

JOY MINISTRY GUIDELINES

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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America**

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Dear Faithful,

With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, we are pleased to offer the parishes, clergy, and youth workers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the revised *Junior Orthodox Youth (JOY) Ministry Guidelines*.

These *Guidelines* are offered to assist the local parish in continuing to create and enhance their JOY Ministry. These are guidelines—not by-laws. They are in no way intended to be the ultimate authority in JOY Ministry programming, however, they are considered best practices for the ministry.

The question is often asked, “What is the Church doing for our Orthodox children?” A successful JOY Ministry is but one of the answers to this question. As the Church of Christ, we must be willing to incorporate all members into the Body. A great way of doing this is to have our youth participate in all aspects of the Church, allowing them to fully experience the Orthodox Faith.

Using the basic principles of JOY Ministry—*worship, fellowship, service, and witness*—we pray that these *JOY Ministry Guidelines* will assist you in ministering to our young people on their journey toward salvation.

These *Guidelines* have been reviewed and revised by the Archdiocese Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team, along with parish clergy and JOY advisors. The Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team is comprised of the National Department and each Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry throughout our Archdiocese.

On behalf of this team, I pray that these *Guidelines* will assist you in your JOY Ministry and will be a source of inspiration to all who read them.

†Reverend Mark A. Leondis, *National Director*
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**A NOTE FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES**

If this article rings true to you, take some time for yourself before proceeding with your ministry. You cannot minister to others unless you minister to yourself first. Remember that the heart must first pump blood to itself before it can pump it to the rest of the body. If you need assistance or guidance, talk with your parish priest, a fellow youth worker or someone from the Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team.

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WHAT IS JOY MINISTRY?

MISSION

The mission of the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is to coordinate the youth and young adult ministries of the national church in collaboration with Metropolis Directors; by providing standardized resources and training, this unified national ministry team enables youth workers, young people, and their families to better understand and fully experience the Orthodox Christian Faith.

The *Junior Orthodox Youth*, or JOY, is a ministry of the Department. The mission of JOY is to strengthen the relationship of young Orthodox Christians with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The program works to educate and edify young members of the Church, encouraging them to become active sacramental participants in the life of the Body of Christ. This ministry offers them the opportunity to experience the Faith, ultimately leading them to Salvation.

MINISTRY VS. ORGANIZATION

JOY is a ministry of the Church. It is not an organization or club, but simply a gathering of the faithful of the Church who share the same grades, ages and common interests. It is a spiritual ministry, based on the theological tenets of the Orthodox Christian Faith.

PARTICIPANTS VS. MEMBERS

Belonging to JOY Ministry depends solely on being an Orthodox Christian. Children are not classified as members or non-members—if they are members of the Faith, they belong! That is, they are participants or children rather than members. If non-Orthodox children wish to participate, welcome and offer ministry to them. Encourage them to participate in the program and explain to them that the Sacraments are only for baptized and/or chrismated members of the Orthodox Church. There have been many instances of entire families converting to Orthodoxy because of their child's involvement in JOY Ministry.

GUIDELINES VS. CONSTITUTION

Since JOY Ministry is not an organization or club, guidelines exist rather than a constitution. The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries offers these guidelines to inform and direct the faithful

Ask Yourself: Do I tend to overlook my own spiritual nurture? Am I feeding myself so little spiritual food that I'm unable to nurture others through my ministry?

WARNING SIGN #5: AVOIDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

If we don't pursue opportunities for professional growth, we grow stale. And when burnout is lurking, we lose interest in upgrading our skills. Professional growth is important to me for two reasons: (1) I value professional relationships with ministry colleagues. When I plan activities or brainstorm ideas with friends, or when I join support groups, I stay fresh. (2) I appreciate good training opportunities. I use my continuing education allowance to upgrade my skills. I particularly like events that teach me new strategies, not just clarify what I already know. I've not always put an emphasis on professional growth. I realize those were times when the burnout bug was like a tick trying to burrow in. Don't neglect opportunities for professional growth. If you do, that's a burnout warning sign. (Or worse, you think you know it all already!)

Ask Yourself: Do I see professional growth as just another impossible expectation that must be sacrificed for "the important stuff"?

WARNING SIGN #6: NEGLECTING PERSONAL NEEDS

Have you learned that ministry needs always take priority over personal needs? Then you're in for troubled times. It's taken me too long to understand that God never asks me to sacrifice my personal life for professional ministry. I know you could use "take up your cross and follow me" as debate ammunition. But I also know that, at times, I've neglected myself, my family, and my friends. And I believe that's a sin. What a joke—we punish the people we love most to do God's work. That's stupid theology. If you make ministry your mistress, you'll fizzle quickly. I'm grateful I learned before it was too late that God's hopes for my ministry aren't the same as my own expectations. But I've paid dearly for neglecting myself, my family, and my friends.

Ask Yourself: Do I neglect my personal needs because of ministry demands? Do I neglect my family or friends because the church needs me more?

If you checked YES on all or most of these warning signs, you're headed for burnout. Please, before it's too late, take the necessary steps to prevent it. Many good people have left ministry because of burnout. You could be one of them.

cise routine. I understand that I'm no good to anyone when I'm tired. Excuses such as "That's what ministry is all about" are simply dumb. Recently, a youth group member bluntly told me, "Hey, you look tired. Get some rest." I did. It helped. I'm psyched again.

Ask Yourself: Do people notice that I'm tired a lot? Have I looked in the mirror lately and moaned, "I'm tired"?

WARNING SIGN #3: MISHANDLING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

All of us work with difficult people. Every church and every denomination has them. Sometimes I think God has "over blessed" me with them. Difficult people demand a lot of attention. They're high maintenance people. It takes patience and energy to respond well when they come at you with another passionate agenda. How you deal with them can indicate impending burnout. I recall an intense father who had demanding views and a biting, sarcastic attitude. I worked with his two daughters. I monitored how I reacted to him. Sometimes I was highly effective and could work through his criticisms positively. Other times I was poisoned by his attacks, and lingering bitterness got the best of me. What did I discover? It all had to do with ministry energy. When I was in "martyr" mode, I was much less effective with him. When I was energized, I never took his stuff personally.

Ask Yourself: Do difficult people often get the best of me? Do confrontations linger and absorb me emotionally?

WARNING SIGN #4: SPIRITUAL LETHARGY

When we balance our emotional, spiritual, and physical needs, we set in place a foundation for more effective ministry. Experience has taught me that spiritual needs are easy to neglect. That's why I started taking a yearly hiking vacation in the Colorado Rockies. God has worked on me powerfully on those back-country trails. As ministers, we're always praying for kids, preparing Bible studies, preaching, and so on. And we expect we'll find nourishment by spiritual osmosis. That just isn't true.

To meet my spiritual needs, I must pursue prayer, reading, and quiet time apart from my ministry. If I don't, my kids know. How? I lead Bible studies like a dictator instead of a facilitator. I preach at people instead of with them. Group prayer times are legalistic and boring. And I'm pharisaical—I mean I go through the religious motions while neglecting the Holy Spirit's power.

as to the ecclesiastical purpose of JOY Ministry, stressing the four characteristics of worship, fellowship, service, and witness.

WHO IT SERVES

JOY ministers to 3rd through 6th grade children of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. In smaller parishes, it is sometimes necessary for JOY and HOPE (Kindergarten to 2nd grade) Ministry to be combined, though it is not recommended. It is important that the advisors of this combined group familiarize themselves with both the JOY and HOPE Ministry Guidelines. During planning, pay special attention to the developmental needs of the individual children in the group, as each activity may not be appropriate for all the children who attend. Occasionally, special activities may be planned for specific grades.

YOUTH MINISTRY FOUNDATION

A child's world is changing rapidly—it is virtually impossible to keep up with every new trend and movement of their culture. Growing up in today's society is a much more difficult task than it was in previous times. Our children are constantly being exposed to negative and destructive influences. If these influences are not challenged, they can, and will, define who our children will become. Innocence is slipping away at an alarmingly early age. For these reasons, the positive teachings and traditions of the Orthodox Church must become a living presence in the lives of our children. This makes ministry to our children not an option, but rather a necessity.

But what is ministry? The word **minister** means to give aid to those in need. Therefore, a ministry of the Orthodox Church gives aid as part of the Body of Christ. A child becomes a full member of this Body at their baptism. The foundation of all youth ministry is the cultivation and education of our children, so that they may become **active** members of the Body of Christ. JOY Ministry is but one means to this end; it must not stand alone, but rather be incorporated into the entire life of the Church and its mission.

Youth ministry needs to begin early, even before the child begins to participate in JOY Ministry. It begins with the family in the home, and it needs to continue in the home as the child grows in the Church. As youth workers, it is important to keep in mind that the single greatest influence on how a child develops a "sense of self" is their parents. Therefore, it is critical that we not only minister to the children, but also to their parents. We should consider our ministry a supplement to this vital "home ministry."

PATRON SAINTS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Great are the achievements of faith! In the fountain of flame, as by the water of rest, the Three Holy Children rejoiced. And the Prophet Daniel proved a shepherd of lions as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Apolytikion of Daniel the Prophet and the Three Holy Youths

The Three Holy Youths (Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego) are the patron saints for all Youth Ministry programs of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. During that time, King Nebuchadnezzar created a law stating that all those in the land were to bow down and worship his golden idols. If the anyone chose not to, they would be thrown into a furnace and burned to death.

It came to the attention of the King that three children were refusing to worship these idols. Enraged by their refusal, the king brought the three youths before him, commanding them to bow down before the idols. The youths, steadfast in their faith, would not bow down, and King Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into the furnace. God sent an Angel into the furnace with the youths in order to protect them, cooling the flames. The youths danced and sang praises to God, the very praises we sing on Great and Holy Saturday: *"Praise the Lord and exalt Him to all the ages!"* The king, amazed that they had not been harmed, declared their God to be the True God. They are commemorated each year on December 17th. This account from the Old Testament can be found in the 3rd chapter of the book of Daniel.

PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO MINISTER TO YOUTH

O Lord our God, You who said, "Let the little children come to me," bless us who faithfully minister to Your children. Guide us, O Lord, as Your youth workers and teachers in the vineyard of the Faith, so that we may provide a fruitful ministry to the young people we serve. Help us to speak to their hearts in both our words and deeds, so that You may dwell in them. Assist us to effectively communicate Your love to them so that they may comprehend and know You, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Strengthen us O Lord, as we continually direct them toward You, and that through You, they may be unified by the love of Christ and be filled with Your loving kindness.

We thank You O Lord our God, for the rich and abundant blessings You continually bestow on us. May these blessings be a source of inspiration, joy and love to us. We lift up our prayers to You, O Christ our God, the light of our souls and bodies, together with Your all holy good and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages, Amen.

APPENDIX F: ARE YOU HEADED FOR BURNOUT?

Group Magazine (www.groupmag.com)

July-August, 1996

By Mike Gillespie

I've logged 18 years as a youth minister-18 years learning to outsmart a ministry Nemesis that's claimed many of my friends. That enemy is burnout. Two decades ago, I scoffed at the possibility; now I don't. That's because I've paid a high price for ignoring the warning signs of burnout in my ministry. As you read my story, take a moment to evaluate your ministry. Remember, if you think you're safe from burnout, you're probably its next victim.

WARNING SIGN #1: THE SUPERSTAR SYNDROME

Early in ministry, I was sure hard work was all I needed for success. I felt confident because I already had a good work ethic. Because of my naiveté I didn't realize the church will let you work as many hours as you want. There's always something more to do. A 45-hour week quickly stretched to 50, then to 60, then...I thought I could be everything to everybody. I was particularly vulnerable at youth council planning sessions. We scheduled retreats, lock-ins, and trips with little recognition on my part of what it'd take to pull them off. The kids loved that about me, so I succumbed. My favorite refrain: "Sure, we can do that." One summer, I committed to participate in five group trips and lead two weeklong children's camps. "Sure, I can get it all done." BUNK! I'm learning to work smarter, not longer.

Ask Yourself: Am I obsessed with getting it all done? Is hard work a sign of successful ministry to me?

WARNING SIGN #2: THE FATIGUE FACTOR

How many times in the last six months has a church member said, "You look tired." Hey, there's no hiding it. All those all-nighters, retreats, program planning meetings, and visitation trips add up. It surfaces in your posture, your eyes, your energy, and in your enthusiasm. It roars out at people you work with in the form of irritability, sarcasm, and cynicism.

I've learned to appreciate people who tell me when I look tired. I take it as grace. I get some rest, lighten my calendar, and recommit to my exer-

APPENDIX E: END OF THE YEAR PROGRAM EVALUATION

How often did we have activities this year?

How many people did we have on average?

What children were involved? Who wasn't involved and how can we bring them into the ministry next year?

Did we have activities that incorporated worship, witness, service and fellowship?

What activities did people enjoy? Why were they successful?

How can we expand on these for next year?

What activities did not go so well?

- ✦ What went wrong?
- ✦ How can we change that for next year?

What would we like to see in the future? Brainstorm ideas for:

- ✦ Worship
- ✦ Witness
- ✦ Service
- ✦ Fellowship

What resources and strengths supported the ministry?

- ✦ How can we expand on these?
- ✦ What resources and strengths did we not tap into this year?
- ✦ How can we use these next year?
- ✦ What resources and strengths did we over use this year?
- ✦ How can we avoid this next year?

What problems did we face? How can we solve these and avoid them in the future?

How is our current structure (communication, planning) supporting the ministry?

- ✦ What changes do we need to make?
- ✦ What changes in leadership will we be making?
- ✦ How will we transition for these changes?

THE JOY CHILD

The span from 3rd to 6th grade is a large one, and within it there are great variances in maturity. A 6th grader is at a completely different stage of development than a 3rd grader, however, there is much that they share in common. A well-balanced JOY Ministry program will provide activities that meet the needs of all children in the ministry.

The following are some general observations that apply to most elementary school children:

- ✦ They are very enthusiastic, responsive, and appreciative of youth group activities.
- ✦ They very much respect and look up to adults and are eager to please them.
- ✦ They have short attention spans coupled with an inherent curiosity.
- ✦ They have a tendency for separation between males and females.
- ✦ They have limited ability for abstract thinking.

Though all children in JOY Ministry share many common characteristics, it is helpful to look at some differences. As advisors, we need to keep these characteristics in mind as we prepare to serve our children. Providing them with a supportive and accepting environment will continually help them build and strengthen their self-image in regard to God's plan for them.

THE 3RD TO 4TH GRADE JOY CHILD

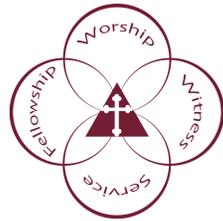
During this period of development, young children are exploring and refining skills learned at earlier ages. Physically, they have all the basics down (running, bike riding, cutting with scissors, etc.), but the quality is not as precise as it is for the older child (an important thing to consider when playing games). Intellectually, children are able to look beyond the surface of things to understand what is causing a certain result. Their ability to understand feelings has matured, causing them to be less focused on themselves. With this new understanding, they are now able to consider the feelings of others before acting.

THE 5TH TO 6TH GRADE JOY CHILD

The pre-adolescent child is on the verge of some big changes in his or her life. They are still children but may occasionally question certain childhood concepts or activities. Physically these children are more skilled than their younger friends. With the teenage years quickly approaching, some

of these children will enter puberty during this pre-adolescent stage. This can greatly impact how a young person perceives him or herself. Social cliques become more prevalent at this age. Although they still group themselves into same-sex groups, they are becoming more interested in the opposite sex. Their ability to understand emotions continues to grow more complex, allowing them to process multiple feelings at one time.

THE FOUR CIRCLES



It is recommended that JOY Ministry integrates the following elements into all aspects of their programming: *worship, fellowship, service, and witness*. An exceptional program will see these elements not only as four separate entities, but as four interlocking circles that overlap and build on each other. A healthy JOY Ministry keeps these aspects in balance.

WORSHIP (LITURGLA)

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.”

Psalm 95:6-7

As Orthodox Christians, we believe that God reveals Himself through Holy Tradition and Scripture. *Worship* is the living expression of these, and is therefore a very important element in ministering to our children. It is necessary for them to be active participants in the liturgical life of the church.

JOY children experience **WORSHIP** by:

- ✦ Actively participating in corporate prayer. Always have copies of any prayers of services you will be doing as a group. Take time to review and explain them before you pray. Make sure the words in the prayers are age appropriate.
- ✦ Actively participating in private prayer. Create personal prayer books, which would include morning, evening and other occasional prayers. Leave room to add other prayers as they grow.

APPENDIX D: ACTIVITY REVIEW QUESTIONS

If lesson is typed out, please attach and file with this form:

Meeting/ Activity Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Chaperones: _____

Designated Drivers: _____

Participants: _____

Describe Activity or Lesson: *What was the objective? Was it met? How was the lesson received? What should we do different in the future? Are there any questions that need to be followed up on?*

Materials Needed: *Who brought them? How much were they? If we need any for the future where can we find them?*

Opening and Closing Prayers: *Which ones did we do?*

Icebreakers: *What did we do? How was it received?*

Music or other Multimedia: *What did we use? Where did we get it? Where can it be found for the future? How was it received? Were there any costs associated with it?*

Arts and Crafts: *What was it? How was it received by the children? What would we do different next time? What were the expenses associated with the project (reflect even if someone donated the money)?*

Refreshments: *What was it? Who brought it? Were there any expenses to the ministry? Who will bring the next one?*

Business: *What did you discuss and decide?*

Setup and Cleanup: *How did it go? Did we allot enough time for each? Are there things we should consider more closely when doing this activity again?*

Total Expenses for Activity: *Does anyone still need to be reimbursed? Does anyone need to be thanked for their donation?*

Overall thoughts on the activity: *What worked? What did not work? What would you do differently?*

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE WEEKEND RETREAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

| | |
|---------|---|
| 6:00 pm | Arrive and Dinner |
| 7:00 pm | Icebreakers |
| 8:00 pm | Compline (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>) |
| 8:30 pm | Cabin Devotional |
| 9:30 pm | Lights Out |

SATURDAY

| | |
|----------|--|
| 7:00 am | Wake Up |
| 8:00 am | Morning Prayers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>) |
| 8:30 am | Breakfast |
| 9:15 am | Session 1 |
| 10:45 am | Group Outdoor Activity |
| 12:00 pm | Lunch |
| 1:00 pm | Session 2 |
| 2:30 pm | Free Time |
| 5:00 pm | Evening Prayers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>) |
| 5:30 pm | Dinner |
| 6:30 pm | Session 3 |
| 7:30 pm | Campfire |
| 9:00 pm | Cabin Devotional |
| 9:30 pm | Lights Out |

SUNDAY

| | |
|----------|---|
| 7:00am | Wake Up |
| 8:00 am | Divine Liturgy (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>) |
| 9:30am | Breakfast |
| 10:15 am | Wrap-Up |
| 11:00 am | Dismissal |

- ✦ Learning and participating in the Divine Services and Sacraments of the Church (not only Liturgy, but the entire cycle of worship). Occasionally offer services with JOY Ministry gatherings and emphasize the role of each child as a participant in the service (Divine Liturgy, Paraklesis, Vespers, Compline, etc.).
- ✦ Praying for those who are sick or in need. Keep a list of people that need prayers. Pray for them at meetings and encourage children to pray for these people in their personal prayers as well.
- ✦ Observing the Church calendar, including the prescribed Feasts and Fasts.
- ✦ Learning the hymns of the Church and using them in prayer.
- ✦ Serving as an Acolyte (Altar Boy).
- ✦ Reading the Epistles during Divine Services.
- ✦ Helping prepare the church for feasts (making breads, decorating icons, etc.)
- ✦ Reading the Bible and the stories of the Saints.

FELLOWSHIP (KOINONIA)

“Behold how good and pleasing it is when brothers dwell in unity.”

Psalm 133:1

Fellowship is the way Orthodox Christians integrate their faith with daily life. It is sacred when Orthodox Christians gather together in the Lord’s name. The relationship of the Holy Trinity is the perfect model of Fellowship—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share perfect communion and exist in perfect love with each other. By gathering together in *fellowship* and experiencing this love, we emulate the relationship of the Trinity and develop our life in Christ.

JOY children can experience FELLOWSHIP by:

- ✦ Participating in Church sponsored camps and retreat programs.
- ✦ Participating in Church sponsored athletic programs, ethnic dancing, etc.
- ✦ Participating in Inter-Orthodox activities.
- ✦ Watching films, videos, and multimedia presentations that can spark discussion.
- ✦ Watching performances of religious productions, plays, musicals, etc.
- ✦ Participating in day or overnight outings together.
- ✦ Volunteering either at the parish or in the local community.
- ✦ Participating in group activities on various topics, books, movies, music, etc.
- ✦ Attending Church, JOY Ministry gatherings and other Church related activities.

SERVICE (DIAKONIA)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”

Mark 10:45

Christ came to serve, not to be served. Children are urged to do the same. They can honor and glorify God by loving and serving humanity in His name. Children can use their God-given gifts to serve. For Orthodox Christians, *service* to God and community is a way of life; the way of living one’s Faith. As Jesus Christ said, “Let your light so shine for men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). *Service* is an integral part of the Orthodox Christian’s life.

Too often, we look at our children and wonder how we can help them. We need to inspire them toward a life of *service*. How can our children use their God-given gifts for *service* to the needy and *service* to those less fortunate? How can they be the people of God who respond to His call in Matthew 25:31-46, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit those in prison? Responding to these human needs is the true meaning of *service*.

JOY children experience SERVICE by:

- ✦ Offering their personal stewardship—giving of time, talents, and treasure—to both the church and their local community charities.
- ✦ Participating in work projects to beautify and maintain the parish or local community.
- ✦ Outreaching to the elderly, the sick, the shut-ins, etc.
- ✦ Supporting missions abroad and at home by learning about Orthodoxy throughout the world.
- ✦ Supporting Archdiocesan, Metropolitan, and Parish ministries like St. Basil’s Academy, Philoptochos, Hellenic College/Holy Cross, St. Michael’s Home, etc.
- ✦ Supporting Inter-Orthodox organizations endorsed by SCOBA, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas: International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting (EOCS), Orthodox Christian Network (OCN), etc.
- ✦ Making sandwiches to deliver to the homeless.
- ✦ Cleaning up trash at a local park.
- ✦ Making cookies to thank those who serve the church (chanters, custodians, parish council members, etc.) or the community (firemen, policemen, teachers, etc.).

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE MEETING SCHEDULE

| | |
|---------|--|
| 5:30 pm | Opening Prayer Icebreaker Music |
| 6:00 pm | Lesson |
| 6:30 pm | Arts and Crafts |
| 7:00 pm | Clean-up Announcement and Business Closing Prayer Fellowship and Refreshments |

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE DAY RETREAT SCHEDULE

| | |
|----------|--|
| 9:00 am | Arrival and Light Refreshments |
| 9:30 am | Morning Prayers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>) |
| 10:00 am | Icebreakers |
| 10:30 am | Session 1 |
| 11:00 am | Arts and Crafts |
| 12:00 pm | Lunch |
| 1:00 pm | Session 2 |
| 2:00 pm | Music |
| 3:00 pm | Wrap-up and Reflection |
| 4:00 pm | Vespers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>) |

Other Possible Retreat Activities: Service Projects and Games

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FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

As we develop and update our resources and website regularly, we welcome your feedback. If you have questions, ideas, suggestions, or need resources not yet provided, please e-mail the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at youthoffice@goarch.org. Let us know how we can better support you and your efforts in Youth Ministry.

It is our fervent prayer that the provided resources, especially these guidelines, offer Youth and Young Adults the opportunity for growth in the faith, development of personal relationships with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and continued strength to strive toward Salvation.

WITNESS (MARTYRIA)

“For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.”
Acts 22:15

Man is both a spiritual and physical being. Unfortunately this spiritual reality is not always expressed in the material world. In order to be true to oneself and to the Orthodox Christian Faith, children should strive to exemplify the teachings of the Church. We are witnessing our faith when we are living as Christ taught us to live, letting Christ shine in all that we do to those around us. This is the true meaning of *witness*.

JOY children experience WITNESS by:

- ✦ Learning about Christ’s teachings and living them.
- ✦ Learning about the Saints’ great witness to the faith and imitating their example.
- ✦ Finding answers to questions they, or others, have about the faith.
- ✦ Making newcomers feel welcome.
- ✦ Inviting a non-Orthodox friend to a Church service or JOY Ministry event.
- ✦ Making the sign of the Cross before every meal—no matter where they are.
- ✦ Supporting mission work abroad and locally.
- ✦ Letting Christ’s love shine in all they do.

JOY MINISTRY MODEL

The structure of JOY Ministry depends upon the specific needs of each individual parish. The following recommendations not only take into consideration what is developmentally appropriate for this age group, but also suggest a JOY Ministry model based on that information. Flexibility exists within this model so that adjustments may be made to best meet the needs of each individual ministry. If you are just starting JOY Ministry in your parish, be sure to read the *How to Organize JOY Ministry* section in these guidelines.

For JOY Ministry to be effective, there needs to be a high adult-to-child ratio. The ideal ratio is 1 adult for every 7 children at this age level. While this may sound high, these adults will provide the appropriate direction and supervision for the children participating.

JOY MINISTRY TEAM

The JOY Ministry Team will be responsible for planning and leading all activities. This team is made up of the parish priest, youth director and advisor(s). If there is more than one advisor, it is helpful to have one designated as the lead advisor. This lead advisor is responsible for making sure all team members are well informed, and that all efforts are being coordinated toward the common goal of the ministry. All members of the team should have clear roles and responsibilities; these should be defined at least one month before the JOY Ministry year begins.

In addition to planning and overseeing all activities, the JOY Ministry Team should work to cultivate additional leadership within the other adults who participate in the ministry. Too often, youth programs are based on the leadership of one or two individuals. When these people move on or burnout, the ministry disappears. All ministry team members should take some responsibility for the group at one point or another. By setting this as a goal, the ministry will be constantly training new leaders and providing support for current ones.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Volunteers are needed to assist with the children and ministry. These volunteers can be parents, grandparents, young adults, and even mature teenagers from the parish. As with the JOY Ministry Team, it is important that these volunteers have defined roles and responsibilities. These can be communicated through a meeting at the beginning of the year, ongoing meetings, or even telephone and e-mail contact.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAMS

When we think of leadership, we instinctively think of people in power. As Christians, Christ gave us a living example of leadership:

“And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”

Mark 10:44-45

Christ led by serving others, and we are called to do the same. This type of leadership, servant leadership, is key to the ministry.

Even though children at this age are not ready for independent leadership, they have much to offer the ministry. They should be given opportunities to build on their understanding of Christian leadership. Additionally, offering the opportunity to assist in planning and execution of different activities gives them a sense of ownership toward the ministry. Keep

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MAGAZINES

- ✦ *Praxis* published by the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.religioused.goarch.org)
- ✦ *Little Falcons* published by the Serbian Orthodox Archdiocese (littlefalcons@owc.net)
- ✦ *Children's Ministry* published by Group Publishing (www.grouppublishing.com)

FOR CHILDREN

- ✦ Orthodox Children's Books Published by Light and Life Publishing (www.light-n-life.com)
- ✦ Orthodox Children's Books Published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (www.svspress.com)
- ✦ Orthodox Children's Books Published by Conciliar Press (www.conciliarpress.com)

ARCHDIOCESAN YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY TEAM

As youth workers, it is important for us to realize that the greatest resource we have is one another. While books, videos, and magazines are helpful to your ministry, creating a network of Orthodox Youth Workers in your parish, region and Metropolis is critical. Reach out to your Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries or the Archdiocesan Department for ideas and further resources. Additionally, they can put you in touch with other youth workers who are involved in the same ministry.

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in mind that they are still immature in their ability to plan; they will need much support, but the yield will be well worth the effort. The advisor(s) should work closely with the children to provide them with the necessary support to plan and successfully complete the responsibility. Tasks should be clear, simple, and meaningful.

Organizing leadership teams will foster leadership in your ministry. In this model of ministry, each participant has an opportunity for leadership, as well as specific responsibilities. How you choose to organize these teams will depend on the size of your group. Be mindful of the four circles (worship, fellowship, service and witness) and try to give children opportunities to contribute to all of these.

To build unity, it is best to keep the same leadership teams for the entire JOY Ministry year. At the beginning of the year, have each team pick a Patron Saint for their team. The saint each group chooses will be the name of their team. It is recommended that each leadership team have 3-5 children who participate regularly, and that the teams be diverse in age and gender. These teams are not intended to be together for all JOY Ministry activities. Their purpose is to promote opportunities for cooperative leadership.

Below are examples of how JOY children are able to plan and assist with the ministry:

- ✦ A team can be given copies of the opening and closing prayer so that they can lead the group in prayer at the next meeting.
- ✦ A team can be responsible for planning and bringing a snack for one meeting.
- ✦ If you are making holy bread (prosforo), one team can be responsible for bringing the supplies and informing others about the seal.
- ✦ A team can be responsible for preparing and setting up for the art project at one meeting.
- ✦ A team can be responsible for addressing and signing "We missed you!" postcards to send to children who missed a meeting.
- ✦ As a group, the children can choose a service project and later plan how to carry it out.
- ✦ As a group, the children can decide on a fellowship activity to do in addition to the regular meeting (bowling, go to a park, etc.).

FOR SMALLER MINISTRIES

If there are not enough children to have a separate JOY and HOPE (Kindergarten through 2nd grade children) Ministry, give the older children a larger role in leadership. Find 15 minutes alone with the JOY Ministry participants at each gathering to plan and instill in them a sense of responsibility for the younger participants of the combined group.

ROLES IN JOY MINISTRY

It takes many people to sustain a ministry: some people are leaders, others followers; some people have active roles, others have passive roles; some people are consultants, others implementers. Each role has its own set of responsibilities. In a strong ministry, responsibilities are clear and distributed amongst different people. Whatever the roles, all should be working towards the common goal of the ministry. Below are different roles which are vital for the success of the ministry. If the ministry is missing any of these roles, the JOY Ministry Team should address how the responsibilities assigned to each role can still be fulfilled.

ARCHDIOCESAN DEPARTMENT

The Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is located on the grounds of Saint Basil Academy in New York. The Department creates and distributes resources for parish ministry, as well as oversees the Office of Ionian Village and Camping Ministries. The Department coordinates the *Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team*, which is made up of the National Department and each Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. This team meets twice a year and collaborates throughout the year to coordinate national and regional youth and young adult ministries. For information on contacting the Archdiocesan Department, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

METROPOLIS OFFICES

The Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries oversees all youth and young adult activities within their respective Metropolis. These directors are trained not only in Theology, but also in the basic tenets of youth ministry. They are an excellent resource for local parish programming and should be called upon for assistance. For information on contacting your Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

PARISH PRIEST

The parish priest is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the entire parish. Under the direction of the Metropolis Hierarchy, the parish priest ministers to all of the parishioners and groups of the parish. JOY Ministry is a part of his overall ministry. It is imperative that the priest be active in this ministry by guiding and working with the advisors in all aspects of the ministry, as well as attending all activities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE

- ✦ *Our Church and Our Children* by Sophie Koulomizin
- ✦ *Conversations with Children* by Sister Magdalen
- ✦ *The Unschooled Mind* by Howard Gardner

CURRICULUM AND ICEBREAKERS

- ✦ *Children's Worker's Encyclopedia of Bible Teaching Ideas (Old and New Testament)* by Group Publishing (www.grouppublishing.com)
- ✦ *Indoor Action Games for Elementary Children* by Foster, Overholt, and Schultz

ARTS AND CRAFTS

- ✦ *Bible Story Crafts and Projects Children Love* by Kathy Ross
- ✦ *Crafts and More for Children's Ministry* by Karen Henley & Lois Keffer
- ✦ *Craft Handbook for Children's Church* by Leslea Stringer Lea Bowman

MUSIC

- ✦ Liturgical Music by Eikona (www.eikona.com)
- ✦ *Fruits of the Spirit* by Gigi Shadid
- ✦ *Living in an Orthodox World* by Fr. Michael Shanbour

PRAYER

- ✦ Online Chapel of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)
- ✦ *Daily Prayers for Orthodox Christians* edited by N. Michael Vapouris (www.hchc.edu/bookstore)
- ✦ *My Daily Orthodox Prayer Book* edited by Anthony Coniaris (www.light-n-life.com)

FUNDRAISING

- ✦ *Youth Ministry Handbook* Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA (www.ukrainianorthodoxchurchusa.org/offices/OYM/)
- ✦ *20 Something Ideas for Fundraising* by Orthodox Church in America Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (yya.oca.org/TheHub/Activities/20SomethingWays/Fundraising.htm)
- ✦ *Fundraising for Youth: Hundreds of Wonderful Ways of Raising Funds for Youth Organizations* by Dorothy M. Ross

TEEN VIDEO SERIES (*video and resource guide*)

These videos can be used with teenagers, families, parents and youth workers. The resource books contain vital statistics, additional information pertaining to the topic, as well as youth group sessions and retreats to assist both clergy and youth workers. Currently available: *Substance Abuse: Our Kids Are Not Immune*, *Sexual Purity: Purity of Mind, Body, and Soul*, and *Teen Violence: Fight the Good Fight*.

MINISTRY CURRICULUM

Each curriculum binder provides twelve complete session plans that follow the cycle of the Ecclesiastical Year. Youth workers will enjoy monthly session plans in complete outline form, with objectives, discussion prompts, questions, activities, resources, and ideas.

WHERE DOES GOD GO FOR SUMMER VACATION?

This creative book helps breathe life into summer youth programs. It is a workbook written for young people of all ages. The author takes the concepts of faith and fellowship, creating some wonderful activities that are sure to entertain and engage young people while they learn about their Orthodox Faith. The resource book also includes a youth worker/parent's guide.

THE PLANNER: ORTHODOX DAILY CALENDAR AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Use *The Planner* to keep track of all your schedules. Keep a daily focus on Christ with Scriptural readings, fast days, prayers, saints of the day and inspiration from the Fathers. The Planner follows the Ecclesiastical (church) year beginning in September and ending in August. Spiral bound and PDA versions available.

EMAIL MINISTRY

Youth Worker Pulse provides resources, ideas, and activities for both parents and youth workers. Sent weekly via email, the information offers support for youth ministry following the monthly themes of *The Planner*. To sign up for *Youth Worker Pulse*, send an e-mail to listserv@listserv.goarch.org. Leave the subject blank and in the body of the e-mail type in "subscribe youth" (without the quotation marks). You will receive a confirmation of your subscription shortly thereafter.

PARISH COUNCIL

The parish council represents the parish as a whole. As JOY Ministry is part of the overall ministry of the church, it is important that the parish council be kept informed of the ministry activities. The parish council should provide the necessary support through the parish budget and other resources to help sustain the ministry. It is best if one of the parish council members acts as a liaison between the council and JOY Ministry, attending all activities.

PARISH YOUTH DIRECTOR

Under the direction of the parish priest, the parish youth director is responsible for all youth and young adult ministry in the parish. Specifically for JOY Ministry, the parish youth director oversees the work of advisors, ministering to them so they might minister to the children. The youth director should guide the advisors to ensure a balanced program so that the best opportunity for ministry exists. The parish youth director should be trained not only in the Theology of the Church, but also in the field of youth ministry.

JOY MINISTRY TEAM

Under the direction of the parish priest and youth director, the JOY Ministry Team is responsible for planning and carrying out all JOY Ministry activities. By guiding children to a deeper understanding of their Orthodox Christian faith, these advisors directly minister to the lives of the children and their families. Every advisor should participate in the youth ministry training program. This program strengthens faith and develops techniques for Orthodox Christian Youth Ministry (see the *Training for Ministry* section).

JOY CHILDREN

The true role of the children is to actively live their Faith. JOY Ministry should be a vehicle in which they can develop their lives, faith and morals. The children should feel a sense of ownership for the group and be excited about participating in the ministry activities. They should be encouraged to help with planning for the ministry in a manner that is appropriate for their developmental level.

PARENTS

Parents are crucial to the success of any youth ministry program. As youth workers, it is important to keep in mind that the amount of time we spend with the children pales in comparison to the time they spend with their families. Parents need to be brought on board from the very beginning, and should be kept aware of the goals and activities of the ministry. Parents can build on JOY Ministry objectives in their home, and likewise, the ministry can reemphasize these same objectives at gatherings.

GOYA MENTORS

An often-overlooked source of assistance in JOY Ministry are GOYA Ministry participants, or GOYA Mentors. Their involvement in the ministry can be a great help, while providing the teenagers with a means to serve. They can also provide positive role models for the children to follow as they grow. It is important to remember that GOYA Mentors themselves are still minors; they should not be left in charge of the children without adult advisors present. The teenagers who are assisting with the ministry should participate in an orientation before they begin working with the children. This interaction will be a very healthy and positive experience for the children and the young people of GOYA Ministry alike.

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

It is appropriate to have the same volunteers at every activity for continuity, but equally beneficial to welcome new volunteers for specific assistance. Using different volunteers to assist with small, but meaningful tasks will get people involved that might otherwise be hesitant to make larger commitments. Additionally, these task volunteers will provide support to those who are there regularly. Consider the needs of the ministry and the talents of the volunteers when delegating responsibilities. All those who are assisting with the ministry should participate in an orientation before they begin working with the children.

SELECTING YOUTH WORKERS

Youth workers are charged with the important task of sharing the Gospel of Christ and the Holy Traditions of our Faith with our young people. Finding dedicated and qualified individuals to do this can often be a challenge. These positions should never be taken lightly. Taking time to properly screen and select youth workers ensures that our youth ministry teams are made up of qualified, responsible, and Christ-centered individuals. A youth worker is anyone who works with the children of the ministry, whether they are paid or volunteer, part time or full time.

QUALITIES OF A YOUTH WORKER

The adults working with JOY children should be people who have a love of children and a genuine commitment to serve the Church. They

FUNDRAISING

There are many simple fundraisers that young people can do to help supplement the expenses of their ministry. Be sure to involve participants in the planning and implementation of the fundraiser appropriately for their age. When the fundraiser is complete, have participants thank all of the necessary contributors to its success—especially the parish council. See the *Resources for Ministry* section for further information on fundraising.

RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY

There are many resources to aid the development of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. This abbreviated list of resources can assist you in your ministry. For a more complete list, see the *Youth Ministry Resource Guide* available from the Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE DEPARTMENT

GUIDELINES

Guidelines are available for Young Adult Ministry, GOYA, JOY, HOPE, Early Childhood and Altar Boy Ministries. These guidelines include information on starting and sustaining a ministry, as well as other invaluable information. These resources will assist you in your parish programming.

YOUTH MINISTRY RESOURCE GUIDE

Do you need ideas for an activity, information on child abuse, or just a basic book on youth ministry? This resource guide lists helpful books, magazines, videos, websites, and organizations that will assist those who work with young people.

THE CHALLENGE

The *Challenge* is the monthly youth and young adult ministry supplement of the Orthodox Observer. This featured section offers articles for young people, parents, and youth workers, as well as upcoming events, youth worker tips and family sessions. Current issues and archives can be found online at www.youth.goarch.org.

When reporting an incident that a child discloses to you, it is advisable in most instances to let them know you are making the call, and that you are doing so because you care about them. They may be upset with you, but you cannot let this affect your actions. Keep in mind you getting them the help that they desperately need, even if they don't appear to want it at the time.

CONTACT

As youth workers, it is important to remember your role as an advisor to the group. Spending time with children can form close bonds between the advisor and child. It is never appropriate for a child to be alone with an adult advisor. If a child wants to talk privately during an activity, take them to the side where others will not hear your conversation, but where you will still be seen. By taking these simple precautions, you will ensure the safety and integrity of your leadership, the child, and the ministry.

INCIDENT REPORTS

For any incident that occurs at a meeting or activity, a report should be filed. These incidents can include but are not limited to: minor and major injuries, seizures, anything that requires emergency services to be called (i.e. Fire, Ambulance or Police), harassment of one child by another, and chronic disciplinary offences, etc. These reports should be filed in the Church office and forwarded to your Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for their files.

BUDGETING FOR MINISTRY

CREATING A BUDGET

Creating a budget is necessary for every ministry of the church. A budget will help to set short and long term goals, defining appropriate resources for the ministry. Below find items for consideration:

Income

- ✦ Allotted money from parish funds
- ✦ Fundraising Activities
- ✦ Individual Donations
- ✦ Stewardship of JOY children

Expenses

- ✦ Charity
- ✦ Refreshments
- ✦ Postage and Printing
- ✦ Outings
- ✦ Transportation
- ✦ Supplies
- ✦ Miscellaneous

must be Orthodox Christians who are active sacramental members of the Church. Through both their actions and their words, these individuals bring to life the love of Christ and the truth of the Gospel for the children to whom they minister.

Above all, youth workers must...

- ✦ Be honest! If you can't answer their question, tell them you'll get back to them—children can tell when you're not being honest.
- ✦ Be an icon! Your actions speak louder than your words, so make sure they are good ones. St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words."
- ✦ Love each child! "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).
- ✦ Be there, and accept them for who they are. They are children of God created in His image and likeness, just as you are.
- ✦ Know their world—what shows they watch, music they listen to and how they enjoy spending their time.
- ✦ Help them find the answers they are looking for. It's alright to question—when answers are found—faith will be stronger.
- ✦ Listen more than talk! Remember that effective listening will require you to use both your ears and your eyes. Look and listen for feedback.
- ✦ Treat them with respect. If you give them this, they will give it back to you!
- ✦ Know when they need more help than you can give. Unless you are a licensed counselor, you cannot help children with serious issues. Please refer to the *Legal Issues* section for additional information about this subject.
- ✦ Be patient! The fruits of your work may not blossom for years; growth is a slow process.
- ✦ Pray for them daily! Ask them to pray for you too!

SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

The task of selecting volunteers requires a great amount of consideration. Screening volunteers is necessary in all youth ministry programs in order to manage risk and protect our young people. It is important to be systematic when choosing volunteers. **All** volunteers must fill out applications, provide references, and have a criminal background check performed even if the potential advisors are active members of the parish.

When considering volunteers, keep in mind the following...

- ✦ Is the individual an active sacramental member in good standing of the Church?
- ✦ Does the individual possess good organizational skills?
- ✦ Does this individual enjoy spending time with young people?
- ✦ Is the individual responsible, dedicated to working with young people, and willing to continue in this position for an extended period?
- ✦ Does this individual have a “vision” for the parish youth ministry and are they motivated to work toward its realization?
- ✦ Is this individual active in other aspects of Church life?
- ✦ Will this individual serve as a good role model for young people?
- ✦ Is this individual willing to take direction from the parish priest?
- ✦ Is this individual a teacher of God’s word?
- ✦ Is this individual able to work with other adults and youth workers?
- ✦ Will the individual employ appropriate means of communication, teaching, and discipline with young people?
- ✦ Does this individual speak to young people in a loving, respectful and nurturing manner?
- ✦ Does this individual have a criminal record or a history of offences toward children?
- ✦ Is this individual interested in spreading the message of Orthodox Christianity, or are they simply trying to re-live their own youth group experience?
- ✦ Is this individual aware of youth culture and willing to refresh him or herself continually with what is going on in the lives of the youth?
- ✦ Will the individual be able to integrate into an existing program or structure and/or will they need to create one?
- ✦ Are you confident in this individual’s leadership skills and the ability to make appropriate decisions?
- ✦ Will you be able to supply this youth worker with all the necessary resources or show the youth worker where to find resources (financial, educational, spiritual)?
- ✦ Will the individual be accepted and received by the parish?
- ✦ Are you willing to monitor the youth program and provide advice, guidance, and/or constructive criticism to the youth worker?
- ✦ Will this person follow through in their commitment?

adult in each van. For vans or buses, the 1:5 adult to child ratio is recommended for all JOY Ministry activities.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

It is also advisable to have medical forms for the children. Collecting them at the beginning of the year is recommended, keeping them in a binder to take along on all outings. If you split the children up into different groups for an outing, make sure the adult group leaders have a copy of the medical forms for each participant in their group. The Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends using the American Camping Association health forms which can be ordered at www.acacamps.org (look for the Health History & Exam Form For Children/Youth/Adults Form FM08N in their online bookstore).

SAFETY

In all that we do, we must consider the physical safety of the children to whom we minister. Things that seem like fun (like throwing someone into a swimming pool) can result in serious injuries. With all activities, consider the risks involved and ways to minimize them. In addition, prepare for emergency situations and always have a First Aid kit on hand. It is recommended to host a First Aid/CPR training with all youth workers at the beginning of the year. When traveling, know where the nearest hospital is and keep a list of emergency numbers handy at all times (make sure your parish priest’s number is on this).

REPORTING ABUSE

Listening is a powerful way to get to know the children in your group. It is important to remember that as youth ministers we can listen to children but we cannot be their counselors. When serious issues arise, it is your obligation to help that child find professional help through the parish priest and local social agencies.

Deciding when a child needs more help than you can give can be a difficult decision. When in doubt, you should check with your parish priest and/or local social agency for the best course of action. As a youth worker, there are several situations that you are legally required to report to the local social agency. If the child has indicated that they want to harm themselves or commit suicide, a report must be made. You must make a report if a child tells of his/her intent to harm another. Finally, you must report if the young person tells you that they are or have been physically or sexually abused. If a child tells you any of these things, it is imperative that you take action, even if you think they are doing it for attention—leave that to the professionals to discern.

- ✦ Listen to the child closely before making any disciplinary decisions. Have the young person explain what he/she did and why. Have him/her tell you why he/she thinks it is wrong. Discuss if it can be changed and ask that he/she consider his/her further responsibilities.
- ✦ Pray for and with the child as you consider the best way to deal with the situation.
- ✦ How you deal with a problem is going to depend on the severity of it. Consider the spiritual well being of the child/children involved and how this problem affects the entire group.

Consider the following...

- ✦ Is this likely to reoccur?
- ✦ Is this child a danger to him or herself? (See the *Legal Issues* section for more information)
- ✦ Does he/she pose a danger to the group?
- ✦ Who needs to be involved in the disciplinary action? (Priest, other children involved, parents, as well as social and law enforcement agencies when necessary)
- ✦ Was anyone hurt physically or emotionally as a result of this?
- ✦ What is the best course of action to deal with this problem?
- ✦ How will we keep this child involved in the life of the church

LEGAL ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION

Please take precautions when planning transportation, and whenever possible, hire a transportation service. Make sure parents know who will be driving their children. It is highly recommended that a permission form be filled out and signed prior to each event in which the young person will be transported. The Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is currently developing standardized forms for all parishes to use. When available, they will be posted at: www.youth.goarch.org.

Your parish should develop a list of designated drivers. These drivers should be 25 years or older and should have their driving record checked. Parish vans should be checked regularly to assure that they are in good working condition. There should always be more than one

ONGOING EVALUATION

Ongoing evaluation of youth workers is critical to the success of the ministry. These evaluations are not only of benefit to JOY Ministry, but also to the youth workers themselves. Evaluations should be a dialogue with the youth worker, parish priest, and parish youth director. They should focus on strengths, challenges, and needs. It is important that the evaluation process begin with a self-evaluation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries has compiled a detailed packet explaining the process of selecting youth workers and screening volunteers. This packet includes job descriptions, applications, and other vital details to assist you with this process. These tools are available by contacting the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries or visiting their website at www.youth.goarch.org.

TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY

Youth workers are entrusted with a sacred task: inspiring children's hearts toward God. For this reason, training is essential for each and every person involved in this effort. The parish priest, along with the parish youth director, should take the lead in the planning and implementation of this training. One month before the JOY Ministry year begins, it is recommended that all involved in the leadership of children attend training for one or two days. If the training is for more than one youth ministry program, make sure to schedule time for age-specific breakout sessions. The training should include the following:

- ✦ Goals of JOY Ministry
- ✦ The Four Circles
- ✦ What it means to be a Youth Minister and Leader
- ✦ Definition of Roles and Responsibilities
- ✦ Developmental Issues
- ✦ Ideas, Resources and Planning for Ministry
- ✦ Legal Issues of Ministry

PARENTS

Parental support and involvement is a vital part of the ministry. The JOY child, especially at the younger ages, is still open to having parents come

and take part in activities. This presents advisors with a great opportunity to take a truly “family approach” to his or her ministry, which is critical for the children. The ministry cannot be fully successful unless its lessons are realized in the home.

Parents should be invited and highly encouraged to attend the youth worker training at the beginning of the year. Additionally, hold a parent meeting at the beginning of the JOY Ministry year. This will lay the foundation for your partnership in the spiritual education of their children. In order to encourage participation at this meeting, here are a few suggestions: have a potluck dinner for the whole family, provide supervision and activities for the children as the parent meeting is conducted, and consider joint youth ministry/parent meetings when appropriate. The initial meeting should cover the following:

- ✦ Goals of JOY Ministry
- ✦ Plan for the year
- ✦ Parental role in the ministry
- ✦ Questions, concerns, and ideas
- ✦ Plan for ongoing communication

In order to continue to build the parent-youth worker relationship, parent meetings should be held periodically throughout the year.

GOYA MENTORS

GOYA Mentors who assist with JOY Ministry should participate in youth worker training and orientation prior to the beginning of the year. Specific focus of this training should include:

- ✦ Goals of JOY Ministry
- ✦ Their roles and responsibilities in the ministry
- ✦ Practical strategies for working with children
- ✦ Legal issues and safety concerns
- ✦ Effective leadership skill development

TRAINING RESOURCES

Youth worker and leadership training is available from the Archdiocese Department and Metropolis Offices of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. In depth training for youth workers, parents, and leaders on a parish, regional, and Metropolis level is available on the following topics:

CODE OF CONDUCT

Compose a code of conduct for JOY Ministry that meets the needs of your community. This code reflects desirable behaviors of participants. Below is a sample *Joy Ministry Code of Conduct*:

As a participant of JOY Ministry and the Greek Orthodox Church, I realize that I represent my parish and church in all activities. As a participant of JOY Ministry I agree to meet all of the expectations below:

- ✦ I will come to JOY Ministry activities ready to have fun, learn, and grow in my faith.
- ✦ I will honor my priest, parents, advisors, and fellow participants.
- ✦ I will listen to instructions given to me by my priest, parents, and advisors at all JOY Ministry events.
- ✦ I will use kind words.
- ✦ I will give my time, talents, and treasures for the good of the group.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

When things go wrong, how we deal with them is crucial. Above all, remember that the child is a member of the Church, and we must make sure that nothing we do drives them or their family away. The problem should be used as a springboard to bring them closer to Christ and His Church. Therefore, discipline should be approached with great consideration, love and respect.

Remember that no matter what they did, God still loves them. Likewise, no matter how hard it is, you must love them as well. That is not to underscore that what they did was wrong—but God can still love without liking a person’s behavior. If you need assistance in dealing with this issue, read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. *Notice the love and forgiveness of the Father.*

Things to keep in mind...

- ✦ Never act in anger! Do not let your emotions get the better of you. If you need to wait to discuss the consequences until you can think logically, then wait.
- ✦ Focus on the behavior and address it directly.
- ✦ It is **never** appropriate to use any kind of physical punishment.
- ✦ Get others involved! Parents should be informed about any problems with their child. The priest should be involved and aware of disciplinary actions. In some instances, a peer review committee may be appropriate. In severe cases, it may be necessary to involve social or law enforcement agencies.

PROCEDURE AND PREVENTION

It is very important that the JOY Ministry Team spend time planning how to manage their group in order to prevent disciplinary problems. Creating basic procedures and conveying them clearly to the children will prevent discipline problems. Children need structure and guidelines to feel secure. If purposeful expectations are clearly communicated, children usually do their best to comply. Make the children partners in deciding standards for group behavior, consequences, and boundaries. Ask their help in suggesting ways to manage the group, creating useful procedures together.

Things to consider . . .

- ✦ Create a climate of respect. Rules should be centered on love and respect for self, others and the Church. Through fostering mutual respect between all who participate in your group, fewer problems will arise.
- ✦ Set rules (centered on respect) with the children. Phrase them in a positive way whenever possible (instead of “don’t tease others” say “always be kind”). Post and review them at the meetings.
- ✦ Before major outings outline expectations. Review them with the group. If it is an overnight trip, you may want to have the children and their parents sign the form after reviewing.
- ✦ Remember this is a ministry for the children. They should have some control and ownership. If they feel like they have no control in the planning of activities and other decision making, they will let you know, sometimes in the form of defiance.
- ✦ Avoid power struggles at all costs. *No one ever wins.*
- ✦ Refrain from making threatening statements that you cannot or do not intend on keeping.
- ✦ Be consistent. Don’t look the other way when there is a problem. Addressing issues immediately even if it seems small will prevent future problems. Remember to follow up on these issues as well.
- ✦ Create a code of conduct with not only with the children, but also with the advisors. Guide each group, then exchange and share these codes of conduct so that everyone involved understands the commitments made.

- ✦ How to start an Early Childhood, HOPE, JOY, GOYA, and Young Adult Ministry
- ✦ Orthodox Youth Ministry
- ✦ Building Bridges
- ✦ Relational Ministry
- ✦ “Nuts and Bolts” of Youth Ministry
- ✦ Family Ministry
- ✦ Creative Teaching
- ✦ Christian Leadership

For further information, contact the Archdiocesan Department or your local Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

JOY MINISTRY MEETINGS

For JOY children, a meeting should involve movement, discussion and more movement. It should be a fun experience that helps them grow in their knowledge as Orthodox Christians. Every moment should be a teachable moment, from the instant the children are greeted through the closing prayer. In everything, we need to keep the children active, involved and inspired!

It is recommended that the ministry have at least two meetings each month. Meetings should incorporate some of the following elements: prayer, icebreaker, lesson, arts and crafts, music, business, and refreshments. For a sample meeting schedule, please see *Appendix A*.

The family is the single greatest influence on the faith development of a child. All meetings should take a family ministry approach. Consider occasionally having a parent discussion going on in another room during gatherings. On some occasions, have parents come to the meeting and have a special lesson planned for all. Every effort should be made to inspire the children and their families to integrate the Orthodox Faith into their daily lives. It is important that parents are viewed as vital and active partners in the ministry.

PRAYER

Since JOY is a ministry of the Church, the meetings (and all activities) should begin and end with prayer. Prayer should not be mechanical recitation, but rather a time of connection with God. Take some time before beginning to inspire the children's hearts toward prayer. Allow time to explain the prayer in order to encourage proper worship, that is, worshipping not only with empty words, but with one's entire being—mind, body and soul

Put together different resources for parents on prayer, the Liturgy, and other seasonal services so that they can continue to encourage prayer in the home. Parents are very busy, so keep the information short and simple, including additional references if they want more information.

Making prayer an important and exciting part of gatherings will lay the perfect foundation on which to build the ministry. For additional assistance, speak with your parish priest and consult *The Four Circles* and *Resources for Ministry* sections of these guidelines.

ICEBREAKERS

All meetings should begin with an icebreaker. Icebreakers can relate directly to the needs of the group or serve as an introduction to the theme of the presentation. Whatever their purpose, they should be fun and encourage full participation, helping to unify the group. At this age, icebreakers should focus on building group camaraderie through games and other activities. Be careful to plan icebreakers that do not divide the group, but work toward unity by keeping all children actively involved. Icebreakers should take place after the opening prayer and last around 10 to 15 minutes. Examples of fun icebreakers include the following:

- ✦ The Song Game - Break into groups of 4-6. Give all the groups the same word (perhaps one related to your lesson that day). Allow them 2 minutes to think of a song that has that word and prepare to perform it as a group. Praise them for originality, creativity and group cohesiveness. Time permitting, do several rounds of this using different words.
- ✦ Simon Says - Although this seems like a simple game, it can be great fun. It is a great way to get the young people in tune with listening to the person leading the lesson.
- ✦ Scavenger Hunt - Put together a scavenger hunt that has children learning more about the inside of the Church (i.e. how many crosses can you find, who is the saint next to Jesus on the icon screen, etc.)

INITIAL ACTIVITY

The initial activity should be an activity indicated by the *Needs Assessment* as something the children like to do (picnic, skating, etc.) and it should involve their families. The purpose of this activity is not only fellowship, but also to build interest—start off with a bang. The activity should be free, and having food is always a good idea. At the end of the activity, take 10 minutes to go over what the plans are for the ministry, and get input from the families present. People support what they create, so really listen to what the parents and children tell you. Have a flyer for the next meeting ready to hand out at this time. Make sure to gather everyone's email address and contact information. It will most likely take a few activities to get the desired attendance; be patient and don't become discouraged.

YEARLY MAINTENANCE

Participation in JOY Ministry will vary from year to year. Special efforts should be made to keep the ministry vibrant and healthy. When it is evident that a certain individual is not participating, a special effort should be made to reach out to that young person and bring them back to the group. Always consult with your parish priest first, as he may be aware of sensitive situations that may be preventing the child's participation.

Ways to do this are:

- ✦ Have the parish priest contact them
- ✦ Send a "we miss you" letter
- ✦ Make a home visitation

It is important to make sure that JOY Ministry truly meets the needs of the children who participate. From time to time, and at least annually, evaluate the program to see if it is accomplishing its goals. While the adults might think the ministry is meeting its goals, the children might disagree. Both groups need to be happy with the ministry for it to be successful. See *Appendix E: End of the Year Program Evaluation*.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ✦ Annual Events - When something works well, make it an annual event. It gives the children something to anticipate.
- ✦ Consistency - Be consistent! This will build your ministry. Hold meetings at the same time each month.

By understanding your needs and resources, you can properly determine goals for the ministry. A good formula to follow is:

Needs + Resources = GOALS

GOALS AND PLAN

After completing the assessment of your parish community, develop some preliminary goals. Be realistic and start small—you can build from there. Consider the following questions using information from your *Needs Assessment*:

- ✦ What purpose will this ministry serve?
- ✦ How will we meet this purpose? (meetings, activities, etc.)
- ✦ What resources are available to support the purpose of this ministry?
- ✦ When is the best time to hold activities?
- ✦ What do we want to do for our initial activity?
- ✦ What will be the different roles and responsibilities of people involved?
- ✦ How will we communicate activities?
- ✦ How will we plan activities?
- ✦ What obstacles might we encounter?

PUBLICITY

This committee should organize a list of potential children. To compile this list, look through the parish directory, church school list, baptismal records, and consult with your parish priest. Send an introductory letter to all of these children and their parents letting them know about the formation of JOY Ministry. Send an invitation to the first activity and follow up with a phone call or personal e-mail from the planning committee. Recruit other families in the community to assist in the personal contact so that the burden does not fall on one person. Make sure to also list the activity in your parish weekly and monthly bulletin.

As your group grows, have different families take turns calling about meetings. It is not necessary to call everyone all the time—but it is important to call new participants or those who don't come as frequently. E-mail is a quick way to send out meeting notices and quick reminders. An excellent resource can be *Evite* invitations www.evite.com (*Evite* is a free service which sends event invitations and reminders). This service is invaluable, as it lets you know who has responded and who hasn't even opened the e-mail. The group will grow over time through consistent communication.

- ✦ Telephone - This is another classic that can get children ready to listen to the lesson. Have them sit in a circle and whisper a phrase (perhaps related to the lesson) in one person's ear; they in turn must whisper the message to the next person. This should continue until you come to the last person who says the phrase out loud to hear how much it has changed.

For more information on icebreakers, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

LESSON

The core of the meeting is the lesson, which can take on many different forms. Keep the lesson timely, interesting, upbeat, and most of all, full of opportunities for interaction. Children need less talking and more activities; keep them active and moving! Children need to move; if you fail to meet this need, they will meet it themselves (at times you would prefer them not to). The goal of the lesson is to provide the children with the tools and knowledge to become active participants in their spiritual development. An activity followed by a brief discussion to emphasize the teaching is the ideal approach. This can be done in many different ways.

- ✦ Play a Game - Simple games have wonderful lessons in them. Games such as follow the leader, hide and seek, and competitive activities can all be adapted to explore spiritual topics.
- ✦ Act it Out - Experience is our best teacher. Get the children involved in the lesson by having them act it out.
- ✦ View a Video - Carefully select age-appropriate videos or shorter clips of a movie that support your lesson and theme. Select from a variety of genres and sources, whether religious, non-religious, Orthodox or non-Orthodox. Verify appropriateness with your parish priest and Youth Ministry Team before using.
- ✦ Hands-on Experience - Activities help children “experience” the lesson: painting icons while learning about them, learning about the hymns while chanting them, preparing a meal for the homeless while learning about charity, etc.
- ✦ Read a Book - There are many wonderful children's books both Orthodox and non-Orthodox that can support your lesson. Read through all books thoroughly to make sure the message is in line with the teaching of the Orthodox Church (have your parish priest help with this).

Avoid trying to accomplish too much in one session. St. John Cassian writes, “Less is more. It is not the amount of learning that must be our aim, but the quality of learning. Better to learn two verses with understanding than a whole page with wandering thoughts.” Keep the activity, and the message simple, concrete and clear.

Whatever direction the lesson takes, make sure there is ample time for the children to process what they have learned at the end of the lesson. This can be done in a variety of ways:

- ✦ Drawing - Have the children draw a picture of the lesson or something they learned from it. Keep a folder of their drawings from each lesson and have them review and take them home at the end of the year.
- ✦ Writing - Writing can help children make sense of what they have learned. At the end of the lesson, have them write 5 things they learned, something they want to do differently as a result of what they learned, or a letter to God.
- ✦ Review Games - Fun games like charades, hangman and picture-ary can provide a fun way to review the lesson.
- ✦ Charting - At the end of the lesson, have the group of children help you make a list of everything they now know about the topic presented.

Using one or several of these methods will increase the chance of the lesson being truly learned by the children. Additionally, revisit past lessons, and if needed, repeat lessons with a different twist. Repetition is the key to learning for children.

Finally, plan a simple family activity to send home with the children. Give parents an outline of the lesson from the day, including questions, bible passages, and ideas for building on the activity in the home. Keep hand-outs and activities as simple as possible, as families are very busy.

Above all, be creative! Constantly search for new and interesting ways to get your message across. Remember that you are building a foundation of faith, so pray and let the Holy Spirit guide you. For information to assist you in planning see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Adding an arts and crafts activity to your meeting will give the children something tangible to take home that reminds them of the lesson. When planning arts and crafts, make sure all projects can be done regardless of talent or inclination. Art projects should be more than just crayons and

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ✦ Record and Review - Make sure to document all your every gathering’s date, time and location. Review what went well and what did not at the end of each meeting and activity. Write full explanations of your lessons, activities, volunteers, snack, etc. Keep receipts for records. This will make future planning much easier (see *Appendix D: Activity Review Questions*).
- ✦ Cost - When planning gatherings, be careful of the cost. No child should ever feel excluded because an activity is too expensive. If you have an outing that is a little more expensive than others, find a discrete way to make arrangements for children whose families may be experiencing financial difficulty. A group fundraiser is always good in this instance (see *Budgeting for Ministry*).

HOW TO ORGANIZE JOY MINISTRY

Starting JOY Ministry where one has not existed is a difficult but worthwhile task. Through the guidance of the parish priest, organize a small committee of interested Orthodox Christians. This committee should consist of the priest, youth director, advisors, parents, young adults, a parish council member, and professionals that work with children (teachers, psychologists, educators, doctors, social workers, etc). This group should be diverse in its makeup but united in its mission, gathering initially to plan the first activity, and meeting regularly thereafter to determine goals as well as consider the needs of the ministry.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is important to take an inventory of your community and the children in it. Consider the following as you begin to develop your JOY Ministry:

- ✦ How many children could this ministry potentially serve?
- ✦ What are these children already involved in that might conflict with JOY Ministry activities?
- ✦ What do the children like doing with their family and friends?
- ✦ Where do they like going with their family and friends?
- ✦ What do the children want from this ministry?
- ✦ What do parents want from this ministry?
- ✦ How often should this ministry meet?
- ✦ What resources does the parish have to assist this ministry?

PLANNING FOR JOY MINISTRY

Often times in youth ministry we fail to take the necessary time to plan. Planning may take extra work initially but it saves time in the long run. The most successful youth programs plan ahead not just by one week or one month, but a whole year in advance. Sit down with your JOY Ministry Team and take the time to outline and set goals each year. Things to consider as you plan for the ministry are:

- ✦ What is of interest to the children?
- ✦ What issues are they dealing with in their lives?
- ✦ What will help them build on their concept of who they are as Orthodox Christian individuals?
- ✦ How will we make our lessons relate to their lives?
- ✦ How can we be sensitive to individual young people in the group?
- ✦ How can we make everyone feel included?
- ✦ What problems might occur with each activity? (costs, logistics, safety, behaviors, etc.)
- ✦ What questions might arise during each lesson and how will we answer them?
- ✦ How can we schedule meetings and activities to fit into the busy schedules of children?
- ✦ How can we communicate and share information with parents?

BEFORE ANY JOY GATHERING

- ✦ Remember to pray for direction as you prepare to lead all activities and events.
- ✦ Make sure you have properly publicized the meeting (phone calls, e-mails, flyers, church bulletin).
- ✦ Have everything set up and organized with plenty of assistants to help the children.
- ✦ Be prepared—have an agenda.
- ✦ Make sure everyone knows what his or her role is (refreshments, discussion leader, etc.).
- ✦ Have a few children greet others at the door.
- ✦ Prepare handouts for discussion with appropriate materials.
- ✦ Remember to have fun!

paper; there are many creative projects that can be done. Whenever possible, have the arts and crafts project support the lesson of the day or create a lesson around the art project. For example, a wooden cross from a craft store can be decorated in a variety of ways when you are doing a lesson on the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross (September 14th). For ideas, search on the web or brainstorm with others in your community. See the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines for additional information about arts and crafts.

MUSIC

Singing can help unify and settle down a group. It can be a great thing to do when you think you are losing the children. Christian camp songs are always fun, but don't forget to also teach them the hymns of the Church. Go through the song or hymn line by line to help the children learn the lyrics, melody and meaning. See the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines for suggested music.

BUSINESS

While the children should be learning about leadership and involved in some planning for their ministry, there needs to be time to do business at the meeting. This portion of the meeting should not be more than 10 minutes long. The advisors should prepare an agenda so that they are prepared to guide the children. Things that might need to be covered in the business portion of the meeting include the following:

- ✦ Committee updates (Worship, Service, Fellowship, and Witness)
- ✦ Checking in on current projects
- ✦ Deciding on future activities and meeting topics (Suggest three predetermined activities/topics and have them choose—take suggestions for future consideration.)
- ✦ General announcements (Type out announcements to hand out to all attending and mail them to the children who were unable to attend. Consider also including this announcement page in the parish bulletin.)

REFRESHMENTS

It is always nice to have refreshments at gatherings. Assign each family a specific day so that the responsibility does not fall on a small group of individuals. Insist that the refreshments are kept simple no matter who is bringing them. Also, try to keep snacks healthy and low on sugar for most meetings (special occasions can be exempt). For a twist, have the children make the refreshments and build a lesson around it, like making fruit pizzas while teaching about the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

JOY MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

JOY Ministry represents the Orthodox Christian Faith. All activities and interactions should be a witness to this. It is recommended that at least one activity be planned per month in addition to the regular meetings. Activities can be even more enjoyable if you invite youth groups from other Orthodox parishes in your area. Whatever the activity, allow enough time to plan all the details, making sure that there is proper support and supervision. Also, pay special attention to the church calendar, making sure the activities do not conflict with the feasts and liturgical life of the church. Consult with the parish priest when selecting dates for all activities.

RETREATS

A great way to heighten fellowship and to begin living and learning the Orthodox Faith is through retreats. While serving as significant tools in enlightening lives, retreats set aside a special time for a change of pace, fellowship, reflection, growth, and bonding as a community of faith. Remember to keep the lesson simple, concrete, and clear as well as fun, creative and active. JOY Ministry children should participate in at least two retreats per year. If you are interested in holding a retreat at your parish, contact your Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Ministries for assistance. For sample retreat schedules, see *Appendix B* and *C*.

SERVICE AND WITNESS

JOY children can learn to be stewards and witnesses of their faith by giving of their time, talents and treasures. It is critical that this be part of the ministry. It is recommended that the children participate in at least two service projects each year. Service projects can be short term, such as packing school kits for children in impoverished countries (see www.iocc.org for more information on this project), or more long term, like collecting food for a local shelter each month. There are so many opportunities to help them learn about giving and witnessing their faith. For additional examples, see *The Four Circles* section of these guidelines.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Since JOY Ministry is also a ministry to the family, consider hosting several family events throughout the year. When appropriate, partner with the other youth ministry groups in your parish to plan the activity. Be sensitive of all families (single, adoptive, grandparents, etc.) so that everyone feels included. There are many different activities that can be done with families to build on their relationships with each other and with Christ, for example:

- ✦ Host a potluck dinner with a game night and end with a brief prayer service.
- ✦ Have concurrent lectures for children and their parents, bringing the groups together and facilitating dialogue.
- ✦ Have a lesson for the entire family to attend and participate in.
- ✦ Host a family camp or family retreat.

Consider sending home fun activities that engage the whole family, especially after a family activity, encouraging parents to build on previous lessons.

INTER-ORTHODOX ACTIVITIES

Our Orthodox Faith reaches far beyond our culture. It is recommended to plan activities and events with children from various Orthodox Christian jurisdictions. Attending services at other Orthodox churches with the group can help emphasize the oneness of the faith. If your JOY Ministry does not have many participants, have your priest call another local Orthodox church in the region—join together!

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Fellowship activities are a great way to build unity in your group. Some of the greatest ministry can occur when nothing educational is planned. Do not underestimate the power of spending time with your group participating in fun activities. It is these activities that are going to build your group as a community. When planning fellowship activities, always involve the children; consider what they like doing in their free time. Some fun activities include: going to a movie, lunch, ball game, bowling, day trip, etc. Whatever the activity, special emphasis needs to be placed on group interaction; no one should feel excluded. This can be achieved through icebreakers, welcoming committees, and activities that will encourage group interaction. For additional fellowship ideas, see *The Four Circles* section of these guidelines.

ATHLETICS

Athletics also provides a great opportunity for fellowship. At this age, competitions should not be stressed. It is not necessary to have winners and losers. Plan a variety of sports to reach all children, athletic and non-athletic alike. Athletics can enhance camaraderie by developing the idea of healthy competition. Some suggestions include: bowling, basketball, miniature golf, swimming, baseball and hiking. To discourage cliques, try not to allow the children to pick teams themselves, but rather pick teams by favorite color, favorite food, etc. If JOY Ministry sponsors an athletic team, all participants should be sacramental members of the Church and active in the ministry. If the group is participating in a league with other Orthodox Churches, contact your local Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for local league guidelines.