Outreach

Besides its primary role as a scientific and technological research body, INAF-OAPa offers institutional side activities such as supporting teaching in schools and organizing popularization events for the public, with the following aims:

- promote the development of astronomical knowledge in schools and in society by opening its research sites to the public, and running teaching laboratories and continuing education courses for teachers and students .
- provide a sky-observing experience, under the guide of qualified technical-scientific personnel, with the most suitable equipment.
- valorise the Observatory historical and scientific heritage by making it accessible to the public .

Sun observations with the sunspotter

Activities for schools

As a preparatory to the visit to the Museo della Specola or to astronomical observations at the observatory, short courses for **Middle School** classes are provided on request. They take place at the schools and aim to introduces students and teachers to astrophysics, optics and astronomical equipment. One of the main goals is to accustom students to a thorough and mindful observations of astronomical phenomena, in particular those involving the Sun and our solar system. A further purpose is the study of light and simple optical systems .

Guided tour to the museum

For students of **Secondary Schools and Technical Colleges**, OAPa provides lectures, seminars and laboratory activities on physics, astrophysics, technologies for space equipment, advanced numerical computation and history of science. The activities are also addressed to school teachers .

A teaching project entitled 'A spasso per l'Universo' (Wandering through the Universe) has been designed for **Primary School** students by IASF-PA (Istituto di Astrofisica Spaziale e Fisica Cosmica di Palermo). Its goal is to stimulate children to observe the sky and ask questions about the phenomena observed. Contents for children of the three upper years include the morphological and physical aspects of the solar system and the Milky Way. A special approach to learning has been devised by OAPA for younger students who, through games and experiments, acquire simple astronomical notions based on their own perception of celestial phenomena.

Evaluation and assessment of the knowledge and skills gained by the students during the course take place at the end of each study module through a display of the work done. This way the students, in groups, “popularize” what they have learned by showing their work to students from other classes of the same school .

Sun observations with the telescope