

Holy Bread (Prosforo) and Sunday School - A Snack Time Idea

By Angelica Sotiriou-Rausch

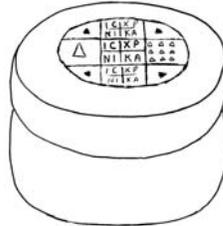
St Katherine Greek Orthodox Church, Redondo Beach, CA

Then Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst..."John 6:35

You may wonder what do Holy Bread (Prosforo) and Sunday School have in common with each other? If you ask our School students, they will readily be able to share with you how Prosforo is made, what the seal means, the meaning of Holy Bread, the meaning of Communion and how to reverently receive the Holy Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ. They will tell you that Holy Bread is an integral part of their weekly Sunday School curriculum.

It was two years ago, during our first of the year staff meeting, that we discussed the issues that had arisen around serving our Sunday School students an **appropriate snack**. Too much sugar, peanut allergies, wheat allergies, food additives and dyes, sugary drinks, not enough snack, too much time taken from class time to serve snack... whew! As a thoughtful and concerned group of teachers we talked and decided that **our most important responsibility to our students is to share the word of God**, spending our forty minutes of teaching time engaging **and educating our students about our Greek Orthodox Christian faith**.

Sunday Solutions were tossed around and then Adelina Damean-Stubberud suggested that we offer Holy Bread as a snack! It was unanimously approved to accept this wonderful solution. Carolyn Crossley offered to teach the School staff how to make Holy Bread as she was taught in seminary. **We scheduled two Saturdays to make 40 loaves at each gathering**. Family, friends, students and teachers met in fellowship and made enough loaves to feed all of the students all year! The bread became a labor of love that was blessed during Divine Liturgy and Father Michael read the names of our teachers and their families to remember in prayer in the offering. It was as if the Lord knew all along what we needed to do.



This year we could not find a Saturday that fit all of our schedules. Once again, the Lord planted the solution in our hearts. A list went out to the teaching staff to sign up for a Sunday to bake the three loaves of Holy Bread for our students. The list slowly filled with teachers names offering to bake the Prosforo (means "offering") for their students. Some teachers baked the Holy Bread for the very first time... recipes and seals were shared with one another. Most importantly, each one of us grew closer to Christ as we prayerfully made our three loaves of Prosforo. This ancient tradition passed down from the first century connected all of us—student, teacher and Christ in a way that was an unexpected blessing. **At the end of classes, our students leave full, nourished with the word of God and sustained by the Prosforo, the body of Christ.**

[Editor's note: Keep in mind that the Prosforo has not been consecrated and thus, not the Eucharist, "The Body of Christ." This is still a good metaphor since Jesus is the 'Bread of Life'.]

This year our Sunday School student roster has significantly grown and participation in our Christmas program, our Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon procession and our Palm Sunday procession have exceeded previous year's attendance. **Could it be the yeast in our Holy Bread?** Each and every Sunday our classrooms are well attended and our students and teachers can be heard singing praises, sharing the word of God, embracing a richer understanding of Christ's heart and inviting Him into their lives. We are blessed to have a loving, dedicated, educated, servant-hearted teaching staff whose Orthodox Christian lives are models for their students.

Note: Bolding of key phrases in each paragraph was added by *PMO*.