

**Annunciation Greek
Orthodox Cathedral**
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

Youth Ministry
-Mission Statement-
2013

Norfolk, Virginia





Parents must teach their children from their earliest days. They must teach them the fear of God, must cut their bad impulses and faults, and they mustn't fawn upon them or satisfy their bad desires and appetites. The small child is like the soft candle that you shape as you like and which accepts whatever seal you put on it. Whatever letters you write on a clean sheet of paper will remain imprinted. In the same way, whatever the small child learns when he is small will remain imprinted until old age....When the tree is small, if the wind blows, it bends. If we put a pole next to it, it becomes straight. If we don't put up a pole, and it remains bent, it will always remain bent. If, when it has grown up and is well rooted, we want to straighten it, it breaks and is cut down. It is the same way with our children. Let us support them in the faith and in the fear of God when they are small. Let us fence them in and surround them with walls of instruction and good examples until they get rooted in virtue, when they won't fear any danger."

COUNSEL
By ELDER PHILOTHEOS

CONTENTS

PREFACE	...4
INTRODUCTION	...5
FOREWARD	...9
ACOLYTES	...13
ANGEL AND JUNIOR CHOIRS	...13
LAP/NURSERY	...13
HOPE	...13
JOY	...14
GOYA	...14
SCOUTS	...19
OCF	...20
YAL	...21
HELLENIC DANCE ACADEMY	...21
BASKETBALL	...21
ORATORICAL FESTIVAL	...22
SUMMER CAMPS	...22
RETREATS	...23
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	...23
ORTHODOX RESOURCES	...24
HELLENIC LANGUAGE, FAITH & CULTURAL SCHOOL	...24

PREFACE

*“Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations.
Ask your father, and he will show you;
Your elders, and they will tell you.”*

-Deuteronomy 32:7

Certainly, the most fundamental cornerstone supporting the life of our children must be the Orthodox Christian faith. If the foundation set for our youth is one built upon the principles of our Holy Orthodox faith and our blessed ancestors, then the youth of today will be better equipped to combat the tumultuous seas of life which are surely lurking off in the distant horizon. In a well-concerted effort to promote the youth programs of this Holy Cathedral, which is named after the blessed Mother of God, the Θεοτόκος, this packet was conceived, and will attempt to provide direction for the youth programs which are designed to provide a safe harbor for our youth, which so often today sail the dangerous seas of life, alone.

It has become ever more apparent that we all sailing through this life are seeking direction, guidance and oftentimes, a bit of help. This is all the more relevant and applicable for the youth of today who, despite being surrounded by false truths and false modes of communication, so terribly find themselves isolated and alone.

While reading this text please keep in mind the mission statement for each of the youth programs. Though each mission statement might vary slightly, the underline focus in all of our ministries must have as its main focus the truth of Christ. This fact must be etched on our souls in all that we do as Orthodox Christians, never should our actions be separated from the Light of Christ. Throughout the history of our Holy Orthodox faith, the Light of Christ has provided the Light of Life for so many who sailed through equally dangerous seas. It was Christ who sustained the early martyrs as they were savagely attacked and devoured in the hippodromes of the Roman empire, it was Christ who sustained our ancestors as they had the Ottoman yataghan pressed against their throats, it was Christ who sustained the villagers of Kalavryta as they were slaughtered with German machine guns, it was Christ who sustained the prisoners of the Communist labor camps and it is Christ who sustains us now as we suffer in an age of nihilism, atheism and self-love.

For these reasons do we have the youth programs at the Cathedral. Our goal is to educate our children in the ways of Christ. Our goal is to bring the children into the life of the Church, the Body of Christ. Our goal is to joyously ascend together into the heights of the Heavenly Kingdom, which we are all called to do. To these ends shall we, walking together, continue and work towards. Just as our ancestors who went before us, now we are the Holy Precious vessels of the Orthodox Christian faith—our youth are looking towards you to teach them, console them and love them as the ever blessed children of Christ.

I pray that this packet provides some direction for us all as we seek to build and develop the youth programs of this Holy Cathedral, all to the Glory of God! *Πρός δόξαν Θεού!*

INTRODUCTION

Young Children in the Orthodox Church: some basic guidelines

By Presvytera Juliana Cownie

<http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/praxis/youngchildren.aspx>

*"Suffer little children to come unto me,
for of such is the Kingdom of God."*

-Luke 18:16

Of course, we Orthodox Christian parents want to bring our children to Christ. We bring them to be baptized, they are present with us at the Divine Services, they receive communion regularly. Isn't that enough? No, we are still holding them back if we are waiting for them to absorb Orthodoxy by osmosis. Their bodies may be in the Church, but their minds and spirits are far away. They come into the presence of the Lord, but they do not know where they are or Who He is. Their boredom and restlessness should tell us this, but unfortunately, we often render ourselves oblivious to the messages the children are sending. We ignore their behavior, hoping that this is merely symptomatic of youthful ignorance and that time will take care of the problem. In fact, it will. When they are older, these children will leave the Church, a church of which they have never been made to feel a part. They will leave and we will be answerable to God for their departure.

We have a responsibility to our children and to meet that responsibility we must stop listening to worldly wisdom and listen instead to eternal wisdom. The world tells us to indulge our children and make sure that they are never uncomfortable or unhappy. If we heed this kind of philosophy, we will feed our children's egos and starve their souls. God, in His infinite love for mankind, allows us to suffer terrible hardship and grief for the sake of our eternal souls. We are afraid to allow our children to suffer a temporary aggravation for the sake of theirs. The world has taught us to have no confidence in our ability to teach and discipline our own children. We want teams of child psychologists to approve our every action and we fear losing the love of our children every time a conflict arises. Even when we are willing to admit the Church into our child-rearing decisions, we have a tendency to want to hand over all of our responsibilities to some hapless individual who suggests having Protestant-style Sunday school sessions during the Divine Liturgy. This is nonsense. Our children are our responsibility and we can begin all by ourselves with two basic principles:

1. We must instruct our children from the day they are born in Orthodox Christian life BY OUR EXAMPLE, in our every thought, word and deed.

2. We must concentrate, from their earliest childhood, on teaching our children basic civilized behavior, without which any further education, either secular or religious, will be impossible.

This is not at all complicated or difficult. The key is consistency.

Traditional Orthodoxy is a priceless pearl, a gift which we bestow upon our children. If we act as though we are depriving our children in some way by insisting that they adhere to the teachings of the church, we are blaspheming. When we bring our children to Christ, we must not forget that we are bringing them into the presence of the King of Kings. We do no service to our children when we deprive them of the means of understanding this blessing. To give them the false impression that they are equals with their "friend, Jesus" is to give them a counterfeit Christ. We love our children and therefore we want to bring them to Christ as He truly is, in all of His glory. To give them less is to give them a stone in the place of bread.

'If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?' (Luke 11:11-13).

Self-will, once it is firmly established, is so antithetical to Orthodoxy that it will render spiritual growth impossible. It is the responsibility of the parents to impose their will upon the child, even in the smallest details, even in the seemingly insignificant areas of the child's life.

"The will of the parents should be imprinted upon each step— of course in a general way. Without this, the behavior of the child can easily become corrupted. After enjoying himself according to his own will, the child always returns unwilling to obey even in the smallest things; and this if it happens only once—what then can one say if this part of bodily activity is completely neglected? How difficult it is later to uproot self-will, which so quickly seats itself in the body as in a fortress. The neck will not bend, the hands and feet will not move, and the eyes will not even wish to look as they are told.

But on the contrary, a child comes out ready to obey any kind of order when from the very beginning he is not given total freedom in his movements. In addition, there is no better training in being the master of one's body than by forcing it to exert itself according to orders."

-St. Theophan the Recluse,
Raising Them Right,
Conciliar Press, 1989, p. 34

Take, for example, a toddler who becomes obstinate about food. The child is given a healthy breakfast but he refuses to eat because he would rather play at that moment. He screams and cries and thrusts the food away from him. Fine. Let him get down. A parent cannot and should not force a child to eat. However, the child should not be

offered any more food until a specific time determined by the parent, preferably the next mealtime. If the parent becomes obsessive about the child's eating habits to the point where the child is fed on demand, the child will learn:

- 1). *The world revolves around me. My desires supersede those of my parents and they must act according to my will.*
- 2). *It is important that I never feel hungry or uncomfortable in any way.*

How could one expect such a child to respond to the idea of fasting when he comes of age? It is especially important that the child not connect the idea of "love" with the idea of "instant gratification." Otherwise, all attempts at helping the child to grow spiritually will be greeted as frightening portents of abandonment.

From very early childhood the child must learn that he will eat food given by a parent or permitted by a parent at the time decided by the parent. He will play when and where the parent decides. A child must learn from infancy to look to his parents for guidance and not to his own will. We must be careful here to note that overcoming self-will is not easy at all. We must expect to struggle and sometimes have unpleasant confrontations with our children. This can certainly be exhausting but if parents give in to their children's demands, even once, spiritual ground is lost that is very difficult to regain. A child who cries in order to get his way, for example, will cry for everything once he finds that this method moves the parents to sympathy. This so-called "sensitive" child is merely a manipulator of the feelings of others. To cater to this kind of manipulation as though it were a touching character trait is to develop the child into a self-involved cry-baby who will be unable to "cope" with anything he chooses to avoid.

In the evening, the family is reunited. The evening meal should be taken together. Sadly, our society has largely abandoned the concept that it is important for the family to come together in joyful fellowship at the end of the day. Frantic accommodation of various schedules, snacks taken in front of the television, grazing from the refrigerator — these have taken the place of meaningful conversation and the bonding of parents and children around the dining room table. Let it not be so for the Orthodox family. The hectic pace of life being what it is, the evening meal may be one of the few times we have during the work week to relax and enjoy one another's company. This is where children learn how to make congenial conversation and have a chance to tell the important events of their day. It should be an opportunity for everyone at the table to talk about the things that interest them with the people they love most. This is not the occasion for the mother to tell her husband about the transgressions of the younger children, or for heated arguments of any kind, or for adolescent sullenness, or for complaints about the food. Informality within the family does not mean that we are free to be our rudest and crudest with those who must put up with us. It means we are free to express our love and interest in those with whom our lives are entwined.

For Orthodox Christians, every day is dedicated to God. Our earthly concerns must always be secondary to our spiritual concerns. This is what our children must see and experience always. When there is a Feast Day of the Church, the Orthodox family must

make every attempt to be present at the services for the Feast. If this means missing school or work, the sacrifice of that time will only help to underline the fact that worship of God is a priority. When, for some reason, it is impossible for the family to attend services on a Feast Day, they should make an effort to either say some of the prayers from the services in their icon corner at home (if they have the books) or teach the children the significance of the feast day and read the appropriate scripture readings from the Bible. At all times, the children should be made aware of festal and fasting periods and what is expected of them during these periods. The more they know of the cycle of the Church calendar, the more Orthodox children will feel themselves to be a part of the greater Body of Christ.

There are no guarantees that applying any of the above suggestions will result in our children remaining in the Orthodox Church into adulthood. This is a sad fact, but one which must be faced. We live in difficult times and our children face myriad temptations. We cannot ultimately force Orthodoxy upon them. They must choose it for themselves. We are, however, accountable for what kind of teachings they receive during their formative years. If we have done our job, the chances are greater that they will remain Orthodox or, if they leave the Church, that they will come back. They will not come back because they like us so much or because we filled every minute of their childhood with fun. They will come back because their hard experience in the world will teach them some respect for our strictness and because we told them the truth even when it hurt. There can be no other definition of love for a Christian than a sincere desire for someone's salvation. The love we bear our children must be according to that definition at the expense of any other which the world may try to impose upon us.

“Is it remarkable that there are so few who are being saved among those who have led a bad youth? This example more clearly than anything else indicates in what great danger is a person who has not received good rules in his youth and has not beforehand dedicated himself to God.”

“What good fortune therefore it is to receive a good, truly Christian upbringing, to enter with it into the years of youth, and then in the same spirit to enter into the years of adulthood.” (Ibid, p. 71.)

FOREWARD

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

By Father Apostolos Hill

When I was a lad in Sunday School we used to sing a great many very active songs that required a lot of physical movement from us, no doubt a sneaky ploy by our long-suffering teachers to channel some of the boundless energy we had in those days. And one of the little songs we used to sing was called *"I'm in the Lord's army."* And the words went like this; *"I'm too young to march in the infantry, ride in the cavalry, shoot the artillery, I'm too young to fly o'er the enemy but I'm in the Lord's army."*

Well now, I am too old to do any of those things but not too old to understand the basic point of the song which we find reflected in the Epistle reading of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. The Church in her wisdom gives us this particular reading early on in the Advent fast, the 2nd – longest fasting period in the Church calendar, to encourage us and to remind us about the aim of our ascetic efforts as we prepare for the Feast of the Incarnation of our Lord.

St. Paul is writing to encourage the faithful to stand tough against the many noetic and spiritual attacks launched against us by our ancient adversary, the devil, in our journey toward the Kingdom of Heaven. Of course, many times throughout history these words and others like them have been misused and misappropriated to justify open warfare and physical violence in the name of God. Hence, under the banner of religion the Crusades were launched which saw the Levant awash in a river of blood and the great Christian city of Constantinople put to the knife by the armies of the 4th Crusade in 1204. And the uniform of the German *Wermacht* in WWII included on the buckle the phrase *"Got mit uns"* (God with us) as they put 7 millions Jews, Poles, Gypsies, and invalids to systematic death. In the name of religion the 9/11 terrorists wreaked carnage in New York, Washington, and the Pennsylvania countryside.

But St. James plainly tells us that; *"the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."* (1:20) and St. Paul goes even further when he writes to the Corinthians; *"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* (2 Cor.10:4, 5)

So before we begin to address this morning's reading we must first understand the context of it; St. Paul is speaking about the spiritual warfare in which we are all engaged who take our salvation and our life in Christ seriously enough to strive for it as the Lord Jesus Christ told His Disciples; *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the*

kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Matt. 11:12)
That is to say it takes effort to enter the kingdom of heaven.

When Presbytera and I took our vacation in Scotland last month we toured many castles and armories and were able to see many fine collections of ancient suits of chain-mail and armor, swords, shields, battle-axes, cross-bows, and other implements of war. And having seen some of these relics of primitive warfare helps bring alive the words that follow;

Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Can there be any doubt about the evil in our day and age? A cursory glance at the morning news tells the grim tale of a society spinning out of control; this week's papers alone telling of an 18-year old college student who disappeared shortly after it was discovered that she lived a double life as a porn actress, a 10-year old girl who was gunned down in a cross-fire at her home, a young NFL player who was murdered in his own home, even of a tragic suicide that stemmed from a cruel hoax perpetrated against a 13-yr old girl by a 47-yr old mother and her daughter; the list is sad and endless. And every year during the holiday season we see that the birth of Christ is pushed farther out into the margins of our collective consciousness as the greeting "Merry Christmas" (to say nothing of "Christ is born, glorify him!") is replaced with "Festive Hana-kwanza-solsti-mas." We are many light years removed from Linus standing alone on stage during "A Charlie Brown Christmas" reciting the story of Christmas from St. Luke's gospel.

Added to these examples are the other untold and unreported stories of havoc and mayhem that afflicts the most vulnerable members of our communities. And then there is the spiritual violence perpetrated against the faithful everyday in the spiritual darkness that borders on a kind of madness and the inky blackness of the void in a craven consumer culture that exhausts itself in a frenzy of noise and spending trying to fill the emptiness of a soul shut off from the only true source of love and light. So we must take seriously the words of the Apostle this morning when he writes;

Ephesians 6:14-17 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Before exploring these implements of spiritual warfare it is vital that we understand against whom precisely this spiritual conflict is to be waged. St. Paul wrote about this in

the 7th chapter of Romans when he said; “*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” (**Romans 7: 19-24**)

In other words, the spiritual warfare is waged more often than not against our own sinful proclivities and the temptations we face as men and women bearing flesh in the world. So before we get too far ahead of ourselves looking for enemies out on the distant horizon we must first look inwardly at our own hearts and the evil that lurks therein. In the Orthodox tradition we refer to this exercise as “asceticism” that is the training of the body toward spiritual ends, much as an athlete trains and disciplines his or her body for the contest ahead, as St. Paul wrote of it to the Corinthians; **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

So what are these spiritual weapons that St. Paul beckons us to take up? First there is the undergarment of truth (“*having your loins girt about with truth*”), that is to say being united with the One who is the way, the truth, and the life. It is His weapons we take up and not our own because it is only in Him that we can have any hope of victory. In Him we know we can be victorious over sin! **Romans 8:37-39** *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

Then there is the breastplate of righteousness as the Prophet Isaiah described the Messiah; **Isaiah 59:17** *For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.* Righteousness for the Christian believer, which is living rightly according to the commandments of God, is not an optional exercise for those who call themselves Orthodox. Living a holy life is expected of all of us.

Next comes the sandals of the preparation of the gospel of peace, that is to say, we are quick to bring the word of God to as many as will hear it and receive it joyfully. Again, the prophet Isaiah proclaims; **Isaiah 52:7** *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!* History is replete with examples when the best defense is a good offense and we need to take the fight to the enemy much more than we do by boldly proclaiming the message of the Gospel of peace to a dark and drifting world!

And as any good knight or ancient foot soldier knew, we dare not go into battle with the forces of the enemy without a shield, without a means of defense. And especially in

such a faithless age as we live in faith is essential to combat the many attacks we face every day. By faith we can move the mountains in our path but without it we too easily and too quickly fall into skepticism, boredom, and disbelief. Thus the psalmist writes; **Psalm 84:11** *For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

And then having put on the helmet of salvation, the grace and adornment of humanity without which we revert to bestial activities and unmindfulness of God, we take up the sword of Spirit which is the word of God as St. Paul described to the Hebrews; **Hebrews 4:12** *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Ignorance of Holy Scripture is the source of great calamity in the lives of Orthodox today. It isn't for nothing that the proverbs says; *"Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against God."* So we, if we are to wage the spiritual warfare required of any good soldier of Christ, must take up the weapons God has made available to us. This isn't a battle we can shy away from because the enemy will bring it to our very door, to the door of our hearts, whether we will him to or not. Ignorance of Holy Scripture is to a Christian like a soldier cut off from his platoon and lost on the battlefield without a compass.

Why must we wage this war? What is the end of our striving? St. Paul reminds us when he writes to his beloved spiritual son, Timothy, near the end of his life before he was beheaded for the Gospel telling of the life of toil and the many battles he has waged and the hope that has sustained him; **2 Tim. 4:6-8** *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

We are surrounded in this Cathedral with the icon of those saints of God who have fought their good fight and who have finished the course of their lives as good and constant soldiers of the cross. May we, like them, wage the battle for our souls and the souls of our families and loved one, friends and colleagues, and as many as God deigns should cross our path with the same faith and conviction, with the same piety and courage, knowing that in Jesus Christ the victory has already been won.

In Christ,



ACOLYTES

The acolyte program is one permitted and blessed by the parish Priest in an effort to promote and encourage the young boys to constantly learn and remain engaged in the Holy Services. It is a privilege to serve in the Holy Altar and one which should not be taken lightly. The boys are expected to dress appropriately, to arrive early and to listen to the adult and youth leaders while serving. Minimum age for service is 12 years.

ANGEL AND JUNIOR CHOIRS

The Angel and Junior Choirs provide an avenue whereby the youth of the Cathedral can develop an understanding of both the beautiful yet complex Byzantine, and other various styles of hymnology as it pertains to the ecclesiastical music employed in Orthodox worship.

LAP/Nursery

In an effort to promote and develop the sacred bond between Parent and child, Little Angels Playgroup (LAP) operates as a mode whereby Orthodox parents can encourage each other while relating and discussing the issues and concerns of child rearing with other like-minded Orthodox Christians. Social events and day trips which support the mission are highly important.

Infants to Pre-K.

HOPE

The Hellenic Orthodox Primary Education (HOPE) is the ministry to Kindergarten through 2nd grade children of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Since HOPE is a ministry, the orientation and implementation of the program should reflect the Orthodox Christian Faith, Tradition and Life.

The mission and goal of the HOPE ministry is to lead our children in to experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith. By developing a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and becoming active sacramental members of the living church, our children will be equipped with tools necessary to assist them in their journey toward salvation. By laying a foundation of faith at this age, the young people will have something that will guide and strengthen them through life. Grades K – 2.

JOY

The Junior Orthodox Youth, or JOY, is the ministry to 3rd through 6th grade children of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Since JOY is a ministry, the orientation and implementation of the program should reflect the Orthodox Christian Faith, Tradition and Life.

The mission and goal of the JOY ministry is to lead our young people into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith. By developing a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and becoming active sacramental members of the living church, our young people will be equipped with tools necessary to assist them in their journey toward salvation. By laying a foundation of faith at this age, the young people will have something that will guide and strengthen them as they progress into junior high and high school. Grades 3 – 6.

GOYA

The Greek Orthodox Youth of America, or GOYA, is the ministry to teenagers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Since GOYA is ministry, the orientation and implementation of the program should reflect the Orthodox Christian Faith, Tradition and Life.

GOYA is ministry to middle and high school grade Orthodox Christian teenagers. Teenagers should be in sixth through twelfth grades to participate. It is recommended that GOYA ministry be divided into two distinct groups, the junior high GOYA ministry and the high school GOYA ministry.

The mission and goal of GOYA ministry is to lead our young people into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith. By developing a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and becoming active sacramental members of the living Church, our young people will be equipped with tools necessary to assist them in their journey toward salvation.

The National Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends that GOYA ministry be based on the following four characteristics: Worship (Liturgia), Fellowship (Koinonia), Service (Diakonia), and Witness (Martyria).

WORSHIP, (LITURGIA)

“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 sacramental expression of these, and is thus a very important element in ministering to our young people. It is important for GOYAn's to be active sacramental members of the Church.

GOYAn's can participate in WORSHIP through:

- Private and Corporate Prayer
- Participation in the Divine Services and Sacraments of the Church (not just Sunday, but the entire cycle of worship)
- Prayer services at GOYA gatherings
- Prayer for those who are sick or in need
- Observance of the Church calendar, including the pre-scribed Feasts and Fasts
- Study of religious books and writings

FELLOWSHIP (KOINONIA)

“Behold how good and pleasing it is when brothers dwell in unity” (Psalm 133).

Fellowship is the way Orthodox Christians integrate their faith with daily life. It is sacred when Orthodox Christians gather together in our 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. By gathering together in fellowship, and by experiencing this love, we emulate the relationship of the Trinity, and develop our life in Christ.

GOYAn's can participate in FELLOWSHIP through:

- Camp and retreat programs, church sponsored athletic programs, ethnic dancing, etc.
- Pan-Orthodox seminars under the guidance of the priest
- Film, video and multimedia presentations and subsequent discussions
- Performance of religious productions (plays, musicals, role-playing, etc.)
- Day, overnight or weeklong outings
- Volunteerism at the parish level
- Group discussions on various contemporary issues (books, movies, music)
- Church Attendance

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. Young people are urged to do the same. Therefore, we can honor and glorify God by loving and serving humanity in His name. Young people should use their God-given charismata (gifts) to serve.

Young people serve God by serving the Church. For Orthodox Christians, service to

God and community is the way of life, the way of living one's faith. As Jesus Christ our Lord said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16). For this reason, service is an integral part of the Orthodox Christian's life.

Often times, we look at our youth and wonder how we can help them. We need to inspire them into a life of service. The question must be asked, "How can our young people use their God-given gifts for service to the needy, service to those less fortunate?" How can they be part of the people who respond to our Lord's call in Matthew 25:31-46, to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, visit those in prison. This is the true meaning of service.

GOYAns can participate in Service through:

- Local work projects to beautify and maintain the parish
- Outreach to the elderly, the sick, the shut-in's, etc.
- Support of missions abroad and at home
- Contributing to Archdiocesan, Diocesan, and parish ministries (St. Basil's Academy, St. Michael's, Hellenic College/Holy Cross, etc.)
- Volunteerism in a local soup kitchen for the day
- Participating in short-term mission trips
- Allow them to be personally creative and innovative

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. The spiritual reality is not always expressed in the material world. In order to be true to oneself and to the Orthodox Christian Faith, young people should strive to exemplify faith. They must be a witness to their faith, offering a convincing word and verbal expression of this faith, to those they come in contact with.

GOYAns can participate in WITNESS through:

- Attending spiritual classes and reading about the faith
- Sharing the faith with one another and with others outside the group
- Becoming ambassadors of Christ to people we come in contact with
- Inviting a non-Orthodox friend to a Church service or GOYA event
- Sponsor a booth at a local Church Festival or community event to share the Orthodox Faith
- Start a book of the month club with your Orthodox friends and invite non-Orthodox friends as well

YEARLY MAINTENANCE

Every year GOYA will experience some attrition. Special efforts should be made to keep the

ministry strong and healthy. When it is evident that a certain individual is not participating in GOYA, a special effort should be made to reach out to that young person and bring them back to the group.

Ways to do this are:

- Have the parish priest contact them
- Have a peer contact them by e-mail, phone or in person
- Send a "we miss you" letter
- Make a home visitation

It is important to make sure that the GOYA ministry is meeting the needs of the young people involved in it. From time to time and at least annual, the program should be evaluated by those involved to see if it is accomplishing its goals. It is especially important to listen to the young people involved; adults might think that GOYA is meeting its goal but the young people might not. Both groups need to be happy with the ministry for it to be successful. **DISCIPLINE AND PREVENTING PROBLEMS**

It is very important that the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team spend time planning how to prevent disciplinary problems. If you take time to come up with this plan and convey it clearly to the GOYAnS, less time will be spent dealing with discipline problems. Despite popular belief that teenagers are trouble . . . they are not! If you expect them to be, they will be. Young people rise to your expectation. Clearly communicating what you expect of them and why, will work much better than approaching them with the "I am in charge attitude". Often times, trying to be over-controlling is seen as a challenge to try to get past you. Make young people partners in deciding standards for group behavior, consequences and boundaries.

Rules should be centered on respect for self, others, the church, the priest and advisors. Through fostering mutual respect between all who participate in your group, fewer problems will arise.

Things to consider . . .

- Set rules with the young people. The rules should center on respect. Phrase them in a positive way whenever possible (instead of don't use foul language say use appropriate language). Post them at meetings.
 - Before major outings outline expectations.
 - Review them with the group. If it is an overnight trip, you may want to have the GOYAn and their parent sign the form after reviewing.
- Remember this is a ministry for the teenagers. 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 and sometimes this will be in the form of defiance.
- Avoid power struggles at all costs. No one ever wins.
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep.

- Be consistent. Don't look the other way when there is a problem. Address the issues immediately to prevent future problems.
- Create a GOYA code of conduct (you should also have one for advisors too)

CODE OF CONDUCT

This is a sample code of conduct. Compose one with your GOYA that meets the needs of your community. This code reflects desirable and undesirable behaviors of GOYA members. It is also an appropriate guide for creating a code of conduct for advisors who minister to the group.

GOYA Code of Conduct

As a participant of GOYA and the Greek Orthodox Church, I realize that I represent my parish and church in all activities both in and out of the church. As participant in the GOYA ministry, I will strive to:

- Be an active sacramental member of the church.
- Keep the GOYA ministry, participants, advisors and the parish in my prayers.
- Give my time, talents and gifts for the good of the ministry.
- Continue to grow in my relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Treat all that I come into contact, with respect and love.
- Dress appropriately for all activities.
- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Honor my priest, parents and advisors and fellow GOYAns.

I realize that there are certain things that will not be tolerated in the GOYA ministry and I promise not to indulge any of the following activities:

- I will not use alcohol, drugs or tobacco
- I will not verbally abuse or harass others
- I will not physically or emotionally abuse others
- I will not engage in any type of sexual activity
- I will not bring any guns, knives or any other type of weapon

SCOUTS

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. Troop 102 seeks to condition and develop the physical, mental and spiritual capabilities of each Boy Scout while fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and Christian love.

Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is:
Trustworthy Obedient
Loyal Cheerful
Helpful Thrifty
Friendly Brave
Courteous Clean
Kind Reverent

The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.

Your Orthodox Church, in partnership with Boy Scouts of America/Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and the Standing Conference of Canonical Eastern Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, wholeheartedly endorses Scouting and urges parish councils and the Reverend Clergy to sponsor this program on a local level. Too often we fail to see the possibilities that this program offers in the Christian education of our youth. Boy Scouts of America tell us in effect "Here is a program for you to use as you wish. We will provide you the resources and framework for your program and help train your leaders." What more do we ask? The unit or units once established, belong to the church and the Boy Scouts will issue charters. The priest and Parish Council have the responsibility of appointing Christian

leaders to guide the activities of the units. The Girl Scouts appoint their leaders. There are two types of troops a parish may sponsor. On the one hand there is the closed troop whose membership is open only to Orthodox Scouts; on the other hand, there is the opened troop whose membership is not restricted in any way. Each parish is free to chose its own program.

What does Scouting offer a Church?

A program for boys/girls tailored to the local parish and administrated by the church, through the Priest and Parish Council.

An opportunity of reading, teaching and training boys & girls and thus strengthening the parish.

A cooperative program in which the Church, troop, school and home work together. Helpful up-to-date literature and program aids for the leaders.

Assistance and guidance from competent professional and volunteer Scout leaders and also from the local Scout council office.

Scouting does not detract from existing youth programs. Rather, they provide a Church-centered program of education and outdoor activities which supplements other youth ministries in the parish.

Scouting in the Parish Life

Scouting has many objectives that are common with those of our Holy, Orthodox Church. As a program devised especially for the formative years of our Orthodox youth, Scouting encourages a better Christian life; it aids in building character and developing wholesome habits and effective citizenship activities. The Scout motto "Be Prepared" implies not only physical and mental but also spiritual, moral preparedness.

Scouting works hand and hand with the Church on all levels. A properly organized and supervised Scout program in a parish can do a great deal in keeping our youth close to the Church and its many varied, wholesome, character building activities; it trains boys and girls to be of service to God, country, and fellowmen – all of which constitutes a Christian upbringing. Finally, it trains our boys/girls not only how to be contributing citizens of tomorrow, but also participating members and leaders in our Holy Faith. We have many examples of Scouts participating as acolytes, choir members, Sunday school teachers, and in various other capacities in our parish life. A number of the Boy Scouts even found themselves drawn to the Holy Priesthood as a result of the close contact they had with their priest through this program,

Scouting reaches every member of the family and leads him/her into the parish life of our churches. This program cannot be expected to cure all parish problems, but it can rally the youth around the priest with a Church-centered, wholesome program of education and fun.

OCF

Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) is the official collegiate campus ministry program under SCOBA (the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas). OCF's mission is to support fellowships on college campuses, whose members experience and witness to the Orthodox Christian Church through community life, prayer, service to others and study of the Faith. Working alongside the clergy and youth leader's of local Orthodox parishes the OCF program in Norfolk should seek to reach out to the greater college community of Norfolk.

YAL

The purpose of the Young Adult League is to support and help Orthodox Christians transition through the various stages of life following high school. A successful Young Adult League creates a setting where Young Adults grow spiritually through experiencing the four characteristics which symbolize the YAL movement. Namely, Worship (Liturgia), Witness (Martyria), Service (Diakonia), and Fellowship (Koinonia). Using these four characteristics, YAL members will live a balanced Orthodox Christian life, growing in His likeness.

HELLENIC DANCE ACADEMY

The mission statement of the Hellenic Dance Academy is:

To instill the culture, tradition of Hellenism, and the appreciation of this awesome heritage in the Greek Orthodox youth through folk dances and costuming from throughout Greece, music, song and fellowship.

The Dance Academy proudly displays a variety of dances and costumes from all parts of Greece. Music, dance, and other artistic expressions reflect the real experience of a culture. Dressed in vibrant costumes, accompanied by authentic music, the Hellenic Dance Academy dancers capture the richness and elegance of traditional Greek folk dancing.

The Hellenic Dance Academy continues to enhance its dance repertoire in order to continue to entertain and educate audiences about the beauty of Greek dances and traditions, while striving to keep our beautiful cultural inheritance alive for future generations.

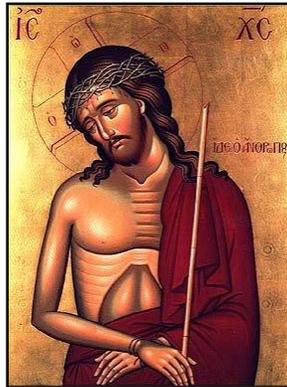
BASKETBALL

The objective of the Cathedral Basketball Program is to encourage and develop the physical abilities of the youth while fostering an environment of mutual respect, understanding and Christian love. Active life in the Divine Services is mandatory, as with all other youth activities.

ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Introduced in 1983, the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. The Oratorical Festival Program begins at the Parish Level and is divided into two divisions; the Junior Division for students in the 7th to 9th grades and the Senior Division for teenagers in the 10th to 12th grades.

The top speakers in each division advance to the district level and if selected become one of two finalists in their division to represent their district at their Metropolis Oratorical Festival. The top speaker in each division is then selected to participate in the Archdiocese Finals, which is hosted by a different Metropolis each year.



SUMMER CAMPS

Ionian village, Vacation Church School, Crossroads are all summer ministries which should be attended by our youth. Camp Good Shepherd aims to enrich the lives of its participants with a living, vibrant experience of Greek Orthodox Christianity and a rich, textured immersion into their Orthodox faith and culture.

The program serves the Orthodox Christian community of the Metropolis of New Jersey and its aim is to bond the youth of America to the Holy Orthodox faith by fostering within them a life-long appreciation of Orthodoxy. The vision of Camp Good Shepherd is to present young adults with all aspects of the Orthodox faith and Hellenism through total immersion by fellowship, education and fun activities.

The Orthodox faith is at the heart of the Camp Good Shepherd program. Each day begins and ends at the chapel with morning and evening prayers. Daily life at Camp Good Shepherd includes many traditional summer camp activities that emphasize fun, fellowship, and learning. Campers engage in daily sessions of Arts and Crafts, Aquatics, Athletics, Music and Greek Culture, and Orthodox Life. The overall goal of the Camp is

to instill in the child an understanding of the Orthodox faith while embracing the life of the Church and developing deep relationships with peers their own age.

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. Retreat themes need to be relevant, pertinent and challenging to the group. The correct format and facilitators should be selected in order to achieve a successful retreat. All Cathedral Youth programs should have retreats at least two times per year.

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The mission of the Department of Religious Education is to serve the youth, lay leaders and parents of the Cathedral by providing materials and services that will advance their knowledge and appreciation of the Holy Orthodox Faith. Vacation Church School held over the summer months is also a part of this yearly ministry.

The Department's main goal is to foster an environment whereby the youth and parents shall:

"Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"
-2 Peter 3:18

The Archbishop's Challenge

In his keynote address at the 34th Clergy-Laity Congress His Eminence Archbishop DEMETRIOS presented a challenge to establish a stronger and more Orthodox catechetical system for the Greek Orthodox faithful in America. The Department of Religious Education enthusiastically accepts this challenge and is responding with educational initiatives that addresses His Eminence's three major objectives: *faith as worship and prayer, faith as love and Philanthropy, and faith as truth.*

These educational initiatives include programs and resources to meet the catechetical needs of the **Total Parish**. **Total Parish** programs are designed to assist Greek Orthodox Christians of all ages to deepen their knowledge of participation in the church's liturgical (worship, sacrament, and prayer), philanthropic (communal fellowship, service, and witness) and theological (doctrine and teachings) inheritance. Total Parish projects include the development of curricula, periodicals, interactive multimedia, teacher training workshops, and distance and distributed learning projects over the Internet.



ORTHODOX RESOURCES

<http://www.goarch.org>

<http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/praxis>

Wounded by Love, Elder Porphyrios

Precious Vessels of the Holy Spirit, counsels of contemporary elders of Greece

Saint Silouan the Athonite, by Archimandrite Saphrony

Father Arseny- priest, prisoner, spiritual father

Way of the Ascetics, by Tito Colliander

Saint Nektarios- repentance and confession

Mountain of Silence, by Kyriakos Markides

Dorotheos of Gaza- discourses and sayings

Spiritual Counsels, by Father John of Kronstadt

HELLENIC LANGUAGE, FAITH & CULTURAL SCHOOL

The successful operation of the Greek School is based upon the determination, organization and teaching methods of experienced and enthusiastic teachers.

The basic purpose of the Greek School is to systematically and methodically teach the Greek language so that our children are able to read, write, understand, speak Greek, and express their thoughts in writing with precision.

In conjunction with these goals, the teaching of the Greek language is closely linked with the cultural and religious teachings of our ethnic group. The teaching of our history, our traditions, our folksongs and dances, our customs and our religion serve as a means of strengthening our children's awareness of, and respect for, their religious and ethnic heritage. Moreover, their esteem for the moral and ethnic values of their ancestors will help them form a strong Hellenic Christian character.

The ultimate goal is to motivate our children to maintain and promote the values they have received from their parents and ancestors, and to keep them close to their fellow Greeks, to Hellenism and to our Greek Orthodox Faith.



IOAKH

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops, angry Poseidon - don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that one on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops, wild Poseidon - you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when, with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbours you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfumes of every kind -
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.

But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvellous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

Constantine P. Cavafy



**“Seek ye first the
kingdom of God”**