

JOY

grades 3-6

Y²AMM Ministry
Plan

October 2017

Part of the 2017-2018 Ministry Year

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Youth & Young Adult Ministries
Office of Camping Ministries

Welcome to the Y²AM Ministry Plan!

August 3, 2017

Dear JOY Leader,

Being a ministry worker isn't easy. For too long, Church workers have spent countless hours finding or identifying resources and materials for their important work: drafting curricula, brainstorming sessions, creating calendars, etc.

That's all valuable effort. But wouldn't it be better if you could spend that time working with the JOY children in your care, rather than cooped up in your office?

But to do that, you need support. You need a set of reliable, high-quality materials to help you lead Christ-centered ministry for your community.

That's why we created the **Y²AM Ministry Plan**.

We've created nine months of materials carefully designed for well-rounded, effective, and Kingdom-oriented ministry. Organized week-by-week and month-by-month, the Y²AM Ministry Plan gives you a comprehensive set of tools that will help you lead ministry designed, not simply for the head, but for the heart.

After all, Christians aren't simply informed: they are formed. They are transformed in the light of Christ into the people, the saints, God has called us to be.

That's why the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** offers a diverse set of experiences that don't simply pass on messages but rather facilitate encounters: both with other Christians and with our Lord Himself.

And it's all laid out for you, from the first week of September 2017 through the last week of May 2018.

If you ever have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us at y2am@goarch.org. Please, let us know what you think: we're committed to creating a new **Y²AM Ministry Plan** every year and constantly refining and improving the materials we offer you.

In Christ,

Steven Christoforou
Director, Y²AM

Special Acknowledgment

August 3, 2017

The **Y²AM Ministry Plan** takes the very best ministry insights and sets them forth in a simple, concrete, easy-to-use resource that can offer ministry workers help today. It reflects the great work of our Team, a fantastic group of people who have done (and continue to do) amazing things for the Church.

I'm blessed to work with them; their fierce dedication and humble love of the Lord encourage me daily.

Yet I'd be remiss if I don't offer special thanks to Cassandra Garibaldi, Y²AM's Resources & Training Coordinator, for her unique contribution.

Cassandra started working on this vital project almost a year ago. It's been an interesting and challenging process as she's both helped shape Y²AM's ministry vision and crystallized it into this concrete, user-friendly **Y²AM Ministry Plan**. Despite all the twists and turns and challenges along the way, Cassandra stayed focused on serving Christ and doing her best to help create ways to reveal Him in our lives.

Her leadership and effort (not to mention the amazing final product) are an incredible testament to Y²AM's ministry vision and the incredible impact that committed, Christ-centered young adults can have on the Church.

In Christ,

Steven Christoforou
Director, Y²AM

How to Use the Y²AM Ministry Plan

When working with small groups, it can be easy to let talkative people (leaders and students included) take over conversation. Small groups are also filled with people who process things in different ways: some may need more time and silence, some may need physical manipulation (writing, getting up, etc.).

Here are some tips that you can use to help your groups thrive in discussion:

Before each session:

1. It is important to read through each session before presenting the session to participants. Be confident in what you are presenting.
2. Note time allotments and have in mind what you would like to accomplish with your group during the session.
3. Before each session begins, pass out paper and pens to each participant. This can help participants process their thoughts and reactions.

During each session:

1. When asking questions, allow time for participants to reflect and write their answers down on the paper.
 2. Read one of the main questions or Bible verses from the lesson and write it on a board. Give a few minutes to respond and then allow time for each participant to respond.
 3. Try many different ways to engage conversation, and don't be afraid of silence; just because people aren't saying anything doesn't mean that they aren't thinking or responding.
 4. Remember to listen before reacting.
 5. If a question comes up and you are not sure of the answer, be honest and let participants know. Ask a priest and follow up with the participants. Be honest and true to yourself.
 6. If you have a good discussion going on a topic, allow the conversation to flow. Don't feel like you have to ask every question or go through every activity in its entirety.
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Remember:

1. These sessions are a time for participants to share their own hearts, thoughts and feelings. They have much to say and offer, so try your best to be an active listener.
2. The goal is for participants to speak and learn, not to force a lesson on them for the sake of getting through the paper outline.
3. You are on a journey with your participants, and everyone is on a journey of learning together.

Thanks for letting the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** help you lead incredible, Christ-centered ministry.

And thank you for letting us join you on this journey.

JOY

Grades 3-6

Resources Book

A **Y²AM** Project

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Youth & Young Adult Ministries
Office of Camping Ministries

“Fruit of the Spirit” : Joy

Model sessions, activities, and lesson plans for
the month of October

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LEARNING SESSION

OCTOBER 2017

How Joy is a Fruit of the Spirit

DATE:

Week of Monday, October 9, 2017

GOAL:

To learn how joy is a fruit of the Spirit

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can show Christian joy
in your daily life

ESTIMATED DURATION:

45 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. notebooks
2. pencils

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

O Holy Spirit, grace me with your fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Amen.

(A Prayer by Archbishop Anastasios of Albania)

ICEBREAKER

10 minutes

Gather participants in a circle. Ask them to say their name and something that brings them joy.

Remember:

It's always helpful to start with a fun activity to help participants relax and allow community to build. Ministry is about hitting hearts, not just heads, and we need to establish a level of comfort and safety to encourage participants to open their hearts to each other and to God.

ACTIVITY 1: EXPERIENCE JOY

10 minutes

Have participants stand up. Put on some upbeat, age-appropriate music, and have them dance together.

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you do?
- How did you feel while the music was playing?

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Remember:

Early in the session, focus primarily on getting participants to open their hearts and connect with what is happening in the group. Take this time to connect with what is important to them and notice what connections they are making.

ACTIVITY 2: LEARNING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What does joy mean to you?
 - There is a difference between joy and happiness.
- What do you think that difference is?
- Can you share a story of a time when you felt happiness? How long did that feeling last?
- When you have felt joy?
- Is it ever hard to have joy in difficult times or to be joyful around certain people?
 - Can you offer an example?
- What things are you grateful for? Do they make you feel joy?

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Remember:

This is another chance to have participants wrestle with important questions, and share their hearts.

Lesson:

Happiness depends on your circumstances: if things are going well, you're happy. If those good things stop, you stop feeling happy. With real joy, you can feel joy no matter how things are going. Joy is given to us by God and when we remember God and His love for us, we are joyful. Being grateful can help us be joyful. If we spend time thinking about those good things God has given us, it causes us to be joyful.

ACTIVITY 3: GRATITUDE JOURNALS

10 minutes

Pass out a notebook and pencil to each participant. Have them mark each page with the day of the week for the next month.

Instruct participants to journal three things for which they are grateful each day and then thank God for those things in prayer.

Lesson:

Though a small task, journaling our positive thoughts can have a big impact on our lives. Similarly, even a small act of love can have a big impact.

Remind participants to journal at the end of each day. By doing so, they will make time for silence and evening prayers before bed.

Lesson:

Creating a routine where we devote a few minutes each night praying and thanking God is a good habit. Being grateful for what we have right in front of us is a way to meet God in the present moment and to remind ourselves of the love God has for each of us.

LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 4: SCRIPTURE READING

10 minutes

Have one participant read the following passage aloud to the group:

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

(John 15:5 and 9-11)

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Where can we find examples of joy in the passage?
- What does “abide” mean?
- How does this passage teach us about joy?
- What is the connection between joy and abiding with God?
- How can we abide in God to experience His joy?

LEARNING SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Lesson:

We can feel joy in good times and bad times. Joy is not about being happy. Joy is the feeling of being close to God, to abide in Him. If we are close with God, if we pray, practice silence to listen to Him, go to church to worship Him, if our actions are to really get to know God, then we will be joyful people. We are joyful because God is love and abiding in Him means being shaped by that love. Relying on God and being shaped by His love should give us joy that cannot be taken away by a stubbed toe or a bad grade.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way you will try to be joyful, even when it may be difficult?

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, let Your will be done within us and help us remember to: “Be joyful at all times, pray without ceasing, and give thanks for all things.”

Amen.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

OCTOBER 2017

How to Demonstrate Joy Through our Relationships

DATE:

Week of Monday, October 16, 2017

GOAL:

To learn how being close to God brings about joy

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can express joy in your daily life, even in the difficult times

ESTIMATED DURATION:

3 hours

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. copy of *Inside Out*, or another appropriate movie on joy
2. projector or television, and speaker
3. meal ingredients

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

O Holy Spirit, grace me with your fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Amen.

(A Prayer by Archbishop Anastasios of Albania)

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 1: PREPARE THE MEAL

45 minutes

Organize participants to clean up and prepare the food for the movie night. Make sure everyone has a job, even if it is a small one. Remember to pray before everyone starts eating.

Remember:

You can order pre-made food, but preparing a meal is a great way for people to connect and share a special bond. It is no accident that the focus of every Liturgy is a meal, and that early Christians shared meals together as a sign of their love and community.

ACTIVITY 2: WATCH MOVIE

1 hour 42 minutes

Make sure everyone has access to food, a comfortable place to sit, and a good view of the movie. We have suggested *Inside Out*, but any age-appropriate movie that showcases joy would work.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 3: CLEAN UP

10 minutes

Make sure the space is completely clean after everyone has eaten.

ACTIVITY 4: MOVIE DEBRIEF

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you see and hear in the movie?
- What is one lesson you can take away from the movie?

Remember:

Art impacts people by compelling us with beauty rather than convincing us with data. It hits us in the heart rather than the head. Movies are great way to show people the compelling beauty behind Christian ideals like joy and sacrifice and can connect with people in a way that a talk or academic lesson may not.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 5: TEACHING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Did you see joy in the movie?
- How do the characters in the movie demonstrate joy?
- What are some examples of this kind of joy in our own lives?
 - Parents, siblings, friends, family

Remember: *Joy is the experience of abiding in God, of being close with God.*

Lesson:

In life we will be knocked down, but it's important to remember that we are connected to God. When we are connected to Him, God draws near to us and supports us in our tough moments.

While it would be nice to never have to go through any hard times in life, we know that we will. They're going to happen, it's just a fact of life. As Christians, we also know

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

another fact—that we can have joy no matter how hard things get. Remember joy is the feeling of abiding with God.

When you lose your joy, remember where your hope comes from. Remember that it comes from God. Ask Him to fill you up with joy, and He will! He is your hope. No matter how dark life gets, He will always be our Light to fill us with His joy.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following questions. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way you will try to be joyful even in life's dark moments?
- How have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to stay joyful even when it's difficult?

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, let Your will be done within us and help us remember to: “Be joyful at all times, pray without ceasing, and give thanks for all things.”

Amen.

WORSHIP SESSION

JANUARY 2017

Experiencing God's Joy
Through Worship

DATE:

Week of Monday, October 23, 2017

GOAL:

To experience God's joy through our Christian
worship

OBJECTIVE:

To chant the Small Paraklesis together

ESTIMATED DURATION:

90 minutes

WORSHIP SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. copies of Small Paraklesis to the Theotokos
2. pencils and paper

OPENING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

O Holy Spirit, grace me with your fruit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Amen.

(A Prayer by Archbishop Anastasios of Albania)

ACTIVITY 1: SMALL PARAKLESIS

45 minutes

Invite your parish priest to lead the service. If your parish priest is not available, you can still chant it as a reader service. If it is a reader service, make the following changes:

1. Instead of “Blessed is our God...” to begin the service, we say: “Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.”
2. After the “Our Father,” we say “Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us,” instead of “For Thine is the power...”
3. We omit all the petitions and commemorations of names done by the priest.

Assemble your group either in the Church building (if possible) or before an icon of the Theotokos.

A copy of the service is available here: http://www.goarch.org/chapel/chant/paraklesis/index_html.

WORSHIP SESSION: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Remember:

The more we are exposed to prayer, and the language of the Church, the more our minds and hearts are shaped by the mind and heart of the Church. Over time, we can internalize the prayer of the Church and better learn to talk to God ourselves. This takes time, and should be an important part of every ministry.

ACTIVITY 2: DEBRIEF

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you feel or experience during the service?
- What is one lesson that you can take away from the service?

Remember:

Many participants may not have ever celebrated this service before. Some may not have heard it chanted in English. Give them space to process and verbalize what they've just experienced.

ACTIVITY 3: TEACHING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Do you experience God's joy in Church services?
- What happened during the service?
- Can you identify themes?
 - Love, joy, repentance, forgiveness, etc.
- How does the Small Paraklesis relate to joy?
- How do you experience or feel joy through chanting Paraklesis together?

Remember:

Some (perhaps many) participants don't feel God's joy in Church services. Instead, they're more often bored than inspired. Don't be afraid of "negative" or "challenging" answers. We can always ask the Theotokos to help us as we struggle with boredom and distraction.

ACTIVITY 4: REFLECTION

10 minutes

Ask participants the following question and facilitate a discussion:

- What is one way that I noticed God's presence today?
Pause and give thanks.

Remember:

When they are very young, we teach children “how” to connect with God: prayer, fasting, etc. As they grow, we need to teach them “why” we need God. As children grow, they develop a better understanding of the brokenness of the world and the inner brokenness against which we all struggle. We all need help: verbalizing this is a step towards humility and opening ourselves to God, who is the source of life and healing.

ACTIVITY 5: EXCERPT & APPLICATION

10 minutes

Ask one participant to read the following verse aloud:

Ode 9 - Verse 2

*With gladness fill my heart,
Most holy Virgin lady,
For you are she who received the abundant joy;
Take the grief of my sinfulness,
And make it disappear.*

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What stood out to you?
- What does it mean for our lives?
- How does Panagia's help fill our lives with joy?

Lesson:

Joy is the feeling of abiding in God. It is a result of being close to Him. Worship can help cultivate this closeness to God, causing joy.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following questions. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way to experience God's joy in your daily life through what you learned in the service?
- How have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to have joy even when it's difficult?

Remember:

Don't just use this opportunity to ask participants to commit to action: check in with them, and follow up to see how they're doing after past sessions. We can all be accountable to each other to make necessary improvements in our lives.

WORSHIP SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, let Your will be done within us, and help us remember to “be joyful at all times, pray without ceasing, and give thanks for all things.”

Amen.

SERVICE PROJECT

OCTOBER 2017

Serve with Joy

DATE:

Week of Monday, October 30, 2017

GOAL:

To learn to serve others with joy

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way to spread joy in our daily lives through serving others

ESTIMATED DURATION:

1 hour 15 minutes

SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

As needed (depending on the specific service project you choose)

OPENING PRAYER

*In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Good and gracious Lord, Creator of all, help me to recognize Your image in all the people that I will serve today and every day, in person or through activities that may benefit them. Help me to respect the people in need, and to give my full attention and effort to the work that we do for them in Your Holy Name. Guide me to recognize all these people as my brothers and sisters. Help me to open my heart and fill it with compassion. Quiet any fears or nervousness that I might have so that I can be fully present to everyone I encounter today and every day. Help me to remember that some of the people I serve may be broken or wounded persons who need healing. Let my heart be moved to show love and let my heart rejoice with any good that I may see or do in your name. Remind me to do my part, no matter how small, in your great work of charity. Through serving my neighbor, may I recognize the better world that has been created.
Amen.*

SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ICEBREAKER

10 minutes

Ask participants to sit in a circle, with one person in the middle. The person in the middle will walk up to someone and ask, “Do you love your neighbor?” That person will respond, “Yes, except for [insert your own criterion here].” For example, “Yes, except for people wearing red.”

Everyone in the circle who matches the criterion needs to get up and find a new seat while the person who was in the middle tries to steal (sit) in someone’s seat. The person left standing becomes the new person in the middle.

SERVICE PROJECT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 1: SERVICE PROJECT

30 minutes

Begin by introducing participants to the organization or population they will be serving, and the specific project they will be starting. Give participants any directions or materials they will need to achieve their goals for the day's service project.

Possible service organizations include:

- Local soup kitchen or food bank
- Homeless shelter
- Nursing home
- YES (*Youth Equipped to Serve, of FOCUS North America*) - focusnorthamerica.org/programs/yes/
- FOCUS North America - focusnorthamerica.org
- IOCC (*International Orthodox Christian Charities*) - iocc.org
- OCMC (*Orthodox Christian Mission Center*) - ocmc.org
- Salvation Army - salvationarmyusa.org

SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 2: DEBRIEF

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you do during the service project?
- How do you feel after today's project?
- What was the goal of the project? Do you think the goal was achieved?
- What is something new that you learned today?
- Did you think you would be able to complete the task?

ACTIVITY 3: REFLECTION

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Did you experience joy through this project?
- How did you share joy during this project?

ACTIVITY 4: SCRIPTURE READING & APPLICATION

10 minutes

Have one participant read the following passage aloud to the group, twice:

*“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”
(Romans 12:9-13)*

Then ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What’s one lesson you can take away from the project?
- How does the service project relate to the theme of “joy”?
- How is service an important part of joy?

SERVICE PROJECT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Lesson:

To love is to serve. By loving our neighbor, we are loving God. We serve others to be an example of Christ in the world and to bring joy into their lives. Abiding in God causes us to be joyful and offers others around us the ability to experience that joy. Serving our neighbor brings God into our lives as well as theirs. We can grow the fruit of joy by planting seeds of love in others. Our sacrifice helps us grow closer to God. Abiding in Him brings us joy.

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following questions. The session leader should go first.

- What is one way to experience God's joy in your daily life through what you learned in the service?
- How have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to abide in God to experience His joy?

SERVICE PROJECT:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

CLOSING PRAYER

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Almighty God, giver of every good and perfect gift, teach us to render to You all that we have and all that we are, that we may praise You with our whole lives, turning the duties, the sorrows, and the joys of all our life into a living sacrifice to You; Remind us, O Master, to opening our hearts daily to serve our brothers and sisters who are in need. In your Holy Name we pray.

Amen.