

Small Parish Forum in Canton, Ohio: July 14-16 2016
“The 8-Person Sunday School & 4-Person Youth Group”

***Handout: Example of Detailed Calendar for
Youth Ministry***

Priest Justin Patterson, St. Athanasius Orthodox Church, Nicholasville, Kentucky
priest@athanasiusoca.org / 859-361-2823 / www.athanasiusoca.org

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A General Proposal for Youth Group 2015-2016

Adopted and Implemented through summer 2016!

Based on the Youth Leadership Team Meeting, July 2, 2015

Sarah Holiday, the Whitemans, Lindsay Buhler, and Fr. Justin attending

Objectives: The primary objective for the St. Athanasius Youth Program is the creative fostering of the Orthodox Christian Faith among the young men and women of our parish. This includes the guided exploration of questions related to living our Faith in the world, the development of appropriate models of Christian service, and the cultivation of a healthy outlet for fellowship and friendship in the context of the youth group. The youth group leadership team sees its role as offering an additional layer of discipleship for our parish teens. Even as we attempt to cultivate a spirit of ongoing Christian education, service, and hospitality, the youth leaders will endeavor to direct the youth towards the Sacramental reality of our Faith and the liturgical worship of the Lord, so integral to our spiritual tradition as Orthodox Christians. We hope that the youth’s involvement in our program will help them be better prepared to take their place as adult Orthodox Christians!

Highlights of this Coming Year 2015-2016: Continuing with the foundation of regular meetings of the whole youth group twice a month as well as regular meetings of the much-loved girls’ group (for discipleship and more reflective fellowship) on many of the Sundays the youth group will not meet, the youth leadership team is proposing a new component this year in our schedule (without increasing the number of meetings). About once a month, Fr. Justin and the youth leadership team will lead guided visits to various faith communities’ houses of worship. These visits (which will not interfere with our parish’s Saturday evening and Sunday morning worship cycle) will have several objectives:

- to offer a “safe” environment for our youth to experience other faith traditions
- to explore our own history as Orthodox in America by visiting with others who constitute part of the story of Christianity outside our Orthodox Church
- to encourage respectful yet critical engagement with other faiths in guided (yet open) conversation with the youth

- to reflect on the strengths and similarities of these faiths as a group (and as individual congregations)
- to reflect on these experiences so as to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of our own Orthodox tradition.

We envision that our schedule for each of these “field trips” will include an actual visit to a synagogue or church, then a half-hour debrief at a local coffee shop or at our church itself (depending on the location). While we will aim to keep our youth group meetings in the 6-8pm range, our visits “out” will necessitate some flexibility with time. Because of this need for flexibility, the youth leadership team is resolved to communicate even more effectively than we ever have with parents and youth directly.

The youth leadership team is also investigating the possibility of getting involved this year in a Bible Quiz Competition Program, in order to provide a structured environment to foster more familiarity with the Scriptures.

Proposed Calendar of Events for Youth Group 2015-2016

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| Sun., Sept. 6, 2pm: | High Ropes Course Teambuilding & Theotokos Birthday Party
(meet @ Asbury--Geoff Whiteman) |
| Sun., Sept. 20, 6pm: | <p>Introduction to Church Visits, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Church history (30 minutes) outlining some of the divisions in the Christian world (including a word about Judaism) [Fr. Justin] ● Visiting other churches--what to look out for (“Their theology is revealed in the space itself.”) Tips for being aware observers in other churches, including list of questions to answer and reflect on. [Kriss and Sarah] ● Practical expectations for visiting other faith communities regarding behavior, dress, and respect. [Fr. Justin] ● Some general thoughts about ecumenical challenges (including theological considerations such as the Orthodox prohibition on inter-Communion with non-Orthodox) ● Optional challenge of reading through <i>The Orthodox Church</i> by Met. Kallistos Ware--with Trivia Night at end of year (@ the church) |

- Fri., Oct. 2, 7pm: Visit to Jewish Synagogue (Temple Adath Israel-Reformed)
(meet @ church at 6pm--Fr. Justin)
- Sun., Oct. 18, 6pm: Service Visit to Council Oaks Home in Nicholasville
 - including playing games and sharing dessert
(meet @ church at 6pm--Fr. Justin)
- Sun., Nov. 8, 6pm: Fall Fellowship Event (***Pan-Orthodox Youth Event*** for Lex. area)
 - Fire-pit with “meatfare” cookout; Q & A with priest(s)
(@ the church--Sarah Holiday)
- Sun., Nov. 22, 4pm: Visit to Latin-Rite (Pre-Vatican II) Catholic Mass (St. Peter RC Church)
(meet @ the church at 3pm--Fr. Justin)
- Sun., Dec. 13, 6pm: Service Visit to Council Oaks Home in Nicholasville
 - Caroling and lenten desserts
(meet @ the church at 6pm--Fr. Justin)
- Sun., Dec. 27, 6pm: Movie Night Fellowship and Pizza (hosted in home)
(meet @ designated home at 6pm--Lindsay B.)
- Sun. Jan. 10, 6pm: Game Night (@ church--Kriss Whiteman)
- Sun. Jan. 24, TBA: Visit to Christ the King Catholic Cathedral
(meet @ church one hour prior to service--Fr. Justin)
- Sun., Feb. 14, 5-9pm: Youth Babysitting Service Night (Free-will donations)
(@ church--Sarah Holiday)
- Sun., Feb. 21, TBA: Visit to St. Patrick’s Anglican Church
(meet @ church one hour prior to service--Fr. Justin)
- Sun., March 6, 6pm: Annual Meatfare Banquet Dinner
(@church--Geoff Whiteman)

Cheesefare Week and Clean Week (Start of Lent)

- Sun., Mar. 20, TBA: Attending Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers Together as Youth Group
(Pan-Orthodox Youth Event)
(location and time TBA--Fr. Justin)
- April 4-7: Spring Break (Fayette/Jessamine Co.) to Holy Transfiguration
Monastery Trip to Ellwood City; Services; Retreat; and Service
Project at Monastery (Sarah Holiday)

Sun., April 17, 6pm: Visit to Southland Christian
(meet @ the church at 5:15pm--Fr. Justin)

2 weeks of Palm Sunday through Post-Pascha

Sun., May 15, 6pm: Service Visit to Council Oaks

- Post-Paschal Ice Cream Party with the seniors
(meet @ the church at 6pm--Fr. Justin)

Sun., May 22, 6pm: End-of -Year Trivia Night (drawing from church visits and *The Orthodox Church*)
(@ the church--Lindsay Buhler)

Sun., June 4, 1pm: Annual Fellowship Trip to Red River Gorge (***Pan-Orthodox Event***)

- Miguel's Pizza afterwards
(meet @ church at 1pm--Kriss Whiteman)

Sun., June 19, noon: Pentecost "Tongues of Fire" Chili Cook-off Celebration/Fundraiser
(Sarah Holiday)

Notes:

Additional ideas for youth events include more Film Nights, Service Project Nights, Mini-Golf Night, or Game Nights. Also, we have been invited to the annual lock-in at St. Andrew's (date TBA). Specific ideas for Film Nights might include *The Mission*, a number of films inspired by CS Lewis' writing or about his life, (e.g., *The Shadowlands*), biblical films (with a an eye to contrasting them with the Orthodox tradition), etc. Other ideas are welcomed!

Additional Ideas for church visits potentially include Lutheran and Anglican churches, a traditionally African-American congregation, a mainline Methodist-type church, a traditional Baptist experience (sans intense altar-call), a Disciples of Christ-style church, a seeker-sensitive church like Church of the Savior, a seeker-sensitive mega church like Southland, and perhaps a charismatic church (e.g., even the Ukrainian Pentecostals). These are options we can discuss among the youth leadership team, parents, and the youth themselves.

Events to strengthen biblical knowledge in fun ways or to equip our youth apologetically are possibilities the leadership team would like to explore. Fr. Justin has expressed interest in cultivating youth as greeters...