

JOY

grades 3-6

Y²AMM Ministry
Plan

September 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.
-

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” : Love

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Learning Session September 2017	3
Fellowship Night September 2017	10
Worship Session September 2017	17
Service Project September 2017	29

LEARNING SESSION

SEPTEMBER 2017

How Love is a Fruit of the Spirit

DATE:

Week of Monday, September 11, 2017

GOAL:

To learn why love is a fruit of the Spirit

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can show Christian love
in your daily life, even when it is difficult

ESTIMATED DURATION:

45 minutes

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. projector and laptop
2. incense

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, something they like, and something they love.

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 should strive to establish a level of comfort and safety to encourage participants to open their hearts to each other and to God.

LEARNING SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

ACTIVITY 1: VIDEO

10 minutes

Show participants **Be the Bee #20 | Overflowing with God's Love** (<https://youtu.be/c7zCEfnbK8A>).

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you see and hear in the video? What is one thing that caught your attention?
- Someone asked Steve what to do if you're showing love to someone and they do not show it back. How did Jesus handle that situation?
- What happens if you try to bottle up God's love, like the priest bottled up the myrrh? What is better to do with God's love, and the myrrh?
- What lesson will you take away from the video?

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 love mean to you? When have you felt loved?
- To whom is it easy to show love?
- Have you ever felt rejected or discouraged when you tried to show someone love?
 - Jesus showed His love to people (when He healed them and worked miracles) but not everyone was interested in receiving Jesus' love. The people in his hometown seemed the least interested.
- Is it ever hard to show our love to certain people?
 - Can you offer an example?
- Should we love everyone?
- How do you feel about showing love even when you will receive nothing in return?
- What are some ways you show love to others?

Remember:

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

ACTIVITY 3: INCENSE

10 minutes

Pass a piece of incense to each participant. Ask them to smell the incense.

Lesson:

Though it's very small, a single piece of incense can give off a big smell. Similarly, even a small act of love can have a big impact.

Next, remind participants of the miraculous myrrh-streaming icon from the video.

Lesson:

When the priest was stingy with the myrrh, it stopped flowing. When he shared it, the myrrh flowed even more. Even though it may be small, God can multiply the small love we are able to show others.

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 love people, even when it may be difficult?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

Christ my God, set my heart on fire with love in You, that in its flame I may love You with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul and with all my strength, and my neighbor as myself, so that by keeping Your commandments I may glorify You the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

Amen.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2017

How to Demonstrate Love Through Our Relationships

DATE:

Week of Monday, September 18, 2017

GOAL:

To learn how to demonstrate love through our relationships

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can show Christian love in your daily life, even when it is difficult

ESTIMATED DURATION:

3 hours

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. copy of *Finding Nemo*, or another appropriate movie on love
2. projector or television, and speaker
3. popcorn, nachos, and nacho 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

Make nachos and popcorn as a group. 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 41 minutes

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

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 a great way to show people the compelling beauty behind Christian ideals like love and sacrifice, and can connect with people in a way that a talk or academic lesson may not.

ACTIVITY 5: TEACHING

10 minutes

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- How do the characters in *Finding Nemo* demonstrate love?
 - Marlin (the father) does not give up looking for Nemo (his son) who is lost.
 - God also has this constant love for us.
 - Dory shows love to a stranger.
 - Nemo was not her son. He was a stranger, yet she shows love to him. We are called to love our neighbor (everyone around us) in this way.
- Where do we see this kind of love in our own lives?
 - Parents, siblings, friends, family

Remember:

Love is more than an emotion. It is an action.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

Lesson:

Love is more than an idea or a feeling. It's a choice, something we live out in real relationships with specific, real people. The more we practice love daily and in small ways, the more grace God gives us to love unconditionally, even when love is difficult or demands sacrifices from us. The deeper our love becomes, the more it looks like God's love for us.

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 love a specific person in your life?
- How have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to love people 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.

Christ my God, set my heart on fire with love for You, that in its flame I may love You with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul and with all my strength, and my neighbor as myself, so that by keeping Your commandments I may glorify You the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

Amen.

WORSHIP SESSION

SEPTEMBER 2017

Experiencing God's Love
Through Worship

DATE:

Week of Monday, September 25, 2017

GOAL:

To experience God's love 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)

WORSHIP SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

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.

WORSHIP SESSION:
JOY RESOURCES 2017-18

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 love in Church services? Did you experience God's love in this service?
- What is supplication?
 - Asking for something humbly or earnestly
- What does "intercede" mean?
- What happened during the service?
- Can you identify themes from the Small Paraklesis?
 - Love, repentance, forgiveness
- How does the Small Paraklesis relate to love?
- How do you experience or feel love through chanting Paraklesis together?

Remember:

Some (perhaps many) participants don't feel God's love 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 questions and facilitate a discussion:

- Can you think of a time you needed help with something?
- What did you do? How did you find a solution or answer?

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 1 - Verse 1

*With many temptations surrounding me,
Searching for salvation,
I have hastened unto you;
O Mother of the Word, and ever-Virgin,
From all distresses and dangers deliver me.*

Ask participants the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you read? What stood out to you?
- What does it mean for our lives?
- How does it feel to know that Panagia loves you?
Who else loves you?

Lesson:

Love is more than a feeling. It's a choice and an action; it's something we live out in real relationships with real live people.

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 love in your daily life through what you learned in the service?
- How have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to love a specific person in your life?

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.

Christ my God, set my heart on fire with love in You, that in its flame I may love You with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul and with all my strength, and my neighbor as myself, so that by keeping Your commandments I may glorify You the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

Amen.

Additional Notes on the Small Paraklesis

Explanation of the Service

The Paraklesis is served in times of need and on behalf of the living. The Greek word *paraklesis* means “supplication,” that is, asking for help. The paraklesis service we prayed asks for help from the Theotokos, but there are other paraklesis services dedicated to other saints, such as Sts. Nektarios and Demetrios and many others. The paraklesis service we are most familiar with (the one to the Theotokos) is called the “Small” or “Little” Paraklesis. There is also a “Great” Paraklesis, but that service is only chanted during the Dormition Fast in the first two weeks of August. Outside of that time, we chant the Small Paraklesis only.

The designation “Small” or “Great” simply refers to a difference in the troparia (hymns) of the canon (the long grouping of short, poetic hymns set to certain melodies). In this case, some of the hymns of the Great Paraklesis are slightly longer than those of the Small. Otherwise, the services are the same, with the exception that they have different Gospel readings assigned to them. The canon of the Small Paraklesis dates from the ninth century; that of the Great, the thirteenth. Properly speaking, the chanting of a paraklesis service belongs to the Evening (Vespers) service, and, if it is to be chanted then, is inserted towards the end of that service, after the so-called “Song of Symeon”.

SERVICE PROJECT

SEPTEMBER 2017

To Love is to Serve

DATE:

Week of Monday, October 2, 2017

GOAL:

To learn that to love is to serve

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way to love 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.*

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 feel love through this project?
- How did you give love?
- How did you receive love?

ACTIVITY 4: SCRIPTURE READING & APPLICATION

10 minutes

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

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

(John 13:34-35)

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 “love”?
 - Our sacrifice helps us grow closer to God.
- How is service an important part of love?

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. Because God is love, when we love someone we are bringing God to them. Serving our neighbor brings God into our lives as well.

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 love in your daily life through what you learned during the service project?
- Have you been fulfilling your commitment from last week to try to love people even when it's difficult?

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.