

Report of the Girls' Friendly Society to the 228th Annual Diocesan Convention
Juniors 2010/2011

The 2010/2011 season for the GFS Juniors was a fantastic one. Every other Friday evening from September to June, the GFS girls gather in Craft Hall for an evening of sharing, crafts, and companionship. Our meetings begin with a prayer and a chance for the girls to share special acknowledgements, activities and tidbits going on in their lives. Most meetings focus on a craft or activity.

The activities vary, it may be learning a new craft such as crocheting granny squares in the hope of creating lap blankets for veterans or nursing homes, while others are dedicated to fundraising, community service, or helping those in need. In October, GFS joined with the Church School for a Fall Family Fun Night. Pumpkin painting, donut eating contest, and of course, sweet treats were on the agenda for the night. At Christmas we participated in "Adopt-a-Family" through the Hamilton Township Health Department. We were given a wish list and our girls and their families came together to provide a needy family a very Merry Christmas. Of course, the Epiphany celebration is one of the hallmarks of GFS. As we celebrate the arrival of the 3 Kings, everyone is careful to look for "penalties baked in the famous cake. No matter the penalty, the whole congregation thoroughly enjoys the festivities. Many of the girls joined the church School to produce "Bags of Love" for distribution at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. In addition, our girls collected, filled and wrap over 60 shoe boxes filled with personal hygiene products to be distributed to needy families through the Hamilton Township Health Department. What an assembly line that was!

Many of you loved the bracelets, earrings, candy and centerpieces that the girls created and sold. As a result of our fundraising, we were able to send the GFS world project \$500.00!

Two of our biggest events are the fall and spring roast beef dinners. The girls create the centerpieces and set the table for both the fall and spring dinners then come back the day of the dinner to help by waitressing, working in the kitchen, distributing desserts (yum) or manning our craft table or church school bake sale table. In addition to our regular meetings, the girls participate in a variety of "just for fun" activities throughout the year. These include ice skating at Mercer County Park in the winter and miniature golf or bowling in the spring. To lick off the Christmas season the girls gather at the Quaker Bridge mall for a picture with Santa, followed by an evening of Christmas shopping for their Pollyanna gifts and Adopt-a-Family members. Aunt Jill then opens her home for our annual Christmas party where the girls exchange gifts and sing carols for the neighbors and share in the joy of season. Truly an evening filled with fun, chatter, giggling and festivities. Our year culminates with the year-end picnic. Whether it's a three-legged race, water balloons or hula-hoops it doesn't matter who wins or loses, it's all about enjoying the company.

Don't think that's it for the summer – the girls have the opportunity to attend Holiday House in Cape May for a week – usually the hottest week of the summer! The entire Diocese of New Jersey participates and this year the entire house was filled! The days are long, filled with lessons, fun, service projects, fun, swimming, fun, making friends, and more fun.

This past year our girls ranged in age from 5 to 21 and our attendance grew to almost 25 girls! Whether the girls are learning to crochet, decorating cupcakes, or learning the difference between a teaspoon and tablespoon while baking brownies for coffee hour, the friendship and camaraderie these young ladies share is always heartwarming. It is evident that they enjoy being with each other and are learning the meaning of fellowship, the value of helping each other and assisting less fortunate people in their community.

Our calendar of events for 2011-12 include some old as well as new activities. Basic first aid training, mother's day tea for the girls and a special lady in their lives, a sleepover to name just a few. We are a non-denominational group, all are welcomed-want to see what we are all about – stop by, but beware the decibel level will be high- just imagine what happens when you put a room full of girls together- lots of talking, giggling, sharing and fun!

Be sure to keep your eyes peeled for a large bin- the girls are collecting books for the annual book drive for Holiday House –their biggest fundraiser. Paperback, hardcover, any and all, old or new (but please, no encyclopedias or magazines)