

## LITTLE FLOWER CATHOLIC CHURCH

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**Stewardship**

*A Way of Life*

August 29, 2009

Hello, Little Flower!

My name is Greg Burns and I'm the new Pastoral Associate for Middle and High School Faith Formation (fancy name for Youth Director). For those of you who missed my inspiring words when I introduced myself at each Mass back in May, I'll give you the "sound bite" version.

I grew up at Little Flower, was an active member of the youth group "back in the day" ... and after working in youth ministry in other parishes both near and far, I am incredibly excited about coming back home... to where it all began. Actually that's not just hyperbole. Little Flower was on the cutting edge in the 1970's implementing the US Catholic Bishops' *A Vision of Youth Ministry* and continues to lead the way in comprehensive programming for young people. I believe that is in large part due to the incredible support given by a community that has made youth ministry a vital and integral part of everyday parish life.

We have also been blessed throughout the years with a number of extremely gifted youth directors and I know I have some *huge* shoes to fill. One very large pair of shoes I won't have to fill, however, is Bill Odell's... because he'll be walking beside me. Bill has graciously agreed to return to the KCC as a volunteer leader and I'm not sure *he* could be any more excited. I am too. Bill and I have worked together many times over the years and complement each other extremely well. We are also very close friends. Bill will be the lead catechist for the eighth grade group and sacramental prep for Confirmation. I can't think of anyone more qualified and Confirmation is one of Bill's great passions. Parents of Eighth graders: expect to hear much more from Bill very shortly.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

There will be quite a few differences from last year but perhaps the biggest change will be for the Middle School youth. One of my first priorities has been to find a way to reunite the Middle School program. For a number of reasons, the eighth grade was separated from sixth and seventh a couple of years ago and I really wanted to bring them back together. I believe the eighth graders can have a very positive influence on their younger counterparts. I also felt the eighth graders were kind of stuck in a "no man's land" on Sunday mornings, not belonging to any group of their own. We will still split out by grade level for catechesis - with parishioners and ND students as teachers - but each session will involve time together with all three grades and I will utilize the older teens in leadership roles.

So when will this reunion take place? After speaking for weeks with a number of Middle School parents, teachers, and parish staff members... I've become convinced that, with a little patience and cooperation, and a lot of organization, we can meld the Middle School program into the already vibrant Sunday morning parish community.