

A Letter to Parents from the Youth Director

Dear Parent(s),

Christ is in our midst! Thank you for allowing your child/children to be part of the youth program at our Diocesan Assembly. I pray it is a fun and spiritually encouraging time for them. The purpose of the youth program is to offer our children an opportunity to be with Orthodox peers in a spiritually nourishing environment, to build up their faith, and to offer you, the parents, the opportunity to take full advantage of the social and spiritual fellowship the conference affords. This means that the youth volunteers are going to be working very hard, with a very full schedule, for the two days we are with your children. Because of this, I ask that you pay special attention to the pick up and drop off times in the schedule. The drop off times are important. If your child is not with us when we leave we cannot make any accommodation to catch them up. The pick up times are important because our volunteers are extending themselves to give you full days of child-free enrichment, and they need a break too. Please drop your children off and pick them up no later than the scheduled o'clock.

A note about teaching: As you can see from the schedule, the children are going to get an hour of time from our keynote speaker, Fr. Silviu Bunta, in which he will talk with them about "The Mystery of the Incarnation (particularly the Cross) being worked out in our life, warts and all." Fr. Silviu is an engaging speaker. Don't let your child miss this. Additionally, we are pleased to have YES (Youth Equipped to Serve) with us again this year. YES is a pan-Orthodox initiative that introduces young people to urban ministry. They will be leading our 13-18 year olds on Thursday in activities that are intended to help them put their faith into action.

A note about safety: The safety of your children is very important to us. You, or the guardian you list on the Youth Program waiver, are required to sign your child(ren) into and out of all youth program activities. You must also complete and return the attached waiver and medical form for each child in order for them to participate. All youth volunteers have received a background check and we will practice the two-leader rule, meaning that no approved youth worker will be alone in private with any child. Your child will also be provided with a silicone bracelet that includes the name of the Assembly on the outside and my personal number on the inside like this: For Help: xxx.xxx.xxxx. Should one of the children, God forbid, be separated from the group they, or someone else, can call me for immediate assistance. Please see to it that your children to keep this bracelet with them, even if they do not wear it, at all times. A life guard will be provided for the pool party on Thursday night.

Be Prepared: Florida is hot in the summer and we will be outside, and in the water, quite a bit. Your child should keep with them a backpack with everything they need for such conditions, including sun screen, a towel, a change of clothes, drinking water, and water socks/shoes so they don't burn their feet on hot sand. On Thursday we are going to be out and about the town. Your children will wear their Assembly t-shirt on this day since it will make them much easier to keep track of in the crowds.

If you have any other questions or concerns about the youth program please feel free to contact me, Fr. John Cox, at: priest@dormitionnorfolk.com. I look forward to seeing you all in Jupiter!