



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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2019 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Topics

Junior Division (Grades 7–9)

1. Martyrs of the Church and some of the early monastics are both described as “athletes.” What does it mean to be an athlete for Christ?
2. On January 30th, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Three Hierarchs: St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, and St. John Chrysostom. Select one of these Church Fathers and discuss his contribution to the Church.
3. Discuss the significance of water in the Church – Baptism, Theophany, holy water, etc. – and what this suggests about our responsibility for the natural world.
4. Discuss the new commandment of John 13:34: “Love one another, even as I have loved you...” What does it mean to love one another as Christ loved us?
5. In 1 Timothy 6:10, St. Paul writes, “For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.” How should Orthodox Christians relate to money and wealth?

Senior Division (Grades 10–12)

1. Many of the Church’s services employ objects from the natural world (such as wheat, wine, oil, or water) in order to confer a blessing upon the faithful. Why does the Church do this, and what does this suggest about our responsibility for the natural world?
2. From ancient Greece to the present, politicians have aligned themselves with religious concepts and constituencies. How is an Orthodox Christian to discern whether today’s politicians do this out of genuine piety or in order to manipulate the electorate?
3. The hymns of the Church contain the whole of its theology. Pick one hymn from the Lenten or Holy Week period and describe how it speaks to you personally.
4. Describe how science and technology should always be at the service of humanity and, ultimately, of God, in harmony with His purposes.
5. In view of St. Paul’s exhortation in Colossians 3:16, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,” discuss the importance of being biblically literate today.