

Katechein



ST. THOMAS SYRO MALABAR CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

SUMMER LEARNING SERIES FOR CATECHISTS 2020-21

The Department of Faith Formation is excited to announce a Summer Learning Series for enhancing knowledge and skills for our Catechists in the Diocese.

These ten 1 ½ hour classes offer a diverse variety of Faith and Classroom related Topics.

See Page5 for more details

DIDACHE: DIPLOMA COURSE IN THEOLOGY FOR THE CATECHISTS AND ADULTS

The Department of Catechesis is collaborating with the Pontifical Oriental Institute Kottayam, India to organize a Diploma course in Theology to contribute to the biblical, liturgical, theological and catechetical formation of teachers or any interested adults. This is an excellent opportunity for anyone aspiring to become Christian leaders.

Contact us at: smccdchicago@gmail.com



MESSAGE FROM OUR BISHOP

Dear Catechists,

Glory to God in the highest! Amen.

I am grateful to each and everyone of you for volunteering to teach catechism to our children and young adults. May the Holy Spirit enlighten you to do this ministry in our Syro Malabar Church. 'Katechein' is a new venture of our faith formation program. This E-journal is intended to assist our Catechism teachers with resources and new ventures in our different parishes. I earnestly advise all our teachers to make use of this E-journal for the good of our future generations. I congratulate Rev. Fr. George Danavelil and the Team in preparing this E-journal to promote our Faith Formation.

May the Lord bless all of you.

+ Jacob Angadiath

Mar Jacob Angadiath
Bishop

PLEASE NOTE

The Diocesan Annual Sunday School Principals meeting is rescheduled from Saturday, July 25, 2020 to Saturday, August 29, 2020. This virtual meeting will start at 1:30 p.m. CST (2:30 EST, 12:30 MST and 11:30 PST) and is expected to last for three hours. The meeting participation link and related materials will be sent to the Sunday School Principals prior to the meeting. Please have the Principal or a designee attend the meeting.

Editorial

We are happy to publish the very first edition of Katechein, the e-journal for the catechists of our diocese. The Diocesan Catechetical Department intends to publish this journal quarterly, bringing to you, relevant information, topical news items and teaching aids. The articles in the journal will focus on following topics:

- Innovative ideas implemented by CCD teams in various parishes
- Contemporary news, recent books, Publications etc. (e.g., Papal encyclical and Apostolic letters)
- Supplementary topics / websites that are useful for CCD teachers while preparing their lesson plan
- Upcoming events, key dates relevant to CCD, for next 3 months

I want to make you familiar with a couple of terms used in this journal. The word 'catechesis' and 'katechein' come from the Greek word 'Katecho,' which means sound from above. In the Greek common usage, two meanings have developed for the word: to inform someone of something, and to instruct or to teach something to someone. In the Greek context, the word didakein or didache was also used by meaning 'to teach' or 'to instruct.' It was still used for the authentic teaching act of the philosophers, who have some inspiration or revelation. So, in the New Testament in general, especially in the Pauline writings, didakein is used to denote the teaching of Jesus and katechein the teaching act of Apostles. So didakein is authentic teaching, while katechein is an instruction given to someone in the teaching of an authentic person.

We sincerely hope that this e-journal will provide instructions and guidance to you, catechists, in the great calling that you have accepted, namely the faith formation of our kids.

The e-journal is not meant to be a news report for parish activities, but as a reference for catechists while preparing the faith formation lesson plan and as an aid for their continuous learning.

Request your blessings and cooperation on this initiative. We will be delighted to hear your feedback, what you like to see in upcoming editions and suggestions to make this effort more useful to you.

Fr. George Danavelil
Chief Editor



Katechein

A Quarterly Catechetical E-Journal

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Our Katechein
Logo depicting
divine instructions
is designed by
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St. Thomas Syro-
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Revised 8th grade text books

As a pilot initiative, eighth grade textbook was revised with a new formatting. It is prepared this year as an 'ad experimentum' textbook for our diocese. The book will be available for Sunday Schools within the Diocese during this academic year. This 8th grade text has several special features. This is a modified translation of our existing text based on U.S. English and NABRE. The illustrations and assignments given in this text, are modeled after textbooks formally edited in America. Special care is given to make it more in agreement with YOUCAT and Catechism of the Catholic Church.



Catechetical Sunday

The 2020 Catechetical Sunday theme is taken from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, "I Received from the Lord what I also Handed on to You."

The theme focuses on the primary substance of catechesis, which is an invitation to a whole new life given by Christ Himself. It emphasizes that living faith necessitates movement, inspiring all those who hear the Word to share it as witnesses of the true and living God. This year, we are invited to focus on catechist formation, as catechists are the instruments through which many come to encounter Christ and hear this invitation.

Catechetical Sunday this year will be celebrated on Sunday, September 20, 2020. Please refer to Echo for suggestions and recommendations.

Did You Know ?

Supplementary Topics

A committee is currently working on developing supplementary topics for the Sunday School Students from 8-12. At the start of the school year, each grade will get a set of topics that are targeted for their faith fundamentals from a US context. The resource includes Power Point slides, notes, online resources etc.

Question Board

The Question Board assist the diocese with the preparation of mid-term and final examination questions and answers for Sunday School. The team meet regularly to assess and improve question formats, grading and examination. See Echo for more information.

What to teach in your class?

The Echo has a list of topics, prayers, books from the Bible, Saints etc, in addition to the textbook materials. Please refer Echo for those topics.

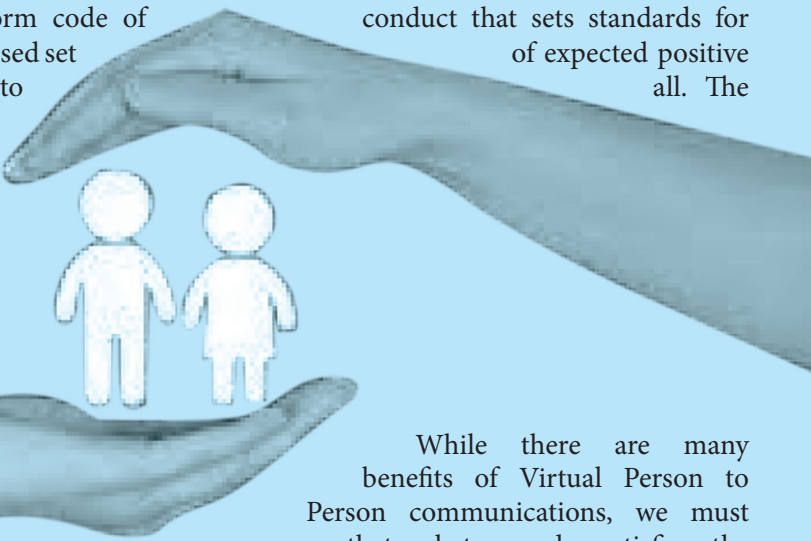
Feedback:

We are delighted to hear your suggestions to make this effort more useful. We would ask you to be our ambassadors in the parishes to promote the journal and to ensure that this is put to good use. We encourage you to send your ideas, if there are creative activities related to CCD that have been successfully implemented in your parish - things that you are proud of and want to share for the benefit of others - please send a write up on this to katechein@googlegroups.com or please send your writings to the Diocesan Department of Catechesis at smccdchicago@gmail.com.

Recommendations of the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth on Virtual Faith Formation program

St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago is committed to each student's success in Internet Learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our diocese works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the parish community. Online teaching is new to most of us. It is important to remember that even though you may be teaching from the comfort of your own home, it is still necessary to keep professionalism and adhere to boundaries with students.

Our diocesan code of conduct for Internet Learning describes the positive behaviors expected of its parishes/missions. The school community, including Religious Education, should follow a uniform code of conduct that sets standards for ethics and covers a focused set of behaviors that applies to all. The local and State Laws specify what must be included in internet learning procedures. They should also be adhered to as well.



While there are many benefits of Virtual Person to Person communications, we must ensure that what we do satisfies the Children's Online Privacy and Protection Act ("COPPA"). Clear communications must be provided to parents regarding Virtual Person to Person meetings so that they are informed of the dates, time, and reasons for the meetings and have an opportunity to decide that their child not participate.

(Email or direct phone call with parents are acceptable). Parents must be given the ability and the corresponding links or phone numbers to join the class/ conferences at any time (email or text message are acceptable).

1. Online training for children has become necessary under the pandemic situation, and it should not be a norm for future training. The catechism is to empower children in faith formation and to help them to grow as a community. However, as we do not know the extent of the current situation, we need to come up with standard procedures for running online classes for catechism.
2. All Tele/video conferencing and internet activities of the parish /mission only be done through a domain set by IT professionals. The use of outside sources should not be allowed.
3. Parishes/missions should ensure the existence of proper software for firewalling, monitoring, screening, and filtering the sources to ensure authenticity of the material the children can access.



- ◆ You are a role model for students!
- ◆ Boundaries keep EVERYONE safe!
- ◆ We cannot compromise our safety standards!

Catechetical department has arranged a mandatory session for all DREs on New guidelines on Virtual Faith Formation regarding the Safe Environment and Child Protection - August 15, Saturday 3-4.30pm CST with below agenda:

- ◆ Responsibilities of DREs in Virtual FaithFormation
- ◆ How we can protect our children from the dangerous zones of Virtual Classes

Summer Learning Series for Catechists 2020 - 2021

The Department of Faith Formation is excited to announce a Summer Learning Series for:

- ◆ Enhancing knowledge and skills for our Catechists in the Diocese.
- ◆ There are ten Faith and Classroom related Topics.
- ◆ For each topic 1 ½ hour sessions on Saturdays, Time: 3 -4.30pm CST. See box below for details.
- ◆ Classes will be conducted virtually via, WebEx and is free of charge.
- ◆ Any active catechist of our diocese is welcome to register.
- ◆ A teacher cannot register for not more than 3 topics.

No.	SUBJECT	Resource Person	Date
1	Digital Tools for Virtual Faith Formation	Jacob Mathew	July 18
2	Explore & Awaken your Hidden Teacher Capacities (For Catechists of 11 & 12 graders)	Luke Edamana	July 25
3	Making Faith Formation interesting for our kids (For Catechists of Higher graders)	Ajith Cherayil and Mariella Payyappilly	August 1
4	Making Faith Formation interesting for our kids (For the Catechists of Middle school graders)	Ajith Cherayil and Mariella Payyappilly	August 8
5	Safe Environment and Child Protection New guidelines on Virtual Faith Formation (A mandatory session for all DREs)	Thomas Moolayil	August 15
6	A Study on the Syro Malabar Catechetical Textbooks Series	Fr. Dr. George Danavelil	August 22
7	Forming Christian Character Beyond the Classroom through Pious Organizations (For the Catechists of Lower School Graders)	Sr. Agnes Maria	August 29
8	Thirst for Christ - A Parents Faith Formation Program initiative (For the Catechists of 3 rd grade students)	Lintu Mathews	Sept. 05
9	Catechesis Outside the Classes - Outreach programs in Faith Formation	Rinson John	Sept. 12
10	Effective Teaching and Classroom Management Strategies for Catechists	Sajan Mathew	Sept. 19

- ◆ Each class is limited to 50 participants; registration is on a first come first serve basis
- ◆ Pre-registration is mandatory; need name, email address, cell#, parish of the participant.
- ◆ WebEx classroom link will be sent only to the registered email of teachers
- ◆ Kindly encourage all the catechists of our diocese to join.

For More information, <http://www.syromalabarcatechesischicago.org/>

Echo, New Catechetical Directory of Our Diocese



The Echo, a Catechetical Directory prepared by the St. Thomas Syro Malabar Catholic Diocese of Chicago, contains norms, principles, directives, and guidelines for effective and orderly catechesis in our diocese will be released this summer. The Echo was developed by the Handbook Committee. The main purpose of this directory is to help the parish/mission catechetical ministry to conduct the faith formation program based on the guidelines given by the Universal Church and the Synod of Bishops of the Syro Malabar Church and our Bishops. The Echo will assist in standardizing various catechetical activities within the diocese.

PEARLAND ST. MARY'S : Fostering Spiritual Formation amidst the Pandemic

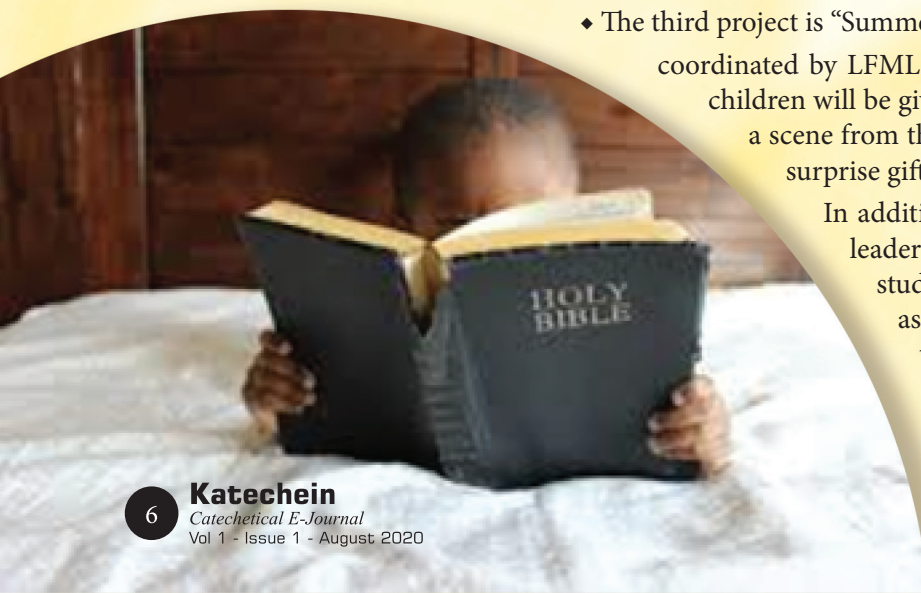
The Little Flower Mission League (LFML) of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Pearland is implementing three summer projects for Pre-K — 12th grade children specially designed for the lock down period.

These activities have been undertaken after detailed discussion among Vicar Rev. Fr. Ruban Thannickal, LFML Animator Rev. Sr. Agnes Maria, and a dedicated team of adult and youth animators and LFML executive officers.

The purpose of these projects is two-fold:

1. To foster Christian values in children during their extended time at home
 2. To cultivate leadership of students in 8th – 12th grades.
- ◆ The first project is a digital Spiritual Diary. LFML members will submit a weekly online Google Form keeping track of their spiritual growth through attendance of Holy Mass, Bible reading, prayer, sacrifice and helping others.
 - ◆ The second project is a video souvenir for LFML kids in 4th -12th grades. Kids will submit a 20 sec video answering one of the given topics related to sharing their faith experience and prayer life. These videos will be compiled into a video souvenir for the 2019-2020 year.
 - ◆ The third project is “Summer in Colors with Christ,” a coloring activity coordinated by LFML for Pre-K – 3 rd grade children. Every week, children will be given a grade- specific coloring sheet that depicts a scene from the life of Jesus to color and submit for monthly surprise gifts.

In addition to spiritual growth, these projects cultivate leadership skills in 8th – 12th grade students. These students have assigned roles and responsibilities as group leaders for the online Spiritual Diary, to monitor and report their group’s progress, leaders for the coloring project who communicate with parents every week, and executive officers who oversee group leaders.



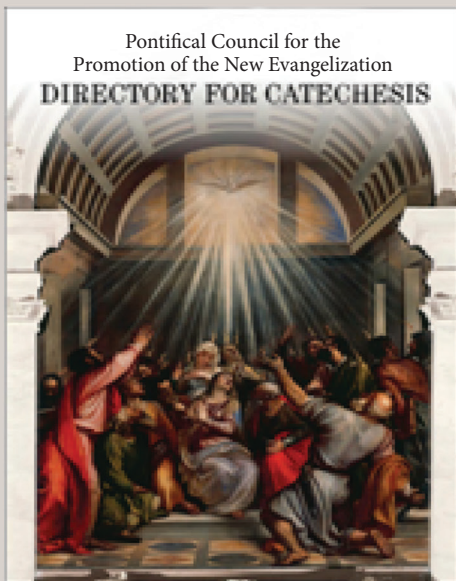
OBITUARY



Mr. James Varghese Palathuruthil

DRE of St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Detroit, Michigan passed away on June 30, 2020. He was 57 years old. He served as a DRE of the parish since 2006. He is survived by his wife and three children. On behalf of the Diocesan Department of Faith Formation and with the entire family of catechists, our heartfelt condolences to the bereaving family and the Detroit St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Parish community. Let us remember the family and parish in our prayers that they may be strengthened by the Lord to find peace at this time of loss and grief.

New Directory for Catechesis Released



The long-awaited updated Directory for Catechesis was released in the Vatican on 25, June 2020. The new Directory seeks to highlight the close link between evangelization and catechesis. It underlines that every baptized person is a missionary called to find new ways of communicating the faith with commitment and responsibility. In this regard, the new Directory proposes three major principles of action: Witnessing, Mercy and Dialogue. The new Directory containing over 300 pages and is made up of 3 parts divided into 12 chapters.

Recommended Faith Formation Activities

AUGUST

- ◆ Senior students may prepare and present a short presentation on the growth of the church.
- ◆ Plan an evening prayer and cookout for your family and friends in honour of St. Euphrasia on August 29th.

SEPTEMBER

- ◆ Make a spiritual bouquet for Mother Mary by fasting, attending Holy Mass, praying the rosary, learning a Marian hymn and carrying out acts of charity.
- ◆ Celebrate the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Meditate upon the victory and glory of the Cross.
- ◆ Jesus' transfiguration opened the disciples' eyes to the wonders of God. Witnessing the transfiguration caused the disciples to worship with fear and awe. Have kids learning the meaning of transfiguration through a science experiment. Teach and lead them to worship God with fear and awe.
- ◆ Celebrate the Catechetical Sunday on September 20th as a special day with activities and presentations.
- ◆ CML Inauguration: Select CML leaders and light the candle for the CML activities for the year.

OCTOBER

- ◆ Holy walking: hold mini-processions by

praying the rosary to the grotto or a procession outside church to the beautiful Mary Statue in your church.

- ◆ Participate in the 10 day Holy mass and rosary at church.
- ◆ Spend a day doing little things for God and others in honor of the feast day of St. Therese “The Little Flower” (Octo 1st).
- ◆ Senior students prepare a presentation about the value of human life and present it to the whole church community.
- ◆ Celebrate Mission Day. Pray for the missionaries in your church and for those who are discerning the call as a missionary. CML: activities and poster presentations by children about the missionary activities. Conduct a food sale and raise fund to support a mission. Invite a missionary to speak during or after church, and educate our church about what is happening overseas.

Dei Verbum Bible Quiz

For the first time, the Diocese conducted a diocese wide Bible Quiz competition. The Dei Verbum Bible Quiz was a huge success. The Bible Quiz prompted a lot of faithful to read and study the Word of God. There were 5300 people participating in Phase 1. A total of 1400 people were selected for Phase II and 40 people from four categories were selected for the final round. The final on-stage round will be conducted on-site in Chicago. The Diocese is expecting to conduct the final on-stage program at the beginning of the year 2021.

Best Sunday School

Thanks to all the parishes/missions that sent the best Sunday School Application for the academic



year 2018. The Diocese is impressed by the qua-

lity and amount of activities done by our parents/ teachers and students. Due to the pandemic, the Diocese is not able to conduct site visits to parishes to verify the application, it was decided not to award the best Sunday School Award this year. Diocese will be giving an award of appreciation to all the parishes that applied for the best Sunday School.

Sacred Heart Knanaya Church Tampa: CCD students stepping up to the plate during pandemic lockdown

At Sacred Heart Knanaya Church, Tampa, high school CCD students are taking the lead during the, Covid-19 lockdown in organizing parish activities and fostering communication.

- The 12th grade students volunteer in different church activities such as ushers, showing power point presentation about various topics to other students after Holy Mass, cooking and delivering food to the CCD students, teachers assistant and office assistant. They help to organize picnics, sports, games, and other entertainment programs. During this lockdown time they made a video for the mothers on Mother's Day. They also do fundraising sale for charity.



- Youth made a 12th grade graduation video which is broadcasting through KVTV. For intensive catechism faith fest our youths are conducting 1st and 10th grade classes, which will be aired in the KVTV. Some students participated in the books of Bible recital competition done by Chithanya Commission, Kottayam.

Thirst for Christ - Eucharistia

A Parents Faith Formation Program initiative

Why this Program?

Family centered faith formation with parent's engagement has become a necessity for the formation of children receiving Holy Communion. Parents must form themselves to be good role models in living and practicing faith to their children.

Key Highlights of the Program

- Faith formation program focused for Grade 3 Parents prior to Solemn Holy Communion and First Confession preparation.
- **Key objectives are:**
 - ◆ **To uplift the spiritual and religious growth of parents and equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for faith-forming**
 - ◆ **How to transmit faith and values to the children in preparation for Holy Communion.**
 - **The sessions are conducted online or in person if circumstances are allowed & done on a weekly basis.**
 - **There are 7 main topics that will be covered for the Program distributed over 18 sessions with initial classes taken by experienced Catechist Teams of the respective Parish/ Mission.**
 - **Parent families will be involved in both attending and conducting certain classes in order to actively participate in the Program, this expectation need to be set well in advance with Parents.**

For more information kindly contact

Lintu Mathews Karimpil, DRE, St Teresa Mission, SFO, Mobile : 408 784 6129, Email : mathews.lintu@gmail.com

Call to Vocation

Promote vocations to priesthood & religious life

The Lord says, "the harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few" (Matt 9:37).

There is nothing that is needed in the world today more than the Love of Christ, and there is no love greater than that of Christ in the Eucharist. The calling of the priest is to unite God and His children through the Eucharist.

If you feel the call of the Lord in the depth of your heart, pray for clarity on your vocation. Entrust yourself to the Blessed Mother Mary, who will lead you along the right path.

With discernment and trust in God's providence, take the next step.

For more information regarding vocations for the Syro Malabar Diocese of Chicago, contact:

Fr. Paul Chalissery Antony
DIRECTOR

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St. Thomas Syro Malabar Diocese
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Elmhurst, Illinois -60126.

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RESOURCES FOR CATECHISTS

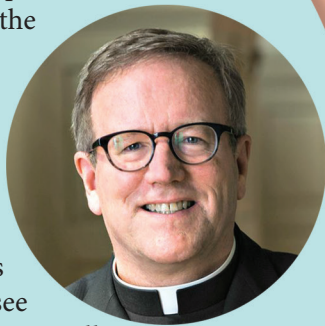


LINKS & RESOURCES

BEING A CATECHIST IS A VOCATION

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkmTeXCzGDI>

In this video, Bishop Robert Barron uses the story of Nicholas Black Elk to illustrate several lessons that the everyday catechist can glean from his life. In particular, Bishop Barron speaks on the necessity of studying the faith before passing it on, especially since CCD students yearn for an intellectual grounding of the information they are taught. Secondly, he notes that the catechist should see their work as a vocation – as a call. The Church needs orthodox Catechists who not only know their subject-matter but are passionate about it too.



To “be” catechists!
Not to “work” as catechists.
Catechesis is a vocation:
“being a catechist”,
this is the vocation,
not “working” as a catechist.

Pope Francis,
Congress on Catechesis



LGBT Sexuality

<https://www.catechist.com/advice-master-catechist-five-big-questions-sex-attraction/>



In this article, Fr. Philip G. Bochanski addresses 5 popular questions regarding sexuality that CCD students (namely, those in middle school and above) often have. Addressing questions from same-sex relationships to the transgender issue, he answers each question with clarity and charity ensuring that the reader understands the position the Catholic Church holds is in favor of the betterment of the person.

‘Teacher Amma’

How a teacher can change lives by just sharing his/her inner Christ.
A true inspirational story dedicated to all Teachers and Students



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7b8OXQ0lrU>