

ESSAY AND POETRY OVERVIEW

These two categories are optional and are structured for the Parish and Metropolis levels. The essays and poems bypass the District level and end at the Metropolis level.

Getting Started

In 2014, the Oratorical Festival expanded to include Essay and Poetry writing. This program was graciously shared with the Archdiocese by the Metropolis of Chicago, which had included these categories (along with icon painting) for many years. ***An Archdiocese or National Essay and Poetry program proved to be challenging on many fronts and is not being continued.***

Allowing young people to study and express their faith in written form, poems and essays, is a worthwhile program. The written word, in verse or prose, is an important means of expressing the Orthodox Christian Faith. To call the Bible “the Holy Scriptures” is another way of saying the holy writings. As Orthodox Christians, we turn to the writings of the Church Fathers, who wrote treatises, essays, letters, and poems. Many of the hymns of the Church are, in fact, poems set to music. In them, we find the definitions of the Christian faith, their guidance on Christian living, and their responses to the challenges of the ages.

Continuing the Essay and Poetry divisions at the Metropolis level is more suitable and more manageable. But, it is the ***choice*** of the Metropolis whether or not to include these divisions as part of the St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival. Each Metropolis can develop its own protocols for including essays and poetry as part of their Oratorical Festival programs. We offer the following guidelines for consideration.

Additional Outlets

There are other ways to allow young people to share their faith in writing other than delivering a speech. A few possibilities:

Poetry and Essay writing retreats. Gather young people for an overnight at the Metropolis camp or retreat center, providing them with the resources to study their faith, write an essay, and receive guidance and feedback from adult writers from local parishes.

Poetry and Essay magazines. Coordinate the development of an annual or semi-annual magazine or newspaper containing the essays, poems, and artwork (drawings, photographs, etc.) created only by young people from the parish or Metropolis. Working in a team, allow the young people to design and layout the magazine or newspaper. Invite adults – graphic artists, writing coaches, art teachers, and the like – to work with the young people to create the publication. Distribute the publication throughout the Metropolis.

Poetry and essay website. The same as the magazine, but instead of a printed piece, allow the young people to create a website with the same. Allow them also to record and post videos that they create, including perhaps, some of the speeches from the Oratorical Festival itself (although this does not replace the Festival and its process of judging, processes, etc.).

Junior Division
ESSAY CATEGORY
Grades 7–9

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

GUIDELINES:

1. State Title and Topic on the front page of your essay.
2. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church’s Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
3. Choose your TOPIC from among the Junior Division Oratorical Festival Topics.
4. Write a 300–400 word essay, which should be typed and double-spaced.
5. When writing your essay, think about the Orthodox perspective regarding your chosen topic
Research may be done by consulting your Bible and other Orthodox books and materials.
The guidance of your Church School Teachers and Priest(s) may also be helpful.
6. Reflect your personal experiences that relate to the topic.
7. All Essays will be judged according to their Content, Organization, Style, Language, Originality, and Presentation.

POINTS:

_____ CONTENT

_____ ORGANIZATION

_____ STYLE

_____ LANGUAGE

_____ ORIGINALITY

_____ PRESENTATION

_____ TOTAL POINTS

POINT SCALE:

OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points

GOOD.....7–8 points
(Better than average)

SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points
(Fair, Average)

BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points

INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points

Participant #: _____ **TOPIC #:** _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____

Senior Division
ESSAY CATEGORY
Grades 10–12

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

GUIDELINES:

1. State Title and Topic on the front page of your essay.
2. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church's Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
3. Choose your TOPIC from among the Junior Division Oratorical Festival Topics.
4. Write a 500–600 word essay, which should be typed and double-spaced.
5. When writing your essay, think about the Orthodox perspective regarding your chosen topic
Research may be done by consulting your Bible and other Orthodox books and materials.
The guidance of your Church School Teachers and Priest(s) may also be helpful
6. Reflect your personal experiences that relate to the topic.
7. All Essays will be judged according to their Content, Organization, Style, Language, Originality, and Presentation.

POINTS:

POINT SCALE:

_____ CONTENT

OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points

_____ ORGANIZATION

GOOD.....7–8 points
(Better than average)

_____ STYLE

SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points
(Fair, Average)

_____ LANGUAGE

_____ ORIGINALITY

BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points

_____ PRESENTATION

INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points

_____ **TOTAL POINTS**

Participant #: _____

TOPIC #: _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____

Junior Division
POETRY CATEGORY
Grades 7–9

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

RULES:

MINIMUM: 8 lines
MAXIMUM: 30 lines

1. Must be based on the Junior Division Oratorical Topics
2. Poets may choose any form (sonnet, open verse, etc.)
3. State Title and Topic on the front page.
4. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church's Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
5. The criteria for which poems will be judged are:
Theologically Sound, Sincerity, Imagery, Originality, Choice of Form, Presentation, and Title.

POINTS:

POINT SCALE:

_____ THEOLOGICALLY SOUND	OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points
_____ SINCERITY	GOOD.....7–8 points (Better than average)
_____ IMAGERY	SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points (Fair, Average)
_____ ORIGINALITY	BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points
_____ CHOICE OF FORM	INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points
_____ PRESENTATION	
_____ TITLE	

_____ **TOTAL POINTS**

TOPIC #: _____

Participant #: _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____

Senior Division
POETRY CATEGORY
Grades 10–12

Please reproduce this page for each participant and judge(s)

RULES:

MINIMUM: 8 lines

MAXIMUM: 30 lines

1. Must be based on the Senior Division Oratorical Topics
2. Poets may choose any form (sonnet, open verse, etc.)
3. State Title and Topic on the front page.
4. Include your Name, Address, City, State, and Zip Code along with your Church's Name and City on an additional page of your poem.
5. The criteria for which poems will be judged are:
Theologically Sound, Sincerity, Imagery, Originality, Choice of Form, Presentation, and Title.

POINTS:

POINT SCALE:

_____ THEOLOGICALLY SOUND

OUTSTANDING.....9–10 points

_____ SINCERITY

GOOD.....7–8 points
(Better than average)

_____ IMAGERY

SATISFACTORY.....5–6 points
(Fair, Average)

_____ ORIGINALITY

_____ CHOICE OF FORM

BELOW AVERAGE..... 3–4 points

_____ PRESENTATION

INEFFECTIVE.....1–2 points

_____ TITLE

_____ TOTAL POINTS

TOPIC #: _____

Participant #: _____

Participant Name: _____

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE: _____