

By Terri Malta, RISEN Co-leader & parishioner

We Are RISEN

The RISEN (Religious Instruction Special Education Needs) program for special students has been a part of the LFF program for many years. This is my first year involved with this ministry and I have found it very rewarding. I decided to take a step “out of my comfort zone” as they say, and volunteer as my previous commitment for Sundays had ended.

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Terri Malta



Above & Right: Loaves and Fishes Lesson—choosing to share their food for the Lenten Bake Sale.



I have enjoyed working with these beautiful students, all of whom come with their own unique personalities as do all children. I have been amazed by their participation in spite of the challenges they face. They exemplify the model that we all should follow, “Bloom where you are planted!”

I have a great admiration for their parents, who are committed to their children’s spiritual and overall development. I am very lucky to have able co-leaders in Carol Wingenter and Rachel Daily. Carol brings her special expertise (and equipment!) as an occupational therapist and long time LFF class leader. Rachel, as a student volunteer with previous experience with the RISEN class, has helped with suggestions and has offered her fine example in dealing with various situations.

In addition there are confirmation candidate volunteer teachers who are able to give one-on-one attention to each student. These include Julie Golab, Eliza Zwolinski, Taylor

Stewart, Kevin and Brian Sylla, Joe Heckes, Mike Meidl and Kim Haberkorn. I am so impressed by their interactions with our RISEN students — what a great example of their Christian spirit!

The RISEN classes are held in the Marcy Center approximately every two weeks on Sunday mornings during the school year. We have been reading both Old and New Testament stories adapted for their interest and then focus on the lessons God is teaching us with these stories and events. During the Lenten season we focused on Jesus’ life, teachings and the meaning of His death for us. The students are asked to give their insight into the lessons learned from God’s actions and how they can respond to His teachings. They show good insight into what it means to be a follower of Christ!

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WEISSE FAMILY

What have you taught your children about family?

We have taught them that it is a blessing to be a part of a family. When the kids were younger, they would sometimes say things like, “Why is Lydia different?” We have tried to teach them that all people are children of God and Lydia was given to us, just as they were. As a part of God’s family we need to care for one another. We have also tried to teach them that things don’t always go as you might have planned, but as a family we work together and see each new day as a gift from God.



How is St. Dominic a part of your larger family? Joining St. Dominic Parish 10 years ago was a blessing. We love the school and we have met so many wonderful people. Having a child with special needs is a daily challenge. I feel blessed and fortunate that I am able to call on people to help out with rides and more, for the other kids. We met Lydia’s two best helpers here. (You know who you are, L.& C.!)

Are there any stories about the RISEN program specifically that you would like to share? Lydia has been attending RISEN for many years. Every time we go to church, she has to go downstairs and check if there is class. She loves all the teachers and all the students who have helped out. She also looks forward to seeing her friend Mary in class. We would personally like to thank St. Dominic Parish and all the people who have helped out to provide this opportunity for these special kids!