

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS



"The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib" - (Isaiah 1.3).

The Church of the Assumption in Seattle, WA portrays the symbolism of the Orthodox Icon of the Nativity of Christ.

The original script is available on our Metropolis Religious Education website: www.sanfran.goarch.org/religioused

Below: The ABC's of Christmas
Saint Demetrios, Tucson AZ



Holiday Giving Project: Holy Trinity, San Francisco

"One good turn led to another and our students and faculty are now engaged in a clothing, toy and book drive to donate to a mother's and children's shelter."

The Sunday School students of Holy Trinity Church, San Francisco, had a very successful fall semester first by faithfully attending their religious education classes where the focus is on the Gospel lesson of the day and then by participating in several outreach projects defining us as stewards of our Orthodox Christian faith.

The students prepared fruit baskets for less fortunate families in the general community for Thanksgiving. They went Christmas caroling to our parishioners' homes and collected more than \$3,000, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our families, and they presented our parish with a beautiful Christmas pageant reminding us all of the reason for the season.

The students then as-

tounded their teachers and families with a holiday project called "One Good Turn." Each student was offered an opportunity to spend or use or give \$5 to someone in order to spread the joy of the season. i

As we discussed our project, the children were quick to say that they felt so good giving to others. Some noted that it was a little challenging trying to figure out the best way to use the money. And then the most amazing thing happened... One good turn led to another and our students and faculty are now engaged in a clothing, toy and book drive to donate to a mother's and children's shelter. The children were thrilled to do more (even after they realized it involved cleaning their rooms and closets) and pledged their support with

a goal of completing the drive by Valentine's Day.

This spring holds more excitement as the students in the upper grades prepare for the Oratorical Festival. Our high school students are looking forward to joining their friends from other parishes at Asilomar in Monterey for a Lenten Retreat. And our younger students will participate in their own day-long Lenten retreat at Church just before Pascha.

Along with our beloved Fr. James Adams, our entire parish is so proud of our students as they grow in the light of our Lord and become leaders of our Orthodox Christian faith.

*Vickie Buonocore,
Director of Religious Education,
Holy Trinity Church,
San Francisco*

Holy Apostles takes Sunday School “out of the box”

Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church in Shoreline, Washington has taken Sunday School “out of the box,” according to Maria Burke, one of the program’s coordinators. “Instead of having classes every Sunday for 10 months, we break it up, offering six 6-week sessions during the year. OASIS (which stands for Orthodox Adults and Students in Study) meets on Sundays after coffee hour. The kids go to their classrooms with their teachers, while the adults meet in our fellowship hall with various parishioners, visiting clergy or outside speakers leading them.” At the conclusion of each six-week session, the entire community takes a two-Sunday break without classes, with focus instead

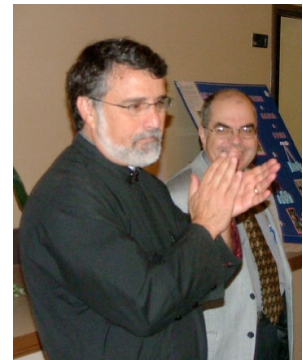
on fellowship and out-reach. On the first Sunday there is a parish-wide potluck and the next Sunday is a service project. The four Church School classes alternate in the planning of one potluck and one service project each year. Last year, the service projects included: Clean up day at Teen Hope, a local shelter for at risk youth; a diaper drive and fleece blanket making project for Childhaven, a local charity for young children under the age of five years; raising money through a Valentine’s Day dessert auction for Heifer International; putting Fr. Tom Tsagalakis in a dunk tank, charging \$1 per ball, with proceeds to benefit Teen Hope shelter; the kids made and sold icon greeting cards, raising money for our

missionary Ed Pier, with O.C.M.C. To keep things fresh, the themes vary through the year with an ultimate focus on Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Themes have included: “Taking on 21st Century Challenges with the Wisdom of the Church”, a focus on “Wellness” and most-recently “Healing Messages from St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians.” The instructors also rotate and alternate responsibilities, so no one is overwhelmed with a long commitment. Maria says that the program, which began over three years ago, has been enjoyed by all, and has promoted fellowship as well as opportunities for spiritual growth for parishioners of all ages.

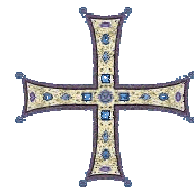
“Instead of having classes every Sunday for 10 months, we break it up, offering six 6-week sessions during the year.”



Left: Teens from the Holy Apostles’ “OASIS” class.



Father Tom Tsagalakis, Pastor of Holy Apostles, Shoreline, WA



Emergency Preparedness in San Jose

“...disaster preparedness is something that every parish in the San Francisco Metropolis would do well to pursue...”

Teena Claudatos, member of the new SF Metropolis Christian Education Advisory Committee, and Superintendent of the St. Nicholas Church School in San Jose, CA, is spear-heading the emergency preparedness awareness efforts in her parish. At St. Nicholas, the Church School is coordinating a fundraising effort, which includes the sale of home disaster kits and car emergency kits, in order to

purchase basic survival group kits for at least 100 persons, to be kept in a shed on the parish grounds. The survival kits consist of food, water, a blanket, a poncho, and tissue, in a small bag. The local AHEPA group will be paying for a search and rescue kit (dust masks, flashlights w/ spark-free switch & utility knives). Teena has also recommended that the leadership team of each parish organization receive disaster training, as well as CPR training.

Since disaster preparedness is something that every parish in the San Francisco Metropolis would do well to pursue, **we have created an information page, accessible from the main Religious Education website**, with links to some of the resources that St. Nicholas utilized, as well as an area for suggestions from parishes that have pursued similar projects.

(see: www.sanfran.goarch.org/religious)