



2012 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival Topics

Junior Division (Grades 7–9)

1. Many times in the New Testament, we see Jesus caring about the blind, the paralyzed, and others with physical disabilities (for example, Matthew 9:2 and 9:27–29). Following Christ's footsteps, discuss the Christian attitude toward disabled people.
2. Discuss the lives of Sts. Cyril and Methodios and their missionary work. How can we follow their example by responding to Christ's commandment to "go forth" (Matthew 28:19)?
3. In the Old Testament, we see many stories involving disagreements among siblings. What can families learn from these stories today?
4. Discuss one of the Great Feasts of the Church. How has this feast become important to you and your family?

Pascha (the Feast of Feasts)

The Twelve Great Feasts:

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| • Nativity of the Theotokos | • Annunciation of the Theotokos |
| • Elevation of the Holy Cross | • Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem |
| • Presentation of the Theotokos | • Ascension of the Lord |
| • Nativity of the Lord | • Pentecost |
| • Theophany | • Transfiguration of the Lord |
| • Presentation of the Lord | • Dormition of the Theotokos |
5. In our day, when people's lives have become more and more scheduled with events, how might we reclaim our understanding of Sunday (the Sabbath) as a day of rest and honoring the Lord?

Senior Division (Grades 10–12)

1. In Leviticus 19:33, we read, "And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him." Immigration has always been a source of growth and change in American society. What should be the attitude of an Orthodox Christian toward immigration and immigrants?
2. Discuss the prayers and Biblical references of the Sacrament of Holy Unction in the Orthodox Church (James 5:14–15). What does the sacrament tell us about faith, healing, and our relationship with God?
3. In Matthew 18:21–22, Jesus tells Peter that one should forgive one's brother not just seven times but "seventy times seven." Discuss how and why we should forgive wrongdoers, even when something within us cries out for justice—especially if we're the injured party.
4. Discuss the famous speech of St. Paul in Athens (Acts of the Apostles 17:22–31). Why is the speech meaningful, and what is its relevance for others today?
5. Stress and anxiety seem to be inevitable nowadays, in our every relationship and activity. How are we as Christians supposed to act in times of worry and uncertainty?