

June 2002
No. 4



SAINT MICHAEL

Messenger

SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL
Santa Rosa, California

Greetings in the Risen Christ!

Modern culture exalts intellectual achievements, but does not give much regard to the ability to work with one's hands. Yet the Scriptures reveal a different perspective. They tell us that when God created us, He did not simply say, "Let there be man." They give us a picture of God carefully forming us with His Divine Hands. He took raw material, created something of beauty, and breathed His Spirit into it. Being in the image of God, the Supreme Artist, man has the capability and yearning to make things.

When King David exclaims, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name" (Ps. 102), he is referring to the capabilities of the soul, including this creative ability. These capabilities are some of the talents God has given to all of us. He wants us to develop them and use them to His glory. When God told Moses how to design the tabernacle, He named a particular man to do the work and to teach others to do so. "The Lord hath called Bezaleel...and hath filled him with



Alicia Krueger creates a mosaic design.



Juliana Woolums finishes sewing her nature journal bag.

the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise skilled work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, ...in the carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work.” (Ex. 35:30-35). It is

also significant that Christ spent His pre-ministry years as a craftsman, a carpenter.

People of pre-modern cultures had a more Biblical perspective on the value of handwork and knew how to make many of the items needed in a household. They could not simply go to the store and purchase something made in a factory. In the last hundred years, we have become increasingly more dependent on “conveniences,” and now even the art of cooking is being pushed aside. Frozen, prepared meals are becoming so popular and available that it is easy to avoid preparing a meal from scratch.



Whittling wooden spoons and making jigsaw puzzles are some of the projects of this woodworking class.

It is very possible to go through life purchasing everything and making nothing. But it would be a great loss to do so. If we no longer need to work with our hands for material reasons, we still need to for spiritual reasons. Working with one’s hands and creating beauti-

ful and useful things from raw materials provides many opportunities to enrich the soul and strengthen its powers. The very activity of creating can inspire the soul, giving it wings as it discovers new ways to express and produce a worthy idea, feeling or image. This process of learning new skills can also be challenging and difficult. Dealing with these difficulties, however, has its own reward. Greater patience, perseverance, and attention to detail are gained in the process.



Helena Woolums and Eugenia Killinger design a poster-size, illustrated poem.

Even in terms of intellectual development, learning and practicing skills with the hands is important. A young child's developing mind is strongly influenced by bodily activities. Working with the hands not only helps develop manual coordination but also helps develop communication between the two brain hemispheres. This communication is crucial for higher-level thinking. A child who has experienced, through crafts, that physical material has to be shaped and fitted correctly to form a meaningful product, learns that ideas must be related correctly. In this way, working with his hands gives the child non-verbal experience in reason and logic. In our day and age, when many children



Juliana Woolums and Theodore Killinger card dyed wool to use for Christmas ornaments.

spend so much time in front of an electronic screen, this is all the more crucial.

At St. Michael's, arts and crafts activities hold a very important place in the curriculum. Painting and drawing are often included in Old Testament, history and science classes. Traditional crafts such as knitting, woodworking, origami, mosaics, basket weaving, paper quilling, wool felting and cooking are also taught. The children may refer to their experience with crafts as "fun," but the delight and joy that accompanies these endeavors reveal that something much deeper is happening.

Since many of us have little exposure to the useful crafts, the idea may seem intimidating. Start with a simple project, be it sewing, baking or carving. Let us know if you would like some suggestions. Learning how to do something new is always uplifting and gives new confidence and inspiration. Last year, when shopping for plants for a new garden, one of the girls noticed a wooden trellis, checked the price and exclaimed, "*We* could make that!" So we went to the lumberyard, bought the wood and made our own! +



Camden Ramsay, Alicia Krueger, Danny Foster, Rebekah Tolbert, and Leo Woolums display their origami crosses.



High LIGHTS

Handcraft Classes with Mrs. Hoffman

The children are always happy to see Mrs. Hoffman arrive at school because it means that some lucky students are about to have a handcraft class. Having a rich background of experience in arts and crafts, and an enthusiasm for learning new skills, Mrs. Hoffman comes prepared with projects for all ages. She is the mother of two students, Nicholas and Xenia. We are very thankful to her for her participation this year.



Mrs. Margaret Hoffman with Gabriel McHugh, Juliana Woolums, and Xenia Hoffman.



Corn husk doll made for autumn decoration.



Rebekah Tolbert, Alicia Krueger, and Nicholas Hoffman weave 3-D Christmas stars.

High LIGHTS



To complement our history studies of the Roman and Byzantine Empires, several of the handcraft projects this year involved the art of mosaic. Here displayed are churches formed using colored paper “tiles,” and mosaic flower pots designed with pieces of broken ceramic plates.



Eugenia Killinger, Aneliese Ramsay, Helena Woolums, Mary Williamson, and Rebekah Steineck design pictures of churches from small pieces of colored paper.

High LIGHTS

Our Daily Sixth Hour Service*

Have you ever seen children *run* to a church service? We see this phenomenon rather often. Of course, this could be interpreted as running away from school rather than to church, but I think not. At any rate, when I arrive they are ringing the bells, lighting the lampadas or huddling around the reader's stand, finding the correct *troparia* and *kontakion* for the saints of the day, and waiting for their reading assignments.



When Fr. Michael arrives, we begin the service. After the introductory prayers, the children take turns reading. It is interesting to see how the reading assignments for the service have fallen into a certain pattern. The youngest children are usually assigned to read “Holy God” (which they know by heart anyway), then they progress to “Seeing we have no boldness” or Psalm 53. Reading Psalm 54 was a bit intimidating at first because of its length, but now many of the children ask to read it. The all-time favorite, of course, is Psalm 90. What a wonderful, comforting Psalm for us all! Everyone wants to read it, but we try to keep the competition to a minimum. The *troparia*, *kontakion* and Prayer of the Hours are read by the middle to older students. Those who are not given particular reading assignments help with the “Lord Have Mercy” after the *kontakion*. I finish the service with the final prayer.

It has been our practice to read a portion of the *Prologue (Lives of Saints)* after Sixth Hour. This task is assigned to the oldest students since it often involves the reading of many unfamiliar names of people and places. Many times we read something in the saint's life or the “For Consideration” reading which correlates to what we have been studying in school. When this happens, we cannot help but look at each other, marveling at God's Providence and Wisdom.

Fr. Dcn. James

*The noon-time prayer service.



High LIGHTS

Chinese Language and Cooking Classes with Mrs. Killinger

For two years now, Mrs. Anna Killinger has taught weekly classes, introducing our students to the Chinese language and culture. Originally from Taiwan, Mrs. Killinger speaks both Mandarin and Taiwanese, and is an excellent cook as well! Besides giving language classes to two groups of children, she teaches a Chinese cooking class to the older girls. We all benefit from this when a Chinese lunch is prepared and served once a month.

Mrs. Killinger is the mother of two of our students, Theodore and Eugenia. We are grateful to her for all her efforts, and for sharing with us so many interesting things from her country's culture.



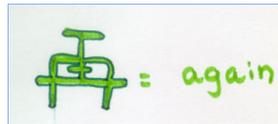
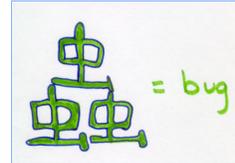
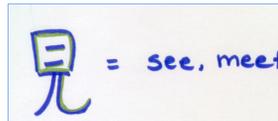
Mrs. Killinger with some of her students.



High LIGHTS



The Chinese cooking class prepares a lunch for the school.



Examples of Chinese writing from a student's notebook.



Writing Chinese characters with the traditional pen and ink.



Student Report

How to Play “Scrambled Eggs”

By Louis Woolums

One of the most popular games we play is called “Scrambled Eggs” (or “Scrambled Tofu” on fast days). The game is played with the class standing in a circle. One of the class starts counting by saying “one.” The person on the left says “two,” the next person says “three,” and so on until everyone in the circle has a number. Then number “one” says, “Scramble,” and everyone quickly changes position in the circle so the numbers are all mixed up.



Once we are all scrambled, we have a practice run. Number “one” picks up several beanbags and throws one of them to “two,” who throws it to “three,” who throws it to “four,” and so on until the beanbag returns to “one.” Once the beanbag makes it all around the circle, number “one” throws again, but this time, after about three seconds, throws a second, then a third beanbag until several beanbags are in motion at once.

Once the game has started, number “one” can say, “Reverse.” Then we throw the beanbag back to the person who threw it to us. The beanbags start going in reverse order.

Student Report



How to Play “Ricochet Ball”

By Alicia Krueger and Rebekah Tolbert

Sometimes during our morning opening we play a game called “Ricochet Ball.” In this game those playing are divided into two equal lines. The person at the beginning of one line bounces a ball to the person at the beginning of the second line. This person bounces the ball to the second person of the first line, who bounces it to the second person of the second line. The ball is bounced in this fashion until it reaches the end of the second line. This person then bounces it back to the person at the beginning of the first line.

The person at the beginning of the first line restarts the process. More balls are added once you get started. If the leader calls out “Reverse!” the ball is bounced in reverse order.





As school year 2001-2002 comes to a close, we offer thanks to God for His mercy and loving-kindness. We also wish to make a special mention of appreciation to His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph for his love, prayers and encouragement this past year, and to our dedicated pastor, Fr. Michael Oyer, the Holy Dormition Church community, and all our parents and supporters. May God bless each one and reward you with his peace and joy. +

Fr. Dcn. James Hughes

Mrs. Katherine Hughes

Mrs. Christine Steineck

ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL is a ministry of the Holy Dormition Orthodox Church, Santa Rosa, CA, under the Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church, and His Very Most Reverend Metropolitan Joseph of the Diocese of U.S.A., Canada, and Australia. Fr. Dcn. James Hughes, Headmaster, Tel. (707) 545-0861, e-mail: jkhughes@infostations.com.