

opusdei.org

The Chain of Diligence: Spreading Good Doctrine

Nkem, a young mother and a supernumerary of Opus Dei, shares her adventure of teaching catechism classes in Lagos with other mothers of young children.

25/09/2023

Here in Lagos, Nonye, a supernumerary member of Opus Dei, started a Catechism club in her neighborhood and she invited Sinmi

and I to assist. And as with most catechism clubs, the children get to learn about the history and values of the Catholic faith. Sinmi and I learnt a lot through volunteering, and upon Nonye's relocation to a new community, we gathered other supernumeraries, who are also mothers and with them, established a Catechism Club for Children. I had the privilege to be one of the 'Super Mothers'.

Together with other women, I and others are working to make the club a place of friendship, laughter, learning, and spiritual growth.

For the children, repetitions of basic prayers such as: Prayer to My Guardian Angel, and Our Father, are valuable teaching moments. And because they're very much 'children' (their ages range from 5-10), there is a short play period after each class. On some days, the

children can be super excited to participate in the various activities, on other days, it is a herculean task that becomes lightened by God's grace & strength.

It is true that Nigerians are quick to acknowledge good things, so when word soon spread in the neighborhood about the club, many mothers came onboard with their children. Now, the club has soon become a community - the mothers are more involved in planning end-of-year parties and get-togethers.

In the race to do God's work more and better, He deserves the very best, the club is a work-in-progress. A club curriculum was introduced, making it easier for mothers to volunteer given the allotted timetable. With growth came new challenges; the club outgrew its original venue and had to find a new home at a nearby school that was once the primary

school location of Lagoon School.

This unexpected connection proved to be a blessing. Club activities thrived in the new location, and the classrooms became livelier on Saturdays. Parents dropped off their children, grateful for the chance to tend to other responsibilities while knowing their children were engaged in meaningful activities.

Back then in March 2020, the world faced a global pandemic, and here in Nigeria, the club had to adapt to virtual classes. As with stories of renewed family ties during the lockdown, COVID fostered a deeper connection between mothers and their children's participation in the club; despite the barrier distance, parents from different parts of Nigeria and even from Addis Ababa and Kenya, joined the digital platform.

The children too, embraced this new way of learning and discovered creative ways to make their faith journey enjoyable. As the lockdown eased, the club faced the challenge of finding a suitable physical venue. However, instead of seeing it as a setback, we embraced it as an opportunity to become a Virtual Catechism Club. The participation of mothers increased, with special classes by Priests, engaging games, and inspiring videos. The children even embarked on a virtual pilgrimage during the Marian months!

Celebrating its 5th anniversary, the club experienced tremendous growth in 2022. It tripled in size, gained more volunteers, and had its first cross-regional candidate. The joy of witnessing thirty-five (35) candidates, both girls and boys, receiving their First Holy Communion was immeasurable. One

remarkable moment that occurred was how the Priest who celebrated the Mass for the first set of boys, went on to celebrate the Mass for a club member living in Nairobi. This experience beautifully demonstrated the unity and universality of the Church, resounding the need for fraternity and care for souls that is expected of us as children of God.

Through this journey and the club, I have learnt so much about trust, friendship, and the beauty of families coming together to learn about the faith, full of God's love which urges us on.

Nkem Emezie-Ejinima
