

---

SERBIAN ORTHODOX METROPOLITANATE OF NEW  
GRACANICA MIDWESTERN AMERICA SOC YOUTH  
MINISTRY

---

October 17, 2024

**Who is my neighbor? (Dad and Me/ Mom and Me/My church and me)**

Our family should always be a place filled with love and mutual respect, a "small church" where each member strives to live according to Christ's commandments. The teachings of the Orthodox Church make it clear that children who do not honor, love, and respect their parents cannot fully serve God, for He is the "Father of all" (Eph 4:6). This principle also applies to parents, as they serve as the primary examples in a child's spiritual upbringing in the Orthodox faith.

In recognition of these essential Orthodox family values, which are vital for both youth and parents, the Youth Department strongly encourages families throughout the diocese to dedicate one day each month to a family-focused project. These activities will foster love and unity within church communities, helping to strengthen the bonds among family members and deepen their relationships with one another.

Spending quality time together as a family not only builds trust but also creates a fertile ground for reconnecting and growing spiritually.

Each family activity organized by the parish, which involves joint participation of a Youth Group and their parents, should begin with an Akathist hymn dedicated to a saint or holy event, led by the parish priest. Following this prayerful beginning, fun and engaging activities can follow to further enhance the spirit of togetherness.

Some family-friendly projects that church-school congregations can consider include:

First and foremost: Attending Divine Liturgy and Church services together

**Pilgrimages**

**Family Karaoke**

**Family Olympics**

**Ice Cream Socials**

**Movie Nights**

**Family Talent Shows**

**Make Festal Slava Bread and Zito**

**Night of Cultural and Gastronomy heritage**

**Bonfire**

And any other activity organized by a parish (Youth) members, with the blessing of their parish priest and the strong support of the church-school congregation.

These activities not only provide opportunities for fun and fellowship but also strengthen the spiritual bonds among families, creating a vibrant and loving church community.

In Christ's Service,

Pdn. Jovan Anicic, *Director*

Youth Ministry

Serbian Orthodox Metropolitanate

The New Gracanica Midwestern America