

Encountering Christ to enrich faith formation



An increasing number of children learn the faith in our parishes.
An estimated 80,000 children in the diocese are enrolled in parish religious education programs.

A key element of *Encountering Christ* is “emerging disciples” — providing a full spectrum of formation opportunities to ensure the Diocese of Austin is cultivating and preparing the next generation of disciples and church leaders.

To accomplish this, \$7 million in campaign gifts will be directed to initiatives that help parishes find new and creative approaches to faith formation — both individually and in collaboration with others — and acquire the resources needed to upgrade and enhance their religious education programs.

Like other dioceses, our diocese has long relied on textbooks, which provide general instruction for religious education, according to Gustavo Rodriguez, director of Evangelization and Catechesis. The new approach will incorporate updated versions of these resources along with other methodologies to help children and families learn.

“Many parents are bringing their children to catechesis very late in the game,” Gustavo said. “We realized that happens because the parents themselves lack catechesis and can benefit from general instruction of their faith.”

Acknowledging that many adults are unable to dedicate time to sitting in a classroom, the diocese is exploring subscriptions to online resources and other digital media that allow them to learn on their own schedule. This will parallel nicely with the new ways children are learning in school.

“The child today is learning very differently, with different technologies,” Gustavo said. “In many parishes, we’re still working with the crayon box and handouts.”

Of the \$7 million, \$3.5 million will immediately benefit these initiatives and the remaining \$3.5 million will be set aside in an endowment to guarantee the long-term sustainability of these efforts and to meet future needs.