18/10/2021

History is made – Inaugural Sunday School Camp in Adelaide



This school holidays marked another historic event for the Archdiocesan District of Adelaide – with the blessing of Archdiocesan Vicar, His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope, the District held its first ever Sunday School camp for 9 to 13 year-olds from October Wednesday 6th till Friday 8th of October 2021.

The camp was hosted at the picturesque Mylor Adventure Camp, run by Baptist Care SA in the Adelaide Hills. It was an ideal location, being a convenient 40-minute drive from the CBD.

The camp began with the 56 children gathering together on the bus for the trip up to the site, leaving bright and early (8:30am) from the parish of St Nectarios as a convenient departure point. It was a great way for the children to get to know each other and play a few games in preparation for the days to come.

On arrival at Mylor, the children disembarked and were shown around the camping site, followed by an agiasmo service (led by Fr Jeremy Krieg from St Nectarios/Greek Welfare Centre and Fr Daniel Bradshaw of St Nectarios/St Spyridon

College) to open the camp.



Over the three days of the camp, the children were divided into a variety of different groups – activity groups (for fun activities), lesson groups (for lessons about the Faith) and combined sessions with all the children together. Activities were professionally run by the site and included favourites such as a flying fox (the second-longest in Australia) and a giant swing. The lesson groups were based on the camp theme “Put on the full armour of God” from the epistle of Saint Apostle Paul to the Ephesians, which the participants were called to live by both the duration of the camp and of course in their life afterwards. Each group focused on a particular aspect of the armour (Shield of Faith, Belt of Truth, Sword of the Spirit, Breastplate of Righteousness). In addition, there were two guest speaker slots by Fr Jeremy and Fr John Psalios (St Spyridon), who spoke on topics related to the theme of the camp.

Mealtimes were also an important part of the experience, with groups assigned responsibility for setting up and packing up at each meal, as part of their spiritual development in teaching the children to care for others. They were also an opportunity for the children to practice their group singing, something that proved very popular.

Each day began and ended with group prayer, teaching our children the basics of an Orthodox prayer life, and encouraging them to develop/reinforce this habit as something natural for the Orthodox Christian.



The camp culminated on Friday morning with a Divine Liturgy in the campsite's chapel. The service was officiated by His Grace Bishop Silouan, who addressed the children and encouraged them all to constantly look for the hidden presence of God in their lives.

After the Liturgy, the children and volunteers all made their way back to the hall of St Nectarios, where they had their last meal together and ended with a performance of the plays that they had been practicing for their parents. These plays were based on the theme of their lesson groups and were a fitting way for the children to express their enthusiasm and show their parents what they had learned.

A big thanks must go to the volunteer camp coordinators and supervisors, without whom the camp would not have been possible. Their dedication to our children and the personal sacrifices they made to invest in their spiritual development was to be admired. Special mention must also be made of the volunteer cooks from the Central Philoptochos and others. Without their volunteered effort preparing the five meals per day, the camp would not have been affordable (nor, dare we say, would

the food have been half as good or plentiful!)

The feedback from the children about the camp has been overwhelmingly positive, with many of them excited about doing it again next year. The volunteer camp coordination team has gained valuable experience and is looking forward to making next year’s camp even bigger and better.

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