

Summer Day Camp Report



From July 1 to July 7, 2009 the summer day camp was run in Simferopol Jewish Progressive Community, Synagogue 'Ner Tamid'. There were 14 children altogether from 9 to 16 years old involved in the camp. The camp was run by the professional madrichim (youth leaders) especially invited from Kiev, the rabbi of 'Ner Tamid' Misha Kapustin and the Executive Director of 'Ner Tamid' Anatoly Gendin.

The camp was run according to the program prepared in advance by the youth leaders and the rabbi, which included different activities, such as daily morning prayers Shacharit, Kabbalat Shabbat, Shabbat Shacharit, lessons on Jewish values, learning Jewish songs, games, sport activities, excursions, and swimming in the sea. Each day of the camp usually started at 9 or 10 AM and was finished by 6 or 7 pm; by the end of each day the children were taken home by their parents or went home on their own.

Each day started with Shacharit, so the participants got familiar with some Jewish prayers, although some children had never been participating in Jewish prayer earlier at all. Then we had breakfast and the program continued. We also had proper lunch every day in a cafeteria in downtown.

The topic of the camp was 'Jewish Heroes'. The idea was to tell the participants about the significance of being Jewish thanks to examples of famous Jewish characters. So the kids learnt about different biblical, post biblical and modern personalities, and their impact in Judaism and Israel in particular and the entire world as a whole. Besides, the children learnt about main features of the ideology of Jewish Progressive movement 'Netzer Olami'.



One of the days of the program we spent out of Simferopol, as we went to Yevpatoria to see their beautiful synagogue, to have an excursion, and to go swimming. Everyone was very excited by the beauty of the synagogue. We were greeted by Stas Perevozchikov, who is their local spiritual leader and community worker. He showed the campers and the madrichim the building of the synagogue and explained the meanings of different religious items

in it, many of which (including Aron Kodesh and the Bimah) were crafted by the congregants. We had a short but very meaningful service in the Sanctuary and then we had an hour excursion in town. After lunch we went down to the seaside and spent the rest of the day swimming in the sea. The day went quicker than everybody wanted to and we got back to Simferopol by the evening tired and happy.

Another important feature of the camp was Kabbalat Shabbat. Every single camper prepared his or her particular passage of the service and had a chance to read it from the Bimah for the congregation. It was very moving to see for many people as a 9 year old kid was reading Shema Israel in Hebrew.

According to the final feedback, the children were happy and wanted very much to participate in our summer camp again next year. Some of them will come to the Ukrainian Netzer summer camp in Kiev coming August and participate in Sunday school which will restart working this autumn.

It seemed to be a great experience for all of us thanks to professionalism and an ability of working as a team of the organizers of this camp. I would like to express my gratitude to the youth leaders Denis Burmistrov, Helena Priseman and to the Executive Director Anatoly Gendin for working so hard and so good!!!

This camp is run thanks to kind donations from our sister congregations from the US and UK, membership fees of our congregants, parents, participants of recent Crimean seminar for students and after graduates which took part in Simferopol in the end of May, and individual donors who wished to sponsor our camp. Thank you very much we really appreciate your help!!!

Rabbi Misha Kapustin

The photos:



The kids gathered in the sanctuary of Simferopol Progressive Synagogue 'Ner Tamid'



Playing the games



Having fun



Shabbat Shacharit