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OPEN COPTIC DAY PLANNING

“The LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, “Blessed *is* Egypt My people.” (Isaiah 19:25)

How God lead this idea to us:

Bishop Paul (Bolos), who came to visit us from Africa, gave us the idea when we went to visit China Town with him. Few among us had the same idea, so it was from God.

Introduction

The Evangelism Group of Virgin Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, St-Hubert, Québec, held a meeting on Sunday Jan. 11, 2009 to discuss the need to preach and present our Church to the community. The discussion is for conducting an Open House / Exhibition Coptic Day/Festival which will be celebrating the Feast of the Entry of the Holy Family to Egypt. We are submitting this simple proposal to the church Board of Deacons for approval.

Objective

As a Church, our project objective is to introduce the Coptic Orthodox Church to our neighbours who do not know the Ancient and traditional Church of the Christians in Egypt. The Church will show how it was founded in the 1st century by the great apostle Saint Mark and how it is full of heavenly treasures that they would have never imagined in their life here.

Steps, Ideas and Activities

This is a project for the whole church. Please note that the followings are the result of a brainstorming activity that was held to capture all of the discussed ideas throughout the meeting. However, it does not necessarily mean that every idea will be done and we are open for feasible ideas. Once the project will be signed, we will announce the event to get more members from the youth and the entire congregation to participate in this great project. Here are the steps:

- Ask youth to prepare researches on topics related to the event. Gather last summer tournament researches done by our youth and other churches. Make a contest to encourage participation. This will help our children to be proud of their origin.
- Prepare a contest for the LOGO of the event which will unite us and carry the meaning of the Open House to every eye.

- Prepare biography about Saints whose relics we have and clearly post their nametags.
- Find creative people with artistic talents to decorate and paint the posters to introduce the Church great treasures to the Canadians.
- Prepare and scan pictures of Monasteries to show how the monks and nuns leave everything in the world and live actively with Christ in the deserts of Egypt.
- Create stations of the path and places the Holy Family visited to educate people on the importance of the land of Egypt which was mentioned in the Bible.
- Get several laptops to play slide shows or PPT presentations at each station to grab more attention of the visitors as some people are more into visual aids.
- Make a large wooden model for the Holy Family to be put outside of the church to attract as many visitors as we can.
- Ask St. Joseph Oratory about any material relating to the visit (DVD or info.)
- Contact St. Mark and St. George churches for support which will unite us.
- Make gifts for guests: Buttons which will be simple, creative and affordable gifts.
- Prepare background music (Coptic Hymns praises) to be played during the event to make the surrounding ambiance full of cultural harmony.
- Ask the Bible Society to provide the Sculptures Collection.
- Make a big map of Egypt showing the visit tour and show all sites, with photos and description of all stations as many people are looking forward to visit Egypt.
- Set tables at corners in the cafeteria showing different characteristics of our church with posters and visual aids such as: St. Mark, Apostolic Teachings, our Faith, Coptic Traditions, Monasticism, Martyrdom, Ecumenical Councils, Coptic Calendar, Coptic Language, Coptic music and hymns, Coptic art, Divine Liturgies, Books (Agpeya, Synaxarum, Kholgy, Katamares) Fasting, Feasts, Church Rites, Iconography, Sunday School Service and Youth Meetings Structure, etc. These all we have and enjoy. Now is the time to get the outsiders to share and enjoy with us.

- Play Movies or PPT presentations for 15 minutes every hour in the new and old chapel. Signs will have to be on the walls to show directions.
- Cover the Pharaonic history of Egypt with posters and booklets which mysteriously fascinate people and get them to think about the greatness of Egypt.
- Plan for a church guided tour every 2 hours which will introduce Christ's house to people.
- Make T-Shirts with the event logo and sell them to remind people about us and bring them back to Church. (sell at cost price)
- Get tourist materials (Videos, DVDs, and Pamphlets) from the Egyptian Consulate or from relatives in Egypt.
- Make a draw for a big gift and small gifts as we receive from donors.
- Prepare door prizes through the event to encourage people to come back the following day.
- Use the Sunday school classes/Chapel to show each of the event projects / subjects / activity.
- Use the Gym for the big map and stations of the tour.
- Use plastic or cloth for big signs (Call Georges Legault to find supplier)
- Contact the church in Maady, Egypt to get DVD about the visit.
- Contact St. George's Church Day Care to prepare some crafts suitable for the event.
- Ask Saturday children club (Nady of Saturday) to present Christian's drafts materials to the visitors.
- Get the youth Friday meeting to prepare some activities for the Canadian youth who will be visiting the Church. They can bring their friends from school, college and universities.
- Huge effort is required for translation to get people to read our treasures and stories of saints.
- Prepare Christian pamphlets and brochures (Youth will prepare: Coptic and non-Coptic).
- Get any material related to the event from the church bookstore if possible.

- Fr. Saraphim has a DVD of the Holy Family visit in multiple languages.
- Provide 2 teams for security and church maintenance during the event.

Publicity: Have someone in charge of publicity: Press Release, News paper, TV, Radio, Church Web site, Invitation cards or letters, flyers, e-mail list, mass phone message.

Services: We may offer babysitting service for guest's children.

- Offer Egyptian food for a light lunch (Good hospitality)
- Coat check service according to the weather.

Resource Persons:

- Travel Agent contacts:
- Décor specialist – members of the Church
- Egyptian Embassy: (Cultural Delegate)
- Ask friends and relatives in Egypt to bring some DVDs or other material
- Kitchen
- And more

Budget

Expected Income

Admission fees (\$5 X 120)	\$	600	
Photos of guests with costumes (20 X\$5)		100	
A draw for a big gift		200	
Meals Takeout (100 X \$8)		800	
Bible Sale (50 X \$2)		100	
Pharaonic items (souvenirs and ideas) for sale		1000	
Submit letters to sponsors for the event			
(Business /Printing or Multimedia Company)		500	
Car washes		200	
Donation from evangelism committee (10 X \$50)			<u>500</u>
Total expected income			<u>\$ 4,000</u>

Rough Estimate of Expenses

Big Map (size 3 X6 feet)	\$	400	
Posters (Qty 10 X \$50) size (18 X 24)			500
Colour Photocopies		250	
Wooden model of the Holy Family		200	
Publicity		400	
Mail invitation letters		200	
Out door Signs		300	
Miscellaneous		200	
Gifts for guests		300	
Hospitality (Lunch and Refreshments)		250	
Material from Egypt (DVDs and posters)		200	
Printing a booklet (200 X \$3)		600	
Pharaonic items to be sold		500	
Colour printing for brochures			<u>150</u>
	\$	4,450	
Contingency 10 %			<u>0,445</u>
Total Estimate of Expenses			<u>\$ 4,895</u>

The project could be self-funded as it is seen. The expected income will cover the expenses!!!

Coptic Day preparation

Starting has to be 2 days ahead to make a plan of the Hall and how to organize the units all over the Church. Also, plan for the volunteers who will help to install the units. Encouragement is needed to all who participate in order to keep a cheerful spirit through this amazing service.

Opening Day steps

Wait for the visitors to arrive. Some of these visitors could be the Minister of Immigration and Centralism, the mayor, the city Hall representatives, the other churches priests, the deacons, the Sunday school servants, the board of committee of the Church, the Church congregation and the public.

Make sure you give volunteers breaks to have their supper, give them water or coffee.

After-all procedures

Make sure every item in the exhibition goes back to its owner with appreciation and respect.

GOD BLESS ☺

OPEN COPTIC DAY DESCRIPTION

Oh my God, I don't know where to start. This Saturday and Sunday on May 30th and 31st 2009, we had an open Church in Saint-Mary Coptic Church of Montreal. You should have seen it to imagine how wonderful it was. As soon you step in, you hear the harmony of the Coptic Tasbeha which makes you relax and forget the world.

In the center of the entrance of the church, you find the statues of the Holy Family visit to Egypt, the pyramids and palms which were very presentable to take pictures with.

Inside the big elegant newly renovated hall with Crystals Chandeliers, you find on the right hand side a 20 meter wall of pictures and tables full of documents, Bibles, flyers and pamphlets. We had 4 flat screens of continual PPT, the non-stop movies of places and visits in monasteries, the 20 meters of walls full of colorful pictures of the places visited by the Holy family in Egypt with colored papers explaining every step.

On the other side of the wall (20 meters too) there were, flyers, PPT done by youth, printed researches done by the youth, articles written by the youth and hard work of well-done presentations about the Coptic church with all its details like the Dogma, the Holy Synod, the Roman persecution, the Iconography, Symbolism in the Architecture of the Coptic Church, The Miracle of moving the

Mokatam Mountain, the seven sacraments, the Coptic language, Coptic art, Coptic manuscripts, Coptic feasts and fasts and the Spread of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the land of immigration all over the world (Canada, USA, South America, Europe, Australia and Africa). Then, you find the frames with historical tissues from Egypt with designs and notes to explain them. Then you find a huge chart full of pictures of the Holy Synod (24 Bishops) with big size of (8 1/2 X 11 each) and the historical names and years of all of the Popes from St-Marc the 1st Pope to Pope Shenouda II the 117th.

There was a Coptic artist who draws faces of kids while their parents are admiring and enjoying the exhibition.

The Canadian Bible Society came with 2 reps and brought along ancient metal crafted pictures valued at \$4,000,000 which shows the trip of the Holy family in Egypt. These were in the center of the hall along with ancient Bibles of the world which came from Germany. The Bible society made such a wonderful presentation on how the Pharos wrote in their manuscripts about the judgment day and relates them to the Torah and the Bible.

On the horizontal wall, we had artistic pictures of the Coptic art in the Old Egypt where were pictures taken by real artists who lend them to us for the exhibition. On this side too, we had a TV with movies presenting how blind priests, blind deacons and blind congregation perform the mass...there were other amazing movies too.

In the chapel, we had movies running all day long.

In the Church, we had the 23 relics of the saints on tables around the benches of the church. Each relic had her/his picture, story and its copies that you take home.

In the Gym, we had the Coptic and Pharaonic souvenirs including Pharaonic clothes which the kids of the church put them on the took pictures with the public like Cleopatra, Nephertity, Remises, etc (Including the accessories, the crowns, the Nile cross and Necklaces, etc.)

In the corridor, you find the Egyptian cuisine which all types of meals and deserts.

The even started with the visit of the Minister of Immigration of Canada, Mr. Jason Kenny who came himself with his representatives from Ottawa to give us the certificates of appreciation and congratulate us along with Mr. Steven Harper. We had many other political figures like the mayor. Fr. Tadros gave them all pictures of the Holy Family in Egypt.

Many Canadians came twice on Saturday and Sunday to enjoy the exhibition.

I wish you can see it online to enjoy it as much as we did.

