



Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Department of Religious Education
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2013 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Topics

Junior Division (Grades 7–9)

1. Considering the Lord's words to His disciples, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35), discuss the relationship between service and leadership.
2. Discuss the importance of participating in the life of the Church in light of Jesus's teaching in John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches."
3. In the Resurrection Service, the priest proclaims, "Come receive the light." Discuss the place of light in the Orthodox Tradition.
4. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23). Discuss how we can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, produce this fruit in our lives.
5. In Psalm 103/104, God's care for the natural world is praised. Select elements from the psalm and discuss how they may help us "grow" in our Faith.

Senior Division (Grades 10–12)

1. The Prophet Micah says, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). Discuss how this passage has inspired many Christians to acts of service.
2. In 313 AD, St. Constantine the Great proclaimed the Edict of Milan, which allowed Christians to practice their faith freely. What did religious freedom mean then, and what does it mean for people of faith today in countries where violent religious persecution occurs?
3. Discuss the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian in light of today's culture.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim

Lord and Master of my life, cast away from me the spirit of
laziness, idle curiosity, love of power and vain talk.

But grant me, Your servant, the spirit of moderation, humility, patience and love.

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters.

For You are blessed forever. Amen.

4. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Social websites, apps, and so on are constantly present in our lives, making it easy for us to share bits and pieces of our lives with many people. How do you "let your light so shine" using these widely available social and other media?
5. "Your hands have made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments." (Psalm 118/119, verse 73). Discuss how this passage can guide us in a time when we constantly seek to alter the way we look, act, and live.