

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. Videos or DVDs 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. 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**