



The Great Adventure Training Day

**August 14 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Cardinal Keeler Center, Harrisburg**

The Great Adventure Training Day is an excellent opportunity for you to gain key insights on implementing and maintaining a fruitful Bible study experience at the parish level. Learn the keys to running a Bible study that will transform your parish. Discover how to create a successful small group experience. Leave with materials designed to help you launch a successful Great Adventure Bible Study in your parish.

The training day is for Great Adventure Bible Study Leaders, Core Team Members, Small Group Facilitators and substitute facilitators, and anyone looking to lead a dynamic Catholic Bible Study.

**Cost is \$55 for Bible Study Leaders,
\$40 for Core Team Members.
Lunch and materials included.**

Register online at www.regonline.com/TGATrainingHarrisburg by August 6. Contact Corrine at cmurphy@ascensionpress.com or 610-696-7795, ext. 209, for more information.

Annual Pilgrimage for World Peace Planned

The 23rd annual Pilgrimage for World Peace through Conversion of Heart will take place Aug. 5 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Emmitsburg, Md. The day will begin at 10:30 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. Pilgrims will be able to receive the Sacrament of Penance, attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, pray the rosary, spend time in private prayer, enjoy the beauty of the Marian shrine and end the day with a Holy Hour to honor Our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist. This is a day of prayer for world peace through conversion of heart.

Pilgrims must make their own provisions for travel to and from the shrine, and for lunch and supper. Meals are not available at the Mount. Most of those attending bring a box lunch and make reservations in nearby restaurants for supper.

For general information about the day, contact Deacon Michael Grella at 717-939-6431 (home) or 717-657-4804, ext. 266 (diocesan office) or via e-mail at dmgrella@hbgdiocese.org.

Camp Kirchenwald Seeks Campers, Volunteers, Sponsors

The Diocese of Harrisburg will sponsor its annual summer camp for youth and young adults with mental disabilities on Aug. 15-20 at Camp Kirchenwald, near Hershey. The camp is designed for youth and young adults, ages 15 and up, with mild to moderate mental retardation and no significant behavioral problems. Tuition for camp is \$425, but camperships are available. For further information, contact the Diocesan Family Ministries Office at 717-657-4804, or e-mail kenders@hbgdiocese.org.

Share your light! Volunteer! Full-time and part-time volunteers are needed to staff Camp Kirchenwald Aug. 15-20. No experience is necessary, but those with experience in fishing, camping, hiking and arts and crafts are especially welcome. If interested, call the Diocesan Family Ministries Office at 717-657-4804, or e-mail vlskowsk@hbgdiocese.org.

Would you like to sponsor a campership for a person with a disability who might not otherwise be able to afford camp? The Diocese of Harrisburg is seeking donations to defray the cost for campers. A full week of camp costs \$425, but donations in any amount will be welcomed. Send donations to the Family Ministries Office, 4800 Union Deposit Road, Harrisburg, PA 17111. Checks should be made payable to the Diocese of Harrisburg.



JEN REED, THE CATHOLIC WITNESS

Participants in The Great Adventure Bible study program at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Lewisburg engage in small-group discussion. Among them is 84-year-old Gladys Lakes, center.

Lewisburg Parish Leads 465 Members on a 'Great Adventure' of Scripture Study

By Jen Reed
The Catholic Witness

LEWISBURG – The perfect storm for Scripture study through The Great Adventure program has erupted at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish.

Some 465 parishioners – yes, 465 – have expanded their understanding of Scripture and the Catholic faith through The Great Adventure's 8-week Quick Journey, and the parish is looking to dive into the complete 24-week program beginning in September.

"I was looking for a program that would re-energize the parish. We wanted to do something big and spectacular," Msgr. William Richardson, pastor, told *The Catholic Witness* about the parish's decision to explore the Scripture study. "We wanted to have something that would offer not only personal reflection and growth in the Scriptures but also something that would energize the parish."

The Great Adventure is a Catholic Bible study system created by Jeff Cavins and published by Ascension Press. It makes the complex simple by teaching the story of the Bible.

In an effort to make The Great Adventure program accessible to as many parishioners as possible, Msgr. Richardson and parish leaders – including Richard Owen, who oversees The Great Adventure at Sacred Heart – worked to remove any obstacles that might have kept people from attending.

The parish consumed the cost of the program instead of passing the fees on to participants, and choreographed a schedule of Bible study facilitators and locations to offer sessions an impressive 14 times per week between Sacred Heart and St. George Mission Church in Mifflinburg.

"My idea was that people would come to learn and to love the Word of God, and to bring the parish together to understand that we're a community of faith," Msgr. Richardson remarked.

"I really believe that one of the reasons why we've had such success is because we had different times for participation," he said. "If a person couldn't go to the Scripture study on a Monday evening, they had 13 other times to choose from that week."

The 465-person participation caught the attention of Jeff Cavins and the team at The Great Adventure.

"Sacred Heart is the perfect storm. It's a result of everything coming together perfectly at the right time," said Kelly Wahlquist, Director of Community Relations for The Great Adventure.

"They have a pastor who is supporting the program, they have a leader in Richard Owen who has surrounded himself with a wonderful core team, they offered it multiple times and they are preparing their leaders and small group facilitators by encouraging them to go to The Great Adventure Training Day on Aug. 14 at the Cardinal Keeler Center. There is something really special in what is going on at Sacred Heart," she said.

Mrs. Wahlquist visited Sacred Heart in mid April during

the seventh week of the 8-week program. She observed the program's implementation and spoke with Msgr. Richardson and Mr. Owen about its marked success there.

"According to Ascension Press, this was one of the largest initiatives that they've ever seen, and they offer this program worldwide. They've never seen another parish offer this the way Sacred Heart has," Mr. Owen noted.

He said the parish plans to use this momentum to propel parishioners into the full 24-week course this fall.

"The 24-week program takes a bigger effort. It gives a deeper understanding of salvation history," Mr. Owen said. "It's going to be my mission to keep this going. After the 24-week course, we'll study Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles. I think the program will be a building block for our parishioners."

Great Merits of Great Adventure

"The Great Adventure program has attracted parishioners of all ages," Msgr. Richardson said of the working parents, high school students and retirees who have participated in the weekly sessions. "It's really helped people get to know one another."

Among the attendees was Gladys Lakes, an 84-year-old lifelong member of Sacred Heart.

Mrs. Lakes observed how The Great Adventure has helped parishioners get to know one another. After the parish's recent celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday, parishioners who attended the Scripture study on different days began sharing their impressions with one another.

"I joined the program because I thought this would be a good opportunity for me to really learn Scripture," Mrs. Lakes said. "You get some knowledge from what you hear at Mass, but I felt this program would be a good way to really know the Bible."

Through at-home study, a DVD lecture, small group discussion, and a review of study set responses, The Great Adventure helps Catholics come to understand God's plan as revealed in the Scriptures.

"What we hear the most from parishioners who have participated in The Great Adventure is that the Mass comes alive for them," Mrs. Wahlquist remarked. "They become so excited about Scripture that they want to live it. Once you meet Christ in his Word, you want to be the hands and feet of Christ."

She pointed out that in addition to leading Catholics toward a deeper understanding of the faith, the program helps nurture parish life.

"Ministries in parishes are growing and flourishing. Priests are telling us that the Confession line is getting longer. People are partaking of the sacraments, attending daily Mass and signing up to volunteer for Meals on Wheels, women's groups and other ministries," she said.

"The Great Adventure is not just about imparting information, it's about transforming lives," she remarked. "Our main goal is to make disciples for Christ. We want people to be in Scripture for life."