



Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese
Department of Christian Education
CREATIVE FESTIVALS

NEW TO THE FESTIVALS?

You may always contact the Department of Christian Education, aodce@aol.com for questions!

In this section: Overview, Resources, Factors to Consider in Scheduling, and Planning and Implementation.

Overview

The Creative Festivals were instituted by His Eminence, Metropolitan PHILIP as a way for the Church School students to express their faith. He assigned the Fellowship of St. John the Divine to implement the Festivals. His Eminence chooses the theme for each year.

The Department of Christian Education is responsible for organizing the Festivals, and the Fellowship of St. John the Divine implements the festivals by supplying a Diocesan Festival Chairperson, who in turn appoints Coordinators for each of the categories (such as Art), who in turn secure judges, display the entries, and award the prizes.

Provisions are made to display entries at each Diocesan Parish Life Conference. Entries are judged beforehand, and prizes are awarded for each category by grade. Each participant will receive a bronze, silver, or gold ribbon according to how the entry scored during judging. As has been the procedure in the past, in addition to the ribbons, a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place award will be given for each grade in each of the categories.

Resources

Several items are available for download to assist you as you introduce the theme.

- **Lesson Plans:** The plans are available for download from this site. They are designed for one (or two) 40-minute classes, and written at four levels: Preschool and Kindergarten, Grades 1-3, 4-6, Middle School and High School. More than enough material is offered, choose what will work for your class.
- **Theme Song:** Kh. Gigi Shadid has composed a theme song for the festivals, available as an MP3

download. Consider playing it in the background as the children do their projects. It may also be played as background if your parish chooses to have an exhibit of the students' work.

- **Posters:** Posters for the classrooms are available to inspire the students .
- **OCEC Cross Reference:** There are many lessons from the OCEC texts that relate to the theme. A listing is provided.
- **Using the Theme:** Throughout the Year: Suggestions for bulletin boards, activities, and other reminders of the theme are provided so the theme may be incorporated into the church school year.

Factors to Consider in Scheduling

The deadline, April 1, is firm. (A sample schedule is provided below.)

- 1) Consult any correspondence from the Festival Chairperson. Parishes will receive information about the Creative Festivals from the Diocesan Creative Festival Chair in early Fall.
- 2) If the projects are done in the church school during class, allow for make-up sessions at the end of your planned days for those who were absent.
- 3) There are forms to fill out, which may take longer than expected, especially if you have a large church school. Each entry requires a **Standard Identification Form** and each category's submissions require a **Record of Participants Form**. To save time, fill in the Standard Identification Form with the information that will be the same on all (such as the church name), and copy the filled-in

form for each entry. Students can fill out the rest, if their printing is legible.

- 4) Writing entries—you must submit *four* copies.
- 5) Packing the submissions may require more time than anticipated—allow at least two weeks before the due date as a buffer zone.
- 6) If the projects require more than one session, try to keep dates close together. Consider where projects will be stored.

Example of scheduling with a deadline of April 1.

- 1) **August:** Check with your pastor for the Creative Festivals Mailing, and/or check the website, review the materials, in particular, the due date.
- 2) **August:** Plan how and when to implement the festivals.
- 3) **September 1--March 1:** Implement the festivals.
- 4) **March 1--March 15 (or when all projects are done):**
 - Allow “make-up days” for absent students
 - Double-check to see if entries comply with the Eligibility Requirements.
 - Check each entry for a Standard Identification Form
 - Copy writing entries (four copies of each are to be submitted)
- 5) **March 15:** Entries are ready to be packaged. Record of Participants is filled out for each category.
- 6) **March 18-25:** Mail entries.
- 8) **April 1:** All entries must be postmarked by this date.

Planning and Implementation

Teachers should be aware of all the resources available at the outset of the year. Posters should be printed. Teachers should see the lessons plans for the theme, and the cross-reference listing (if using the OCEC texts) at the beginning of the year. Then, as the theme comes up in the lessons, artwork or writing can done, and saved for possible submission.

When the Creative Festivals theme is introduced, review the following with the students:

- 1) Eligibility Requirements.

- 2) The Standard Identification Form, which asks them to answer two questions.
- 3) The Rubrics so they understand what makes for a good entry.

There are a few dioceses that have *special notes* about submissions. Consult the Contact and Submission Information for your diocese, below.

- Diocese of Los Angeles and the West & Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest
- Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America
- Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
- Diocese of Charleston, Oakland and the Mid-Atlantic & Diocese of New York and Washington DC
- Diocese of Miami and the Southeast
- Diocese of Worcester and New England
- Diocese of Ottawa, Eastern Canada and Upstate New York

There are several ways to implement the festivals.

- 1) With a copy of the eligibility requirements and rubrics, each class can work on their projects whenever it’s convenient; the teacher can refer to the OCEC Curriculum Cross-Reference Chart to coordinate the dates with lessons of a related theme.
- 2) The entire church school can work on projects on set dates, which may include
 - several church school sessions
 - an all-day Saturday event
 - a lock-in
- 3) **Lesson Plans.** Begin with the 40-minute lesson plans [See doc p 14] that introduce the theme. It is best if this is done by the individual teachers. The four levels for which they are written are: Preschool-Kindergarten, Grades 1-3, 4-5, Middle and High School. Have students brainstorm together on the theme. Have paper ready for students to write down their ideas, for creative writing, poetry, photography and art.

[**Note:** Show the students the Standard Identification Form and point out that they will be asked to explain what their project has to do

with the theme, and sign that they alone did the project and it was not copied from another source.]

- 4) **Creative Writing and Poetry.** It is best to do the writing the next session while ideas are fresh. Consider having two stations with moderators, one for creative writing, and one for poetry.
- 5) **Photography.** For photography, depending on the theme, people or objects from the church can be made available and students can bring cameras to church.
- 6) **Artwork.** Keep in mind that mounted artwork is required, unless it is done on stretched canvas, canvas board, poster board or another stiff material. Decide what mounting will be used.
- 7) A single medium for the artwork, such as paint, can be used; or several different media can be provided.
- 8) Ask an artist in the parish to teach or help the children. Ask for parents to help as well, noting that the work is to be done by the children.
- 9) Have the Standard Identification Forms ready to be filled out by the students or parents. Have mounting material available so parents can assist with this.

- 10) Students can be given a copy of the eligibility requirements, and rubrics, and work on their projects at home.

Shipping Entries

The shipment is to contain the Record of Participants form. Each entry must have the Standard Identification Form attached. The shipping container should be sturdy enough to be sent not only to the Festival Coordinator who will conduct the judging, but also to the church hosting the Parish Life Conference, and then be used to package the entries for their return home.

Parish Life Conferences

The entries are displayed at the Parish Life Conference. The first, second, and third place award winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony there. All entries are to be taken back by the parish priest or a representative attending the conference. The ribbons will be given out by the home parish. It is a good idea to have a display of the students' work, either before the entries are shipped for judging, or after the conference when they are returned, so the parish can appreciate how they chose to express their faith.