
St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival 2012



TOPICS, TIPS, AND RESOURCES



GREEK ORTHODOX
ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

Department of Religious Education
(800) 566-1088 | religioused@goarch.org

Senior Division (Grades 10–12)

1. In Leviticus 19:33, we read, “And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him.” Immigration has always been a source of growth and change in American society. What should be the attitude of an Orthodox Christian toward immigration and immigrants?

A. Read the Church’s teachings:

Genesis 4:4–15; Genesis 27; Psalm 137 (136 Septuagint); Matthew 22:37–38; Luke 10:25–37; John 13:34

B. Consider the direction your speech might take. Here are some examples:

- Who were some of the immigrants in the Bible? How were they treated? Have any of your friends or family members been immigrants? How do you act toward them? (Alternatively: Would you ever consider emigrating to another country? Think about challenges you might meet.)
- The first Greek immigrants to arrive in the United States established the Greek Orthodox Church of America. How did their church integrate into a new culture? How did they maintain their Orthodox Tradition and Greek heritage?
- Does the Church respond differently to different kinds of immigrants? Why or why not?

C. Once you have chosen a direction, learn more about the topic. Here are some recommended resources and readings:

- Thomas FitzGerald, “The Development of the Orthodox Parish in the United States,” pages 11–32 in Anton Vrame, ed., *The Orthodox Parish in America: Faithfulness to the Past and Responsibility to the Future* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2004).
- National Council of Churches USA, “Resolution on Immigration and a Call for Action,” (September 22, 2008), www.nccusa.org/NCCpolicies/immigrationsresolution08.htm

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- National Council of Churches USA Ecumenical Resources for Immigration Ministries, “Who Is My Neighbor?” www.ncccusa.org/immigration/immigmain.html
- National Council of Churches News Service, “More faith groups favor immigration reform, but just how many Americans are listening?” (February 28, 2011), available from www.ncccusa.org/news/110301immigrants2.html

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2. Discuss the prayers and Biblical references of the Sacrament of Holy Unction in the Orthodox Church (James 5:14–15). What does the sacrament tell us about faith, healing, and our relationship with God?

A. Read the Church's teachings:

Genesis 30:22–33; James 5:14–15

B. Consider the direction your speech might take. Here are some examples:

- In the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Unction is offered for the healing of soul and body and for forgiveness of sins. At the end of the service, the person is anointed with oil, and the grace of God is called down upon each person. What is the meaning of the service, and how is it meant to affect us?
- Focus on the Holy Unction service of Holy Wednesday. What are the troparias, psalms, prayers, and Scripture readings of the service?
- Who needs to partake in the Sacrament of Holy Unction, and when, according to the Church's teachings?

C. Once you have chosen a direction, learn more about the topic. Here are some recommended resources and readings:

- *Holy Unction* video, available at www.goarch.org/multimedia/video/unction/qt-unction (DVD also available for purchase, DRE item # GOTEL012)
- Alkiviadis Calivas, *Great Week and Pascha in the Greek Orthodox Church* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1992), pages 51–62.
- Donna Farley, *Seasons of Grace: Reflections on the Orthodox Church Year* (Conciliar Press, 2002), pages 133–36. (DRE item # FL760)
- Paul Meyendorff, *The Anointing of the Sick* (SVS Press, 2009).
- Meletios Webber, *Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God* (Conciliar Press, 2007). (DRE item #FL625)

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3. In Matthew 18:21–22, Jesus tells Peter that one should forgive one’s brother not just seven times but “seventy times seven.” Discuss how and why we should forgive wrongdoers, even when something within us cries out for justice—especially if we’re the injured party.

A. Read the Church’s teachings:

Luke 23:34; Matthew 6:14–15; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:3

B. Consider the direction your speech might take. Here are some examples:

- Read the story of St. Dionysius of Zakynthos, St. Moses the Ethiopian, or another saint noted for forgiveness. What can you learn from the life of these saints?
- How does forgiveness work in a world of violence, international and civil wars, totalitarian regimes, holocausts, genocides and so on?
- What are the steps of forgiving someone? How can we practice forgiveness in our daily life?

C. Once you have chosen a direction, learn more about the topic. Here are some recommended resources and readings:

- Barbara Lewis, *What Do You Stand For? For Teens* (Free Spirit Publishing, 2005), pages 94–102 and 142–47. (DRE item # YM651)
- “Saint Dionysios of Zakynthos,” pages 298–300 in George Poulos, *Orthodox Saints*, Vol. 4 (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005). (DRE item # FL328)
- “St. Dionysius of Zakynthos,” www.ionianvillage.org/program/saints/dionysios
- “Saint Moses the Ethiopian,” pages 219–221 in George Poulos, *Orthodox Saints*, Vol. 3 (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005). (DRE item # FL327)
- “St. Moses the Ethiopian,” www.ewtn.com/saintsholy/saints/M/stmosestheblack.asp

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4. Discuss the famous speech of St. Paul in Athens (Acts of the Apostles 17:22–31). Why is the speech meaningful, and what is its relevance for others today?

A. Read the Church’s teachings:

Acts 17; Romans 1:20–23; Hebrews 1:3; Titus 1:11–12

B. Consider the direction your speech might take. Here are some examples:

- Talk about Athens at the time Paul is preaching. What was the Athenians’ religion? Who is their Unknown God? Who is the Unknown God of Paul? How did Paul start introducing Him? How would you start talking about Christ to a non-Christian friend?
- What does it mean to be God’s offspring? How do we maintain this lineage according to St. Paul’s sermon?
- Could St. Paul’s sermon be preached at your church today? What is relevant to us today, and what is not?

C. Once you have chosen a direction, learn more about the topic. Here are some recommended resources and readings:

- Theodore Stylianopoulos, *The Way of Christ: Gospel, Spiritual Life, and Renewal in Orthodoxy* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2002), pages 141–56.
- *The Young Church Pupil’s Manual* (Orthodox Christian Education Commission), available for order from <http://store.orthodoxed.org>.
- Archbishop Demetrios (Trakatellis), editor, *In the Footsteps of Saint Paul: An Academic Symposium* (Ecumenical Patriarchate and Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011).
- John Fotopoulos, “The Kingdom of God: Paul the Apostle’s Perilous Proclamation,” pages 19–41 in *Thinking through Faith: New Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars*, edited by Aristotle Papanikolaou and Elizabeth Prodromou (SVS Press, 2008).
- Anton Vrame, “The St. Paul We Don’t Hear,” *Praxis* vol. 8, no. 2 (Winter 2009), available at <http://issuu.com/orthodoxmarketplace/docs/issuepdf--20->

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5. Stress and anxiety seem to be inevitable nowadays, in our every relationship and activity. How are we as Christians supposed to act in times of worry and uncertainty?

A. Read the Church's teachings:

Matthew 6:25–28; Philippians 4:6

B. Consider the direction your speech might take. Here are some examples:

- What is your greatest stress or anxiety? Why? How did you manage it? What would Christ tell you in time of distress? How can your local church, family and friends help?
- How do you respond to other people who are stressed? How does their behavior influence you?
- How does the Church address society wide stressors such as inequality, violence and economic trouble?

C. Once you have chosen a direction, learn more about the topic. Here are some recommended resources and readings:

- Barbara Lewis, *What Do You Stand For? For Teens* (Free Spirit Publishing, 2005), pages 172–83. (DRE item # YM651)
- GOA Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, “Orthodox Christian Teen Survival Guide: Managing Stress” brochure, available at www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/youth/youthworkers/survivalguide
- Dee Pennock, *Who Is God? Who Am I? Who Are You?* pages 118–31. (DRE item # 1011)