



RAMTELL

RamTell E-Newsletter

September 2024

Expanding Opportunities Through the Church

Reflection

The assimilation of immigrants from many diverse cultures across the globe as full participants in American society has historically required that they learn English as a second language. This process happens naturally when children enroll in schools and when they socialize with other students who are native English speakers. Adults often have more difficulty because of work and family responsibilities and because the older they get, the more difficult it is to understand, read and write new languages.

Most adults who have emigrated from foreign countries for political, economic or religious reasons to build a new life for themselves and their families are committed learners. In spite of the difficulties they encounter in a new homeland, most are determined to make their lives better

by fitting into their new neighborhoods and work environments and by learning their new language as completely as they can.

Teaching English as a second language (ESL) requires linguistic skills, patience, and a deep respect for the native languages and cultures of the adults, youth and children who seek to understand, speak and write American English. It isn't easy to find experienced ESL teachers, but the challenges are well worth the effort.

There are several different methodologies used to help adults learn English. The traditional methods concentrate on teaching vocabulary, grammar and the distinctive idioms used in the written and spoken language of Americans. This is called the "deductive method" because it challenges learners to master a new language based on their familiarity

with the rules and commonly applied principles of the English language.

A more modern approach—the inductive method—encourages adults to learn by experience. By immersing themselves in the world of native English speakers, and by using a “trial and error” approach that is less concerned (in the beginning) with grammar and vocabulary, adults grow in the understanding and practice of the American language by “doing it.” Regardless of the methods used, teaching adults English as a second language can be deeply rewarding. It serves the needs of the learners, and it advances our society’s desire for a diverse but unified workforce and community.

Profile

St. Ambrose Catholic Church, Seymour, Indiana

At St. Ambrose Catholic Church in central Indiana, helping adults learn English is an integral part of the parish’s ministry of hospitality. The first Hispanic families began praying at St. Ambrose in the mid-1990s. Today there are Native Spanish speakers represented on all parish commissions!

The parish’s Hispanic Ministry Coordinator serves as support for the Hispanic community in any church matter and also as a bridge to help the

pastor, Father Dan Staublin, with translations. Events are planned for the entire parish such as our Hispanic Fiesta during the month of September/October to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and the independence of the Hispanic countries of our parishioners. Other events include the Celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Posadas, Three Kings' Day, Feast of Divine Mercy, and celebrations of Mother's and Father's Day.

For 2-3 hours on Saturday mornings, adults gather at St. Ambrose to learn how to understand, speak, and write English. Many different Latin American



countries (including Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and other nations) with a variety of different

languages and dialects are represented in St. Ambrose's ESL classes. According to Father Dan, "It's inspiring to see how much the Spanish speaking adults in our community want to learn English. They are willing to put in long hours of study and practice to become fluent."

St. Ambrose is a parish that is bursting at the seams. On weekends, 1100–1200 people attend Masses in a church built for 300. Meeting and gathering spaces are limited, and every square inch is utilized to provide ministry and faith formation to children, youth and adults.

With the retirement last year of the parish's extremely popular and effective teacher of English as a second language, St. Ambrose is currently engaged in an active search for a woman or man who can assume this critical position. Father Dan says that when the right person (or persons) is hired, the parish will be able to accommodate up to 50 people in Saturday morning classes.

Father Dan is eager to see this happen. "The bilingual spirit in our parish is growing," he says. "We welcome the opportunity to help our Spanish-speaking parishioners learn English, and we encourage those who are native English speakers to learn about the different cultures and languages of their fellow parishioners."

RamTell, Inc. is proud to support the efforts of parishes like St. Ambrose which expand opportunities for adults pursuing a better life for themselves and their families. To assist Father Dan and his Hispanic Ministry team in their efforts to serve the bilingual communities in central Indiana, readers who wish may send contributions to:

St. Ambrose Catholic Church
Hispanic Ministry Outreach
325 S. Chestnut St.
Seymour, IN 47274

