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# St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival 2012

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## TOPICS, TIPS, AND RESOURCES

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*St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival 2012*  
*Topics, Tips, and Resources*

**Junior Division (Grades 7–9)**

1. Many times in the New Testament, we see Jesus caring about the blind, the paralyzed, and others with physical disabilities (for example, Matthew 9:2 and 9:27–29). Following Christ’s footsteps, discuss the Christian attitude toward disabled people.

**A. Read the Church’s teachings:**

Matthew 4:23–25, 8:1–13, 9:27–38, and 12:9–14; Mark 2:12; Luke 13:10–13

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

- Select several healing stories in the Bible and discuss whom it is that Christ heals. What is the Church’s attitude toward the disabled? Talk about how the Church in general and your local church are helping the disabled, and ways in which they could be of further help.
- What is “disability” in the Bible? How does our society define the term? Who are the disabled, according to Christ? Who are they in your eyes?
- We are created in the image and likeness of God. How does one carry that image despite a physical disability?

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

- Wendy Cwiklinski, “Church and the Child with Invisible Disabilities,” OCA Resource Handbook (2006), <http://oca.org/resource-handbook/familylife/church-and-the-child-with-invisible-disabilities>
- St. John the Baptist Philoptochos, *Angels and Autism: Finding Faith for the Autistic Child* DVD, available for order from [http://stjohndfw.info/Files/autismdvdorderform\\_1.pdf](http://stjohndfw.info/Files/autismdvdorderform_1.pdf)
- Marina Katsoulis and Elizabeth Borch, “The Challenge Liturgy and Beyond,” *Praxis* vol. 8, no. 3 (Spring 2009), available at <http://issuu.com/orthodoxmarketplace/docs/issuepdf--21->

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- Michael Matsko, “Ministering to Residents of an Adult Foster Care Home,” OCA Resource Handbook (2001), <http://oca.org/resource-handbook/commservice/ministering-to-residents-of-an-adult-foster-care-home>
- Albert Rossi, Gay Rossi, and Stewart Armour, “No Small Change,” OCA Resource Handbook (1986), <http://oca.org/resource-handbook/commservice/no-small-change>
- Ray Velencia, “St. Matthew House [for individuals with severe physical disabilities],” OCA Resource Handbook (2000), <http://oca.org/resource-handbook/commservice/st.-matthew-house>

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2. Discuss the lives of Sts. Cyril and Methodios and their missionary work. How can we follow their example by responding to Christ’s commandment to “go forth” (Matthew 28:19)?

**A. Read about lives of Sts. Cyril and Methodios, and read Matthew 28:19.**

- “Methodios & Cyril, Equal-to-the Apostles, Illuminators of the Slavs,” GOA Online Chapel, [www.goarch.org/chapel/saints\\_view?contentid=486](http://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints_view?contentid=486)
- “Saints Cyril and Methodios,” pages 163–65 in George Poulos, *Orthodox Saints*, Vol. 2 (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005). (DRE item # FL326)
- “Saints Cyril and Methodius,” Wikipedia, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saints\\_Cyril\\_and\\_Methodius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saints_Cyril_and_Methodius)

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

- What do Sts. Cyril and Methodios have in common with biblical missionaries, such as Paul, Philip, or Barnabas? How did they spread the Gospel? What were the effects of their evangelical works? In what ways might you imitate them?
- Read about the life of a contemporary missionary. Would you ever consider becoming one? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to “go forth”? Talk about ways your local church can help with this mission.

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

- Orthodox Christian Mission Center Magazine, [www.ocmc.org/resources/magazines.aspx](http://www.ocmc.org/resources/magazines.aspx)
- Orthodox Christian Mission Center, “Orthodox Approach to Missions,” [http://ocmc.org/about\\_missions/orthodox\\_approach.aspx](http://ocmc.org/about_missions/orthodox_approach.aspx)
- Luke Veronis, *Missionaries, Monks and Martyrs: Making Disciples of All Nations* (Light & Life, out of print)
- Luke Veronis, *Go Forth: Stories of Mission and Resurrection in Albania* (Conciliar Press, 2010). (DRE item # FL250)

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3. In the Old Testament, we see many stories involving disagreements among siblings. What can families learn from these stories today?

**A. Read the Church’s teachings:**

Genesis 4:4–15; Genesis 27; Matthew 5:23–24; Matthew 22:37–38; Luke 10:25–37;  
John 13:34

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

- Talk about the epic conflict of Cain and Abel and/or Esau and Jacob. What are the consequences of this conflict? Have you ever disagreed with your siblings, relatives or friends? What were the consequences of your conflict? How did you resolve it, or are going to resolve it?
- How would Jesus respond to a disagreement between siblings? What can you learn from Jesus response?
- What would the Church’s response be to sibling rivalry?

**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 202–215. (DRE item # YM651)
- Jennie McLaurin, “Foe or Friend: How to rein in sibling rivalry,” *Christian Parenting Today* (2004),  
[www.kyria.com/topics/marriagefamily/parenting/familydynamics/17.40.html](http://www.kyria.com/topics/marriagefamily/parenting/familydynamics/17.40.html)

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4. Discuss one of the Great Feasts of the Church. How has this feast become important to you and your family?

**A. Choose a feast and read the Church’s teachings:**

Pascha (the Feast of Feasts)

The Twelve Great Feasts:

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ○ Nativity of the Theotokos     | ○ Annunciation of the Theotokos    |
| ○ Elevation of the Holy Cross   | ○ Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem |
| ○ Presentation of the Theotokos | ○ Ascension of the Lord            |
| ○ Nativity of the Lord          | ○ Pentecost                        |
| ○ Theophany                     | ○ Transfiguration of the Lord      |
| ○ Presentation of the Lord      | ○ Dormition of the Theotokos       |

Scriptures related to the feasts, e.g., Luke 2:1–38 and Matthew 26, 27, and 28

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

- Choose one the Great Feasts of the Church and talk about its importance in the Church. How does the Church celebrate this feast? How does your family celebrate this particular feast? What is this feast’s meaning to you?
- Have you ever invited a non-Orthodox friend to celebrate this particular feast with you, how did you explain it to him? What were his impressions?
- Think about a Feast that your family does not celebrate as much. How can you introduce the meaning and traditions of this particular Feast to them? What can you do to make it part of your family.

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

- *Enter In: Exploring the Feasts of the Orthodox Church* DVD. (DRE item # Y19)
- *Epiphany: Festival of Lights* DVD. (DRE item # GOTEL031)
- GOA Center for Family Care articles on Feast Days and Fasting Periods, [www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/family/articles/art-feastdays](http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/family/articles/art-feastdays)

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- Frank Marangos, ed., *The Annual Resource Companion*, vol. 1: The Liturgical Year. (DRE item # FL025)
- A Monk of the Eastern Church, *A Year of Grace of the Lord* (SVS Press, 1997). (DRE item # FL761)
- Theodore Stylianopoulos, *A Year of the Lord: Liturgical Bible Studies*, 5 volumes (DRE items # FL611– FL615; entire set is item # FL616)
- Robert Snyder and Joan Teebagy, *Celebration: Feasts and Holy Days* (DRE item # FL751)

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5. In our day, when people's lives have become more and more scheduled with events, how might we reclaim our understanding of Sunday (the Sabbath), as a day of rest and honoring the Lord?

**A. Read the Church's teachings:**

Exodus 20:8–11; Matthew 12:9–14; Mark 3:1–6

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

- Read Exodus 20:8–11. What does the commandment say about the Lord's Day? What was Jesus' understanding of the Sabbath? How do you think the Lord's Day should be kept?
- Talk about the importance of Sunday as the Lord's Day in the Orthodox Church. What can the Church do to help its believers keep the Day of the Lord?
- Have you ever had the dilemma choosing whether to go to Divine Liturgy on Sunday or to attend another activity? What did you do, and would you change anything the next time you face the choice?

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

- Alkiviadis Calivas, *Come Before God: In Prayer and Solemn Feast* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998)
- Massachusetts Council of Churches, "Take Back Your Time," [masscouncilofchurches.org/docs/takebacktime.htm](http://masscouncilofchurches.org/docs/takebacktime.htm)
- George Mastrantonis, "The Ten Commandments," [www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith7115](http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith7115)
- George Nicozisin, *Teenage Ten Commandments*," pages 44–49 (DRE item # 810)