

The Tree of Life "Caring Tree"

All Levels — Make an outline of a tree on a large wall, with a trunk and empty branches. You can use sturdy brown butcher paper or packing wrap (a large roll is best). Have students from several middle-junior high classes cut out leaves to be taped on the branches (it is easier if you make several "patterns" of leaves, approx. 5-6" tall by 3-4" wide. These should be cut out of a sturdy card stock, with enough for one pattern per student.)

Distribute a pattern to each student, together with several 12" x 18" sheets of green, yellow, orange and/or red construction paper. Have them trace the outlines of the leaves on the paper and cut them out.

Collect in advance names of parish members and those from other Orthodox parishes, as well as neighbors and friends who are ill, and names of people in nursing homes located in different areas of the city where parishioners live. Be sure to get addresses and phone numbers of their homes, group home, nursing home or hospital where they are located. (Check with nursing homes and children's hospitals in advance to check their policies on visitors. You can also check to see if they have a person who can give a **"briefing" or "orientation"** to groups that are interested in making visitations.)

Collect also names of persons or organizations that need clothing, shoes, toys, etc. for children, teens or adults. Check also with community organizations or state or county offices about community projects or clean-up workgroups in which parish members can participate (check if there is a minimum age for children or teen participation).

Write on each leaf, the name of the person, group home or institution that needs a visitor, phone call, greeting card, clothing, shoes, boots, etc. (especially for winter). Tape them to the tree with a small piece of tape. Let each parish member or family "adopt" a person or group by taking a leaf off the tree and pledging to fulfill their commitment on a regular basis.

(See also the OCA **Resource Handbook** for related articles on how to carry out related projects of this nature.)