

The "Come, Lord, Jesus!" Program Relies on Volunteers

Sister Denis Rodrigue, O. Carm.

The basic mission of the "Come, Lord Jesus!" program is the transformation of each member into the very image of Jesus by a process of formation that includes prayer, Scripture, Eucharist and Christian Community. This program founded by Father Conley Bertrand from the Lafayette Diocese offers our students at Mount Carmel Academy the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming Sunday Liturgy.

The students meet in small groups with a leader. The freshman class has girls from the senior class as its leaders. The other grades have faculty members and adult volunteers as leaders. The program presently has 112 groups--48 seniors, 32 faculty members and 53 adults volunteers to lead the groups. A large number of adults volunteer to be substitutes as needed.

Leaders facilitate and mentor the students. So many leaders say that they get so much from the program that they feel privileged to serve. One of the leaders has been serving the program for thirteen years! This experience of service offers volunteers the opportunity to give of their time and to receive spiritual benefit as a result of their volunteering.

Their generous spirit is an inspiration to our faculty and students. A number of them use their lunch hour and/or personal time from work to be present to our girls. This exemplifies a sense of the value and worth of the program. Some volunteers pair up as a team. A number of leaders meet a few days before their day for CLJ to plan so that the time with the girls will be enjoyable and relaxing as they reflect on the words and actions of Jesus. Without these dedicated volunteers the program would not be able to continue. Because of the fewer numbers of sisters, these volunteers continue the mission of Carmel as they minister to the spiritual growth of our students.

The reason these volunteers give for choosing to participate in this program is amazing. Carmel graduates want to give back to Carmel what they received through the CLJ program when they were students. Other volunteers with no connection to Mount Carmel volunteer because they heard of the program from a friend who invited them to get involved. Our leaders offer a wonderful service to our girls. To be a volunteer for this program, all one needs is the desire to serve as well as to continue to grow in faith and love of God. A brief training session is offered at the beginning of each school year for volunteers.

Each CLJ session ends with "Come, Lord, Jesus! Come in grace and glory!" This concluding prayer is the hope of the program, that each student and volunteer leader would experience the presence of Jesus in grace and glory.



Mount Carmel Academy students pray with Scripture in the Come Lord Jesus program.



Sister Denis and Andre Deckert prepare for CLJ.

Sister Denis Rodrigue is coordinator of the Come Lord Jesus Program at Mount Carmel Academy and spiritual assistant to Lay Carmelites in New Orleans, LA.