



Q & A

Q: I'm leaving for college soon—how can I stay connected to the Orthodox Church?

A: If your school has an Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), have the courage to attend a meeting, even if you don't know anyone else! If you don't have an OCF on campus or an Orthodox community near you, there are several regional and national OCF programs and events that you can attend. Visit www.ocf.net to find an Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) chapter and www.assemblyofbishops.org to find a parish near you!

Q: Is it ok to question my faith?

A: There are a ton of conflicting messages about faith, God, ethics, and morality. It can leave you wondering...what is the truth? Questioning your faith in a positive and engaging way can help you understand God and Orthodoxy in a deeper way. In fact, your faith will probably be even stronger once you have overcome doubts. Do the research and make sure to learn what the Orthodox Church believes about different issues. Seek out the answers or resources from your parish priest and others who are knowledgeable about Orthodoxy.

INFO

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www.facebook.com/GOYAministry

Books:

Real World 101: A Survival Guide to Life After High School by Autumn McAlpin, Booksurge Publishing, 2009.



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• Download the Daily Readings Mobile App: www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/internet/mobileapps/

• Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Online Chapel: <http://www.goarch.org/chapel/>

• Transitioning to College: <http://www.transitioning2college.org/>

• Search for a local Orthodox parish: www.assemblyofbishops.org

www.ocf.net

• Orthodox Christian Fellowship: www.ocf.net

Online Resources:

GET THE FACTS

Handling the Transition, Not the Change: No matter how we prepare for a change in life, we may not be fully prepared for the transitions those changes bring about. Whether going to college, leaving home, or starting a new job, life changes will constantly test you—how will you respond?

Personal Freedom: Finding yourself with an enormous amount of freedom and free time may leave you feeling lost and overwhelmed. With so many decisions, extra time, and the added personal and financial responsibilities, daily life can be difficult to navigate.

Relationships: During any transition in life, our relationships with family, friends, and God may become strained because of added stress and the challenges of a new environment. Losing touch with these connections can leave us feeling alone, both emotionally and spiritually.

NAVIGATING THROUGH YOUR TEEN YEARS: LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

DEALING WITH IT

Plan your day, every day! Now it's up to you to make decisions about all aspects of your life—what time to wake up, making it to class or work, remembering to pray. Make a "LIFE" schedule. Planning ahead and knowing when and where you are going can keep you on track, in both your personal AND spiritual life!

Know when to ask for help: Taking advantage of help rather than trying to navigate on your own can be the difference between failure and success. Identifying the people in your life that you trust and can listen to your doubts, fears, and questions is half the battle.

Find a "Family": Finding friends with similar interests can provide you with the right support at the right time. The people that you surround yourself with, your new family, will greatly influence your every day decisions. Choose wisely!

THE CHURCH SPEAKS

Be Sober, Be Watchful (1 Peter 5:8)

Now more than ever, taking responsibility for your actions is extremely important. Facing things like peer pressure, sex, and alcohol on your own will require character, discernment, and a clear understanding about the consequences of your actions. Thinking about how you will respond to difficult situations, including what you will say, is often the best way to prepare for encountering temptations.

Owning Your Faith

Figuring out where God fits into your life after high school may involve standing up for what you believe and sorting out essential questions about faith. With all of these new experiences, especially meeting people from different faith backgrounds, taking the time to "relearn" the basics of Orthodoxy will help you better understand your faith. The willingness to *own* your faith, rather than simply inheriting it from your parents, is a huge step in one's spiritual journey.

Orthodox Christian, All the Time

Living as an Orthodox Christian should be something you think about both on Sunday mornings AND on Friday nights. You may even feel like you are leading a double life, conflicted between *who you are* and *who you would like to be*. Challenge yourself to be an Orthodox Christian all day, every day—not just when it's convenient! Take some inspiration from St. Paul, who said this about his own spiritual dedication, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Maintaining Balance in Your Life

Taking care of yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually is an important aspect of maintaining balance. Scripture says, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time" (Eph. 5:15). When demands like exhaustion, exams, and relationships require more of your time, it can feel impossible to fulfill all of your commitments. Making time for prayer will help reduce anxiety and keep you focused on your connection with God.