a-year proposition, Adkins said. The effort also has a

core group of about 20 volunteers, the ministry’s “angels,” Adkins said. Many hand out catechisms at the confirmation ceremony; others help place stickers of acknowledgments in the books.

The volunteers receive a gift in return, said Maas, who attends St. Mark in St. Paul. “It’s really touched them to see all the new Catholics . . . the grace of it,” he said.

The group’s ministry efforts have not gone unnoticed. In April, the Catholic Defense League will honor the group with its “Catholics of the Year” award, during the League’s annual banquet.

Not to be outdone by marketers who use slick advertising to promote their products, the ministry has a catchy slogan as well: “We’re the one-stop catechism shop,” Adkins joked.