

Youth Ministry in Action: Ding Dong, Ditch and Run

Rose Lehman

Several years ago our youth team at Holy Family Parish in New Albany, Indiana, was searching for a way to show our appreciation to some elderly parishioners who had been very involved in the life and growth of our parish. Thus, was born the “Nativity Set Delivery” program or what is now referred to as “Ding Dong, Ditch and Run” – 3DR for short.

For ten days in mid-December, one figure for a nativity set and part of the nativity story are delivered to the parishioner’s homes one-at-a-time. With each delivery, the nativity story grows.

Each day a group of youth and family members stop at the houses of the parishioners. They ring the doorbell and run back to the car – ding-dong, ditch, and run. “It’s been such a joy when the doorbell rings to see what unfolds in the little packages,” said 3DR recipients Betty Jo and Gene Murphy.

“Initially I heard people wondering what was going on. People like the mystery of it,” commented Pastor, Father Sonny Day. The youth have fun trying to not to get caught; and the recipients have fun trying to catch them. “It was really funny to see how all the senior citizens tried to catch us each night. I think they enjoyed it as much as we did,” said youth, Katherine Finn.

On the last day, the youth and families deliver the stable and the Baby Jesus along with cookies, and sing Christmas carols to those they have served.

The first year Holy Family delivered nativity sets to the homes of two parishioners. This Christmas, the program’s sixth year; six sets were delivered. Recipients say it brings both joy and meaning to the Christmas season.

Rose Lehman is Youth Minister at Holy Family, New Albany

Rev. Jonathan Meyer is Director of Youth Ministry in the Office of Catholic Education
(jmeyer@archindy.org)

I would like to express the great happiness you brought to Ivan and me. I have never had anyone do something like this for us. I cannot say who was most excited,” Mary Helen said. Ivan agreed, “I LOVED IT!

~ Parishioner
Mary Helen Peter
and her son Ivan, a
special needs adult

We enjoyed getting the [nativity] set one piece at-a-time ... We love what you did and how you did it.

~ Parishioners,
Janet and Jim
Schmidt