

25/10/2023

District of Adelaide Combined Sunday School and Girls Omatha Camp October 2023



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, the Archdiocesan District of Adelaide again run a Sunday School camp for children aged 10-12 years of age, from 10th to the 12 of October 2023. This camp built on the success of the previous years' camps and brought Sunday-School aged children together from across Adelaide.

The success of the previous Sunday School camps introduced another problem: given that the original group of children were now too old to attend the Sunday School camp, a separate event was needed to cater for children in the next age bracket (13-17) to maintain the momentum that had built by their attendance over the last two years. Having not had any local experience running Church camps for this age group, the District of Adelaide's camp organising committee turned to their counterparts in Sydney from the Greek Orthodox Christian Society (Enosis), who have decades of experience in running such camps (which they have dubbed

“Omatoes”). Enosis were very obliging in providing planning support and were even able to find several volunteer camp facilitators (led by the very experienced Mrs Katerina Stavropoulos) who came to help run the event – also providing on-the-job training for the Adelaide-based facilitators. As a result, two extra camps were run for the first time this year: the first (for boys aged 13-17) was held from 14th to 16th of July, while the second (for girls aged 13-17) ran concurrently with the Sunday School camp in October 10th-12th. All camps were held at the same venue (Mylor Adventure Camp) in the picturesque Adelaide Hills, and the two concurrent camps were run at the same location but with separate meal times so as to make them as practically separate as possible. All three of the camps had between 20 and 30 children attending.

The three-day programs included a healthy balance of structured play activities (indoor and outdoor), free time, and organised Scripture sessions. The two camps also divided into separate groups with each discussing a different theme – the Sunday School children had St Sebastian and St Kyriaki, while the teen girls learned about the virtues of Humility and Obedience. The Sunday School children were also blessed to receive a visit and address from Fr Michael Psaromatis.



The Divine Liturgy was served on the morning of Thursday 12th October 2023 by Archiepiscopal Vicar, His Grace Bishop Silouan of Sinope, assisted by Deacon John Saredakis. His Grace spoke to the children about the importance of preserving the purity of our youth, and highlighted the fact that the habits we establish in our

youth will usually persist into adulthood and subsequently become very difficult to change. Thus it is important to set down strong spiritual roots at this age to sustain us spiritually into our adulthood.

After breakfast, the children packed up camp and prepared for the bus trip back to the Holy Monastery of St Nectarios, where lunch was served and the children gave some short performances to their parents that they had prepared over the course of the camp.



Upon reflection, there were many lessons that the organisers could glean from the camps and ways that they could improve into the future. The idea of running the two camps concurrently was an innovation born out of necessity, and the experience revealed both some positives and negatives to this approach that can serve as lessons for future planning. But overall, all three camps were highly successful with the children having a wonderful time and looking forward to participating in future years. Moreover, there is great hope that some of the older children, having now “graduated” from the teenage camp program, will themselves mature into camp leaders of the District of Adelaide in the not-too-distant future.









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