

Family

Outreach Sunday

A Day of Outreach & Fellowship
for Orthodox Christians, Families and Friends

A Program of the
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE DEPARTMENT OF OUTREACH & EVANGELISM
in cooperation with
The Ladies Philoptochos Society and The Center for Family Care at Saint Basil Academy

*The Department of Outreach & Evangelism has developed a program for an **Outreach Sunday** in which active members are encouraged to invite inactive family members and Orthodox Christian friends for a special day of Christian fellowship and spiritual renewal. This is modeled on successful programs carried out in the parishes throughout the Archdiocese. Rather than designating a specific Sunday, parishes are encouraged to choose a Family Outreach Sunday in November that fits their parish calendar.*

BACKGROUND

All Orthodox Christians are aware that many of our Orthodox friends and relatives have fallen away from active involvement in the Church. The reasons for this are many. Jesus Christ calls each one of us to engage in active outreach to these relatives and friends. Family Outreach Sunday is a first step in this direction.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Family Outreach Sunday is to bring inactive Orthodox Christians back to the Church, reinvigorating their Orthodox Christian faith, making them aware of the need for Christ in their everyday life, and their importance as individual members of the body of Christ.

SUNDAY DIVINE LITURGY

It is suggested that English be used to a greater extent on this special day of outreach. The Sunday bulletin should include a note of welcome. The sermon should be warm and welcoming with reference to the personal nature of our Orthodox faith and its meaning in our daily lives. Following Divine Liturgy, all should be welcomed by the parish priest and invited to the Church Hall for food & refreshments. A member of the Outreach Committee or Philoptochos might also offer a word of welcome and an invitation to proceed to the Church Hall.

COFFEE HOUR OR LUNCHEON WITH BOOTH FAIR

The parish may consider providing a luncheon or may prefer the informal setting of coffee hour with food and refreshments to allow people to circulate, find old friends, make new friends and learn more about the programs and ministries of the parish. Tables or booths could be set up by all the organizations of the church in order to share with our visitors some examples of the Orthodox faith in action. Nostalgic photo displays may also be set up to remind lapsed Orthodox of the days when they were more involved.

FELLOWSHIP

The time spent in the hall is a time of Christian fellowship – a continuation of the Divine Liturgy. Instead of a formal program with speakers, it is suggested that people be encouraged to partake of food & refreshments and to visit the various ministry booths and tables, and also to enjoy the Christian fellowship of old and new friends.

DATE

It is suggested that a Sunday in November be chosen with the guidance of the parish priest in coordination with the parish calendar.



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GREETERS

It is said that within five minutes of entering the church building, people have decided whether they will come back. Reaching out to those who enter our doors with a sincere handshake, greeting and a welcoming smile could be the most important missionary work we do. Ushers/greeters should be reminded of the importance of reaching out and making visitors welcome. Friendliness has eternal implications.

Following Divine Liturgy, Greeters should be posted throughout the narthex, near the exits and in the Church Hall to encourage people to proceed to the Hall. Greeters are encouraged to circulate among guests in the hall, offering information, encouraging guests to complete a visitor's card, and directing visitors' attention to important or relevant ministry tables/displays.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Formal invitations stress the importance of the event. It is suggested that these be supplemented by brief (3-minute) announcements in church each Sunday following Divine Liturgy by an effective and inspiring speaker. Announcements and articles should appear in bulletins and newsletters. Personal telephone calls are an effective tool for encouraging individuals to bring their inactive friends and family members to make this a special family day at church.

STAFFING

Staff may include but is not limited to the Ladies Philoptochos Society, Parish Outreach Committee, Parish Council members, and the parish youth organizations. All parish organizations may be invited to participate in this Outreach Ministry.

BROCHURE/HANDOUTS

It is suggested that a brochure or handout be prepared with information on the parish – its history and ministries, the Orthodox Faith, the Ladies Philoptochos Society and more. Philoptochos may choose to develop a brochure of their own to include additional information on the ministries carried out by the organization. A *Welcome Card* for collecting names and addresses of guests may be incorporated into the brochure of handed out separately.

PARISH BOOKSTORE

The parish bookstore/book table should open and available for all who want additional information on the Orthodox Christian faith. The bookstore is a great resource center, a place of welcome & fellowship and a witness to all of the richness and vibrancy of the Orthodox faith.

FOLLOW-UP

A guest list should be compiled of those who participated in order to facilitate follow-up outreach activities. Thank-you notes may be sent to all participants. A second invitation to worship may be extended one or two months following the original Sunday event. This same list could also be informed of worship services and parish events. This confirms the sincerity of the Church's outreach and welcome. Names and contact information should be shared among the parish organizations as appropriate for additional follow-up.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

Additional information and materials may be found on the following websites:

www.outreach.goarch.org
www.philoptochos.org, and
www.familyaschurch.org



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& **THE CENTER FOR FAMILY CARE AT SAINT BASIL ACADEMY**