

Children and adults from St Paul's parish, Dandenong Victoria, travelled to St Michael's Monastery in Goulburn, NSW for their third annual parish Family Camp



Under the patronage of His Eminence Metropolitan Basilios, children and adults from St Paul's parish, Dandenong Victoria, travelled to St Michael's Monastery in Goulburn, NSW for their third annual parish Family Camp.

Led by St Paul's Youth Committee under the guidance of Father Jean and Kh. Rita Mawal, families gathered together for a 5-day retreat which allowed 70+ attendees to take part in a program of religious sessions and family activities.

Day one at the village brought all families together for morning prayers followed by a visit by His Eminence whereby the adults, youth and the younger children each spent time with Sayedna in open group discussion sessions.

This year attendees were very blessed to have Father Deacon Philip Saba deliver each group with a session on the Symbolism of Orthodox Vestments. The highly informative presentation provided attendees with the opportunity to learn about the various layers of garments worn by Orthodox Priests and Deacons, the biblical symbolism on why they are worn and the methodical process our clergy go through when dressing in their garments.

For a second year, St Paul's Family Camp was also very blessed to have Tewfic

Joubran from Queensland join us again to deliver sessions on Iconography, whereby each person had the opportunity to paint their very own icon.

For a third year, attendees were blessed to have Kh. Rita patiently provided chanting lessons, which saw the children and youth learn Psalm 135 in English and the Adults learn Psalm 83 in Arabic.

The younger children were also blessed to receive a spiritual lesson from Father Jean about 'Angelic Presence', the hierarchy of angels and their roles in both our daily life and the Divine Liturgy. Whilst the older children learnt about the Divine Liturgy as the 'Earthly Heaven', providing an insight into worship as both human and divine comingled.

In addition to daily spiritual sessions, each day included a mixed agenda of various activities including daily prayers, prosphora bread making and family games. Father Jean and Kh. Rita also facilitated a valuable family self-reflection activity session which allowed each family to create a list of 5 goals they wish to achieve together as a family.

The last night finally brought the group together for the highly anticipated annual Talent Show whereby each family got to showcase their unique talents for an evening of fun and entertainment.

In free time, children and adults spent their time socialising as well as playing basketball, volleyball and football, allowing the group to form even stronger bonds as one church family.

With thanks to our Youth, Father Jean and Kh. Rita, we thank God for another highly nourishing and successful Family Camp.

- Source: antiochian.org.au