
THE SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL



MANUAL

Information • Regulations • Guidelines

St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Manual

Revised for the 2017 Festival

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The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival
is a program for teenage youth sponsored by the



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SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL

The Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is pleased to provide you with this Manual for the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Its content has been developed to assist Oratorical Festival Chairpersons and committee members to organize successful festivals at the Parish, District, and Metropolis levels. Since its inception in 1983, several manuals have been published. This edition of the Manual includes additional procedural guidelines that have been refined, clarified and simplified, from the experience of previous festivals.

There are many ways to express one's faith, not just the spoken word. You will notice that this manual suggests ways to expand your Parish and Metropolis festival into the areas of essay and poetry writing. These are optional additions to the Festival program, much as the Elementary Division is to the speech program. The goal is to provide an even greater number of young people to research, reflect, study, and, express their faith through the genres of poetry and essays. The Metropolis of Chicago has included these areas for many years with much success. The Department is very grateful for their willingness to share their program structure.

To make your job easier, please read the entire Manual. Chairpersons especially must become familiar with the overall structure, but especially the rules for judging and scoring. Even if this is the tenth time you have chaired the Festival, look through the Manual to familiarize yourself, once again, with the procedures. This *Manual* provides in detail every aspect of what one needs to know and do to have a successful Oratorical Festival. For additional copies, contact the Department of Religious Education at (800) 566-1088, or download a copy from www.religioused.goarch.org.

Now in its fourth decade, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival has been an integral part of the religious education experience of the Greek Orthodox Church in America.

Annual Topics

The topics for the Festival are developed by the Department of Religious Education and, once approved by the Archbishop, they are released to the Parishes. The Department also creates "Topic Tips" and a bibliography to help teachers and participants. There are two lists of topics, one for the junior division and one for the senior division. *The topics for each division are to be used for all three categories: speeches, poems, and essays.*

Oratorical Planning

Holding a successful Oratorical Festival requires advance planning, so the sooner one begins, the better the results. Each spring when the Parish Oratorical Festival speeches are heard, Orthodox Christians throughout the country are impressed and inspired by what our youth have to say about their faith. For those teenagers who are self-motivated or have encouragement from their parents, writing and delivering a speech appears to be an easy task. Most, however, need encouragement, sometimes a great deal!

On the Department of Religious Education website, you will find tips and strategies for motivating young people to participate. These were developed by a very successful program, that of the Holy Resurrection Church in Brookville, NY, and Mrs. Vivian Casil.

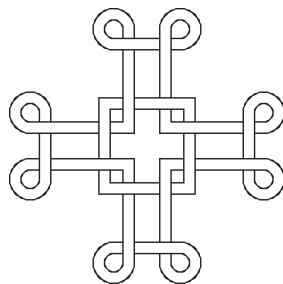
Churches have discovered that planning is essential. The topics may be explored as lessons during the classroom period where the teacher is available to encourage and assist the students in selecting their topics and devoting time to the preparation of a speech, essay, or poem. Special workshops can be held for research, speech rehearsal, and writing assistance. Whatever strategies are employed, successful Festivals are the product of teamwork and community planning. The results are well worth the effort!

Appreciation

Finally, the guidelines and suggestions found in this Manual will help you and your Parish or Metropolis Committee plan and host a successful event. Appreciation is expressed to Presvytera Margaret Orfanakos for her tireless contribution to the publication of this Manual. Special thanks to Ms. Angeliki Constantine of the Department—herself a past Oratorical Festival participant—for her contributions to this Manual. Finally, we remember the three decade legacy of the late Fr. John Orfanakos to the Oratorical Festival.

Congratulations to you for holding a St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Thank you for the ministry you offer to the Church working with our young people in this program, one that has the potential to help them grow in their knowledge of the Orthodox Faith and Way of Life and develop skills that will carry them throughout all avenues of their lives.

Rev. Dr. Anton C. Vrame, Director
Department of Religious Education
The Feast of the Holy Cross 2014



SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, SPIRITUAL FATHER OF THE ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

St. John Chrysostom was born in the ancient city of Antioch in 347 AD to a noble and pious family. He studied to be a lawyer and was an exceptional student. He was led to a religious life where he devoted himself to discipline and spiritual growth.

As a Priest, St. John had the innate quality of winning the hearts of his audience, even though many times he would chastise them. He loved his people and would hold nothing back in order to inspire them, challenge them, and paternally lead them into upright living.

He was also a great advocate of social justice and proclaimed the equality of all people before God. His sermons often spoke of the great disparity between rich and poor, and he placed the blame upon extortioners and the greedy rich. He did not camouflage injustice.

At the age of forty-nine he became Patriarch of Constantinople. He was an outspoken critic

of the imperial court and frequently denounced the Empress Eudokia. After a series of exiles and returns to Constantinople, St. John was again banished in 403 and died two years later.

He earned the title, Chrysostomos, “golden mouth,” because of his dynamic and forthright preaching. The Divine Liturgy most often celebrated in our Churches also bears his name, “The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.”

We observe the feast day of St. John Chrysostom on November 13, and also honor him with St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian on January 30, the feast day of the Three Hierarchs.

As one of our most honored Church Fathers, Patriarchs, and Saints, and also because of his bold eloquence, it is fitting that the Archdiocese Oratorical Festival be named after this most celebrated preacher in the history of the Christian Church.



**Church Father and Patriarch,
Saint John Chrysostom**

THE ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL:

ITS PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE

PURPOSE

The purpose of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival is to give teenagers an opportunity to learn, write, and speak about their Orthodox Faith, Church, and Heritage. This process will enhance their understanding and appreciation of their identity as Greek Orthodox Christians, and cultivates spiritual growth and maturity. The overall Oratorical program is called an Oratorical Festival rather than a contest to minimize the competitive spirit and emphasize a joyful learning experience.

STRUCTURE

The **Parish Festival** is organized by an Oratorical Chairperson who is appointed by the Parish Priest. It is recommended that the Parish Chairperson form an Oratorical Festival Committee so that the responsibilities are shared. A Parish Oratorical Festival usually takes place between **January and March**. Each Parish sends its finalists* to a District Festival.

The **District Festivals** are composed of Parishes in specified areas of a Metropolis. District Festivals typically take place in **April** and send their finalists* to the Metropolis Festival. Each District Chairperson is approved by the Metropolis Hierarchy.

The **Metropolis Festival** takes place in **April** or early **May** and includes the finalists* from each District Festival*. The first place Junior and Senior speakers of each Metropolis advance to the Archdiocese Festival. The Metropolis Chairperson is appointed annually by the Metropolis Hierarchy or is the Youth Director or the Religious Education Coordinator for the Metropolis.

The **Archdiocese Festival** takes place during the first or second weekend in **June** where the first place Junior and Senior speakers from each Metropolis participate. It is coordinated by the Department of Religious Education, the Archdiocese Chairperson of the Oratorical Festival, and the Host Metropolis and Parishes.

*Finalists for Parish and District levels are explained on page 7, #10.

THE ELEMENTARY DIVISION

The purpose of the Elementary Oratorical program is to offer children the opportunity to express their feelings about their Faith and Church, as well as to gain confidence and self-esteem. In addition, it provides an incentive to children for later participation in the Junior and Senior Divisions.

The basic differences between the elementary and the Junior and Senior divisions are:

1. The elementary is strictly a local program.
2. There is no judging.
3. The topics are modest but invite creativity: Jesus, Prayer, Icons, etc.
4. It is designed to fit easily into the Sunday Church School program, with flexible topics that coincide with the curriculum.
5. To make it even more interesting, consider having some classes sign a song or re-enact a Parable or a Bible story. Be creative!

What are the rules?

- Encourage all children to participate. Teachers and parents should assist the children in choosing a topic. Invite the children to present their talks at a community gathering, perhaps after the Divine Liturgy, as part of a parish event, during a special Oratorical program or as part of the Junior and Senior Oratorical Festival.

- Each talk should last 30–90 seconds. However, strict timing should not be observed. For instance, one child may offer only two or three sentences, and another may offer considerably more. Also, if a child feels more comfortable using an icon, picture or poster as part of the talk, this is permissible.

Some suggested topics:

Jesus Christ
Helping Others
A Smile
The Bible
Love
Being Kind
Lighting a Candle

The Cross
My Church
My Family
Prayer
Church School
My Favorite Icon

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARISH ORATORICAL FESTIVAL CHAIRPERSONS

1. THE PARISH ORATORICAL CHAIRPERSON and Committee are asked to read all material carefully and consult with the Parish Priest to determine the date for the Parish Festival. Festival Topics, Tips, and Bibliography are available in September of each year from the Department of Religious Education (page 37). You may contact the Department at (800) 566-1088 or via the website at www.religioused.goarch.org.

The Festival schedule is:

Parish Festivals — January to March
District Festivals — April

Metropolis Festivals— April to 2nd weekend of May
Archdiocese Festival — 1st or 2nd weekend of June

2. PARTICIPANTS: The participants are Greek Orthodox youth in middle school and high school.

Junior Division — Grades 7–9

Senior Division — Grades 10–12

The Priest and Parish Chairperson and committee members should encourage all teenagers to participate in the Festival. Whether you are the Chairperson or a committee member, your enthusiasm for the program cannot be overemphasized. Consider organizing informal get-togethers and writers' workshops for potential speakers. When recruiting speakers seek the assistance of Sunday Church School teachers, youth advisors and previous participants.

3. REGISTRATION FORMS:

- a. The “Parish Chairperson Registration Form” (page 9) should be **completed on-line** by following the links to the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival to Forms and to Parish Chairperson Registration on the website of the Department of Religious Education: www.religioused.goarch.org. This information will be saved on an Excel Spreadsheet which will be accessible to District and Metropolis Chairpersons.
- b. The “Information and Instructions For Speakers” (pages 10–12) should be copied and distributed to all eligible participants. As a chairperson, you might prefer to have the student submit a Speaker Registration Form to you directly, however, it is requested that they also complete the Speaker Registration Form on-line by following the appropriate links included on the form.

4. TOPIC SELECTION: Be certain that everyone is using the current list of Topics which are available on the Department website at www.religioused.goarch.org. Participants must select a topic from their appropriate division, which are available each September. Select the link for the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival.

5. COACHING: It is important to help your participants develop the poise and confidence needed when speaking before an audience. A group of resource people—teachers, lawyers, media persons, etc.—can be invaluable in helping speakers. Also, do not overlook retired persons who have the experience, time and patience to encourage young speakers. Personal assistance such as this is very important for young speakers as they develop their own speaking style and self-confidence. DVDs or digital videos of previous Parish, District, Metropolis and Archdiocese Festivals can provide examples. In addition, former Oratorical participants can offer effective peer motivation and support.

6. PUBLICITY: Ask to use the church bulletin board to publicize the Oratorical Festival and inform people about workshops, etc. Pictures from previous Parish Festivals are well-received. Ask to insert publicity in the church newsletter or magazine, or include a flyer in a parish mailing. Send press releases to local media before and after the event (page 28).

7. JUDGES: The selection of a qualified panel of judges is crucial to the credibility of the Oratorical Festival program. All judges must be Orthodox. Limiting the panel of judges to three persons will make it easier for **competent, neutral and objective judges to be found.** The panel should not be all male or female, and they should have knowledge of the disciplines of English and speech. Lawyers, and others with a background in debating and public speaking are also good choices. Rather than only looking for judges in your own parish, consider asking other Orthodox Churches, and clergy for lay persons who would be qualified to serve on your judges' panel. Depending on the number of participants, especially at a District or Metropolis Festival, you might need two panels of judges, so the earlier you find them the better.

To avoid problems local clergy and parishioners who are familiar with the speakers cannot be judges at their Parish Festival. Likewise, the same judge cannot be used from one level to the next. Persons who are qualified to act as judges on the District or Metropolis level, but who are personally familiar with any of the speakers, should not judge these events. The importance of sound and objective judging cannot be overemphasized. **A careful selection of judges will eliminate problems and complications which may well occur if the above considerations are overlooked.**

Make your selection of judges two or three months in advance, and follow up with a letter or e-mail of confirmation, including date and location, directions if needed, and the time they should arrive for the Judges' Orientation Session. You must send copies of the "Judges' Instructions" (pages 18–27), including the "Speaker Evaluation Form" and "Form C," and also send a copy of the Topics. Call or e-mail the judges a few days before the Festival to reconfirm.

8. PARISH FESTIVAL: The Parish Oratorical Festival can take place after the Divine Liturgy or other Church Service (such as an evening Lenten Service), after a luncheon, or at a special event for the Festival. Have a program prepared listing the names and topics of the speakers and the names and titles of the judges.

Speakers and the judges should be asked to arrive one hour before the program begins to attend their respective Orientation Sessions. (See pages 14 and 17.)

9. RANKING SPEAKERS: The Parish Festival, in most cases, will only send its first place junior and senior speakers to the District Festival. Second and third place speakers are also chosen with the ranking on their certificates designated as such, but they do not advance to the District Festival. Speakers ranked after third place receive the "Honorable Mention" award which is entered on their certificates. **AN EXCEPTION** to the above ruling concerning the first place junior and senior speakers going to the District Festival is explained in the next paragraph (#10), "Parish Finalists."

10. PARISH AND DISTRICTS FINALISTS: In order to encourage more participation at a Parish Festival, some Districts allow the top two speakers in each division (two juniors and two seniors) to advance to the District Festival. This decision must come from your District Chairperson, after consulting with the Metropolis Chairperson, and well before the Parish festivals in your District begin. Obviously one must keep in mind the total number of speakers who would be advancing to a District and if the number of speakers becomes so large that the speaking program becomes very lengthy, for example, more than 60 minutes for each division then one must consider having two judges panels so as one panel of judges deliberate, the other panel simultaneously listens to the next division of speakers. On the other hand one might consider having the speakers deliver their talks in separate areas.

In the foregoing procedure (two juniors and two seniors), no designation as to their ranking (1st or 2nd place) is to be made. These two top speakers from each division will be called “**Parish Finalists**” to the District Festival, and the ranking placed on their certificates will read: “**Parish Finalist.**” The announcement to the audience at the Parish Festival will be: “**Our Parish Finalists to the _____ District Festival will be _____ and _____.**”

The reason for this rule is to avoid the complication that can occur at a District Festival if the rankings of the judges are different from those at the Parish Festival. For example, a 1st place speaker from the Parish Festival could be judged 2nd place, or other, at the District Festival. The term “Parish Finalist” eliminates this possibility.

11. AWARDS: Each participant is to be awarded an official Archdiocese Certificate available from the Department of Religious Education. (See sample on page 39 and order information on page 37.) There is a nominal fee for the certificates. Any leftover certificates can be used the following year. Additional awards such as Bibles, icons, crosses, trophies, cash awards, etc., may be presented at the discretion of the local committee.

12. SUMMARY OF RATINGS AND RANKINGS: Pages 25–27 must be completed with the names of the speech participants and copies sent to the District, Metropolis and Archdiocese Chairperson, as noted on page 26. This form is also available to be e-mailed via fillable PDF.

13. COMMUNICATION: It is extremely important to check the web-site of the Department of Religious Education for updates (www.religioused.goarch.org). Parish, District and Metropolis Chairpersons should communicate via e-mail to ensure that the Oratorical Festival runs smoothly. Similarly, certain e-mails to Metropolis and District Chairpersons that come from the Archdiocese Chairperson must be forwarded to Parish Oratorical Festival Chairpersons.

**ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL
PARISH CHAIRPERSON REGISTRATION FORM**

*Please complete this form on-line by going to www.religioused.goarch.org and then following the links to **St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival to Forms** and to **Parish Chairperson Registration Form**. This information will be available to all District and Metropolis Chairpersons.*

Name Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. _____
(circle one)

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number: Home _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____

Parish Name _____

Parish Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Parish Telephone Number: _____

E-mail _____

Metropolis in which your Church is located _____

Date of Parish Oratorical Festival _____

For informational purposes, please indicate which categories your Parish is offering:

Speech (Jr/Sr) _____ Speech (Elem) _____ Essay _____ Poetry _____

(check all that apply)

**Send to:
Department of Religious Education
50 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445-7415
Fax (617) 850-1489
www.religioused.goarch.org**

INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN AN ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Please reproduce this page for the participants.

1. You must be of the Greek Orthodox Faith. To participate in the Junior Division you must be in grades 7–9. To participate in the Senior Division you must be in grades 10–12. **Your topic must be selected from the list of topics in the corresponding division.**
2. The speech must be original and delivered in English. Previously used material is not eligible. Quotations must be used effectively as supportive material, and sources must be identified.
3. No audio-visual material (slides, charts, etc.) may be used. The speech must be delivered from the lectern. The contents and/or delivery of the speech should not be dramatically presented.
4. A parent or teacher may serve as a “coach” in preparation and delivery, but the speech must reflect your own writing and speaking style.
5. The top speakers in each Division of the Parish Festival will take part in the District Festival (pages 4–7). Finalists in the District Festival will go on to the Metropolis Festival. The first place junior and senior speakers in the Metropolis Festival will advance to the Archdiocese Festival. If a finalist in the District or Metropolis Festival is unable to attend the next level, then the next ranking speaker will take his/her place. A speaker can present his/her speech at only one Parish Oratorical Festival.
6. Topics must be chosen from the official list compiled by the Department of Religious Education. The speech delivered at the Parish level must be the same one given at the District, Metropolis and Archdiocese levels with only minor revisions (i.e., grammatical corrections, deleting a paragraph if speech is over time limit, correcting syntax).
7. Speech time limits for each division are
 JUNIOR- minimum 3 minutes, maximum 4
 SENIOR - minimum 4 minutes, maximum 5

 A 15-second grace period will be given to speakers whose talks run over or under time. Speeches that run over or under the 15-second grace period will lose 1 point for each additional five seconds. These points will be deducted from each judge’s TOTAL POINTS found at the bottom of the SPEAKER EVALUATION FORM (page 21).
8. A copy of the speech (typed double-spaced on 8½ × 11 paper) must be given to the Chairperson before or during the Orientation Session. Your name, full address, phone number, e-mail, and division (junior or senior) should appear in the upper right-hand corner, along with the name and location of your Church. Place the title of your speech (taken from the official list of Topics) right above the opening statement. Speakers who advance to the District, Metropolis and Archdiocese Festivals must also present a copy to the Chairperson at these events. (Instructions for Essays and Poetry on pages 30–35.)
9. Speakers should dress in clothing that is appropriate for Sunday church services, ideally a jacket or sweater, tie and dress trousers for boys and an appropriate-length dress or skirt for girls. Shoes should also be appropriate for church, too.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING YOUR SPEECH

Please reproduce this page for the participants.

WRITING YOUR SPEECH

As you begin to write, keep in mind that you are writing a speech and NOT a research paper. Your goal is to persuade your audience that your response to the question or topic is of high quality.

INTRODUCTION

1. You may choose one of the following rhetorical devices to begin your speech: (a) restate the topic, (b) ask a question, or (c) begin with an anecdote.
2. The goal of the introduction is to alert your audience to the point that you would like to make.
3. You might consider introducing the two or three ways by which you will show that your thesis is an appropriate interpretation of the topic.

BODY

1. The body of the speech is where you will provide both the evidence of your research and your analysis of that research.
2. Some topics, more than others, lend themselves to an emphasis on personal reflections or experience. You should consider what the topic means to you and why.
3. Some topics, more than others, lend themselves to a comparison between ancient times and the present. You should consider how such a comparison is made most effectively.

CONCLUSION

1. A strong conclusion will simultaneously lead your audience to believe that they now understand the topic more completely and that you have convinced them that your thesis was an appropriate one.
2. In some situations, it is appropriate to leave your audience with a reflective or personal sentence, either in the form of a question, statement or exclamatory remark.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE WRITING PROCESS

1. Decide on a topic.
2. Read the suggested research material for your selected topic and takes notes where appropriate.
3. Consider other avenues for research, including Scripture and Church History, using whatever tools are available to you.
4. Develop a thesis. What do you think about this topic? The entire speech should be structured around your particular (and unique) answer to the prompt.
5. After you have a thesis, develop an outline that will effectively communicate that thesis--individual paragraphs should reflect the individual points of the outline.
6. Write your first draft. Practice it in front of others, ask for their feedback so that you can revise the draft.
7. Make sure that the time of your delivery fits within the allotted time for your division.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FORM

*Please complete this form on-line by going to www.religioused.goarch.org and then following the links to the **St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival** and to **Speaker Registration Form**. Be sure you have a copy of this year's Oratorical Festival Topics and Topic Tips, as well as Instructions for Writing Your Speech. You are only permitted to participate in one category.*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number: Home _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____

Date of Birth _____ Current Grade _____

School you attend _____

Name of your Parish _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of your Priest _____

Parish Chairperson _____

E-mail of Parish Chairperson _____

Metropolis that your Parish is in _____

CATEGORY: Speech _____ Essay _____ Poetry _____
(Choose one)

DIVISION: Junior _____ Senior _____

Topic Number: 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

GUIDELINES FOR HOSTING A PARISH, DISTRICT OR METROPOLIS FESTIVAL

PROGRAM ORDER

- 1. At a Parish Festival** the participants should have already been given the opportunity to practice their speeches using the microphone and lectern during practice sessions. The Orientation Session for the Parish Festival is where they select their speaking order and are given a “pep talk.”
- 2. At a District or Metropolis Festival**, members of the registration committee should welcome the participants and guests as they arrive. A program can be distributed here or later on when everyone proceeds to the church or wherever the speeches will be heard. Since the judges are not supposed to know the identity of the speakers they **should not** be given a program.
- 3. During the Orientation Session** for Speakers (page 15) be sure they can be seen above the podium and practice the salutary greeting to make sure they can be heard. Even though the judges received their information previously, a separate Orientation Session for them must be held (page 18). When the program is ready to begin the participants should sit in speaking order and the judges and timekeeper can take their seats (page 18, #7).
- 4. The opening prayer** should be led by the Parish Priest; the host Priest of the District Festival; and the presiding Hierarchy or the Host Priest of the Metropolis Festival. This should be followed by a welcome from the Chairperson who will then explain the format to be followed.
- 5. When each division of speakers has finished** and the judges retire to deliberate, the participants should be introduced by name to the audience. If there will not be a break between divisions because there are only two or three senior speakers, then wait until both divisions are finished before introducing the participants. The recommended format at the Parish level is: “Speaker number one is (Name).” At a District or Metropolis Festival, the introduction would be: “Speaker number one is (Name) from (Church) in (City, State).”
- 6. When the judges’ decisions are made**, the Chairperson should give the results to the person responsible for the certificates so that the ranking can be written on them.
- 7. Award presentations:** Those speakers receiving a rank of “Honorable Mention” are called first to receive their certificates and other awards from the Festival Chairperson, the host Priest, or attending Hierarchy. The speakers receiving a rank of Third Place, Second Place and First Place are then announced. *Please note that at a District Festival, the representatives to the Metropolis Festival are referred to as the _____ District Finalists to the _____ Metropolis Festival. An announcement stating who came in First or Second will most certainly create problems.* So that all participants can be recognized, have each speaker remain standing after he/she has received his/her award. This can be repeated for each division.
- 8. Inviting judges** to offer brief, encouraging, and complimentary comments is appreciated by both the speakers and the audience.
- 9. Closing remarks** and the closing prayer followed by publicity pictures of the entire group of speakers brings your Oratorical Festival program to a close.
- 10. Be sure to speak** with the finalists, who are advancing to the next level of the Festival before they depart. In some instances they will need to fill out registration forms and/or be given additional information about the next level. At the Metropolis Festival, inform the two finalists what monetary award will be given to them. It would be good to give a small gift to each participant as well, as a token of his or her participation.

ITEMS TO HAVE ON HAND IN ADVANCE

1. **Order certificates** at least one month in advance from the Department of Religious Education and have your Parish Priest, Host Priest or Hierarch sign them. The names of all the participants should be written on them before the event and the rankings added as soon as the judges' results are known.
2. **Be sure all the judges received the Judges Instructions** in the mail or via e-mail along with the list of Topics, Tips, and Resources. Call or e-mail them a few days prior to the Oratorical Festival to confirm their participation.
3. **A gift** for each judge and an additional gift for each of the participants.
4. **The program** should be finalized and copies made. At a Parish Festival separate the participants by division and alphabetically list their names. Include the topic of his/her speech after the name. At a District Festival separate the participants by division and alphabetically list the names of the Parish the participant is representing and then include his/her name and topic. At the Metropolis Festival separate participants by division and alphabetically list the district name the participant is representing then list his/her name and topic.
5. **Have the names** of the speakers on address labels so their speaking order can be placed on the Chairperson's "Form A" (page 16).
6. **Be sure the timekeeper** knows the time limits for the Junior and Senior Divisions and has a copy of "Timekeeper Report - Form B" (page 17). Also needed are cards with numbers "1" and "½" large enough to be seen from a distance. The timekeeper can sit directly behind the judges so that the speakers have an unobstructed view of him/her.
7. **Judges' materials:** To be distributed to each judge at the Orientation Session.
 - a. A "Speaker Evaluation Form" for each speaker (page 21), a different color for juniors and seniors
 - b. A copy of the "Judges' Instructions" for reference (pages 19–21)
 - c. Two copies of the "Judges' Ranking Sheet - Form C" (color coded for each division)
 - d. A copy of the Topics for reference
 - e. Extra note paper, pencils, clip board, paper clips, and a calculator for each judge
 - f. To help the speakers feel more comfortable and not so threatened, it is recommended that the judges do not sit at a "Judges' Table," but that they sit in a designated section of the audience.
 - g. If a table is used DO NOT place it directly in front of the speakers.
 - h. If the Festival takes place in Church, and the judges sit in a pew, section off the pew directly in front and behind them.

SPEAKER ORIENTATION SESSION

Conducted approximately one hour before the Festival.

This session is to be conducted by the Festival Chairperson or by his/her representative one hour before the beginning of the Festival, where the speeches will be presented. Its purpose is to give clear, friendly instructions to the speakers, and to have them practice using the microphone and lectern. This is where you will see if the microphone or lectern needs to be adjusted for shorter speakers. Many Parish Festivals are held after a Church service, therefore their orientation session to pick out their speaking order number and to be given final words of encouragement, would need to be held elsewhere.

- 1. Welcome the speakers** and thank them for participating in the Oratorical program. At a **District** or **Metropolis** Festival, remember to introduce yourself to the finalists. Congratulate them for representing their Parishes or Districts. Encourage fellowship among the speakers by asking them to introduce themselves.
- 2. Explain** that in order to ensure objectivity, each person will draw a number that will be the order in which he/she will speak and also be seated. Later, when the judges are deliberating, everyone will be introduced and recognized. To save time and ensure accuracy, it is suggested that the names of the speakers be typed out in advance on adhesive labels. As a speaker selects a number, this label should be put in this order on "Form A" (page 16). This will speed up the process and reduce errors at this busy time.
- 3. Inform them** that they will be introduced by their speaking order number and that their Topic will be stated in this introduction. Assure them that, before they begin their speech, they will have a few seconds to get comfortable. While the speakers practice using the microphone, have them say the salutary greeting, and have someone from the committee be sure that they can be heard and seen over the lectern. Remind them to project their voices, establish eye contact, and speak clearly and distinctly. It's also a good idea to remind them not to have their pages stapled together, which makes turning the pages a distraction to the audience.

An acceptable greeting to the audience, which must be given before the speech begins, would be: *"Your Eminence/Grace (if a Hierarch is present), Reverend Father(s), Honorable Judges, Fellow Parishioners and Speakers, Good morning/ afternoon."* If the event takes place during the 40 days after Pascha, the speaker should greet the audience with *"Christos Anesti"* or *"Christ is Risen,"* instead of *"Good morning/afternoon,"* and then wait for the audience to respond *"Alithos Anesti"* or *"Truly He is Risen."* The timing begins after this introduction. Saying "Thank you" at the end of the speech also lets the timekeeper know when the speech is over.

- 4. If a Hierarch is present,** instruct the speaker to greet him first, kiss his hand, receive his blessing, and then proceed to the podium.
- 5. Introduce the timekeeper** to the speakers and explain that the timekeeper will hold up two cards. The first card will show a large number "1" (one minute remaining), and the second card will show a "½" (one half-minute remaining). Ask the timekeeper to demonstrate and to show them where he/she will be seated.
- 6. Each speaker** must submit a copy of his/her speech, typed on 8½ × 11" paper, with the name, complete address, phone number, e-mail, and division (junior or senior) in the upper right-hand corner. The exact speech Topic should appear above the opening paragraph. These recommendations and any others that may pertain to your local situation, will help put the speakers at ease and ensure a smooth-running program.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL SPEAKING ORDER - CHAIRPERSON COPY - FORM A

The name of each speaker should be previously typed on self adhesive labels, thereby making it easier for names to be put in speaking order number. At a District and Metropolis Festival, you should also include the Parish or District they are representing.

Sample District Label

Mary Pappas
Annunciation Church, Modesto, CA

Sample Metropolis Label

Mary Pappas
Northern CA District
Annunciation Church, Modesto, CA

JUNIORS

SENIORS

1			1
2			2
3			3
4			4
5			5
6			6
7			7
8			8
9			9

**ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL
TIMEKEEPER REPORT - FORM B**

JUNIORS: Minimum 3 minutes, maximum 4

SENIORS: Minimum 4 minutes, maximum 5

The timekeeper must be present at the orientation session and should be seated in clear view of the speakers, and will give a signal when **one minute remains**, and another signal when **one half-minute remains**. All signals should be discreetly shown. The timing should begin after the speaker's initial greeting. The stopwatch should be kept running until the speaker has finished, so that an accurate timing of each talk can be listed on this form. Names are not needed on this form because judges only refer to the speaker's number. **The timekeeper report must be given to the judges as soon as the judges leave to begin deliberating.**

JUNIOR DIVISION

SENIOR DIVISION

Speaker Number	Time	Speaker Number	Time
1		1	
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	
5		5	
6		6	
7		7	
8		8	
9		9	

JUDGES' ORIENTATION SESSION

Held approximately one hour before the Festival begins.

This session with the judges is held in a private room and is led by the Festival Chairperson or by his/her representative. It allows the judges to meet one another and to review the evaluation criteria and procedures. The following points are for your reference and should not be sent to the judges.

1. Welcome and introduce the judges. Thank them for serving on the panel.
2. Give each judge a folder that contains the following: "Instructions for Judges"; a "Speaker Evaluation Form" for each speaker (one color for juniors, another for seniors); two copies of the "Judges' Ranking Sheet - Form C" (one in the junior color, one in the senior color); the Oratorical Topics; and extra note paper. Provide each judge with pencils with erasers, a clipboard (if they aren't seated at a table) and a calculator.
3. Review the "Instructions for Judges" (page 19) and all criteria that the judges will use to evaluate the speeches (page 21). Remind them that content and delivery are equally important (50 points each).
4. Carefully explain the "Rating and Ranking" system of scoring (see pages 25–27 for a point-by-point explanation).
5. Inform them that to maintain total objectivity, the speakers will be introduced by their speaker order number. Judges should place this number on each "Speaker Evaluation Form" in the blank marked "Speaker order number."
6. Our experience indicates that on the Parish level there are usually more speakers in the Junior Division than in the Senior Division. A discussion should take place with the judges to decide whether or not two separate deliberation sessions (one for juniors and one for seniors) are necessary.
7. If the judges are seated at a table during the speaking program, **do not place the table directly in front of the speakers**. Rather have the table situated at an angle to the side of the rostrum, so the judges have a clear view of the speakers; yet, not so close as to "intimidate" the speakers. If the judges are seated in church pews, section off the rows in front and behind them so they cannot hear comments from others.
8. The judges DO NOT have a copy of the speech. They are to watch and listen attentively, and when the speaker has finished, the judges will evaluate the speaker and signal the Chairperson or announcer when they're ready to hear the next speaker. (Judges should not linger on the adding of "Total Points"; this can be done later during the deliberations, where calculators should be used to avoid mistakes)
9. Appoint one of the judges to act as Coordinating Judge. The Coordinating Judge leads the panel in scoring during their deliberations by carefully following the procedures on pages 25–27. When it comes time to place the rank each judge gave to each speaker on Form C; errors can be avoided by saying, "Speaker Number 1 received a Rank of 3"; Speaker Number 2 received a Rank of 5" etc.
10. The scoring rules, which include Total Points and Ranking Points, have been created so that a tie among the speakers is highly unlikely. As explained previously, if a tie in Ranking Points occurs, then the person with the highest Total Points receives the lower Ranking Points, i.e., First Place, Second Place or Third Place. In the unlikely situation where the Total Points and Ranking Points are tied, the judges MUST make a decision as to which speaker would be declared First, Second or Third.
Once again, at a Parish or District Oratorical Festival, if the top two speakers are to advance to the next level, the top two participants are declared "Finalists," not First or Second Place. A Third Place speaker is also named, and then all remaining participants receive a Rank of Honorable Mention.
11. Invite one of the judges to address the speakers and audience briefly before the results are announced. This is well-received by both speakers and audience.
12. If the judges are willing to critique the speeches privately after the results have been announced, ask them not to discuss the panel's deliberations. Their encouragement and constructive criticism to young speakers can be very helpful.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGES

DEAR PANEL OF JUDGES,

Thank you for assisting us by serving as judges in our Oratorical Festival. The information that follows will familiarize you with the procedures to be used and with the requirements expected of our speakers.

1. The Festival Chairperson will provide you with SPEAKER EVALUATION FORMS which are to be completed, one for each speaker. (Sample is on page 21.)
2. One member of the judging panel will be asked to serve as a Coordinating Judge for the deliberations.
3. After all the speakers in the junior or senior division have finished, the judges will depart to a private room for deliberation. At this time, you will be given the "Timekeeper's Report" to determine if any penalties are to be assessed. In scoring, a calculator should be used as scores are often very close.
4. The Parish Priest is not a member of the judging panel. However, he is available as a resource person for verification of religious matters, if needed. Please do not hesitate to request his assistance.
5. After tallying the Ranking Points of each speaker, the top speaker in each division advances to the next level. An exception to this rule at the Parish Festival is if there are four or less churches within a District that have a local Oratorical Festival, then the top two speakers in each division advance to the District Festival. The local Parish Chairperson will inform you about this during the Orientation Session. At the District Festival it is the top two speakers in each division who advance to the Metropolis level. They are referred to as finalists, not first or second place speakers. At the Metropolis Oratorical Festival only the first place speakers in each division advance to the Archdiocese finals.
6. Positive and encouraging comments, to the speakers and audience, are encouraged and beneficial. (Judges should be sensitive to the ability of speakers to understand and accept remarks which may be critical.)
7. The details of the judging panel's deliberations should not be discussed publicly. This can create problems and anxieties among young speakers and also their parents. If, however, a speaker wishes to see how he/she can improve his/her writing and/or oratory skills, the speaker may have a copy of his/her "Speaker Evaluation Form." Under **no** circumstances should comparisons be made with other Speaker Evaluation Forms.
8. Upon completion of deliberations, the Speaker Evaluation Forms are to be given to the Festival Chairperson for future reference.

We hope you will enjoy this experience with us, and again we thank you for your participation in the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival.

Sponsored by
THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

SPEECH REQUIREMENTS

Participants: Junior Division - Students in grades 7–9
Senior Division - Students in grades 10–12

The Speech: The speech Topic must be taken from the official list compiled by the Department of Religious Education. Speakers are expected to have prepared their own speech through research and personal experience. Quotations should be used effectively as supportive material and must have sources identified. No audio-visual material can be used. The delivery must largely be given from the lectern and should **not** be a dramatic presentation.

The Length: Juniors, 3–4 minutes; Seniors, 4–5 minutes. A 15-second grace period will be given to speakers who run under or overtime. The **penalties** assessed are one point lost for every five seconds beyond the 15-second grace period. Such points will be deducted from **each judge's** "TOTAL" for "Content and Delivery" found at the bottom of the "Speaker Evaluation Form." The report of the timekeeper will determine if any penalties are in order.

JUDGES' CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SPEECHES

CONTENT

Organization: Is there a clear introduction that draws the listeners into the speech? Is the body clearly organized with supporting information? Is the development of ideas logical and easy to follow? Does the conclusion draw the ideas together and give clear emphasis to the thesis of the speech?

Persuasiveness: Did the speaker offer persuasive arguments, through logic or other means and cause a new thinking about the topic rather than just summarizing it?

Adaptation of Topic: Did the speaker approach the topic in an innovative way? Was the speech well-researched? Did the speaker use appropriate, descriptive, and convincing language? If personal experience was referenced, was it effective?

Theology: Is the content theologically sound, reflecting Orthodox Tradition accurately? Did the speech draw upon scriptural, liturgical, and historical resources?

Conclusion: Did the speaker offer a call-to-action and/or final thoughts that are designed to move the audience to the speaker's point-of-view?

DELIVERY

Vocal Skills: Was the speaker's voice expressive, easily understood and heard? Did the speaker's voice effectively express the mood and feeling of the speech?

Expressiveness: Did the speaker demonstrate a desire to communicate his/her thoughts? Were pauses and phrasing effective?

Physical Movements: Did the speaker exhibit poise via posture, eye contact, facial expression? Was there effective use or overuse use of movements, gestures? Did these emphasize key points?

Effective Use of Manuscript: It is not a requirement for the speech to be memorized. If a manuscript is used, did the speaker use it discreetly without relying on it throughout or having it become a distraction to the audience?

Communication: Did the speaker effectively communicate his/her thoughts with the audience by making contact with them in a conversational style?

SPEAKER EVALUATION FORM

Topic: _____ Speaker order number: _____

Category: (Check one) _____ Junior Division _____ Senior Division

Point Scale: Outstanding, Superior.....9–10 points
Good, better than average.....7–8 points
Satisfactory, fair, average.....5–6 points
Below average.....3–4 points
Ineffective.....1–2 points

CONTENT

Points

- _____ **Organization:** Was the speech content effective and organized with a clear introduction, body and conclusion?
- _____ **Persuasiveness:** Did the speaker offer persuasive arguments and a clear point-of-view, rather than just summarizing the topic?
- _____ **Adaptation of Topic:** Did the speaker approach the topic in an innovative way? Was the speech well-researched? If personal experience was referenced, was it effective?
- _____ **Theology:** Is the content theologically sound, reflecting accurate Orthodox Tradition? Did the speech draw upon scriptural, liturgical and historical resources?
- _____ **Conclusion:** Did the speaker offer a call-to-action and/or final thoughts that are designed to move the audience to the speaker's point-of-view?
- _____ POINTS - **Content Subtotal (50 is a perfect score)**

DELIVERY

Points

- _____ **Vocal Skills:** Effectiveness of vocal skills via diction and volume. Did the voice express the mood and feeling of the speech?
- _____ **Expressiveness:** Did the speaker communicate his/her thoughts with enthusiasm, and were pauses and phrasing effective, yet not too theatrical?
- _____ **Physical Movements:** Were physical movements, eye contact, posture, poise and facial expressions effective?
- _____ **Effective Use of Manuscript:** If a manuscript was used, was it distracting during the delivery of the speech?
- _____ **Communication:** Did the speaker effectively communicate his/her thoughts with the audience?
- _____ POINTS - **Delivery Subtotal (50 is a perfect score)**

_____ **TOTAL POINTS** — (Content plus Delivery)

_____ Minus time penalty, if applicable

_____ **GRAND TOTAL**

JUDGE _____

PROCEDURES TO BE USED IN SCORING SPEAKERS JUDGES' RANKING SHEET - FORM C

The judging of speakers is sometimes very close. In using the ranking system, judges are further able to refine their grading of speakers and assure the fairest possible scoring. The procedures are as follows:

1. **Each judge** takes his/her set of Speaker Evaluation Forms and **arranges them** in order from highest number of "Total Points" to lowest number of "Total Points."
2. **On the "Speaker Evaluation Form"** (top right-hand corner), you will find "Rank ___." On this line, place the number of the order in which you have arranged the evaluation forms with the highest number of "Total Points" being "Rank 1," your next highest "Rank 2," and so on to your last form.

When placing the Speaker Evaluation Forms in ranking order, sometimes you will have two or more speakers with the same "Total Points." If this occurs, assign the **same** Rank to these speakers. When ranking the next speaker, the assignment of his/her Rank should take into consideration the number of speakers who have already received equal Ranks. See example below: Judge A gave speakers no. 4 and 6 a Rank of 2. Speaker 3, the next highest, would then receive a Rank of 4. Judge C gave speakers no. 3, 7 and 8 a Rank of 1. Speaker 6, the next highest, would then also receive a Rank of 4.

Sample: JUDGES' RANKING SHEET - FORM C

(See page 24 for actual form.)

Speaker Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Judge A	9	7	4	2	6	2	5	1	8			
Judge B	9	4	7	6	8	2	1	3	5			
Judge C	7	8	1	5	6	4	1	1	9			
Total Ranking Points	25	19	12	13	20	8	7	5	22			

Speaker No. Points Speaker Name

RANKINGS: First Place (Lowest number of Ranking points) 8 5 1. _____
 Second Place (2nd lowest number of Ranking points) 7 7 2. _____
 Third Place (3rd lowest number of Ranking points) 6 8 3. _____

3. **After each judge** has completed placing the Rank on his/her Speaker Evaluation Forms, the forms should be re-arranged by “Speaker order number.”
4. **When all the judges** have completed this procedure, the Coordinating Judge will ask each judge to read off the Rank given to each speaker. Confusion at this crucial time can be avoided if each judge uses the following term when recording the Rank of each speaker on Form C. Speaker #1 received a Rank of ____; Speaker #2 received a Rank of ____; Speaker #3 received a Rank of ____; etc.
5. **If there is a wide difference** in the ranking points of speakers who might place in the top three positions – for example, one judge ranks a speaker “1,” the second judge “2,” and the third judge “6” – then a discussion should take place as to why such a difference exists. By reviewing the Speaker Evaluation Forms for these speakers, and sharing comments, an equitable scoring agreement can be reached. This, however, does not necessarily mean that a judge has to change his/her score. You might find this comparison of rankings necessary to determine the third place speaker and the next ranked (or “Honorable Mention”) speaker.
6. **The speaker with the lowest “Total of Ranking Points”** will be ranked **first place**, the speaker with the second lowest total **second place**, and the third lowest total **third place**. All speakers after third place are designated “**Honorable Mention.**”
7. If there is a tie in “**Total Ranking Points**” on Form C for any of the top four speakers (for example, those who receive a tie of Total Ranking Points of 5, 6, 8 etc.), then each judge must refer to his/her **Speaker Evaluation Forms** for the speakers in question. Once the Total Points are found, this number should be placed in the corresponding square for each judge and speaker number. These Total Points are then added and the speaker with the highest Total Points receives the higher rank (the lowest Ranking Point number) and the tie is broken. If there is still a tie, then a discussion among the judges must take place until the tie is broken.

By using the ranking system, our speakers are given the best possible considerations in scoring.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL JUDGES' RANKING SHEET - FORM C

1. Each judge is to place in every square the Rank given to each speaker on his/her "Speaker Evaluation Form. Division: _____ Junior
 "Confusion at this crucial time can be avoided if each judge uses the following term when recording the Rank of each speaker on Form-C. Speaker #1 received a Rank of _____; Speaker #2 received a Rank of _____; Speaker #3 received a Rank of _____; etc. _____ Senior

2. When all rankings are entered, the Ranking points for each speaker are totaled.

Date: _____

3. If there is a tie in "Total Ranking Points" on Form C for any of the top four speakers (for example, those who receive a tie of Total Ranking Points of 5, 6, 8 etc.), then each judge must refer to his/her **Speaker Evaluation Forms** for the speakers in question. Once the Total Points are found, this number should be placed in the corresponding square for each judge and speaker number. These Total Points are then added and the speaker with the highest Total Points receives the higher rank (the lowest Ranking Point number) and the tie is broken. If there is still a tie, then a discussion among the judges must take place until the tie is broken.

Speaker Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Judge A												
Judge B												
Judge C												
Total Ranking Points												

Speaker No. Points Speaker Name*

RANKINGS: First Place (Lowest number of Ranking Points)

Second Place (2nd lowest number of Ranking Points)

Third Place (3rd lowest number of Ranking Points)

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL SPEAKER SUMMARY OF RATINGS AND RANKINGS

THE SUMMARY OF RATINGS AND RANKINGS IS THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF EACH ORATORICAL FESTIVAL (PARISH, DISTRICT, METROPOLIS).

*You have the option of mailing/faxing or filling this form out via fillable PDF, which you can then e-mail to the appropriate chairperson(s). Go to www.religioused.goarch.org and follow the links to the **St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival to Forms** and to **Summary of Ratings and Rankings**.*

Date _____

Check one: _____ Parish Festival _____ District Festival _____ Metropolis Festival

Place of Festival _____

City _____ State _____

Festival Chairperson _____

Please enter the information from the “Judges’ Ranking Sheet – Form C” for each speaker. The speaker with the lowest number of RANKING POINTS will be ranked #1; the speaker with the next lowest number of RANKING POINTS will be ranked #2; the next will be #3. All others will receive “Honorable Mention.”

JUNIOR DIVISION SPEAKERS

Name, Parish, and Speech Topic Number	Judge	Total Points from Each Judge	Ranking Points of the Speaker
---------------------------------------	-------	------------------------------	-------------------------------

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

JUNIOR DIVISION - CONTINUED

Name, Parish, and Speech Topic Number	Judge	Total Points from Each Judge	Ranking Points of the Speaker
---------------------------------------	-------	------------------------------	-------------------------------

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

REMINDER TO ALL FESTIVAL CHAIRPERSONS

Send copies of this Form: "Summary of Ratings and Rankings" as follows:

1. PARISH CHAIRPERSONS:

E-mail/mail/fax one copy to your District Chairperson.
 E-mail/mail/fax one copy to your Metropolis Chairperson.
 E-mail/mail/fax one copy to the Archdiocese Chairperson.*
 Keep one copy in your file.

2. DISTRICT CHAIRPERSONS:

E-mail/mail/fax one copy to your Metropolis Chairperson.
 E-mail/mail/fax one copy to the Archdiocese Chairperson.*
 Keep one copy in your file.

3. METROPOLIS CHAIRPERSONS:

E-mail/mail/fax one copy to the Archdiocese Chairperson.*
 Keep one copy in your file.

*Presvytera Margaret Orfanakos

93 Tall Oaks Drive
 Wayne, NJ 07470
 Tel. (973) 696-7097
 FAX (973) 777-6946
 margaretorfanakos@gmail.com

SENIOR DIVISION SPEAKERS

Name, Parish, and Speech Topic Number

Judge Total
Points from Ranking
Each Judge Points of
the Speaker

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

A		
B		
C		

Total Ranking points =

This page may be photocopied if additional spaces are needed.

**SUGGESTED NEWS RELEASE
FOR
NEWSPAPERS, RADIO AND TELEVISION**

(Date)

Editor
Newspaper
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Editor:

The (Church Name) Greek Orthodox Church of (Address, City, State) is sponsoring an Oratorical Festival for teenagers which is open to the public. It is called the “St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival” and is sponsored by the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

The Oratorical Festival is a program that invites youth in middle and senior high school to speak about their Faith, their Church and their heritage. A list of topics is given to the participants from which they may choose one on which they will deliver a 3–5 minute speech. Some of the topics for this year are: _____.

The junior and senior speakers from each participating Parish will advance first to the District and then to the Metropolis levels in their regions. The top two speakers from each Metropolis will then speak at the Archdiocese National Festival to be held in (City, State) on (Date).

This national event is called the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival in honor of the Church Father, Patriarch and Saint of the Church, John Chrysostom. His sermons, often on behalf of social justice and moral reform, were so eloquent and forceful that he was named “Chrysostom” or “The Golden Mouthed.”

Immediately following the speeches, the judges will render their decisions and each participant will be awarded an Archdiocese certificate signed by the Archbishop. The public is invited to attend this event in which our youth so eloquently express their faith.

Yours sincerely,

Parish Priest

Parish Oratorical Chairperson

** This press release can be revised to use after the Festival with a group photo.*

SUGGESTED LETTER FOR STUDENT'S RECORD

The participation of a teenager in the Oratorical Festival can be a worthy addition to the student's school record. A suggested letter for this purpose, prepared on Parish stationery, is as follows:

Dear Guidance Counselor,

This is to inform you that (Name) has participated in the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. This student selected a topic, prepared a 3–5 minute speech, and presented it in front of the congregation. The Oratorical Festival was judged by a panel of judges qualified in communication skills.

The top speakers in the Junior and Senior Divisions of the local Festival, which was recently held at (Church, Address, City), proceed to the District Level which encompasses (#) churches from this geographic area. From the District Festival, the junior finalists (grades 7–9) and senior finalists (grades 10–12) are selected to participate at the Metropolis Level. This includes the (#) (Midwestern, Southern, Atlantic Coastal, etc.) states in this region.

The first place junior and senior speakers at the Metropolis Oratorical Festival will represent the Metropolis at the Archdiocese Finals to be held this year in (City, State) on June (Date).

We feel that the participation of (Name), who devoted time and abilities to researching and speaking in the Oratorical Festival, should be made a part of his/her permanent record for future reference. We sincerely thank you for this consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Parish Priest

Oratorical Festival Chairperson

ESSAY AND POETRY OVERVIEW

These two categories are optional and are structured for the Parish and Metropolis levels. The essays and poems bypass the District level and end at the Metropolis level.

Getting Started

In 2014, the Oratorical Festival expanded to include Essay and Poetry writing. This program was graciously shared with the Archdiocese by the Metropolis of Chicago, which had included these categories (along with icon painting) for many years. ***An Archdiocese or National Essay and Poetry program proved to be challenging on many fronts and is not being continued.***

Allowing young people to study and express their faith in written form, poems and essays, is a worthwhile program. The written word, in verse or prose, is an important means of expressing the Orthodox Christian Faith. To call the Bible “the Holy Scriptures” is another way of saying the holy writings. As Orthodox Christians, we turn to the writings of the Church Fathers, who wrote treatises, essays, letters, and poems. Many of the hymns of the Church are, in fact, poems set to music. In them, we find the definitions of the Christian faith, their guidance on Christian living, and their responses to the challenges of the ages.

Continuing the Essay and Poetry divisions at the Metropolis level is more suitable and more manageable. But, it is the ***choice*** of the Metropolis whether or not to include these divisions as part of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Each Metropolis can develop its own protocols for including essays and poetry as part of their Oratorical Festival programs. We offer the following guidelines for consideration.

Additional Outlets

There are other ways to allow young people to share their faith in writing other than delivering a speech. A few possibilities:

Poetry and Essay writing retreats. Gather young people for an overnight at the Metropolis camp or retreat center, providing them with the resources to study their faith, write an essay, and receive guidance and feedback from adult writers from local parishes.

Poetry and Essay magazines. Coordinate the development of an annual or semi-annual magazine or newspaper containing the essays, poems, and artwork (drawings, photographs, etc.) created only by young people from the parish or Metropolis. Working in a team, allow the young people to design and layout the magazine or newspaper. Invite adults – graphic artists, writing coaches, art teachers, and the like – to work with the young people to create the publication. Distribute the publication throughout the Metropolis.

Poetry and essay website. The same as the magazine, but instead of a printed piece, allow the young people to create a website with the same. Allow them also to record and post videos that they create, including perhaps, some of the speeches from the Oratorical Festival itself (although this does not replace the Festival and its process of judging, processes, etc.).

ESSAY AND POETRY GUIDELINES

Parish Chairpersons

1. A person can participate in only one category of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival: Speech, Essay or Poetry.
2. Instruct them to fill out a Participant Registration Form on page 12.
3. The topic for the essay or poem must be taken from the current Oratorical Festival topics.
4. Let them know that their poem must be original, written in English and that it must not have been submitted in a previous Oratorical Festival.
5. Inform them that they must submit their entries before the deadline which has been set.
6. Their name, address and division must be included on a separate sheet of paper so that their names are not included on the entries when they are given to the judges.
7. A printed copy of the essay or poem must be handed to you and an additional copy e-mailed to you in a PDF format.
8. The same judge(s) should not be used for the oratory and essay/poetry categories.
9. Before giving the manuscripts to the judge(s) be sure to detach the sheet with the writer's information and assign a correlating number for your reference later on.
10. You can decide to hand the judge(s) a copy or e-mail the PDF format of the essays and/or poems so they can be judged.
11. The results of the essay and poetry should be announced at the award ceremony, prior to the announcing the results of the speech category. Category specific certificates (On the line in between rank and division, specify essay or poetry) and other awards should be given to each attendee.
12. The entries in essay and poetry that receive a First Place in each division, must then be sent to the Metropolis Chairperson before the deadline which has been set by the Metropolis.

Metropolis Chairpersons

1. Inform the District Chairpersons, so they can let the Parish Chairpersons know, the deadline that has been set by you to receive the First Place participants in the categories of Essay and Poetry from each Parish.
2. The same judge(s) should not be used for the oratory and essay/poetry categories.
3. Once the entries are received and before giving them to the judges, detach the sheet with the writer's information and assign a correlating number to the name for your reference later on.
4. The Metropolis program, which lists all Oratorical Festival participants, should also include a copy of all the essays and poetry or only the top three in each division, depending on the number of essays and poetry submitted.
5. The results of the essay and poetry should be announced at the award ceremony, prior to the announcing the results of the speech category. Category specific certificates (On the line in between rank and division, specify essay or poetry) and other awards should be given to each attendee.

Junior Division
ESSAY CATEGORY
Grades 7–9

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

GUIDELINES:

1. State Title and Topic on the front page of your essay.
2. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church's Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
3. Choose your TOPIC from among the Junior Division Oratorical Festival Topics.
4. Write a 300–400 word essay, which should be typed and double-spaced.
5. When writing your essay, think about the Orthodox perspective regarding your chosen topic. Research may be done by consulting your Bible and other Orthodox books and materials. The guidance of your Church School Teachers and Priest(s) may also be helpful.
6. Reflect your personal experiences that relate to the topic.
7. All Essays will be judged according to their Content, Organization, Style, Language, Originality, and Presentation.

POINTS:

_____ CONTENT

_____ ORGANIZATION

_____ STYLE

_____ LANGUAGE

_____ ORIGINALITY

_____ PRESENTATION

_____ **TOTAL POINTS**

POINT SCALE:

OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points

GOOD.....7–8 points
(Better than average)

SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points
(Fair, Average)

BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points

INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points

Participant #: _____ **TOPIC #:** _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____

Senior Division
ESSAY CATEGORY
Grades 10–12

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

GUIDELINES:

1. State Title and Topic on the front page of your essay.
2. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church’s Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
3. Choose your TOPIC from among the Junior Division Oratorical Festival Topics.
4. Write a 500–600 word essay, which should be typed and double-spaced.
5. When writing your essay, think about the Orthodox perspective regarding your chosen topic
Research may be done by consulting your Bible and other Orthodox books and materials.
The guidance of your Church School Teachers and Priest(s) may also be helpful
6. Reflect your personal experiences that relate to the topic.
7. All Essays will be judged according to their Content, Organization, Style, Language, Originality, and Presentation.

POINTS:

POINT SCALE:

_____ CONTENT

OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points

_____ ORGANIZATION

GOOD.....7–8 points
(Better than average)

_____ STYLE

SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points
(Fair, Average)

_____ LANGUAGE

_____ ORIGINALITY

BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points

_____ PRESENTATION

INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points

_____ TOTAL POINTS

Participant #: _____

TOPIC #: _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____

Junior Division
POETRY CATEGORY
Grades 7–9

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

RULES:

MINIMUM: 8 lines
MAXIMUM: 30 lines

1. Must be based on the Junior Division Oratorical Topics
2. Poets may choose any form (sonnet, open verse, etc.)
3. State Title and Topic on the front page.
4. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church's Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
5. The criteria for which poems will be judged are:
Theologically Sound, Sincerity, Imagery, Originality, Choice of Form, Presentation, and Title.

POINTS:

POINT SCALE:

_____ THEOLOGICALLY SOUND	OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points
_____ SINCERITY	GOOD.....7–8 points (Better than average)
_____ IMAGERY	SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points (Fair, Average)
_____ ORIGINALITY	BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points
_____ CHOICE OF FORM	INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points
_____ PRESENTATION	
_____ TITLE	

_____ **TOTAL POINTS**

TOPIC #: _____

Participant #: _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____

Senior Division
POETRY CATEGORY
Grades 10–12

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

RULES:

MINIMUM: 8 lines

MAXIMUM: 30 lines

1. Must be based on the Senior Division Oratorical Topics
2. Poets may choose any form (sonnet, open verse, etc.)
3. State Title and Topic on the front page.
4. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church's Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
5. The criteria for which poems will be judged are:
Theologically Sound, Sincerity, Imagery, Originality, Choice of Form, Presentation, and Title.

POINTS:

POINT SCALE:

_____ THEOLOGICALLY SOUND	OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points
_____ SINCERITY	GOOD.....7–8 points (Better than average)
_____ IMAGERY	SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points (Fair, Average)
_____ ORIGINALITY	
_____ CHOICE OF FORM	BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points
_____ PRESENTATION	INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points
_____ TITLE	
_____ TOTAL POINTS	TOPIC #: _____

Participant #: _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____

THE ORATORICAL FESTIVAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Scholarship Fund was established to provide scholarships for the top three speakers in the Junior and Senior Divisions of the national Archdiocese Oratorical Festival. The first scholarships were awarded in 1988. The Oratorical Scholarship Fund also receives support from individuals and a growing list of Parishes and Philoptochos chapters and other ministries of the Church that annually contribute to the scholarship fund.

One of the major concerns of teenagers today is the rising cost of higher education. A major goal of the Oratorical Festival Scholarship Fund is that it be enlarged to the point whereby scholarship awards will not only be maintained, but also increased. To meet this goal, however, requires the help of individuals, Parishes and organizations that appreciate and will help meet the needs of our college bound youth.

The Fr. John Orfanakos Fund

The Archdiocese Department of Religious Education has established the Fr. John Orfanakos Fund for the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Scholarship as a tribute to the late Co-Chairman of the Archdiocese Oratorical Festival. Fr. John fell asleep in the Lord on August 20, 2014. Fr. Orfanakos along with his wife, Presvytera Margaret, was the Co-Chairman of the Oratorical Festival for three decades. Donations to the Oratorical Festival Scholarship Fund can be directed to the Orfanakos Fund.

Your consideration and support of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Scholarship Fund is needed and deeply appreciated.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

JUNIOR DIVISION

First Place	\$2,000
Second Place	\$1,500
Third Place	\$1,000

SENIOR DIVISION

First Place	\$2,000
Second Place	\$1,500
Third Place	\$1,000

All "Honorable Mention" Finalists receive various other prizes.

Those interested in offering gifts, appreciated securities, or other forms of support to the Scholarship Fund can do so by contacting:

The Department of Religious Education
50 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445
(800) 566-1088

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL MATERIALS

The Oratorical Festival Manual is also available for download in full or in the following sections at www.religioused.goarch.org:

Instructions for Parish Chairpersons
For Speakers
Hosting a Festival
Judges Materials
Summary of Ratings and Rankings
Essay and Poetry Guidelines
Elementary Division

The following supplies may be obtained from the Department of Religious Education by visiting our online store (www.orthodoxmarketplace.com) or calling (800) 566-1088.

CERTIFICATES

Each speaker should receive a Certificate to recognize participation in the Festival. Certificates are available for Parish, District, Metropolis, and Elementary levels.

AWARDS

St. John Chrysostom Medallion: A round medallion with three-color enamel depiction of the icon of the saint (2" diameter)

St. John Chrysostom Icons: 3½ × 5" icons of the saint, available as a coated-paper, laminated, or mounted icon

BOOKS

***Daily Readings from the Writings of St. John Chrysostom*, edited by Fr. Anthony Coniaris:** Brilliant gems from the writings of one of the world's greatest preachers—excellent for daily devotional reading

Also available: Videos of Speeches

A number of Archdiocese Oratorical Festival speeches are available on YouTube to inform and motivate your students. Go to www.youtube.com and search for "St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival" to find videos of the past years' speeches.

NOTES



GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

Department of Religious Education

**ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
ORATORICAL FESTIVAL**



Certificate of Merit awarded to

Parish

Rank

Age Division

Type of Entry

for participation in the
PARISH FESTIVAL

Date

† DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America

Metropolitan

Presbyter



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