

Scouts enlightened at annual retreat

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

More than 40 Catholic Boy and Girl Scouts recently retreated to Camp Babcock-Hovey in Ovid, looking forward to a weekend of fun and enlightenment. Camp Babcock-Hovey is the summer camp of the Finger Lakes Council of the Boy Scouts of America, and Sept. 24-26 it served as the site of the Diocese of Rochester's annual Catholic Scouting Retreat.

"Christ's Mysteries of Light" was the theme of this year's retreat, and participating Scouts learned about the five luminous mysteries, which were proposed by Pope John Paul II in October 2002. These mysteries include Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, the wedding feast at Cana, his proclamation of the kingdom of God, his Transfiguration and his institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

Five stations — one for each of the mysteries — were set up around the camp on Sept. 25. Groups of campers rotated through these stations throughout the day, praying a decade of the rosary and participating in an activity related to a specific mystery. At the station devoted to Jesus' baptism, for example, Scouts made candles and soap to symbolize purity, cleansing and light. At the station for the institution of the Eucharist, Scouts crushed grapes in a press and made bread to be used during Mass that evening.

Lisa Tartaglia, 12, belongs to Girl Scout Troop 392 in Webster. She said she especially enjoyed the station focusing on Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God. There, Scouts read and interpreted biblical passages and put together related skits for that evening's campfire, said Rosemary Varga, the retreat's chairperson.

After observing a group of Scouts discussing Scripture at that station, Varga said she was encouraged.

"I think the most exciting thing that I see here is that the kids are



Eric Sucar/Catholic Courier

Michael Tripp (from left), Brian Lee, Lotzy Heckler, Jacob Connelly, Mark Fry and Dan Smith pick up their friend Kyle Strowe after a game of "Duck, Duck, Goose" Sept. 25 during the diocesan Catholic Scouting Retreat.

comfortable talking about Jesus out loud and saying their prayers out loud," Varga said. "Our schools have just so restricted everyone's ability to talk about religion except in the (sense of) learning about religion."

Before each meal, all the Scouts and adult staff and volunteers prayed a decade of the rosary, completing the rosary by the end of the retreat. Throughout the weekend, the Scouts put together their own rosaries, receiving enough beads for one decade at the completion of each station. In this way, the retreat's religious theme was woven into the Scout camp experience, Varga said.

"It connects their Scouting experiences with their religious experiences," Varga said.

Mark Fry, 11, belongs to Troop 62 from East Irondequoit. This year marked his third time coming to the annual retreat, he said.

"I came back because it's fun and you study, and (because of) the games and all the different activities

you do," Mark said.

Lisa and four of her fellow Scouts from Troop 392 had also attended past retreats. Eleven-year-old Brianna Sulenski and 12-year-olds Lauren Wynne, Katie Olbrich and Marisa Vargas have accompanied Lisa to the Catholic Scouting Retreat

Youth

for four years in a row. Although one year it was so cold that they slept in hats and mittens, they look forward to the retreat every year, they said.

"This time of year is kind of stressful," Katie said, noting that the start of the school also means the start of extracurricular activities. The retreat provides a much-needed break from the fast pace of everyday life, she said.

The retreat was a family activity for Sharon Ternullo-Middleton, who staffed the baptism station with her husband, Corey Middleton. Their daughter, Gina, earned volunteer hours towards the Girl Scout Silver Award while helping Scouts make soap and candles at the station, and their son, Christopher, participated in the camp with other Boy Scouts from his troop.

"This is fun. I think we're enjoying this as a family activity and a Scouting activity. It's a good weekend with good friends and it's spiritually rewarding," said Ternullo-Middleton, whose family belongs to the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward in Rochester.

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