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**Christian group aspires to raise Jesus awareness**

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Staff Wri­­ter



Jeffrey Lazaro / Associate Photography Editor

Students dunk a costumed Satan on Jesus Awareness Day at Morrell Street on the College Avenue campus. Hosts of the event, Coptic Orthodox Fellowship, hoped to spread awareness about Christianity.

Fifty Coptic Orthodox Fellowship members hosted a miniature carnival with a Christian angle on Tuesday to celebrate "Jesus Awareness Day."

Members aimed to clear misleading notions about Christianity for about 450 people who attended the seven-hour event in front of the Rutgers Student Center on the College Avenue campus, said Mariam Nematalla, treasurer of the University's Coptic Orthodox Fellowship.

The decision to hold the event, part of "Jesus Awareness Week," was made with the hope of reaching out to the greater University community, said Elizabeth Awad, president of Coptic Orthodox Fellowship.

"The main thing is that we hope to get across to people who have misconceptions and are interested in learning about Jesus," said Awad, a School of Engineering junior.

Nematalla said the organization worked to make "Jesus Awareness Day" enjoyable for everyone.

"Students can just come, have some food, enjoy the games and also end up learning about Christianity," said Nematalla, a School of Arts and Sciences junior.

The carnival was set up with an inflatable jousting station, a dunk tank, an information table, stations with food and drinks.

"Throughout the day, we also had a tent stationed in front of Morrell Street where goodie bags containing candy and introductory pamphlets about Christianity were distributed," Awad said.

She said the information table was an integral aspect of this event as it addressed any questions people asked concerning Christianity.

"For students that wanted to learn more about Christianity, there were free pamphlets and Bibles provided to anyone who wished to take them," she said.

Nematalla said Coptic Orthodox Fellowship members were looking forward to eliminating any doubts toward the religion.

"There are a lot of myths that people believe about Christians and Christianity which are not true," she said. "We hope to clear them."

Awad said for example, there are certain misconceptions regarding the Holy Trinity.

"Surprisingly, a significant number of people believe that the Holy Trinity includes God the Father, Jesus Christ — God the Son — and St. Mary," she said. "Due to this, many people also consider Christians as polytheists. This is a very wrong misconception, and we addressed it in the pamphlet."

Another fairly common misconception is that one person wrote the Bible, Awad said.

"This is also wrong," she said. "It was written by [more than 40] authors over a span of 1,500 years."

At the carnival, there was a display of Christian verses plastered over the walls and behind each station.

"The verses were there to publicly display central themes of Biblical teachings," Awad said. "One such verse, ‘Let all that you do be done in love' [1 Corinthians 16:14] is an example of a central Christian teaching."

The Coptic Orthodox Church is based on the teachings of St. Mark, according to the pamphlet. It is a support group for students where they can reflect on life and share experiences and advice.

The theme of the event was to "find love, find purpose and find truth," according to the pamphlet.

A wide range of students of different ages and backgrounds visited, participated in the event and inquired about the faith, Awad said.

"Christians, Muslims, Jews, agnostics and atheists came and participated," she said.

Eleanor Davies, a School of Arts and Sciences sophomore, said she belonged to the Roman Catholic Church and went to the event.

"It was a good experience to have come out and learned different things about their church and faith," she said.

Banan Abdelrahman, a School of Arts and Sciences sophomore, attended the event to show his support.

"It is nice that all these students can showcase their beliefs and reach out through these kinds of fun interactive events," she said.