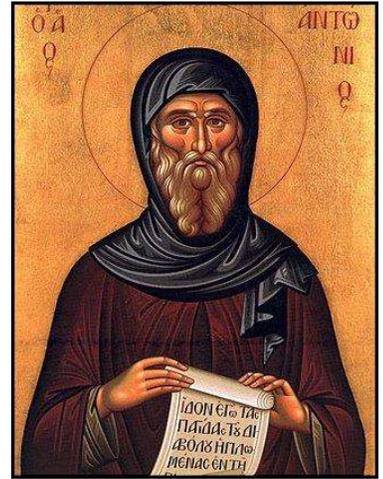


St. Anthony's Scroll



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Camp St. Raphael ~ 2016

Makayla Jefferson, 17, First Time Camper

St. Anthony is a newer church, and sort of lacks kids my age, let alone other girls around my age. So when I would go to church events, I had a good time but was missing a connection with other kids similar to me. That's why I was originally hesitant about going to Camp St. Raphael. I was an incoming senior and a convert of only about a few months so I feared that the camp would have been just like other church affiliated events I went to. I was wrong. Camp St. Raphael not only introduced me to other kids of similar walks of faith, but equipped me with enough resources to leave what



seemed to be more of a sanctuary and back into the real world. I learned a lot about the mentality of prayer and truly worshipping while taking part in liturgy. However, the best thing I took with me

was a philosophy of love. I didn't hear it chanted in a service or taught in Christian Ed but felt it through the staff and mostly the campers at Camp St. Raphael. I realized that no matter what I'm struggling with, whether it be doubt or fleshly desires, I always find refuge in fellowship with God's children. Through loving them, I could feel Christ's love, and it has made all the difference in my relationship with Him. I'm truly grateful to God for the Camp St. Raphael experience. Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!



St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Christian Church

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"I like going to Camp St. Raphael because I can be myself there and talk about my faith."

- Evan Kokkinis, 15 years old, 4th year at camp

"My favorite part about camp was meeting new people who were Orthodox like me and gaining more knowledge about the faith from Christian Ed."

- Natalia Ganim, 11 years old, 1st year at camp

"I expected to have fun, and I did have LOTS of fun and made lots of friends! Camp St. Raphael is the best camp in the universe."

- Maria Saghbini, 10 years old, 1st year of camp

"Camp was a life altering experience. It was a blast, and I didn't even really miss or need my phone. It was my first time, but I hope to go every year and eventually become a counselor."

- Nicholas Kalef, 15 years old, 1st year at camp

Rawan Ashrawi, Counselor, 10 years at CSR

As a counselor this year, I expected to be challenged in the most beautiful ways possible. I have always gone 2nd session as a camper and was nervous to meet the people of 1st session and excited to be a part of the HISTORIC 3rd session. I made a lot of new friends; which is the worst part of camp because most of the time they live nowhere near your home town and you miss them terribly after camp. I actually missed my phone being taken away like I did when I was a camper! Being detached from "the real world" as campers are and solely focused on what's right in front of you is such a blessing.

Camp St. Raphael is the most imperfectly perfect place that continues to attract people to come back in groups, always bigger than the year before. It's a place of security, unity, and love.

One of the best memories from camp this year was when our St. Anthony kids would come up and tell Matt Frangos or me that they didn't want to leave! I still remember when I was 9, and it was just my sister and me from St. Anthony's. This year we had a bus full! Campers, cherish your camp friendships. They are the ones that will last, as they are centered around Christ. Do everything with a loving heart. Remember that we're not much different than those moths we saw at camp, attracted to light. Be the light of Christ everywhere you go! YABOY!





Adella Winder, Youth Director, 10 years at CSR

Our bus ride to Camp St. Raphael was filled with nerves and hundreds of anxious questions. Kids wanted to know every detail of every day of camp, in hopes that this information would bring them some comfort. I thought the angst would subside once we arrived, but on the first night, I was asked multiple times by campers if they could get their cell phones back and a few were already homesick. A bit worried about the outcome of the week, I prayed that night that camp would soon work its magic on our children.

After a rough first night, I was greeted at breakfast the next morning by Evelyn saying, “Ms. Adella, could we stay two weeks? I’m having fun already!” and by Maria soon after with, “I love my bunk bed and my friends here!” I knew that camp was definitely making an impact after just one day! The campers from our parish were already joining in on camp traditions and jumping right into every activity, especially sports during Afternoon Program. It was truly beautiful to see our kids making friends with other campers from all over the diocese, all with different interests but bonding over their shared faith.

Watching our campers’ joy not only on the playing field or in the dining hall, but to see them praying together was the most marvelous part of the week. On Monday morning, the chapel was a bit quiet because campers weren’t really singing along while counselors and staff led most of the readings and chanting. By Divine Liturgy on Wednesday, the chapel was filled with the sweet and joyful sound of campers and staff alike singing with full force as if it were a room packed with camp veterans. Our children were even the ones raising their hands and answering questions during the priest’s sermons each morning.

Camp St. Raphael is a place of stability and belonging, something often lacking in other aspects of our lives. When kids find it difficult to fit in at school, extracurricular activities, or even at home, they find comfort in camp and lean on the friends they’ve made because they, too, understand the struggle of being an Orthodox kid in today’s society. Just as we would imagine the Kingdom to be, camp is full of unconditional love, joy, and peace. I am incredibly grateful to every parent and parishioner of our church for your contribution, whether by prayer or financial support, in making this year of camp possible our children.

Yasmeeen Dikdan, 10 years old, First Time Camper

What did you expect going into camp?

I expected, well, I never knew what to expect because it was my first year at CSRI

Describe Camp St. Raphael in one or two sentences:

It was a great experience for me. I couldn’t have had a better time there!

What was your best camp memory?

Color Wars, Serenade Night, Decades Night, and the Patriotic Pool Party

Jowana Musleh, 13, First Time Camper

I thought I was going to just die because I believed I could not have lived without my phone, but surprisingly I survived! Of course, I'm not going to lie, I thought there were just going to be nerds at camp who only do church stuff. But in the end, I was wrong. I loved everyone there, and it felt like I've known them much longer than I did. They were such great people, and I'm glad I got to know them. One thing that surprised me the most was that I didn't miss my phone at all when they gave it back to me. I didn't care at all. I was too busy crying about leaving camp to care. It would be hard to describe Camp St. Raphael in one sentence, but I would have to say that it is a place where you can be yourself and show your religion without being judged. My favorite camp memories were going to church every night and morning and just having fun with everyone.



Havana Musleh, 12, First Time Camper

At camp, I expected that we would do only church stuff mainly, and I thought the cabin wouldn't be that nice. I thought it would be pretty fun, but it was really REALLY fun! I didn't miss my electronic devices that much; it was actually nice to get off them for a while. I met this really nice girl who was really funny. I'm going to miss her a lot! I hope to see her again and my other friends that I met.

If I were to describe camp in one sentence, I would say Camp St. Raphael is the best camp that I have ever been to (even though it is the only camp I've been to). It's really fun! You learn about your faith while having fun like in Orthodox games during Christian Ed. You won't have another experience like it.

My best camp memory was the last two days. I loved when the electricity went out. You think after that it would get boring but not at Camp St. Raphael – they made it even more fun. It just kept getting better and better. I am so thankful and lucky to have been a part of Camp St. Raphael this year and hopefully every year from now on.



Salwa Musleh, Mother of Three Campers

It was a very special privilege for my children to go to Camp St Raphael this year. It was their first year there, and in fact, it was a very different experience for them. At the beginning, they were not that excited, and I had to make them go, especially Adam. When they came back, I was shocked to see the joy, love, excitement and even the sadness from missing camp on their faces. When they came back, they didn't stop talking about camp the whole time. Their voices were gone from all of the singing and screaming of joy. As a mother, I have noticed that this camp has changed them in their relationship with God. It was certainly the perfect opportunity for my children to get closer to God.

There is something so special that I can't describe about camp. It has made my children grow in their faith in Jesus Christ. For example, Havana was very emotional, and she even broke into tears because she wants to be involved more in church. I really feel that they have grown so much in their faith at camp in an amazing way. In addition, since it was their first time being away from home, I felt that they have learned some responsibility, and they have experienced some independence away from mom and dad.

It is very important to mention here that camp is a great opportunity for the children to take a break from all of their technology. This experience has taught them that they can survive without it. They also learned so much from everyone there, especially from their counselors while having so much fun. For example, I have witnessed Jowana reading about the saints each night after coming back from the camp. In fact, this camp has had such a big impact on them that they are already planning to go to camp next year. I am so thankful for all the blessings that my children received from going to Camp St Raphael. Thanks to everyone who made this camp experience as fun as it was.



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St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church

7202 FM 2920

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Mediterranean Night Gala

10th ANNUAL FUNDRAISER & BANQUET DINNER

Saturday, September 17th

The Woodlands Resort & Conference Center

Live Entertainment ~ Dinner & Dance
~ Silent Auction ~ Raffle ~

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

Altar Server Training

Saturday, September 10, 2016 at 10:30am

Church School Begins

Sunday, September 11, 2016

Teen SOYO Basketball Tournament & Retreat

September 23-25, 2016

Teen SOYO Winter Camp

January 2017