

Youth Camps at Lac-Étchemin

GIRLS' CAMP

For several years now, the Daughters of Mary have been organizing summer camps for our young girls. This year, the camp for the 12-13 year-old girls was held from July 22-29 while the camp for the 14-15-16 year-olds took place from August 5 to 12. The purpose of these camps, under the direction of Father Hervé Lemay, is of a spiritual nature, first of all. With the coming into existence of the Church of John, the theme was the same as the one for the boys' camp: "*I believe*".

The camp begins Sunday evening with the welcome. After a short meeting with the parents, a visit of the premises, etc., an activity is organized to break the ice and so that, very quickly, the girls get to know one another. The usual information is passed on, there is a lunch and then each camper accompanied by their team leader retires to their place of lodging.

The day begins with a time of prayer and Holy Mass, followed by breakfast. The teams take turns doing the dishes. This is followed by the morning activities: workshop for the learning of languages, including sign language for deaf-mutes, followed by a period of relaxation with outdoor activities, competitive games, a treasure hunt on the theme of *Life of Love*, etc. This is followed by a choir practice. Besides beautiful selections from a classical repertoire, songs from *La Bonne Chanson* and compositions by Father Bruno Ruel are also practised. This year, the young girls were also introduced to poetry with the addition, in their final program, of a poem by Louis Fréchette, our national poet, so little known, alas!

The summer camps teach the young girls those Christian values our mothers and grandmothers handed down to us. "*As the woman goes, so goes the man.*" The young girl must become aware of the greatness of her role, of the privilege of being a woman, of the sublimeness of motherhood both on the physical and spiritual levels.

For a few years now, a "fashion show of elegance" has been organized. The young girls participate in it willingly and they learn the basic elements of good bearing and modesty. Some of them have even sewn their own outfits for the occasion. Along this same line of thought, a documentary was made telling the story of an American "beauty queen" who, having been converted, now gives conferences on marriage, modesty, etc. Theatre can also be a school of formation. This year, the younger group presented a theme play entitled: "A meeting of the nations at the UN". The preparation of these activities takes place in the early part of the afternoon. This is followed by swimming, weather permitting, or another sport activity before supper.

Other activities are scheduled for the evening. Besides the camp fires, the conferences by Father Rémi Tremblay and Marc Bosquart aroused much interest and raised many questions. If the weather is favorable, the rosary is recited outdoors in procession. In bad weather, it is said inside in several languages: French, English, Spanish, Italian, German.

OUTDOOR MASS

During the camp for the older girls, the group was received by the Sons of Mary at Marienthal for an outdoor Mass and a candlelight procession. Upon their return, there was adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and confession. An evening that was greatly appreciated.

In order to facilitate exchanges among the girls, ordinarily, as early as Tuesday, there is the famous excursion day with a picnic. For the younger group, it was the Seven Falls Parc at Saint-Georges, the visit of a church, walking along the paths bordering the seven falls of the Famine River and a picnic by the river. They had much fun on the rocks in the current and, on the way home, there was a stop at the ice cream stand. For the older group, they climbed Pilgrim Mount at Saint-Léon-de-Standon, had lunch at the foot of the mount and then visited the Garden of Lights. An enchanted memory of these strolls amid the beautiful nature created by God remains. The soul rises "above the clouds" and dreams of other worlds to be explored...

In closing, we would like to mention the dedication of our cooks and team leaders who generously gave up their holiday time for this good cause. A very sincere thank-you to Father Hervé Lemay who so capably guides our young people.

A tremendous thanks to our Mother, Mother Paul-Marie, who encourages us in so many ways; thank you to the Sons and Daughters of Mary and to all the volunteers who form a wonderful team, making these youth camps possible.

Sister Marie-Gabrielle Carbonneau

BOYS' CAMPS

Last summer was the tenth edition of the summer camps for young boys at the Residence of the Sons of Mary of Marienthal at Lac-Étchemin.

Under the theme "*I believe*", twenty-two young boys between the ages of 11 and 14 met at Marienthal for the week of July 22 to 29.

The camp organizers proposed a well-balanced program of activities for these young people, which began with an early-morning Mass. Then, after the morning meal, the workshops began: the building of kites, electronics, leatherworks, repairing bicycles and plaster bas-reliefs fully occupied the forenoons of our energetic boys.

Sports were also given an important place and a soccer tournament was organized, an imitation of the famous "Mundial" which went on all week and ended the following Saturday with a hotly-disputed final match and the giving out of medals made by the young boys in the plaster bas-relief workshop. In the afternoon, the boys worked at different jobs, making their humble contribution to the improvement of the installations belonging to the Army of Mary and it works in Lac-Étchemin.

Thus, whether it be for the pruning of trees, rock picking, or improvements to the installations for the camps, each one pitched in to make the different sites always more beautiful.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that these camps have a very special spiritual characteristic. Thus, the most important time of the camp is centered on the night of adoration which constitutes one of the major steps in the preparation for the important ceremonial of the dubbing of the Young Knights of the Lady.

Thus, on Wednesday evening, thirteen of the twenty-two young boys were seriously preparing themselves for this great ceremonial. It all began with a candlelight procession of the Blessed Sacrament, bringing together the campers and the members of the Community of the Sons of Mary. This procession headed for the open-air chapel where the night of adoration began with the recitation of the rosary and confessions. Every young boy, accompanied by a Son of Mary or a camp counsellor, assumed, each in turn, his time of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament throughout the night. Early Thursday morning, there was the deposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by an outdoor Mass and the sending off on a mission. In fact, the twenty-two young boys, accompanied by the camp counsellors, went to the "Massif du sud", a splendid mountain in the region, for a twelve-kilometer expedition strewn with difficulties in order to test the worth of our future Knights.

The next day, after a well-deserved night of rest, it was time for the high point of this activity, the very moving dubbing ceremonial of thirteen young Knights, presided over by Father Stéphane Boisvert.

That is how this wonderful week went which normally ends in the evening with a "bivouac" (a time of song and relaxation about a camp fire).

Finally, it was at Spiri-Maria, for the Sunday morning Mass that this week filled with intense activities, challenges, emotions, but especially with an unsuspected spiritual joy, was brought to a close.

We cannot end this brief presentation without underlining a few elements of this tenth edition. First of all, we must mention the exceptional work of our mother cooks who were able to fill the stomachs of our young campers and the members of the Community.

Then, there was the extraordinary atmosphere in which the young campers and the members of the Community had an opportunity for fraternal exchanges at meal times, at evening prayer, about the camp fires and in the course of the different activities for which the Sons of Mary spontaneously joined the youth. They were certainly exclusive moments for these young people to open their souls to God's calling.

Thank you to the Community of the Sons of Mary for their exceptional welcome over the years; thank you to the Community of the Lady for having allowed us to live such wonderful experiences; finally, thank you to our dear Mother, Mother Paul-Marie, who accompanies us with her prayers, her tenderness and her kind words.

Alain Têtu and Yvan Laprise
The team of camp organizers