



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Department of Religious Education
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2021 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Topics

Junior Division (Grades 7–9)

1. Discuss the challenges and opportunities of watching a church service that is live streamed.
2. Prayer is called a “conversation with God.” Discuss the meaning of prayer in your life.
3. During the pandemic, people noticed that our natural environment became cleaner. What can this teach us about our care for the natural world?
4. Why is the Church still relevant, especially for young people, in our increasingly secular, post-COVID world?
5. Choose one parable from the Gospel of Luke chapters 15 or 16 that is particularly meaningful to you and explain what we can learn from it.

Senior Division (Grades 10–12)

1. During the stay at home period of the pandemic, Orthodox Christians had to find ways to practice their faith without attending church in person or participating in parish activities. Discuss what you learned during those days.
2. In July 2020, a Turkish court gave permission for Hagia Sophia to be converted from a museum into a mosque. Discuss the significance of Hagia Sophia in the history of Christianity and the power of monuments like it to inspire religious identity.
3. We live in a highly polarized society – left vs. right, personal liberty vs. common good, and other issues where it seems everything is politicized. How are we as Orthodox Christians called to navigate this environment?

4. St. Peter writes, "Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil; but live as servants of God." (1 Peter 2:16). What is freedom and how does it become a basis for being a servant?

5. In the Psalms we read, "If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you." (Psalm 130:3-4, NRSV). Discuss how an Orthodox Christian understands sin, forgiveness, mercy, and repentance.