



GOYA
grades 7-12

Y²AAM

Ministry Plan

2018-19

A Life of Offering:
Offering our Talents
September 2018





EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

BUILDING FAITH TO MOVE **MOUNTAINS**

A new ministry course designed to help you:

1. **develop** a **vision** for ministry
2. **understand** the **challenges** to ministry
3. **implement** the **practices** of effective Christian ministry

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The Y²AM Ministry Plan 2018-19

A Life of Offering

Module 1: Preparing to Connect

September 2018: Offering our Talents
October 2018: Offering our Struggles
November 2018: Offering our Conflicts

Module 2: Connecting with God

December 2018: Offering our Prayer
January 2019: Offering our Story
February 2019: Offering our Sacrifice

Module 3: Living with Connection

March 2019: Offering our Gifts
April 2019: Offering the Gospel
May 2019: Offering our Lives

Welcome to the Y²AM Ministry Plan!

July 5, 2018

Dear GOYA Leader,

Last summer, we launched the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** to help Church workers lead Christ-centered and Kingdom-oriented ministry.

And, glory to God, the feedback was incredible.

This year, we're proud to unveil a new and improved version of the **Y²AM Ministry Plan**, a tool to help communities and homes lead transformational ministry for the youth and young adults in their care.

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 into people who live lives of constant offering to God.

And it's all laid out for you, from the first week of September 2018 through the last week of May 2019.

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

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.

We couldn't have produced the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** without the hard work of Christian Gonzalez, Maria Pappas, and Christina Andresen who helped edit and review the sessions and offered invaluable feedback and suggestions. I'm also grateful to Kristina Wenger who generously took the lead in developing the Family Supplement and did outstanding work.

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 continues to elevate this project. Not only has she been crafting the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** for almost a year, she faithfully collected and reviewed all the feedback we received from people across the Church. As a result, I think this year's version of the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** will be even better than last year's.

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.

How to Use the Y²AM Ministry Plan

The **Y²AM Ministry Plan** is a tool designed to help you lead great ministry. It's designed to eliminate the stress of finding or creating ministry resources, so you can be free to spend time with the young people in your care. So, as you flip through the **Y²AM Ministry Plan**:

Remember:

1. The **Y²AM Ministry Plan** may be more than you need. We offer week-by-week ministry guidance, but your group may not meet every week. In practice, you may need to skip some of the lesson plans we offer. That's ok: feel free to use the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** in the way that's best for you.
2. Calendar notes are suggestions, not requirements. While the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** is designed intentionally week-by-week and month-by-month, this may not fit your schedule perfectly. That's ok.
3. Anytime you have questions about how to use the **Y²AM Ministry Plan** you can always reach out to us. We're here to help.

Here's a bit more practical advice:

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.



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Offering our Talents
September 2018

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LEARNING SESSION

SEPTEMBER 2018

Offering our Talents

DATE:

Week of Monday, September 3, 2018

GOAL:

To learn to identify your talents with grace

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can offer your talents to
God

ESTIMATED DURATION:

55 minutes

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. projector and speaker (or laptop/tablet)
2. blank paper for each participant
3. pen for each participant
4. buckets for each participant
5. scissors

OPENING PRAYER

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

“Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name.” And help us to, “not neglect to do good and to share what we have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

Amen.

(a passage from Hebrews 13:15-16)

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ICEBREAKER

5 minutes

Tell us your name and an adjective that represents you and begins with the same letter as your first name.

Remember:

It's always helpful to start with an activity to help participants relax and allow community to build. Early in the session, focus primarily on getting participants to open their hearts and connect with what's happening in the group. This is an opportunity to encourage participants to share their honest opinions and thoughts, as well as listen to those of others. Take this time to connect with what's important to them, and to understand what they've connected with.

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 1: FILL YOUR BUCKET

10 minutes

Pass out a pen, paper, and scissors to the group. Ask participants to cut their paper into strips. Participants will need as many strips of paper as there are participants in the group. (If there are 15 participants, then each participant needs 15 strips of paper.) Ask participants to reflect on each person in the group and the talents or strengths each may possess. Have participants write down one talent that they see each participant possess. While participants are writing, label each bucket with the name of each participant. When participants have finished writing, have them drop their slips of paper into the correctly labeled bucket. (Slips of paper with talents for Maria should go into the bucket labeled for Maria.) When everyone has finished, have participants take their bucket and read the slips of paper.

Remember:

Please remind participants that talents are not only sports or activities they do well. Talents are not physical characteristics. They could also include being a good friend, being a positive presence, the ability to cheer up a friend etc.

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 2: DEBRIEF

5 minutes

When participants are done reading their slips of paper, ask them the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you read on the papers?
- Were you surprised by what you read? In what way?
- Did you know that you possessed those talents?
- How do you feel after reading your strengths?

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 3: TALENTS & GRACE

10 minutes

Read the following hymn from the Myrrh Bearing Women from the Triodion, twice, and have participants journal their thoughts about what talents are:

“Come, O Faithful, Let us work zealously for the Master, For He distributes wealth to His servants. Let each of us according to his ability Increase his talent of Grace: Let one be adorned in wisdom through good works; Let another celebrate a service in splendour; The one distributes his wealth to the poor; The other communicates the Word to those untaught. Thus we shall increase what has been entrusted to us, And, as faithful stewards of Grace, We shall be accounted worthy of the Master’s Joy. Make us worthy of this, O Christ our God, In Your love for mankind.”

Remember:

You may have participants who are apprehensive to share their talents. They may not want to share because they have never shared their personal thoughts/feelings, or they may think they are being prideful by sharing information about themselves. Encourage each participant to share something, even if it is short.

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 4: TEACHING

10 minutes

Ask GOYAns the following questions and help facilitate a discussion:

- What is being described in the hymn?
- What is a talent?
- What is grace?
- What do you consider to be your talents?
- How has your view of talent changed, if it has?

Teaching: *(reflect on this rather than read it directly to participants)*
As human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, we are called to become more and more like God everyday. We do this by following His commandments. When we follow His path we are given Grace. Talents aren't just things you are good at, but they are God's grace, and how you "invest" the talents (cooperate with grace) is what matters. Then the "fill your bucket" activity can be examples of how they see each other living out a Christian life...so that people are writing things like, "you bless others with your kindness" not "you're good at sports."

Grace is "life-giving gift of divine life, a participation in the life of God and is the very life that flows naturally and

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

eternally from God. It is the real, life-bestowing power that brings us into communion with Him. It is the very life-giving, transforming, divine power and uncreated energies of God Himself. It is always received as a gift of God (never 'earned') by those who open their hearts and lives to receive it. The Saints tell us that this is the first stage of acquiring divine grace, i.e. the purification of the heart. Ultimately grace comes to dwell in a pure heart. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8). A pure heart (a heart devoid of sinful passions) can then be fully illumined by God's grace and light."

(The Eastern Orthodox Theology of Grace: An Interview with Fr. Michael Shanbour)

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 5: SCRIPTURE READING & APPLICATION

10 minutes

Have students read the following verse:

“Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” (1 Peter 4:8-11)

Ask GOYAnS the following questions and help facilitate a discussion:

- What is being described in this scripture passage
- How does it relate to the bucket activity?
- Do we think our talents or what we have been given is lacking or not enough?
- What happens when we use our talents and offer them to others? To God?
- How can we offer our talents?

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

Teaching: *(reflect on this rather than read it directly to participants)*

Talents should be viewed more as a gift of grace that can be shared to help lift others up. We each have the ability to love the neighbor and offer our talents to them.

Sometimes we may feel like this is not enough.

Sometimes we feel like we have nothing to give. “It's ok to feel empty. God doesn't need us to be full of anything but Himself. The crazy thing is, when we're feeling empty or like we have nothing to offer, we can offer up even that!

We don't have to be good at anything all on our own, we only have to be willing to listen for God's voice, and learn to love Him so that we can do the little goodness He asks of us each day. If we simply keep turning towards Him, no matter how we're feeling about ourselves, He will give us His grace and reveal to us where and how we can serve Him and our neighbor. And we'll be amazed! When we trust and love God, we will be able also to experience just how much we are loved by Him.” Doing this will fill us with God's love. When we realize God loves us, we are full of joy and we become so joyful that we want to give glory to God.

LEARNING SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and (starting with the session leader) ask each participant to answer the following question:

- What is one way to offer your talents to God through what you learned in the session?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

Lord, You have granted us to offer these common prayers in unison and have promised that when two or three agree in Your name, You will grant their requests. Fulfill now, O Lord, the petitions of Your servants as may be of benefit to them, granting us in the present age the knowledge of Your truth, and in the age to come eternal life.

Amen.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT SEPTEMBER 2018

Offering our Talents Through Relationships

DATE:

Week of Monday, September 10, 2018

GOAL:

To learn how to offer our talents through our relationships

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way you can offer your talents

ESTIMATED DURATION:

3 hours

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. copy of *Paper Towns*, or another appropriate movie on talent
2. projector/television and speaker
3. meal ingredients

OPENING PRAYER

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

“Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name.” And help us to “not neglect to do good and to share what we have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

Amen.

(a passage from Hebrews 13:15-16)

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 1: PREPARE THE MEAL

45 minutes

Organize participants to clean up and prepare the meal for the movie night. Make sure everyone has a job, even if it's a small one. Remember to pray before the meal.

Remember:

You can order pre-made food, but preparing a meal is a great way for people to connect and bond. It's 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 53 minutes

Make sure everyone has access to food, a comfortable place to sit, and a good view of the movie. We have suggested *Paper Towns*, but you could choose any movie that is age-appropriate and will inspire thought and conversation about talents.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

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 a few of the following questions and facilitate a discussion:

- What did you see/hear in the movie?
- Did you learn anything from the movie?
- What is the message of this movie? Do you agree or disagree with it?
- In what ways are the characteristics or qualities of the main character(s) like your own or those of someone you know?
- Which character did you (admire, hate, love, pity, relate to, etc.) the most? What was it about that character that caused you to have that reaction?
- The resolution of the film teaches a lesson. How can you apply the lesson in the film to your own life?

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

Remember:

Movies are 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.

FELLOWSHIP NIGHT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to tell the group something new they learned during the session.

CLOSING PRAYER

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

Lord, You have granted us to offer these common prayers in unison and have promised that when two or three agree in Your name, You will grant their requests. Fulfill now, O Lord, the petitions of Your servants as may be of benefit to them, granting us in the present age the knowledge of Your truth, and in the age to come eternal life.

Amen.

WORSHIP SESSION SEPTEMBER 2018

Experiencing Offering Through Worship

DATE:

Week of Monday, September 17, 2018

GOAL:

To learn that we can each offer a prayer

OBJECTIVE:

To chant the Small Paraklesis together

ESTIMATED DURATION:

75-90 minutes

WORSHIP SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

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.

Lord, You have granted us to offer these common prayers in unison and have promised that when two or three agree in Your name, You will grant their requests. Fulfill now, O Lord, the petitions of Your servants as may be of benefit to them, granting us in the present age the knowledge of Your truth, and in the age to come eternal life.

Amen.

WORSHIP SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 1: SMALL PARAKLESIS

45 minutes

Invite your parish priest to lead the service. Pass out pencils and paper, so that everyone can write down names for commemoration. If your parish priest is not available, you can still chant it as a reader service. If it's 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 the parts the priest would do.

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: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

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 experience while you were worshipping during the service?
- Did any part of the service stand out to you?
- Is there 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.

WORSHIP SESSION:
OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 3: GROUP PRAYER

10 minutes

Pray any prayer you would like. Be sure to include each participant in the prayer by name.

Remember:

We are all very comfortable with and accustomed to having a priest pray aloud for us. Prayer is a very powerful tool and it is a tool each of us possesses. As the Youth Worker, try to offer a personal prayer from your heart. This prayer should be in your own words. Be sure to say something specific about the participants, their families, the Church or whatever comes to your mind that you feel needs God's love and help in that moment. Use this opportunity to show participants that they too can offer their own prayers.

WORSHIP SESSION: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

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 to offer a prayer in your daily life through what you learned in the session?

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:
OFFERING OUR TALENTS

CLOSING PRAYER

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

Lord, You have granted us to offer these common prayers in unison and have promised that when two or three agree in Your name, You will grant their requests. Fulfill now, O Lord, the petitions of Your servants as may be of benefit to them, granting us in the present age the knowledge of Your truth, and in the age to come eternal life.

Amen.

SERVICE PROJECT SEPTEMBER 2018

Offering Through Serving

DATE:

Week of Monday, September 24, 2018

GOAL:

To learn to offer through service

OBJECTIVE:

To identify one way to offer our talents through service to others

ESTIMATED DURATION:

1 hour 15 minutes

SERVICE PROJECT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

1. bowls
2. measuring cups and spoons
3. flour
4. water
5. yeast
6. salt
7. sugar
8. prosforo seal
9. paper and pens

OPENING PRAYER

*In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Lord, this bread that we are baking represents each one of us.
We are offering ourselves to You, our very life, in humble
obedience and total commitment to You. We place ourselves on
Your holy altar through this bread to be used by You in any way
that You feel will help enlarge Your kingdom. Accept our gift and
make us worthy to receive the greater gift that You will give us
when You consecrate this bread and give it back to us as Your
Precious Body.
Amen.*

SERVICE PROJECT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 1: PREP

5 minutes

Have all participants wash their hands thoroughly, remove all bracelets, rings and watches, and push up any long sleeves.

ACTIVITY 2: MAKE THE DOUGH

30 minutes

We recognize that there are many different ways to make prosforo. This is one recipe. You can also follow your own or bring in someone from your church that regularly makes prosforo to help. More important than the recipe is that this process is done prayerfully and that all participants are able to contribute.

Possible recipe:

Ingredients:

2 tsp yeast (1 pkg)

1 tsp sugar

¼ cup warm water

5 cups pre-sifted, flour (King Arthur preferred)

1 tsp salt

1 ½ cup warm water

SERVICE PROJECT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

Procedure:

- Place yeast and sugar in a small bowl. Add ¼ cup warm water and whisk to mix well. Sift flour and salt on top of yeast and water to allow yeast to rise for approximately 10 minutes. Next, slowly begin mixing ingredients to form dough. Dough should be soft but not sticky. Place dough on floured surface and knead to make a smooth round ball.
- Once the dough is done being kneaded. Place it in a bowl with a towel over it a place in a warm (but not too warm area). Allow it to rise for a half hour.
- Prepare a list of names of Orthodox Christians who you would like commemorated in the service. Use first names only. On the left side, write "Living" at the top and list the names below. On the right side, write "Departed" and write the names of departed below. Bring the list and the bread to the Church before the start of Orthros (or the day before).

SERVICE PROJECT:
OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 3: REFLECTION

DISCUSSION GROUP

30 minutes

While the dough rises, pass out paper and pens to participants.

Give participants the following prompts and have them write down their thoughts:

Who is a model of Christ-likeness in your life?

Write that person's name on your paper.

What God given talents does this person possess that makes him or her a model of Christ?

After a few minutes of silent writing, ask participants to share what they wrote and facilitate a discussion using the prompt as a guide.

SERVICE PROJECT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

ACTIVITY 4: KNEADING AND STAMPING THE DOUGH

10 minutes

Have each group punch out and knead the dough a bit longer. They should shape it into a smooth round ball.

Once this is done, place the dough on a floured (not greased) baking sheet. Have participants press the seal in (make sure to flour the seal). This must be done evenly and firmly.

Once this is done, use toothpicks to poke holes around the seal and around the sides of the prosforo.

Bake in 350 degree oven for approximately 45 minutes.

ACTIVITY 5: CLEAN UP

10 minutes

While the dough is baking, make sure the space is completely clean.

SERVICE PROJECT: OFFERING OUR TALENTS

CONCLUSION: WRAP-UP & COMMITMENT

5 minutes

Go around the room and ask each participant to answer the following question:

- What is one way to offer our talents to serve others?

CLOSING PRAYER

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

O God, our God, You sent the heavenly Bread, the food for the whole world, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, as Savior, Redeemer, and Benefactor, to bless us and sanctify us. Do bless this offering and accept it upon Your heavenly altar. As a good and loving God remember those who brought it and those for whom it was brought. Keep us blameless in the celebration of Your divine Mysteries. For sanctified and glorified is Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Amen.