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I can remember as far back as first grade wanting to be a teacher. My grandma (who also happened to be my hero) was the school secretary so I was already privy to the “behind the scenes” of the world of education. I would stay after school with her to help complete random jobs. I would deliver phone messages that had come in throughout the day. (These were the times before having a phone in every classroom or even an intercom system.) I would stock supplies such as paper, pencils, and cleaning supplies. And if it was a very lucky day for me, maybe I would get to go with her into (dun, dun, dunnnnn…) the teacher’s lounge. Here was a world that for me was akin to Disney. Here the teachers were real people. They laughed. They hung out. I even saw some eat food or go into a bathroom! I knew I was going to be a teacher when I grew up. As sure as I was that I was a female or that the sky was blue, I never wavered. And just a few short years later, I was a graduate of CMU (English major) and GVSU (Master’s in Elementary Education) and teaching in my own class. I loved teaching!!! I spent so many extra hours making games from scratch, individualizing my lesson plans, and creating engaging yet challenging activities to help the kids have fun while they were learning. I was involved in multiple committees, took extra trainings, had student teachers, and on and on. There was never enough to sate my desire to be a better teacher or have a more effective learning environment. Nothing, except time. Time and life.

 I bought a house. I got married. I had two kids. I taught at Montabella for 16 years. And somewhere along the way, teaching got hard, too hard. It wasn’t just the district at which I taught. It is hard to be a teacher everywhere. Kids have changed. Parents have changed. Administration has changed. Legislation has changed. Society has changed. And what once brought me complete and utter joy and a sense of fulfillment became drudgery, a burden, a weight upon my shoulders that I could no longer bear. Oh, and I had started to feel the Holy Spirit nagging at me to do more.

 I was exhausted! I wondered how I could do more!?! But I tried for another couple of years until I finally listened and heard the Holy Spirit encouraging me to change my career. How could I consider leaving at this point? I only had 9 more years until retirement. It was too late to consider becoming a doctor or lawyer. (Aren’t those jobs just as exhausting anyway?!? Can’t ALL jobs be exhausting?) What could I do that would provide for my family and complete me the way teaching once did? Well, here I am. I began as the Office Manager and have gradually moved into the Director of Faith Formation position. Not only does this allow me to continue my passion of teaching, it allows for me to fulfill the responsibility I accepted when I was confirmed to be a disciple of Christ, to share Him and His teachings, to become an active member of the Church community and our parish family.

 Please come to the Faith Formation classes to learn more about the covenant you entered into. Find out what you are expected to do (spoiler: God does all the work!) and how you can do so, too. Join us as we begin to plan some service projects for the upcoming year. I look forward to seeing you there!

Have a Blessed Advent,

 Julie Gould

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This Week:

* Sunday, Dec. 2, 4-6 pm at Fellowship Hall: **Faith Formation classes** for the whole family.
* Monday, Dec. 3, 7-8:30 pm at St. Francis de Sales, Lakeview: **Adult Enrichment class**
* Tuesday, Dec. 4, 6-7:30 pm at Christ the King, Howard City: **Children’s Christmas Program practice**- We will discuss the skit we will be doing, assigning roles, and clarifying the practice schedule. If you want to participate, please be there!