

LITERACY CAMPAIGN – “Gather Together and Read”

The literacy campaign concept was developed by Catherine Sopko during her term as Youth Delegate. The basic set up would be:

1. Get Parish Approval for use and times. It would be up to each branch to decide how often they would like to offer the program.
2. Ask for volunteers – you’ll need an adult along with 1 or 2 girls to be at each of the gatherings. Ask some of the older members of your parish, they might like being an adopted grandmother for the group.
3. Look for books for your lending library. Ask for donations of gently worn children’s books from your parish. Wal-Mart might be a good source for donations and they also offer small grants (I will find out more information about applying for the grant), Barnes and Nobel will return damaged books to the publisher and will sometimes donate these books. Be sure the books are complete and if possible cover with clear plastic contact paper to help preserve them. Set up a cart or a bookshelf in the church that the children would have access to. You can decide if you want to make up cards that would be a kid’s library card – an index card with their name and the title of the book they’re borrowing, then they would find the card when they brought back the book. Maybe stickers for returning the book would be a reward.
4. It would be nice to have a canvas tote of some kind to supply to the children to transport their books back home. Not all books will be returned to the library and that’s okay, the goal is to get the children interested in reading.
5. Decide on your story telling plan. You can make felt boards and cutouts and let the kids interact as you read the story. Maybe a craft to go along with the story.
6. Look to set up a comfy area for the kids to relax and hear the story. Big pillows on the floor are fun and make it not like school. Provide an area for the parents to wait – young children should not be left without a guardian.
7. Have a snack time after the story.
8. If you want to take pictures to promote your plan, be sure to have a photo release form from the parents.
9. Train your volunteers. They will need to read loudly and slow enough to be understood and show pictures from the book as they read. Pausing for questions. This should be interactive and fun so be sure your volunteer has the book in advance so they can find ways to get the children thinking, maybe they could be looking for something in a picture or asking if they ever did or saw something that’s in the story. Once you have your plan in place, contact local newspapers, intercity schools, area churches to promote and advertise. Provide the schools with fliers announcing the program. See if you can have a sign posted outside your church that would publicize the program.