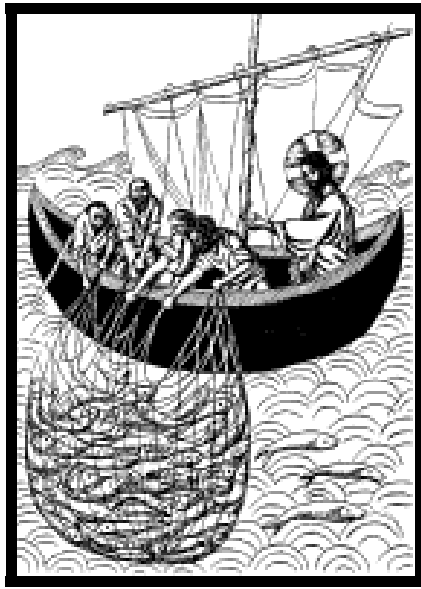


GOYA



GUIDELINES

Dear Faithful,

With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, we are pleased to offer the parishes, clergy and youth workers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the revised GOYA Guidelines.

These Guidelines are offered to assist the local parish in continuing to create, enhance and improve their GOYA ministries. These are guidelines – not by-laws. They are in no way intended to be the ultimate authority in GOYA programming. Rather, they are intended to guide the youth worker in the fundamental tenets of the GOYA ministry.

These Guidelines have been reviewed and revised by the Archdiocese Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team, which is comprised of each Diocese Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry throughout our Archdiocese.

The Department would like to thank Melissa Bazos who provided invaluable assistance in the production of the revised GOYA Guidelines, as well as Fr. Michael Pappas and Katina Gartelos who reviewed the final draft.

We are living in a society where our young people face tremendous pressures. Many of these pressures have never existed before. As the Church of Christ, we must be willing to incorporate all members into the Body. A great way of doing this is to have our youth participate in all aspects of the Church, allowing them to fully experience the Orthodox Faith.

Using the basic principles of the GOYA ministry, Worship, Fellowship, Service and Witness, we pray that these revised GOYA Guidelines will assist you in ministering to our young people on their journey toward salvation.

On behalf of the Archdiocese Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team, I pray that these GOYA Guidelines will be a source of inspiration to all who read them.

†The Reverend Mark A. Leondis, *National Director*
Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

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WHAT IS GOYA?

MISSION AND GOAL OF 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.

WHO IT SERVES

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 junior high and high school grade Orthodox Christian teenagers. Teenagers should be in seventh 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 teenagers themselves prefer the specific age groupings since they can relate better with others who share the same age and school environment. More importantly, it is more developmentally appropriate for these age groups to be separated. Senior High GOYAns are ready to learn different things than Junior High GOYAns.

This approach is the most effective, however it does demand more of the parish priest, youth director and advisors. In smaller parishes, the number of teenagers is fewer; therefore, making GOYA two distinct groups may not be feasible.

If having two groups is not possible, pay special attention to the developmental needs of the individual young people in the group by making sure activities are appropriate for all of the youth. Occasionally, special activities can be planned for specific grades. For example, an outing to a College Career Night for the high school seniors may be planned.

YOUTH MINISTRY FOUNDATION

The foundation of all youth ministry is the cultivation and education of our young people in order to become viable members of the Body of Christ. GOYA is but one means to this end. GOYA must not stand alone, but be incorporated into the entire sphere of the Church's mission.

The adolescent world is constantly changing – it is virtually impossible to keep up with every new trend and movement of youth culture. Growing up in today's society is a much more difficult task than it was in previous times. Our young people are being shaped by negative and destructive influences, ones that can and will define who they are and who they will become. For this reason, the positive teachings and traditions of the Orthodox Church must become a living presence in their lives. This makes youth ministry not an option -- but a necessity.

THE FOUR CHARACTERISTICS

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 prescribed 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.

GOYAn's 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.

GOYAn's 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

THE GOYAN

It has often been assumed that a desire to work with young people is all that is needed to be a successful youth worker. Although a desire is crucial, knowledge of theology, youth culture and adolescent development is paramount. Below are some things to keep in mind when working with GOYAns.

It is highly recommended that youth workers read more about adolescent development to prepare for ministry. As youth workers, it is important that we remain aware of the physical and emotional changes which occur in adolescence. We must become students of theology and students of Youth Culture.

Adolescence is an exciting but often difficult time for young people. They have many forces pulling them in different directions. They are developing physically, mentally and spiritually. They are making decisions about who they are, what they believe and who they will become. Adolescence is a time of exploration after which young people emerge with a commitment to certain values, goals, behaviors and beliefs.

As youth workers, it is important to keep in mind that the single greatest influence on how young people develop a sense of self is their parents. It is therefore crucial that while we minister to the young people, we also minister to their parents. We should consider our ministry a supplement to the vital “home ministry”.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEENAGER

Not quite a teenager but definitely not a child, junior high school teenagers, struggle with where they belong. They still fit into their elementary school shoes in many ways, but desperately want to grow into their high school shoes. This conflict along with the physical changes can make junior high school a difficult two to three years. Physically, their bodies are changing, but not necessarily all at once. Their arms and legs tend to have a growth spurt before the rest of their body, making them look awkward and feel clumsy. Puberty hits creating hormonal issues that can leave a young teenager feel as if they will never have control of their body again.

Even late bloomers are not spared from the difficulties of the junior high years. They often anguish over their lack of physical development. They wonder what is wrong with them and feel trapped in a child’s body. As adults, we know that this phase passes. However, to a young person, it does not feel this way. As youth workers, we must be sensitive of these changes and validate their feelings about themselves.

In addition to physical changes, junior high teenagers are beginning to move into what Piaget (developmental psychologist) calls the “formal operations period”. Young people in this stage are able to think more abstractly. They can consider a hypothetical situation and evaluate several courses of action for it. They no longer need concrete examples to develop a concept. As they are just entering this period of abstract thought development, some will not be as advanced with abstract thinking. So, when planning, it is always good to use both concrete and abstract examples.

THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEENAGER

Senior High School teenagers are being pulled in different directions too, but this is controlled mostly by social and cognitive development, rather than physical changes. They are bombarded with activities. Work, school, sports, clubs, and church are all pulling at them. There is an overwhelming feeling that these activities are needed and without them their future choices (college, career, marriage, etc.) will be limited. They are keenly aware of their approaching adulthood and think often about what the future will hold for them.

With a greater developed ability to think abstractly, they are being challenged by teacher, peer, and parent to figure out where they stand on issues. Concepts of justice, equality, power and control fascinate them along with controversial topics that can be examined through these lenses. They want answers and good ones. “Because the Bible says” is not good enough. They want to know where the answers are, why they are, and what that means to them. If we as youth workers along with parents are not directing them to find these answers in the church, they will find these answers elsewhere.

Things to Consider

When planning for all GOYA activities consider . . .

- ◆ Will this interest them?
- ◆ Will it help them build on their concept of who they are as an Orthodox Christian individual?
- ◆ Will it relate to their lives?
- ◆ Will the activity be understood by both concrete and abstract thinkers?
- ◆ Will it be sensitive to individual young people in the group?

- ◆ Will everyone feel included?
- ◆ What problems might occur with the activity?
- ◆ What questions might arise and how will we answer them?
- ◆ How will this activity fit into the busy schedules of the teenagers?
- ◆ How can we share information with the parents?

Above all youth workers should . . .

- ◆ Be honest! If you can't answer their question, tell them you'll get back to them – teenagers can tell when you are not being honest.
- ◆ Be an icon! Your actions speak louder than your words so make sure they are good ones. Someone once said, “Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words”.
- ◆ Love them! “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)
- ◆ Be there and accept them for who they are — not what you want them to be. They are children of God and are created in His image.
- ◆ Become a student of modern culture — see their movies, listen to their music, read their magazines. Learn their culture without becoming part of it.
- ◆ Help them find the answers they are looking for. It is alright for them to question – when they find the answers, it can make them stronger in their faith.
- ◆ Listen more than you talk! Sometimes all they need is an ear.
- ◆ Know when they need more help than you can give. Unless you are a licensed counselor you cannot help young people with serious issues. For their sake refer out (*see Legal Issue-Disclosure*)
- ◆ Pray for them daily. Ask them to pray for you too. Never underestimate the power of prayer!

MODELS FOR GOYA MINISTRY

The Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries supports the following two systems for selecting GOYA leadership. They are the Chairperson/Coordinator System and the Executive Officer System.

CHAIRPERSON/COORDINATOR SYSTEM

The Chairperson/Coordinator system is preferred. In this model of ministry, each participant in GOYA has an opportunity for leadership. A head coordinator is chosen by the group or is appointed by the parish priest. This coordinator is responsible for delegating responsibilities and coordinating efforts of the leadership committee.

An example of a leadership committee is as follows: parish priest, parish youth director, GOYA advisors, GOYA coordinator, an assistant coordinator, Worship chairperson, Fellowship chairperson, Service chairperson, and Witness chairperson, chairpersons for other committees and any other young person who is interested in leadership. The intent here is to include everyone for leadership opportunities. In this ministry model, every GOYAn assumes some responsibility at one time or another.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SYSTEM

The other model of ministry is the Executive Officer System. In this model, the group elects officers and a board, namely: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and several board members. This is a well-known and widely used model by many groups; *this model is permissible, but not preferable*, as it tends to exclude GOYAn's who are not elected. GOYA is a ministry, not a popularity club, or legal voting body. This model is tolerated because of its familiarity.

ROLES IN GOYA MINISTRY

ARCHDIOCESAN DEPARTMENT

The Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is located at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in New York. The Department oversees the Office of Camping Ministries, Ionian Village, and works to create and disseminate resources for parish ministry. The Department works together with each Diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries to coordinate national and regional youth and young adult ministry events and activities.

DIOCESAN OFFICES

The Diocese Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries acts on behalf of the Diocesan Hierarchy in regard to Youth Ministry. They are trained not only in Theology, but also in the "nuts and bolts" of youth ministry. They are a good resource for local parish programming. Don't be afraid to call upon them for assistance!

PARISH PRIEST

The Parish Priest is responsible for the spiritual well being of the entire parish. Under the direction of the Diocesan Hierarchy, the parish priest ministers to all of the parishioners and groups of the parish. He is not a youth worker or youth director per se, however, GOYA ministry is a part of his overall ministry. It is imperative that the priest be active in GOYA ministry by working with, and guiding the youth group and advisors. The priest should always share his insight for GOYA ministry.

The parish priest should attend all GOYA gatherings. The priest can be an excellent resource when planning activities and should be consulted for guidance. In his addition to his pastoral duties, the priest needs to relate with the teenagers, listening to them to find out where they are in their spiritual development.

PARISH COUNCIL

The parish council represents the parish as a whole. It is important that they be kept informed of all activities that the GOYA is participating in. It is best if one of the parish council members act as a liaison between the council and the GOYA, attending all youth meetings. Often times, as the spiritual leader of the parish and parish council, the priest assumes this role.

PARISH YOUTH DIRECTOR

Under the direction of the parish priest, the parish youth director is responsible for all youth ministry in the parish. This youth director is the chairperson of the Youth & Young Adult Ministry Team. Specifically for GOYA, the parish youth director oversees the work of the GOYA advisors, ministering to them so they might minister to the GOYAnS. The youth director should also review the overall GOYA program to assure that the best opportunity for ministry exists. The parish youth director should be trained not only in the Theology of the Church, but also in the field of youth ministry.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY TEAM

It is highly recommended that a Youth and Young Adult Ministry team be formed in your parish. This team assists the priest, youth director and advisors in creating and sustaining youth ministry on a parish level. Members of the team consist of the priest, youth director, youth advisors, parents, young people and professionals who work with young people (psychologists, doctors, educators, social workers, etc.). For more information in developing a youth and young adult ministry team, contact the National Department.

GOYA ADVISORS

Under the direction of the parish priest and youth director, the GOYA advisors are responsible for overseeing GOYA gatherings. Guiding young people to a deeper understanding of their faith, these advisors directly minister to the lives of young people. Every advisor should be a part of a youth ministry training program that strengthens faith and develops techniques for Orthodox Christian Youth Ministry.

APPOINTED/ELECTED GOYA LEADERS

Under the guidance of the above mentioned adults, the GOYA leaders should be responsible for the planning and implementation of all GOYA activities. The GOYA leaders are responsible for working with the other GOYAnS in the group. They must make sure everyone is involved and feeling accepted. They should lead by delegation -- giving everyone a role in activities.

GOYANS

In general, the role of GOYAn is to actively live their Faith. GOYA should be a vehicle in which they can develop their lives, faith, and morals. GOYAnS should feel a sense of ownership of the group. They should feel that they have a responsibility to keep the group strong and active.

PARENTS

Parents are crucial to the success of any youth ministry program. As youth workers, we must keep in mind that the amount of time we spend with the youth pales in comparison to the time they spend with their family. Parents need to be brought on board from the very beginning and kept aware of what the goals of GOYA are and specific planned activities.

Parents can be helpful in many ways to the ministry. They can chaperone meetings, activities, and trips, help formulate and implement programs, and serve on the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team. Most importantly, parents can emphasize at home the things that are going on in GOYA. Likewise, GOYA Ministry should emphasize things that are being stressed in the home

THE YOUTH WORKER

SELECTION OF YOUTH WORKERS

Anyone interested in spending time and being a role model for young people, has the potential to make an excellent youth worker (mother, father, young adult, retired person, etc). Because these advisors will be spending much time with the young people, it is imperative that you make a wise selection. The selection of youth workers should take into account the following:

Youth Workers Should . . .

- ◆ Be active sacramental members of the Orthodox Faith
- ◆ Enjoy spending time with young people
- ◆ Be responsible adults
- ◆ Attend a leadership training program offered by the parish priest and parish youth director

You Should . . .

- ◆ Have a background check performed on each individual who works with young people, even if the potential advisors are active members of the parish (*Contact your local Department of Child Safety and Care for further details*)
- ◆ Obtain at least two references from qualified people who work with the potential advisors

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Adolescence is a time when teenagers begin to want to do less with their parents. When parents become involved, it is important that they understand when it is appropriate for them to be involved and to what extent. For example if the parish priest and youth director are holding a discussion on sexual purity, a GOYAn may feel unable to talk freely if his/her parent is in the room.

Holding a meeting for parents at the beginning of the GOYA year and periodically throughout the year can help enhance communication with them to better define their role in the ministry.

TRAINING OF YOUTH WORKERS

Leadership training for youth workers should take place in August or early September, before the ecclesiastical and GOYA year begins. This training should be lead by the parish priest and the parish youth director. During this training, it is imperative that roles and responsibilities be very clearly outlined to avoid communication problems in the future. You should plan on the training running one to two days.

TRAINING OF GOYANS

There is no greater ministry opportunity than peer reaching peer. It is important that young people be encouraged to reach out and minister to one another. GOYA leaders should be trained continuously in the tenets of Orthodox Christian leadership. They need to be made aware of the spiritual concern for leadership. They should learn the skills of listening, public speaking, organization, group dynamics, time management, crisis intervention, delegation, working with people, and mediation. When training GOYA leaders, it should be emphasized that as leaders they are there to serve the GOYA as well as the entire parish.

A GOYA leader should always be aware of his/her responsibility as a leader of the group. He/she should lead by example. A progression of teaching leadership is:

I lead you observe
I lead..... you assist
You lead I assist
You lead I do something else!

GOYA PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Many parishes feel it appropriate to have the GOYAnS take a Pledge of Allegiance as an expression of responsibility and understanding of the sacredness of being a member of GOYA. The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends the following Pledge of Allegiance for GOYA .

I do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the teachings, traditions, worship and moral principles of the Holy Orthodox Faith and the GOYA charter, by-laws and guidelines of my Parish, Diocese and the Archdiocese of America. I will strive to be an example and positive Christian role model to my fellow GOYAnS and to those whom I come into contact with. I will faithfully and sincerely fulfill the duties and obligations required of this office. So help me God.

TRAINING RESOURCES

Youth Worker and leadership training is available from the Archdiocese Department and Diocese Offices of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. In depth training for Youth Workers, parents and teenage leaders on parish, regional and the diocesan level are available on the following topics:

- ◆How to start a JOY, GOYA, and YAL Ministry
- ◆Orthodox Youth Ministry
- ◆Building Bridges
- ◆Relational Ministry
- ◆Nuts and Bolts of Youth Ministry
- ◆Drugs and Alcohol
- ◆Counseling Teenagers
- ◆Teaching Abstinence
- ◆Family Ministry
- ◆Creative Teaching

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

GOYA MEETINGS

ELEMENTS OF A GOYA MEETING

The main element of any GOYA meeting or gathering is Orthodox Christian fellowship. Every opportunity should be made to promote fellowship between the teenagers. It is recommended that you have at least two meetings a month. All meetings should begin and end with prayer. Meetings should incorporate some of the following elements: icebreaker, activity, business, presentation, discussion and refreshments. Only one of the meetings each month should allow time to review business. Other meetings should have a more spiritual and educational focus. Or you can set aside a few minutes at each meeting for the review of business.

PRAYER

Since GOYA is a ministry of the Church, the meetings should begin and conclude with a prayer. Under the direction of the parish priest, each teenager should be encouraged to assist in the prayers or to offer one of the prayers. They should be given advance notice of when they will assist with a prayer.

A nice idea for closing prayers is the singing of Church hymns. More specifically, liturgical hymns like “Through the Intercessions of the Theotokos” or “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.” This not only allows the GOYAn to participate in Worship; it also familiarizes them with the hymns of the Divine Services. If the prayer will be in unison, such as with a Small Vespers, Orthros (Matins), Paraklesis or other prayer services, it is vital that each participant receive a copy of the text. This will enhance corporate prayer!

ICEBREAKERS

All meetings should have an icebreaker of some kind. Please note that some icebreakers are to break down communication barriers between people, while others build deeper relationships. The latter are called community builders. Icebreakers should take ten to fifteen minutes. Icebreakers can relate directly to the needs of the group or serve as an introduction to the theme of the presentation.

BUSINESS

One GOYA meeting a month should include a short business portion in which business issues such as committee updates, assignments, and ratification of the leadership committee’s decision are made. Business portions of the meeting should be only ten to fifteen minutes. There should be a time for announcements.

The parish priest, Youth director, and the GOYA Advisors should all be consulted for the announcements. The best way to keep everyone's attention is with short, simple, and fun announcements. Distribute handouts of the announcements.

DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION

The substance of the meeting is the discussion and presentation, which can take many different forms. It can take the shape of a meditation, group discussion, film with discussion, an outing, service project, speaker, interactive activity or anything else that will facilitate ministry. Keep the presentations timely, interesting, upbeat — and most of all, abundant with opportunities for interaction. GOYAnS will place their interest in the group if they feel they have an open environment where they can be heard.

REFRESHMENTS

It is always nice to have some type of refreshments at GOYA gatherings. So the responsibility does not fall on a small group of individuals, assign each youth group member a specific day they can provide refreshments. Keep the refreshments simple.

PLANNING A GOYA GATHERING:

- ◆ Meet with the Youth Ministry Team
- ◆ Make sure you have properly publicized the meeting (phone calls, e-mails, flyers, church bulletin)
- ◆ Be prepared — have an agenda
- ◆ Make sure everyone knows what his or her role is (refreshments, discussion leader, etc.)
- ◆ Have some GOYAnS greet others at the door
- ◆ Prepare handouts for discussion, with appropriate materials
- ◆ Remember to have fun
- ◆ Remember to pray for direction as you prepare and lead all activities and events

GOYA MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

GOYA ministry represents the Orthodox Christian Faith. All activities, discussions and situations should represent the Orthodox Christian Church. The GOYA also represents the parish. Whatever the activity, outing, inter-denominational or public gathering, GOYAnS reflect and represent the parish. It is recommended that at least one activity be planned per month in addition to the regular meetings. Activities can be even more fun if you invite GOYA groups from near by parishes or youth groups from other Orthodox jurisdictions.

When planning activities, be careful of the cost. No GOYAn should ever feel excluded because an activity is too expensive. If you have an outing that is a little more expensive than others, find a discrete way to make arrangements for the GOYAn, whose family may be experiencing financial difficulty, to participate. A group fundraiser is always good in this instance.

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. GOYA fellowships should have retreats at least two times per year. If you are interested in holding a retreat at your parish, feel free to contact your Diocese Office of Youth and Young Ministries for assistance.

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Fellowship Activities are a great way to build unity in your GOYA group. Some of the greatest ministry can occur when nothing educational is planned. Do not underestimate the power of spending time with your group participating in fun activities. It is these activities that are going to build your group as a community. You may get teenagers at these activities that have not been to church in a long time.

Through fellowship with other Orthodox Christians, young people may become more involved in the GOYA meetings and the spiritual life of the church. Some fun activities would be: going to a movie, out to lunch, going to a ball game, bowling, a day trip, etc.

Since GOYA is ministry, celebrations such as parties, dances, or socials should reflect the Orthodox Christian Faith. Special emphasis needs to be placed on group interaction. This can be achieved by several fun events such as ethnic dancing, specialty dances (swing dancing), icebreakers, and fellowship time so that the GOYAnS may become better acquainted.

ATHLETICS

Athletics are also a great opportunity for Fellowship. A variety of sports should be planned so as not to discriminate the non-athletic teenager from participating. Athletics can enhance camaraderie in developing the idea of healthy competition. Some suggestions include: bowling, basketball, miniature golf, volleyball, swimming, baseball and hiking. To discourage cliques, try not to allow the GOYAnS to pick the teams themselves. Pick teams by favorite color, favorite food, etc. If there is a GOYA sponsored team, the GOYAnS that participate should be active participants of the GOYA and active sacramental members of the church.

SERVICE AND WITNESS

GOYAnS can learn to be stewards and witnesses of their faith by giving of their time, talents and treasures. Activities can be planned to help them learn about giving and witnessing their faith. Activities that would help teach this would be: working at a soup kitchen, giving to mission canisters, visiting retirement homes, helping clean the church, planting and maintaining a garden at church, helping with the younger youth groups, etc.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A GOYA

Starting a GOYA where one has not existed is a difficult but worthwhile task. The hardest part about starting a new GOYA is communicating that GOYA is not a club; it is a ministry.

MINISTRY VS. ORGANIZATION

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

PARTICIPANTS VS. MEMBERS

Belonging in GOYA depends solely on being an Orthodox Christian. A teenager who participates is not classified as a member or non-member. If they are a member of the Faith, they belong! They are called participants or GOYAns rather than members. If a non-Orthodox wishes to participate in the GOYA program, don't be afraid to offer ministry to them. There have been many instances where an entire family converts to Orthodoxy because of their child's involvement in a GOYA program. However, explain to the child that they may participate in the program, but not in the Sacramental life of the church.

GUIDELINES VS. CONSTITUTION

Since GOYA is ministry and not a club or organization, it has guidelines, not a constitution. The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries offers these guidelines to inform and direct the faithful as to the ecclesiastical purpose of GOYA ministry. These guidelines stress the four characteristics of Worship (Liturgia), Fellowship (Koinonia), Service (Diakonia) and Witness (Martyria).

GETTING STARTED

Through the guidance of the parish priest, organize a small committee of interested Orthodox Christians. This committee should consist of the priest, advisors, parents, young adults, a parish council member, and professionals that work with young people (teachers, psychologists, educators, doctors, social workers, etc). It is also important that some of the young people who the GOYA will minister to be involved in the planning. This group should be diverse in its make up but united in its mission. The group should meet regularly to consider the needs of the parish, teenagers, determine goals and plan an initial activity.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is important to take an inventory of your community and the teenagers in it. Consider the following questions:

- ◆ How many teenagers could this GOYA potentially serve?
- ◆ What are these teenagers already involved in that might conflict with GOYA activities?
- ◆ What do the teenagers like doing with their family and friends?
- ◆ Where do they like going with their family and friends?

- ◆What do the teenagers want from this ministry?
- ◆What do parents want from this ministry?
- ◆How often should this ministry meet?
- ◆What resources does the parish have to assist this ministry?

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

$$\text{Needs} + \text{Resources} = \text{GOALS}$$

GOALS AND PLAN

After completing the assessment of your parish community, develop some preliminary goals of the GOYA ministry. Consider the following questions using information from your needs assessment.

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

INITIAL ACTIVITY

The initial activity should be an activity that was indicated by the needs assessment as something the young people like to do (picnic, skating, etc.). The purpose of this activity is fellowship. The activity should be free and having food is always a good idea. At the end of the activity, take 10 minutes to go over what the plans are for GOYA and get input from the young people present. This would be most effective if presented by the young people who serve on the organizing committee. Have a flyer ready for the next meeting ready to hand out at this time. Have everyone there sign in and get his or her e-mail addresses and other contact information.

PUBLICITY

This organizing committee should send an introductory letter to all of the potential GOYAnS and their parents letting them know about the forming of a GOYA ministry. There should also be an invitation to the first activity. Although sending out invitations assures that the information gets out, it is impersonal. Whenever possible, the invitation should be followed up with a phone call or personal e-mail. Different young people in your community can communicate so that the burden does not fall on one person. Also, list the activity in your parish weekly and monthly bulletin.

As your group grows, you can have the different young people take turns calling about meetings. It is not necessary to call everyone all the time--but it is important to call new participants or those who don't come as frequently. E-mail is another great way to send out meeting notices and quick reminders. Through communicating what is going on in your group and having the young people reach out to one another, your group will grow over time.

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 GOYAn's

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

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

When things go wrong, how we deal with them is crucial. We must remember that the young person is a member of the church and we must make sure that nothing we do drives them away. The problem should be used as a springboard to bring them closer to Christ and His Church. Therefore, discipline should be approached very thoughtfully.

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

Things to keep in mind:

- ◆ Do not let your emotions get the better of you. If you need to wait to discuss the consequences until you can think logically, then wait!
- ◆ Get others involved when appropriate. Parent should be informed about any problems with their child. The priest should be involved and aware of disciplinary actions. In some instances, a peer review committee may be appropriate. In severe cases, it may be necessary to involve social or law enforcement agencies.
- ◆ Listen to the young person closely before making any disciplinary decisions. Have the young person explain what he/she did and why. Have him/her tell you why he/she think it is wrong.
- ◆ Pray for and with the young person as you consider the best way to deal with the situation.
- ◆ How you deal with problems is going to depend on the severity of the problem. You must consider the spiritual well being of the child/children involved. Also consider the rest of the GOYA, and how this problem affects them.

Consider the following . . .

- ◆ Is this likely to reoccur?
- ◆ Is this young person a danger to him or herself? (See disclosure section under legal issues for more information)
- ◆ Does it pose a danger to the group?
- ◆ Who needs to be involved in the disciplinary action? (Priest, other teenagers involved, parents, social agencies when necessary)
- ◆ Was anyone hurt physically or emotionally as a result of this?

- ◆What is the best course of action to deal with this problem?
- ◆How will we keep this young person involved in the life of the church after this?

LEGAL ISSUES

TRANSPORTATION

It is never appropriate for teenagers to drive themselves or each other to GOYA outings. Please take precautions when planning transportation. Make sure parents know who will be driving their children. It is highly recommended that a permission form be filled out and signed prior to each event in which the young person will be transported. For more information on liability, safety issues and sample permission forms, contact the Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

It is also advisable to have medical forms for the young people in your GOYA group. You can do this at the beginning of the GOYA year. Keep them in a binder and take them with you on all outings. For more information on liability, safety issues and sample permission forms, contact the Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

DISCLOSURE

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

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

When reporting an incident that a young person discloses to you, it is advisable that you let them know you are making the call and that you are doing so because you care about them and are required to.

CONTACT

As youth workers, it is important to remember your role as an advisor to the group. Spending time with young people can form closeness between the advisor and the GOYAn. It is never appropriate for a young person to be alone with an adult advisor. If a young person wants to talk privately, meet them in a public place with people around (coffee house, restaurant, church, park, etc.) By making these precautions, you will ensure the safety and integrity of you, the young person and the ministry.

RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY

CONTACT INFORMATION

Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
8 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: [212] 570-3560 • Fax: [212] 570-3587
E-Mail: youthoffice@goarch.org

Archdiocesan District
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
8 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: [212] 774-0296 • Fax: [212] 570-3587
E-Mail: baz@goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Atlanta
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
2480 Clairmont Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30329
Tel: [404] 634-9347 • Fax: [404] 634-4204
E-Mail: youth@atldiocese.org

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Boston
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
162 Goddard Avenue
Brookline, MA 02445
Tel: [617] 277-4742 • Fax: [617] 739-9229
E-Mail: youthministry@bostondiocese.org

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
601 South Central Avenue
Chicago, IL 60644-5059
Tel: (773) 626-5400•Fax: (773) 626-4814
E-Mail: georganasa@aol.com

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Denver
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
4610 East Alameda Avenue, D1
Denver, CO 80246-1301
Tel: (303) 333-7794•Fax: (303) 333-7796
E-Mail: dioceseyouth@aol.com

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Detroit
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
19405 Renfrew
Detroit, MI 48221
Tel: (313) 864-5433•Fax: (313) 864-5543
E-Mail: nbkotsis@hotmail.com

Greek Orthodox Diocese of New Jersey
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
1811 Springfield Avenue
New Providence, NJ 07974
Tel: (908) 898-0988•Fax: (908) 898-0980
E-Mail: frbill@bellatlantic.net

Greek Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
5201 Ellsworth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15232
Tel: (412) 621-8543•Fax: (412) 621-1522
E-Mail: youth@odpgh.com

Greek Orthodox Diocese of San Francisco
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries
c/o PO Box 400
Dunlap, CA 93621
Tel: (559) 338-2103•Fax: (559) 338-0065

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

- ◆HOPE Guidelines
- ◆JOY Guidelines
- ◆GOYA Guidelines
- ◆YAL Guidelines
- ◆Altar Boy Guidelines
- ◆Resource Guide Book for Youth and Young Adult Ministries
- ◆Orthodox Christian Teen Video Series
 - Substance Abuse: Our Kids Are Not Immune!
 - Sexual Purity
- ◆The Way it Really Is (Video)

INTERNET MINISTRY

With the advent of the Internet, making resources available to parish youth workers has become much easier. Through the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Internet Ministries, an extensive web site has been created. We are in the process of updating this site. To access resources on the Internet go to: <http://www.youth.goarch.org>

All of the dioceses have web-sites. These websites all have or are in the process of designing or composing a youth ministry page. Below is a list of the diocese websites which link to the youth ministry page. All of them can also be accessed through the Archdiocese web page at www.goarch.org.

Archdiocesan District	www.goarch.org/goa/archdiocesan/
Diocese of Atlanta	www.atlanta.goarch.org
Diocese of Boston	www.boston.goarch.org
Diocese of Chicago	www.chicago.goarch.org
Diocese of Denver	www.denver.goarch.org
Diocese of Detroit	www.detroit.goarch.org
Diocese of New Jersey	www.newjersey.goarch.org
Diocese of Pittsburgh	www.pittsburgh.goarch.org
Diocese of San Francisco	www.sf.goarch.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional resources for GOYA ministry, please see the Resource Guide for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, which can be ordered through the Archdiocese Department and Diocese Offices of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. It can also be found on our web page. This resource guide lists magazines, web pages, videos and books that will help in planning your GOYA ministry.

FEEDBACK

As we are updating our resources and website, we would love your feedback. If you have suggestions for resources needed or other questions, please feel free to e-mail the Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Let us know how we can better serve you and your youth ministry.



It is our fervent prayer that these guidelines will assist you in allowing your youth group the opportunity to grow in the faith, develop a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and continue to strive toward our Lord's Kingdom.



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[Tel] 212.570.3560 • [Fax] 212.570.3587 • *youthoffice@goarch.org*