

St. Mary's, Kodiak Christian Kids Learn To Tie Flies

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The one they call the Fish Man is back in Kodiak for the Coho Carnival, the culmination of a yearlong educational program put on by St. Mary's Catholic School and Kodiak Christian School. On Tuesday, students learned to tie fly fishing flies that resemble the different life stages of juvenile salmon.

Fritz Krause, or the Fish Man as he's known to his students, loves fish. He loves talking fish, he loves eating fish, and he especially loves teaching people about fish. Krause retired almost two years ago from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, where he spent more than 20 years as an educational biologist, doing salmon egg takes with different school kids at streams and rivers throughout the state.

Krause has come back to Kodiak a couple times this school year, under contract with St. Mary's and Kodiak Christian School. The fly-tying exercise that he did with students Tuesday was a follow-up to a visit he made in the fall when he performed an egg take at the Buskin River. Krause says it's designed to teach the students about the four stages of juvenile salmon development.

Many of the students start out a little unsure of whether or not they'll be able to tie a fly, Krause says. It's a delicate process that involves wrapping thread and fabric around a fishhook. But he says as soon as he teaches them a few simple steps, they're often off and running.

Third grader John Dunlop says the activity taught him a lot about the way juvenile salmon survive in the wild.

At the end of the lesson Dunlop will have four flies that resemble the four stages of salmonid development. He says he already knows what he's going to do with them.

Krause says that's the idea, which is why he's also teaching the students about how to use their flies when they're out at the river with mom and dad.

Krause and his teaching partner, Craig Baer, will have more lessons for the students of St. Mary's and Kodiak Christian School through the end of the week, including water quality testing at Island Lake and Pillar Creek. It all wraps up Friday with the Coho Carnival, which will be held all day on the St. Paul Harbor spit downtown, weather permitting.