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Click…click…click…click. The higher we ascended that first summit of the ride, the greater my anticipation and excitement grew! As the front car crested the very top, my heart beat as though it were going to burst out of my chest. The view was amazing! I could see the rest of the amusement park, all the people moving toward their next destination, the flashing lights on the midway, the great lake to my left, and in the distance, imperceptible land for as far as I could see. The potential was awesome!

And then the last car let loose of its chain link tether and the thrill of the ride really began. We plummeted head first toward the ground. We raced back up hills. We were jostled as we whipped around bends and twisted through barrel rolls. It was exhilarating, yet terrifying; pleasurable, yet daunting. And all too soon, the ride was over. We exited the platform already reminiscing about the most stimulating parts and protesting the most gut-wrenching portions.

And that is how this, my first year as Director of Faith Formation, has been. Excitement and anticipation grew the closer we came to the Kick-Off Picnic. We had an amazing crowd to start- the potential was there. Then the ride let loose! There were thrills along the way as relationships formed, light bulbs of understanding clicked on, and people shared their experiences. Exhilaration grew as folks/ relationships with Christ developed and flourished. There were moments of fear when lessons didn’t go as planned or less people than I was anticipating showed up. At times it seemed overwhelming and I questioned if I should jump off the ride. But, with God by my side, I realized I was safely buckled in and relaxed and enjoyed the ride.

A huge thanks goes out to all those who helped. Many of these people listed supported in a variety of ways. Here they are in their primary role. There are the catechists and their assistants: Barb Cole, Raeanna Davidson, Brooke and Matt Glowacki, Kathy Nerychel, Dave Schuster, Kathy Thompson, and Jennifer Vos. There were those who helped provide childcare: Maureen Barnes, Sue Judis, and Sandy Saliers. A number of people helped provide snacks: Morgan Hammis, Deborah Kearney, Janet McCahill, Andrea Pearce, Jeannie Schneider, Teri Skaggs, and Sue Wahmhoff. And, of course, in the office I had the support and help of Gina Feley-O’Brien, Rick Hall, and Father James. I also had much guidance from my consultant, Beth Dake, and staff at the diocese including Tammy Graves and Mark Mann. There were multiple presenters throughout the year, too. I’m sure there are some who I have missed in this acknowledgement. I apologize for doing so. It has certainly been a team effort!

Perhaps the most important players on the team were the participants. Thank you to those of you who came to any one of our classes. A special thanks to those who attended regularly. I appreciate your commitment and your trust in my guidance. I pray that you found your attendance to be a meaningful use of your time. I hope that you gleaned something from our experiences that helped you grow in your relationship with Christ.

As always, please let me know of anything I can do to support you in your spiritual journey. Remember that formed.org is a rich resource the parish has made available to you for free. Please contact me at the parish office if you have any specific feedback that I can use to improve next year’s programming. And with that said, like any good ride, let’s race back around to the entrance and get ready to ride it again!

Blessings,

 Julie Gould

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