

## **St. Nicholas Summer Camp: Fun-Filled Week with our Church Family**

2017 Church Camp was an educational, fun and memorable event, for not only the children who participated, but for the adults as well. We had 39 campers, ages 2-15, plus three high school student helpers in attendance. While at camp, the boys and girls participated in many different activities.

The theme of our camp was Divine Liturgy. Our parish is blessed with intelligent and wonderful children, and thanks be to God, they have such a strong foundation. Building from what they already understand of the Divine Liturgy, Father George and Protonica Karen discussed how the service invokes the 5 senses: taste, sight, touch, smell and hearing. While emphasizing on "taste", the children were reminded that the most important aspect of Divine Liturgy is partaking of Holy Communion. On the second day, the children learned about the spiritual meaning behind the use of prosphora and its seal. During baking class, led by Protonica Karen, this was expanded upon as they learned about the ingredients used for prosphora, and its significance, as well as the prayers we are called upon to recite when preparing phosphora. At the end of camp, the children shared a baked loaf. Father George took the older students into the church and showed them the tools he uses to cut the prosphora for communion. He read and explained Woman and the Wheat to the younger students.

Mary Ann Tomich and Alexis Janiga had the school-aged children make their own homemade ice cream in Mason jars that they then got to eat later in the day for their afternoon snack. The kids got to choose whether to make chocolate or vanilla! It took a lot of shaking, but the final product was worth it. Danae Wright gave all of the campers the opportunity to make slime in their choice of color. The kids had some messy hands, but they loved every minute of it!

On the first day, all the boys and girls got to make chocolate chip cookies with Sava Saula. Each child takes a bowl and goes down the line adding the exact amount of each ingredient. Lots of kids were seen sneaking some of that yummy cookie dough! Susan Glenn, Cathy Stupar and Katie Stupar were responsible for helping the kids and then baking all of the cookies.

In Arts and Crafts with Amanda Formato and Maria Stone, the pre-schoolers colored religious flower pots and planted a flower. They also decorated a picture frame and created a "stained glass" cross. With Mary Ann Tomich and Alexis Janiga, the school-aged children created a Children's Orthodox Prayer Book. Some of the prayers included were before and after a meal prayers, morning and bedtime prayers and prayers in times of trouble. They also painted and decorated wooden frame ornaments, crosses and angels that will be sent to our parishioners who are no longer able to attend church. Carla Williamson had all of the children sign and decorate get well cards. She also took a group picture that will be included with the ornament as part of our Stewardship activities.

Sonja Capuzzi stressed the importance of culture and the teachings of our Serbian traditions. With the younger students she taught basic kolo circle dances and stressed the importance of kolo etiquette. The kids had fun saying “hey hop” while the kolo dances got faster. Sonja taught the older kids traditional kolo dances and the reasoning for specific steps. We hope to see the students out there dancing, singing and having a great time at our Serbian events!

Janice Smargie taught the kids to sing responses in church during Divine Liturgy. They had the opportunity to practice singing during our morning prayer service. Janice talked to the kids about the importance of the choir during Divine Liturgy. We hope that we have many future choir members among us!

The campers had the chance to learn some words and phrases in the Serbian language with Nada Zdrale.

The highlight of everyday at camp is recess with Joe Klipa. All of the children get to go outside and play together. It is heartwarming to see the children of all ages having a wonderful time together and enjoying each other’s company. The large parachute put a smile on everyone’s face. You could hear the screams of delight as a “shark” would try to grab a “little fish” while the “lifeguards” would try to save them. The children had a blast!

Tootsie Harvey was in charge of the kitchen this year. With the help of Helen Drakulic, Rose Radjenovich and Donna Kolesar, the ladies prepared lunches and snacks each day. The kids did not walk away hungry!

Our camp was concluded this year with a field trip to Idlewild Park and Soak Zone. The kids, no matter their age, had a wonderful time! Kids were jumping waves in the wave pool, soaring down the water slides, lounging on the lazy river and splashing around on the large pirate ship at the water section of the park. Kids could also play in a ball pit, climb ropes and nets, visit Storybook Forest and ride many of rides. A huge thank you goes to the Men’s Club and Denny Z Equipment Sales and Inspection Services for their generous donations. All of the kids’ admission to the park was completely paid for!

It takes a village to raise a child. We, at St. Nicholas, are very blessed to have that village! May God Bless all of those who gave of their time and talents for our church camp this year. From the smiles that were seen on the children’s faces, it was certainly worth all of the hard work and dedication. We hope to see everyone again next year for another fun-filled week with our church family!