

**A NOTE FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES**

If this article rings true to you, take some time for yourself before proceeding with your ministry. You cannot minister to others unless you minister to yourself first. Remember that the heart must first pump blood to itself before it can pump it to the rest of the body. If you need assistance or guidance, talk with your parish priest, a fellow youth worker or someone from the Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team.

GOYA MINISTRY GUIDELINES

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Dear Faithful,

With the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, we are pleased to offer the parishes, clergy, and youth workers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, the revised *Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA) Ministry Guidelines*.

These *Guidelines* are offered to assist the local parish in continuing to create and enhance their GOYA Ministry. These are guidelines—not by-laws. They are in no way intended to be the ultimate authority in GOYA Ministry programming, however, they are considered to be best practices for the ministry.

We are living in a society where our young people face tremendous pressures, many of which have never existed before. As the Church of Christ, we must be willing to incorporate all members into the Body. A great way of doing this is to have our youth participate in all aspects of the Church, allowing them to fully experience the Orthodox Faith.

Using the basic principles of GOYA Ministry—*worship, fellowship, service, and witness*—we pray that these *GOYA Ministry Guidelines* will assist you in ministering to our young people on their journey toward salvation.

These *Guidelines* have been reviewed and revised by the Archdiocese Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team, along with parish clergy and GOYA advisors. The Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team is comprised of the National Department and each Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry throughout our Archdiocese.

On behalf of this team, I pray that these *Guidelines* will assist you in your GOYA Ministry and will be a source of inspiration to all who read them.

†Reverend Mark A. Leondis, *National Director*
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Ask Yourself: Do I tend to overlook my own spiritual nurture? Am I feeding myself so little spiritual food that I'm unable to nurture others through my ministry?

WARNING SIGN #5: AVOIDING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

If we don't pursue opportunities for professional growth, we grow stale. And when burnout is lurking, we lose interest in upgrading our skills. Professional growth is important to me for two reasons: (1) I value professional relationships with ministry colleagues. When I plan activities or brainstorm ideas with friends, or when I join support groups, I stay fresh. (2) I appreciate good training opportunities. I use my continuing education allowance to upgrade my skills. I particularly like events that teach me new strategies, not just clarify what I already know. I've not always put an emphasis on professional growth. I realize those were times when the burnout bug was like a tick trying to burrow in. Don't neglect opportunities for professional growth. If you do, that's a burnout warning sign. (Or worse, you think you know it all already!)

Ask Yourself: Do I see professional growth as just another impossible expectation that must be sacrificed for "the important stuff"?

WARNING SIGN #6: NEGLECTING PERSONAL NEEDS

Have you learned that ministry needs always take priority over personal needs? Then you're in for troubled times. It's taken me too long to understand that God never asks me to sacrifice my personal life for professional ministry. I know you could use "take up your cross and follow me" as debate ammunition. But I also know that, at times, I've neglected myself, my family, and my friends. And I believe that's a sin. What a joke—we punish the people we love most to do God's work. That's stupid theology. If you make ministry your mistress, you'll fizzle quickly. I'm grateful I learned before it was too late that God's hopes for my ministry aren't the same as my own expectations. But I've paid dearly for neglecting myself, my family, and my friends.

Ask Yourself: Do I neglect my personal needs because of ministry demands? Do I neglect my family or friends because the church needs me more?

If you checked YES on all or most of these warning signs, you're headed for burnout. Please, before it's too late, take the necessary steps to prevent it. Many good people have left ministry because of burnout. You could be one of them.

tired. Excuses such as “That’s what ministry is all about” are simply dumb. Recently, a youth group member bluntly told me, “Hey, you look tired. Get some rest.” I did. It helped. I’m psyched again.

Ask Yourself: Do people notice that I’m tired a lot? Have I looked in the mirror lately and moaned, “I’m tired”?

WARNING SIGN #3: MISHANDLING DIFFICULT PEOPLE

All of us work with difficult people. Every church and every denomination has them. Sometimes I think God has “over blessed” me with them. Difficult people demand a lot of attention. They’re high maintenance people. It takes patience and energy to respond well when they come at you with another passionate agenda. How you deal with them can indicate impending burnout. I recall an intense father who had demanding views and a biting, sarcastic attitude. I worked with his two daughters. I monitored how I reacted to him. Sometimes I was highly effective and could work through his criticisms positively. Other times I was poisoned by his attacks, and lingering bitterness got the best of me. What did I discover? It all had to do with ministry energy. When I was in “martyr” mode, I was much less effective with him. When I was energized, I never took his stuff personally.

Ask Yourself: Do difficult people often get the best of me? Do confrontations linger and absorb me emotionally?

WARNING SIGN #4: SPIRITUAL LETHARGY

When we balance our emotional, spiritual, and physical needs, we set in place a foundation for more effective ministry. Experience has taught me that spiritual needs are easy to neglect. That’s why I started taking a yearly hiking vacation in the Colorado Rockies. God has worked on me powerfully on those back-country trails. As ministers, we’re always praying for kids, preparing Bible studies, preaching, and so on. And we expect we’ll find nourishment by spiritual osmosis. That just isn’t true.

To meet my spiritual needs, I must pursue prayer, reading, and quiet time apart from my ministry. If I don’t, my kids know. How? I lead Bible studies like a dictator instead of a facilitator. I preach at people instead of with them. Group prayer times are legalistic and boring. And I’m pharisaical—I mean I go through the religious motions while neglecting the Holy Spirit’s power.

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WHAT IS GOYA MINISTRY?

MISSION

The mission of the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is to coordinate the youth and young adult ministries of the national church in collaboration with Metropolis Directors; by providing standardized resources and training, this unified national ministry team enables youth workers, young people, and their families to better understand and fully experience the Orthodox Christian Faith.

The *Greek Orthodox Youth of America*, or GOYA, is a ministry of the Department. The mission of GOYA Ministry is to strengthen the relationship of young Orthodox Christians with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The program works to educate and edify young members of the Church, encouraging them to become active sacramental participants in the life of the Body of Christ. This ministry offers them the opportunity to experience the Faith, ultimately leading them to Salvation.

MINISTRY VS. ORGANIZATION

GOYA is a ministry of the Church. It is not an organization or club, but simply a gathering of the faithful of the Church who share the same grades, ages and common interests. It is a spiritual ministry, based on the theological tenets of the Orthodox Christian Faith.

PARTICIPANTS VS. MEMBERS

Belonging to GOYA Ministry depends solely on being an Orthodox Christian. The teenagers are not classified as members or non-members—if they are members of the Faith, they belong! That is, they are participants rather than members. If non-Orthodox teenagers wish to participate in the ministry, welcome and offer ministry to them. Encourage them to participate in the program and explain to them that the Sacraments are only for baptized and/or chrismated members of the Orthodox Church. There have been many instances of entire families converting to Orthodoxy because of their young person's involvement in GOYA Ministry.

GUIDELINES VS. CONSTITUTION

Since GOYA is a ministry and not an organization or club, guidelines exist rather than a constitution. The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries offers these guidelines to inform and direct

APPENDIX G: ARE YOU HEADED FOR BURNOUT?

Group Magazine (www.groupmag.com)

July-August, 1996

By Mike Gillespie

I've logged 18 years as a youth minister-18 years learning to outsmart a ministry Nemesis that's claimed many of my friends. That enemy is burnout. Two decades ago, I scoffed at the possibility; now I don't. That's because I've paid a high price for ignoring the warning signs of burnout in my ministry. As you read my story, take a moment to evaluate your ministry. Remember, if you think you're safe from burnout, you're probably its next victim.

WARNING SIGN #1: THE SUPERSTAR SYNDROME

Early in ministry, I was sure hard work was all I needed for success. I felt confident because I already had a good work ethic. Because of my naiveté I didn't realize the church will let you work as many hours as you want. There's always something more to do. A 45-hour week quickly stretched to 50, then to 60, then...I thought I could be everything to everybody. I was particularly vulnerable at youth council planning sessions. We scheduled retreats, lock-ins, and trips with little recognition on my part of what it'd take to pull them off. The kids loved that about me, so I succumbed. My favorite refrain: "Sure, we can do that." One summer, I committed to participate in five group trips and lead two weeklong youth camps. "Sure, I can get it all done." BUNK! I'm learning to work smarter, not longer.

Ask Yourself: Am I obsessed with getting it all done? Is hard work a sign of successful ministry to me?

WARNING SIGN #2: THE FATIGUE FACTOR

How many times in the last six months has a church member said, "You look tired." Hey, there's no hiding it. All those all-nighters, retreats, program planning meetings, and visitation trips add up. It surfaces in your posture, your eyes, your energy, and in your enthusiasm. It roars out at people you work with in the form of irritability, sarcasm, and cynicism.

I've learned to appreciate people who tell me when I look tired. I take it as grace. I get some rest, lighten my calendar, and recommit to my exercise routine. I understand that I'm no good to anyone when I'm

APPENDIX F: END OF THE YEAR PROGRAM EVALUATION

How often did we have activities this year?

How many people did we have on average?

What teenagers were involved? Who wasn't involved and how can we bring them into the ministry next year?

Did we have activities that incorporate the Four Circles—*worship, witness, service* and *fellowship*?

What activities did people enjoy? Why were they successful?

How can we expand on these for next year?

What activities didn't go to well?

- ✦ What went wrong?
- ✦ How can we change that for next year?

What would we like to see in the future? Brainstorm ideas for:

- ✦ Worship
- ✦ Witness
- ✦ Service
- ✦ Fellowship

What resources and strengths supported the ministry?

- ✦ How can we expand on these?
- ✦ What resources and strengths did we not tap into this year?
- ✦ How can we use these next year?
- ✦ What resources and strengths did we over use this year?
- ✦ How can we avoid this next year?

What problems did we face? How can we solve these and avoid them in the future?

How is our current structure (communication, planning) supporting the ministry?

- ✦ What changes do we need to make?
- ✦ What changes in leadership will we be making?
- ✦ How will we transition for these changes?

the faithful as to the ecclesiastical purpose of GOYA Ministry, stressing the four characteristics of worship, fellowship, service, and witness.

WHO IT SERVES

GOYA ministers to teenagers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in junior high or high school (7th to 12th grades). In some communities, 6th graders are in junior high school or middle school with 7th and 8th grade students. It may be more appropriate in these instances to include 6th grade students in GOYA Ministry instead of JOY Ministry (3rd through 6th grade). After **careful** consideration of what is best for the young people and the ministry, the parish priest, youth director, advisors, and parents should make this decision.

It is recommended that the ministry be divided into two distinct groups: junior high GOYA Ministry and high school GOYA Ministry. It is more appropriate developmentally for these grades to be separated. Teenagers themselves prefer the specific age groupings, since they can relate better with others who share the same age and school environment. Additionally, young people in high school are ready to learn and discuss different things than those in junior high. It is still important to bring the junior high and high school GOYA Ministry together on occasion for activities and general discussions. During these interactions, the older teenagers can serve as role models and give perspective to the younger participants.

In smaller parishes, making GOYA Ministry into two distinct groups may not be feasible, as the number of teenagers may be small. If having two groups is not possible, pay special attention to the developmental needs of the individual young people in the group, as each activity may not be appropriate for all participants. Occasionally, special activities may be planned for specific grades, for example, an outing to a College Career Night for the high school seniors may be arranged.

YOUTH MINISTRY FOUNDATION

The adolescent world is changing rapidly—it is virtually impossible to keep up with every new trend and movement of their culture. Growing up in today's society is a much more difficult task than it was in previous times. Our young people are constantly being exposed to negative and destructive influences. If these influences are not challenged, they can, and will, define who our young people will become. Innocence is slipping away at an alarmingly early age. For these reasons, the positive teachings and traditions of the Orthodox Church must become a living presence in the lives of our teenagers. This makes ministry to our young people not an option, but rather a necessity.

But what is ministry? The word minister means to give aid to those in need. Therefore, a ministry of the Orthodox Church gives aid as part of the Body of Christ. A young person becomes a full member of this Body at their baptism. The foundation of all youth ministry is the cultivation and education of our young people, so that they may become active members of the Body of Christ. GOYA Ministry is but one means to this end; it must not stand alone, but rather be incorporated into the entire life of the Church and its mission.

Youth ministry needs to begin early, well before the teenager begins to participate in GOYA Ministry. It begins with the family in the home, and it needs to continue in the home as the young person grows in the Church. As youth workers, it is important to keep in mind that the single greatest influence on how young people develop a “sense of self” is their parents. Therefore, it is therefore critical that we not only minister to the young people, but also to their parents. We should consider our ministry a supplement to this vital “home ministry.”

PATRON SAINTS OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Great are the achievements of faith! In the fountain of flame, as by the water of rest, the Three Holy Children rejoiced. And the Prophet Daniel proved a shepherd of lions as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Apolytikion of Daniel the Prophet and the Three Holy Youths

The Three Holy Youths (Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego) are the patron saints for all Youth Ministry programs of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. During that time, King Nebuchadnezzar created a law stating that all those in the land were to bow down and worship his golden idols. If the anyone chose not to, they would be thrown into a furnace and burned to death.

It came to the attention of the King that three children were refusing to worship these idols. Enraged by their refusal, the king brought the three youths before him, commanding them to bow down before the idols. The youths, steadfast in their faith, would not bow down, and King Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into the furnace. God sent an Angel into the furnace with the youths in order to protect them, cooling the flames. The youths danced and sang praises to God, the very praises we sing on Great and Holy Saturday: *"Praise the Lord and exalt Him to all the ages!"* The king, amazed that they had not been harmed, declared their God to be the True God. They are commemorated each year on December 17th. This account from the Old Testament can be found in the 3rd chapter of the book of Daniel.

APPENDIX E: ACTIVITY REVIEW QUESTIONS

If lesson is typed out, please attach and file with this form

Meeting/Activity Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Chaperones: _____

Designated Drivers: _____

Participants: _____

Describe Activity or Lesson: *What was the objective? Was it met? How was the lesson received? What should we do different in the future? Are there any questions that need to be followed up on?*

Materials Needed: *Who brought them? How much were they? If we need any for the future where can we find them?*

Opening and Closing Prayers: *Which ones did we do?*

Icebreakers: *What did we do? How was it received?*

Music or other Multimedia: *What did we use? Where did we get it? Where can it be found for the future? How was it received? Were there any costs associated with it?*

Arts and Crafts: *What was it? How was it received by the group? What would we do different next time? What were the expenses associated with the project (reflect even if someone donated the money)?*

Refreshments: *What was it? Who brought it? Were there any expenses to the ministry? Who will bring the next one?*

Business: *What did you discuss and decide?*

Setup and Cleanup: *How did it go? Did we allot enough time for each? Are there things we should consider more closely when doing this activity again?*

Total Expenses for Activity: *Does anyone still need to be reimbursed? Does anyone need to be thanked for their donation?*

Overall thoughts on the activity: *What worked? What did not work? What would you do different?*

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE WEEKEND RETREAT SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

6:00 pm	Arrive and Dinner
8:00 pm	Icebreakers
9:00 pm	Session 1
10:00 pm	Compline (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>)
10:30 pm	Cabin Devotional
11:30 pm	Lights Out

SATURDAY

7:00 am	Wake Up
8:00 am	Morning Prayers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>)
8:30 am	Breakfast
9:15 am	Session 2
10:45 am	Group Outdoor Activity
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Session 3
2:30 pm	Free Time
5:00 pm	Evening Prayers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>)
5:30 pm	Dinner
6:30 pm	Session 4
7:30 pm	Campfire
9:00 pm	Late Night Discussion
10:30 pm	Cabin Devotional
11:30 pm	Lights Out

SUNDAY

7:00am	Wake Up
8:00 am	Divine Liturgy (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>)
9:30 am	Breakfast
10:15 am	Wrap-Up
11:00 am	Dismissal

PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO MINISTER TO YOUTH

O Lord our God, You who said, “Let the little children come to me,” bless us who faithfully minister to Your children. Guide us, O Lord, as Your youth workers and teachers in the vineyard of the Faith, so that we may provide a fruitful ministry to the young people we serve. Help us to speak to their hearts in both our words and deeds, so that You may dwell in them. Assist us to effectively communicate Your love to them so that they may comprehend and know You, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Strengthen us O Lord, as we continually direct them toward You, and that through You, they may be unified by the love of Christ and be filled with Your loving kindness.

We thank You O Lord our God, for the rich and abundant blessings You continually bestow on us. May these blessings be a source of inspiration, joy and love to us. We lift up our prayers to You, O Christ our God, the light of our souls and bodies, together with Your all holy good and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages, Amen.

THE GOYA TEENAGER

Adolescence is an exciting time for young people, but also a difficult period in their lives. Adolescents have many forces pulling them in different directions. They are developing at a rapid pace—physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. They are making life-long decisions about who they are and what they will become.

The major developmental task of a teenager is to achieve or form a sense of identity. Forming a sense of identity helps one understand “who they are” in relationship to others as well as the world (and for Christians, it helps us to understand “who we are” in relationship to God). It has been said that adolescence is a time of exploration, after which young people emerge with a commitment to certain values, goals, behaviors and beliefs. If the church is missing from this process, there is a serious gap in the development of the young person.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEENAGER

Not quite a teenager but definitely not a child, junior high teenagers struggle with where they belong. They still fit into their elementary

school shoes in many ways, but are already faced with many issues that older teenagers face (sex, drugs, violence, etc.). This conflict, along with the physical changes, can make junior high school a difficult two or three years. Physically, their bodies are changing, but not necessarily all at once. Puberty hits, creating hormonal issues that can leave a young teenager feeling as if they will never have control of their body again.

Even late bloomers are not spared from the difficulties of the junior high years, often anguishing over their lack of physical development. They wonder what is wrong with them and feel trapped in a child's body. As adults, we know that this phase passes, however, it does not feel this way to a young person. As youth workers, we must be sensitive of these changes and validate their feelings about themselves.

In addition to physical changes, young people in this period are able to think more abstractly. They can consider a hypothetical situation and evaluate several courses of action for it. They no longer need concrete examples to develop a concept. As they are just entering this period of abstract thought development, some will not be as advanced with this type of thinking as others. Keep this in mind when planning, as it is always good to use both concrete and abstract examples.

THE HIGH SCHOOL TEENAGER

High School teenagers are also experiencing great developmental growth, but this is controlled mostly by social and cognitive development, rather than physical changes. They are bombarded with activities—work, school, sports, clubs, and church—each pulling them in different directions. There is an overwhelming feeling that these activities are needed, and without them, their future choices (college, career, marriage, etc.) will be limited. They are keenly aware of their approaching adulthood and think often about what the future will hold for them.

With a greater developed ability to think abstractly, they are being challenged by teachers, peers, and parents to figure out where they stand on issues. Concepts of justice, equality, power, and control fascinate them, along with controversial topics that can be examined through these lenses. They have real questions and they want real answers. “Because the Bible says” is no longer an acceptable answer. If we as youth workers, along with parents, are not leading and inspiring them to find these answers in the church, they will find these answers elsewhere.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE MEETING SCHEDULE

6:30 pm	Arrival and Opening Prayer
6:45 pm	Icebreaker
7:00 pm	Lesson
8:00 pm	Business
8:15 pm	Closing Prayer
8:30 pm	Fellowship and Refreshments

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE DAY RETREAT SCHEDULE

9:00 am	Arrival and Light Refreshments
9:30 am	Morning Prayers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>)
10:00 am	Icebreakers
10:30 am	Session 1
11:30 am	Private Reflection Time: Alone with God
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Session 2
2:30 pm	Break
3:00 pm	Wrap-Up and Reflection
4:00 pm	Vespers (<i>involve the young people in the service</i>)

FELLOWSHIP (*KOINONIA*)

“Behold how good and pleasing it is when brothers dwell in unity.”

Psalm 133:1

Fellowship is the way Orthodox Christians integrate their faith with daily life. It is sacred when Orthodox Christians gather together in the Lord’s name. The relationship of the Holy Trinity is the perfect model of Fellowship—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share perfect communion and exist in perfect love with each other. By gathering together in *fellowship* and experiencing this love, we emulate the relationship of the Trinity and develop our life in Christ.

GOYA teenagers experience **FELLOWSHIP** by:

- ✦ Participating in Church sponsored camps and retreat programs.
- ✦ Participating in Church sponsored athletic programs, ethnic dancing, etc.
- ✦ Participating in Inter-Orthodox activities.
- ✦ Watching films, videos, and multimedia presentations that can spark discussion.
- ✦ Watching performances of religious productions, musicals, etc.
- ✦ Participating in day or overnight outings together.
- ✦ Volunteering either at the parish or in the local community.
- ✦ Participating in group activities on various topics, books, movies, music, etc.
- ✦ Attending church, GOYA Ministry gatherings, and other church related activities.

SERVICE (*DIAKONIA*)

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve ...”

Mark 10:45

Christ came to serve, not to be served. Young people are urged to do the same. They can honor and glorify God by loving and serving humanity in His name. Young people can use their God-given gifts to serve. For Orthodox Christians, *service* to God and community is a way of life; the way of living one’s Faith. As Jesus Christ said, “Let your light so shine for men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). *Service* is an integral part of the Orthodox Christian’s life.

FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

As we develop and update our resources and website regularly, we welcome your feedback. If you have questions, ideas, suggestions, or need resources not yet provided, please e-mail the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at youthoffice@goarch.org. Let us know how we can better support you and your efforts in Youth Ministry.

It is our fervent prayer that the provided resources, especially these guidelines, offer Youth and Young Adults the opportunity for growth in the faith, development of personal relationships with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and continued strength to strive toward Salvation.

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Too often, we look at our young people and wonder how we can help them. We need to inspire them toward a life of *service*. How can our children use their God-given gifts for *service* to the needy and *service* to those less fortunate? How can they be the people of God who respond to His call in Matthew 25:31-46, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit those in prison? Responding to these human needs is the true meaning of *service*.

GOYA teenagers experience SERVICE by:

- ✦ Offering their personal stewardship—giving of time, talent, and treasure—to both the church and local community charities.
- ✦ Participating in work projects to beautify and maintain the parish or local community.
- ✦ Outreaching to the elderly, the sick, the shut-ins, etc.
- ✦ Supporting and participating in missions abroad and at home.
- ✦ Supporting Archdiocesan, Metropolitan, and Parish ministries such as Saint Basil Academy, Philoptochos, Hellenic College/Holy Cross, St. Michael's Home, etc.
- ✦ Supporting Inter-Orthodox organizations endorsed by SCOBA the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas: International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting (EOCS), Orthodox Christian Networks (OCN), etc.
- ✦ Volunteering for a local soup kitchen or other community charities.
- ✦ Working with younger ministry groups in the parish or children in the local community.

WITNESS (*MARTYRIA*)

"For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard."

Acts 22:15

Man is both a spiritual and physical being. Unfortunately this spiritual reality is not always expressed in the material world. In order to be true to oneself and to the Orthodox Christian Faith, young people should strive to exemplify the teachings of the Church. We are witnessing our faith when we are living as Christ taught us to live, letting Christ shine in all that we do to those around us. This is the true meaning of *witness*.

GOYA teenagers experience **WITNESS** by:

- ✦ Learning about Christ's teachings and living them.
- ✦ Learning about the Saints' great witness to the faith and imitating their example.
- ✦ Finding answers to questions they, or others, have about the faith.
- ✦ Making newcomers feel welcome.
- ✦ Inviting a non-Orthodox friend to a Church service or event.
- ✦ Making the sign of the Cross before every meal—no matter where they are.
- ✦ Supporting and participating in mission work abroad and locally.
- ✦ Teaching children younger than them about the faith.
- ✦ Maintaining Christian integrity in all areas of their lives.
- ✦ Letting Christ's love shine in all they do.

GOYA MINISTRY MODEL

The structure of GOYA Ministry will depend on the specific needs of each individual parish. The following recommendations not only take into consideration what is developmentally appropriate for this age group, but also suggest a model based on that information. Flexibility exists within this model so that adjustments may be made to best meet the needs of each individual ministry. If you are just starting a GOYA Ministry in your parish, be sure to read the *How to Organize GOYA Ministry* section in these guidelines.

For a ministry to be effective, there needs to be a balance of leadership between the youth workers and the young people, as they are able have an active role in the planning and implementation of the ministry. At the same time, these teenagers are not yet adults, and their perspectives on the church, priorities, and responsibilities are still developing. They need adults to work **with** them in this ministry. It is imperative that youth workers and young people work together toward a common goal.

GOYA MINISTRY TEAM

The GOYA Ministry Team will be responsible for planning and leading all activities. This team is made up of the parish priest, youth director and advisor(s). If there is more than one advisor, it is helpful to have one designated as the lead advisor. This lead advisor is responsible for making sure all team members are well informed, and that all efforts are being

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FUNDRAISING

- ✦ *Youth Ministry Handbook* Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA (www.ukrainianorthodoxchurchusa.org/offices/OYM/)
- ✦ *20 Something Ideas for Fundraising* by Orthodox Church in America Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries (yya.oca.org/TheHub/Activities/20SomethingWays/Fundraising.htm)
- ✦ *Fundraising for Youth: Hundreds of Wonderful Ways of Raising Funds for Youth Organizations* by Dorothy M. Ross

MAGAZINES

- ✦ *Praxis* published by the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.religioused.goarch.org)
- ✦ *Group* published by Group Publishing (www.grouppublishing.com)
- ✦ *Youthworker* published by Youth Specialties (www.youthspecialties.com)

FOR TEENAGERS

- ✦ *Orthodox Christian Teen Video Series* produced by the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.youth.goarch.org)
- ✦ *Challenge Newsletter* published by the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America located within the Orthodox Observer (www.youth.goarch.org)
- ✦ *The Cross and the Quill* published by the Teen SOYO of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (www.antiochian.org)

FOR COLLEGE BOUND

Prepare your teenagers for college by making them aware of Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) and their activities. The mission of OCF is to support fellowships on college campuses whose members experience and witness to the Orthodox Christian Church through community life, prayer, service to others, and study of the Faith (Acts 2:42). Furthermore, OCF works to nurture and strengthen love for Jesus Christ and His Church in its fullness at this most critical juncture of human life. To learn more about this ministry visit www.ocf.net.

ARCHDIOCESAN YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY TEAM

As youth workers, it is important for us to realize that the greatest resource we have is one another. While books, videos, and magazines are helpful to your ministry, creating a network of Orthodox Youth Workers in your parish, region and Metropolis is critical. Reach out to your Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries or the Archdiocesan Department for ideas and further resources. Additionally, they can put you in touch with other youth workers who are involved in the same ministry.

coordinated toward the common goal of the ministry. All members of the team should have clear roles and responsibilities; these should be defined at least one month before the GOYA Ministry year begins.

In addition to planning and overseeing all activities, the GOYA Ministry Team should work to cultivate leadership of other adults who participate in the ministry. Too often, youth programs are based on the leadership of one or two individuals. When these people move on or burnout, the ministry disappears. All ministry team members should take some responsibility for the group at one point or another. By setting this as a goal, the ministry will be constantly training new leaders and providing support for current ones.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

A GOYA Ministry will need volunteers to assist with different aspects of the ministry throughout the year. These volunteers can be parents, grandparents and young adults from the parish. As with the GOYA Ministry Team, it is important that these volunteers have defined roles and responsibilities. These can be communicated through a meeting at the beginning of the year, ongoing meetings, or even telephone and e-mail contact.

GOYA LEADERSHIP TEAM

When we think of leadership, we instinctively think of people in power. As Christians, Christ gave us a living example of leadership:

“And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”
Mark 10:44-45

Christ led by serving others, and we are called to do the same. This type of leadership, servant leadership, is key to the ministry.

The Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries supports the leadership team model for GOYA Ministry. In this model of ministry, each participant has an opportunity for leadership. The lead advisor oversees the delegation of responsibilities and coordinated efforts of the GOYA Leadership Team. This team is made of group members inclined toward coordinating activities that incorporate and balance areas of *The Four Circles* of youth ministry.

An example of a GOYA Leadership Team is as follows: parish priest, youth director, advisor(s), Worship Chairperson, Fellowship Chairperson, Service Chairperson, Witness Chairperson, as well as chairpersons for other commit-

tees. This committee should utilize any young person interested in leadership. The intent here is to give all participants an opportunity for leadership. It is important that all leaders have clear roles and responsibilities; these should be defined clearly before the GOYA Ministry year begins.

SELECTION OF GOYA LEADERS

GOYA is not a popularity club or legal voting body, but rather a ministry of the church. For this reason, it is recommended that the teenagers apply and be appointed for positions of leadership within the committee. The application process should explore why they want to serve, what talents they have to offer, and what areas in which they might need assistance (see *Appendix A* for a sample application). The talents of all young people interested in leadership roles should be utilized in some way to further the ministry. The parish priest, youth director, and advisors should make the selection and appointment of GOYA Leaders. The recommended tenure of these positions is one year, beginning in September. For the participants not applying for leadership positions, the ministry team should look for opportunities to include them in service to the ministry.

ROLES IN GOYA MINISTRY

It takes many people to sustain a ministry: some people are leaders, others followers; some people have active roles, others have passive roles; some people are consultants, others implementers. Each role has its own set of responsibilities. In a strong ministry, responsibilities are clear and distributed amongst different people. Whatever the roles, all should be working towards the common goal of the ministry. Below are different roles which are all vital for the success of the ministry. If a ministry is missing any of these roles, the GOYA Ministry Team should address how the responsibilities assigned to each role can still be fulfilled.

ARCHDIOCESAN DEPARTMENT

The Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is located on the grounds of Saint Basil Academy in New York. The Department creates and distributes resources for parish ministry, as well as oversees the Office of Ionian Village and Camping Ministries. The Department coordinates the *Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry Team*, which is made up of the National Department and each Metro-

THE PLANNER: ORTHODOX DAILY CALENDAR AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Use *The Planner* to keep track of all your schedules. Keep a daily focus on Christ with Scriptural readings, fast days, prayers, saints of the day, and inspiration from the Fathers. The Planner follows the Ecclesiastical (church) year beginning in September and ending in August. Spiral bound and PDA versions available.

EMAIL MINISTRY

Youth Worker Pulse provides resources, ideas, and activities for both parents and youth workers. Sent weekly via email, the information offers support for youth ministry following the monthly themes of The Planner. To sign up for *Youth Worker Pulse*, send an e-mail to listserv@listserv.goarch.org. Leave the subject blank and in the body of the e-mail type in “subscribe youth” (without the quotation marks). You will receive a confirmation of your subscription shortly thereafter.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE

- ✦ *Our Church and Our Children* by Sophie Koulomizin
- ✦ *Merchants of Cool* produced by PBS (www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/)
- ✦ *The Youth Builder* by Jim Burns

CURRICULUM AND ICEBREAKERS

- ✦ *GOYA Curriculum* published by the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.youth.goarch.org)
- ✦ *The Ideas Library* published by Youth Specialties (www.youthspecialties.com)
- ✦ *Silver Bullets* by Karl Rohnke

MUSIC

- ✦ Liturgical Music by Eikona (www.eikona.com)
- ✦ *Living Water* by Jimmy Santis
- ✦ *Purpose of Life* by Andrew Anthony

PRAYER

- ✦ Online Chapel of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (www.goarch.org)
- ✦ *Daily Prayers for Orthodox Christians* edited by N. Michael Vaporis (www.hchc.edu/bookstore)
- ✦ *My Daily Orthodox Prayer Book* edited by Anthony Coniaris (www.light-n-life.com)

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE DEPARTMENT

GUIDELINES

Guidelines are available for Young Adult Ministry, GOYA, JOY, HOPE, Early Childhood and Altar Boy Ministries. These guidelines include information on starting and sustaining a ministry, as well as other invaluable information. These resources will assist you in your parish programming.

YOUTH MINISTRY RESOURCE GUIDE

Do you need ideas for an activity, information on child abuse, or just a basic book on youth ministry? This resource guide lists helpful books, magazines, videos, websites, and organizations that will assist those who work with young people.

THE CHALLENGE

The *Challenge* is the monthly youth and young adult ministry supplement of the Orthodox Observer. This featured section offers articles for young people, parents, and youth workers, as well as upcoming events, youth worker tips and family sessions. Current issues and archives can be found online at www.youth.goarch.org.

TEEN VIDEO SERIES (*video and resource guide*)

These videos can be used with teenagers, families, parents and youth workers. The resource books contain vital statistics, additional information pertaining to the topic, as well as youth group sessions and retreats to assist both clergy and youth workers. Currently available: *Substance Abuse: Our Kids Are Not Immune*, *Sexual Purity: Purity of Mind, Body, and Soul*, and *Teen Violence: Fight the Good Fight*.

MINISTRY CURRICULUM

Each curriculum binder provides twelve complete session plans that follow the cycle of the Ecclesiastical Year. Youth Workers will enjoy monthly session plans in complete outline form, with objectives, discussion prompts, questions, activities, resources, and ideas.

WHERE DOES GOD GO FOR SUMMER VACATION?

This creative book helps breathe life into summer youth programs. It is a workbook written for young people of all ages. The author takes the concepts of faith and fellowship, creating some wonderful activities that are sure to entertain and engage young people while they learn about their Orthodox Faith. The resource book also includes a youth worker/parent's guide.

lis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. This team meets twice a year and collaborates throughout the year to coordinate national and regional youth and young adult ministries. For information on contacting the Archdiocesan Department, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

METROPOLIS OFFICES

The Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries oversees all youth and young adult activities within their respective Metropolis. These directors are trained not only in Theology, but also in the basic tenets of youth ministry. They are an excellent resource for local parish programming and should be called upon for assistance. For information on contacting your Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

PARISH PRIEST

The parish priest is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the entire parish. Under the direction of the Metropolis Hierarchy, the parish priest ministers to all of the parishioners and groups of the parish. GOYA Ministry is a part of his overall ministry. It is imperative that the priest be active in this ministry by guiding and working with the advisors in all aspects of the ministry, as well as attending all activities.

PARISH COUNCIL

The parish council represents the parish as a whole. As GOYA Ministry is part of the overall ministry of the church, it is important that the parish council be kept informed of the ministry activities. The parish council should provide the necessary support through the parish budget and other resources to help sustain the ministry. It is best if one of the parish council members acts as a liaison between the council and GOYA Ministry, attending all activities.

PARISH YOUTH DIRECTOR

Under the direction of the parish priest, the parish youth director is responsible for all youth and young adult ministry in the parish. Specifically for GOYA Ministry, the parish youth director oversees the work of the advisors, ministering to them so they might minister to the teenagers. The youth director should guide the advisors to ensure a balanced program so that the best opportunity for ministry exists. The parish youth director should be trained not only in the Theology of the Church, but also in the field of youth ministry.

GOYA ADVISORS

Under the direction of the parish priest and youth director, the GOYA advisors are responsible for planning and carrying out all activities. Guiding young people to a deeper understanding of their Orthodox Christian faith, these advisors directly minister to the lives of the young people. Every advisor should participate in the youth ministry training program. This program strengthens faith and develops techniques for Orthodox Christian Youth Ministry (see *Training for Ministry* section).

GOYA MINISTRY TEAM

Under the direction of the parish priest and youth director, the GOYA Ministry Team will be responsible for planning and implementing all group activities. At the beginning of the year, this team should be part of a special leadership training program that strengthens faith and develops techniques for Orthodox Christian Leadership.

GOYA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Under the guidance of the above-mentioned adults, the GOYA Leadership Team is responsible for the planning and implementation of activities using *The Four Circles* of youth ministry. They should also lead by delegation—accepting everyone and offering them an active role.

GOYA PARTICIPANTS

The true role of GOYA participants is to actively live their Faith. GOYA Ministry should be a vehicle in which they can develop their lives, faith and morals. The young people should feel a sense of ownership for the group and be excited about participating in the ministry activities and feel that they have a responsibility to keep the group strong and active.

PARENTS

Parents are crucial to the success of any youth ministry program. As youth workers, it is important to keep in mind that the amount of time we spend with the young people pales in comparison to the time they spend with their families. Parents need to be brought onboard from the very beginning and should be kept aware of the goals and activities of the ministry, as this enables them to build on GOYA Ministry objectives in their home.

OTHER VOLUNTEERS

It is appropriate to have the same volunteers at every activity for continuity, but equally beneficial to welcome new volunteers for specific assistance. Using different volunteers to assist with small, but meaningful, tasks will get

BUDGETING FOR MINISTRY

CREATING A BUDGET

Creating a budget is necessary for every ministry of the church. A budget will help set short and long term goals, defining appropriate resources for the ministry. Below find items for consideration:

Income

- ✦ Allotted money from the parish funds
- ✦ Fundraising Activities
- ✦ Individual Donations
- ✦ Stewardship of GOYA Ministry participants

Expenses

- ✦ Charity
- ✦ Refreshments
- ✦ Postage and Printing
- ✦ Outings
- ✦ Transportation
- ✦ Supplies
- ✦ Miscellaneous

FUNDRAISING

There are many simple fundraisers that young people can do to help supplement the expenses of their ministry. Be sure to involve participants in the planning and implementation of the fundraiser appropriately for their age. When the fundraiser is complete, have participants thank all of the necessary contributors to its success—especially the parish council. See the *Resources for Ministry* section for further information on fundraising.

RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY

There are many resources to aid the development of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. This abbreviated list of resources can assist you in your ministry. For a more complete list, see the *Youth Ministry Resource Guide* available from the Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. It lists magazines, web pages, videos and books that will help in planning Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

REPORTING ABUSE

Listening is a powerful way to get to know the young people in your group. It is important to remember that as youth ministers we can listen to young people but we cannot be their counselors. When serious issues arise, it is your obligation to help that teenager find professional help through the parish priest and local social agencies.

Deciding when a young person needs more help than you can give can be a difficult decision. When in doubt, you should check with your parish priest and/or local social agency for the best course of action. As a youth worker, there are several situations that you are legally required to report to the local social agency. If the young person has indicated that they want to harm themselves or commit suicide, a report must be made. You must make a report if a young person tells of his/her intent to harm another. Finally, you must report if the young person tells you that they are or have been physically or sexually abused. If a young person tells you any of these things, it is imperative that you take action even if you think they are doing it for attention—leave that to the professionals to discern.

When reporting an incident that a young person discloses to you, it is advisable in most instances to let them know you are making the call, and that you are doing so because you care about them. They may be upset with you, but you cannot let this affect your actions. Keep in mind you are getting them the help that they desperately need, even if they don't appear to want it at the time.

CONTACT

As youth workers, it is important to remember your role as an advisor to the group. Spending time with young people can form close bonds between the advisor and teen. It is never appropriate for a young person to be alone with an adult advisor. If they want to talk privately during an activity, take them to the side where others will not hear your conversation, but where you will still be seen. By taking these simple precautions, you will ensure the safety and integrity of your leadership, the young person, and the ministry.

INCIDENT REPORTS

For any incident that occurs at a meeting or activity, a report should be filed. These incidents can include but are not limited to: minor and major injuries, seizures, anything that requires emergency services to be called (i.e. Fire, Ambulance or Police), harassment of one teenager by another, and chronic disciplinary offences, etc. These reports should be filed in the Church office and forwarded to your Metropolis Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for their files.

people involved that might otherwise be hesitant to make larger commitments. Additionally, these task volunteers will provide support to those who are there regularly. Consider the needs of the ministry and the talents of the volunteers when delegating responsibilities. All those who are assisting with the ministry should participate in an orientation before they begin working with the young people.

SELECTING YOUTH WORKERS

Youth workers are charged with the important task of sharing the Gospel of Christ and the Holy Traditions of our Faith with our young people. Finding dedicated and qualified individuals to do this can often be a challenge. These positions should never be taken lightly. Taking time to properly screen and select youth workers ensures that our youth ministry teams are made up of qualified, responsible, and Christ-centered individuals. A youth worker is anyone who works with the young people of the ministry, whether they are paid or volunteer, part time or full time.

QUALITIES OF A YOUTH WORKER

Adults working with the teenagers should be people who have a love of young people and a genuine commitment to serve the Church. They must be Orthodox Christians who are active sacramental members of the Church. Through both their actions and their words, these individuals bring to life the love of Christ and the truth of the Gospel for the young people to whom they minister.

Above all, youth workers must...

- ✦ Be honest! If you can't answer their question, tell them you'll get back to them—young people can tell when you're not being honest.
- ✦ Be an icon! Your actions speak louder than your words, so make sure they are good ones. St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words."
- ✦ Love each child! "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).
- ✦ Be there, and accept them for who they are. They are children of God created in His image and likeness, just as you are.
- ✦ Know their world—what shows they watch, music they listen to and how they enjoy spending their time.
- ✦ Help them find the answers they are looking for. It's alright to question—when answers are found—faith will be stronger.

LEGAL ISSUES

- ✦ Listen more than talk! Effective listening will require you to use both your ears and your eyes. Look and listen for feedback.
- ✦ Treat them with respect and they will give it back to you!
- ✦ Know when they need more help than you can give. Unless you are a licensed counselor you cannot help young people with serious issues. Please refer to the *Legal Issues* section of these guidelines for further information.
- ✦ Be patient! The fruits of your work may not blossom for years; growth is a slow process.
- ✦ Pray for them daily! Ask them to pray for you too!

SCREENING VOLUNTEERS

The task of selecting volunteers requires a great amount of consideration. Screening volunteers is necessary in all youth ministry programs in order to manage risk and protect our young people. It is important to be systematic when choosing volunteers. **All** volunteers must fill out applications, provide references, and have a criminal background check performed even if the potential advisors are active members of the parish.

When considering volunteers, keep in mind the following...

- ✦ Is the individual an active sacramental member in good standing of the Church?
- ✦ Does the individual possess good organizational skills?
- ✦ Does this individual enjoy spending time with young people?
- ✦ Is the individual responsible, dedicated to working with young people, and willing to continue in this position for an extended period?
- ✦ Does this individual have a “vision” for the parish youth ministry and are they motivated to work toward its realization?
- ✦ Is this individual active in other aspects of Church life?
- ✦ Will this individual serve as a good role model for young people?
- ✦ Is this individual willing to take direction from the parish priest?
- ✦ Is this individual a teacher of God’s word?
- ✦ Is this individual able to work with other adults and youth workers?
- ✦ Will the individual employ appropriate means of communication, teaching, and discipline with young people?
- ✦ Does this individual speak to young people in a loving, respectful and nurturing manner?
- ✦ Does this individual have a criminal record or a history of offences toward children?
- ✦ Is this individual interested in spreading the message of Orthodox Christianity, or are they simply trying to re-live their own youth group experience?

TRANSPORTATION

Please take precautions when planning transportation, and whenever possible, hire a transportation service. Make sure parents know who will be driving their children. It is highly recommended that a permission form be filled out and signed prior to each event in which the young person will be transported. The Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is currently developing standardized forms for all parishes to use. When available, they will be posted at: www.youth.goarch.org.

Your parish should develop a list of designated drivers. No GOYA Ministry participant should be considered a driver for peers or to run errands on behalf of the group. Drivers should be 25 years or older and should have their driving record checked. Parish vans should be checked regularly to assure that they are in good working condition. There should always be more than one adult in each van.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

It is also advisable to have medical forms for the young people in your group. Collecting them at the beginning of the year is recommended, keeping them in a binder to take along on all outings. If you split the teenagers up into different groups for an outing, make sure the adult group leaders have a copy of the medical forms for each person in their group. The Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends using the American Camping Association health forms which can be ordered at www.acacamps.org (look for the Health History & Exam Form for Children/Youth/Adults Form FM08N in their online bookstore).

SAFETY

In all that we do, we must consider the physical safety of the young people participating. Things that seem like fun (like throwing someone into a swimming pool) can result in serious injuries. With all activities, consider the risks involved and ways to minimize them. In addition, prepare for emergency situations and always have a First Aid kit on hand. Host a First Aid/CPR training with all youth workers at the beginning of the year. When traveling, know where the nearest hospital is and keep a list of emergency numbers handy at all times (make sure your parish priest’s number is on this).

Remember that no matter what they did, God still loves them. Likewise, no matter how hard it is, you must love them as well. That is not to underscore that what they did was wrong—but God can still love without liking a person’s behavior. If you need assistance in dealing with this issue, read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. *Notice the love and forgiveness of the Father.*

Things to keep in mind...

- ✦ Never act in anger! Do not let your emotions get the better of you. If you need to wait to discuss the consequences until you can think logically, then wait.
- ✦ Focus on the behavior and address it directly.
- ✦ It is **never** appropriate to use any kind of physical punishment.
- ✦ Get others involved! Parent should be informed about any problems with their teenager. The priest should be involved and aware of disciplinary actions. In some instances, a peer review committee may be appropriate. In severe cases, it may be necessary to involve social or law enforcement agencies.
- ✦ Listen to details of the situation closely before making any disciplinary decisions. Have the young person explain what he/she did and why. Have him/her tell you why he/she thinks it is wrong. Discuss if it can be changed and ask that he/she consider his/her further responsibilities.
- ✦ Pray for and with those involved as you consider the best way to deal with the situation.
- ✦ How you deal with a problem is going to depend on the severity of it. Consider the spiritual well being of the young people involved and how this problem affects the entire group.

Consider the following...

- ✦ Is this likely to reoccur?
- ✦ Is this person a danger to him or herself? (See the *Legal Issues* section for more information)
- ✦ Does he/she pose a danger to the group?
- ✦ Who needs to be involved in the disciplinary action? (Priest, other young people involved, parents, as well as social and law enforcement agencies when necessary)
- ✦ Was anyone hurt physically or emotionally as a result of this?
- ✦ What is the best course of action to deal with this problem?
- ✦ How will we keep this teenager involved in the life of the church after this?

- ✦ Is this individual aware of youth culture and willing to refresh him or herself continually with what is going on in the lives of the youth?
- ✦ Will the individual be able to integrate into an existing program or structure and/or will they need to create one?
- ✦ Are you confident in this individual’s leadership skills and the ability to make appropriate decisions?
- ✦ Will you be able to supply this youth worker with all the necessary resources or show the youth worker where to find resources (financial, educational, spiritual)?
- ✦ Will the individual be accepted and received by the parish?
- ✦ Are you willing to monitor the youth program and provide advice, guidance, and/or constructive criticism to the youth worker?
- ✦ Will this person follow through in their commitment?

ONGOING EVALUATION

Ongoing evaluation of youth workers is critical to the success of the ministry. These evaluations are not only of benefit to the ministry, but also to the youth workers themselves. Evaluations should be a dialogue with the youth worker, parish priest, and parish youth director. They should focus on strengths, challenges, and needs. It is important that the evaluation process begin with a self-evaluation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Archdiocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries has compiled a detailed packet explaining the process of selecting youth workers and screening volunteers. This packet includes job descriptions, applications, and other vital details to assist you with this process. These tools are available by contacting the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries or visiting the website at www.youth.goarch.org.

TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY

Youth workers are entrusted with a sacred task: inspiring young people’s hearts toward God. For this reason, training is essential for each and every person involved in this effort. The parish priest, along with the parish youth director, should take the lead in the planning and implementation of this training. One month before the year begins, it is recommended that all involved in the leadership of young people attend training

for at least one or two days. If the training is for more than one youth ministry program, make sure to schedule time for age-specific breakout sessions. The training should include the following:

- ✦ Goals of GOYA Ministry
- ✦ The Four Circles
- ✦ What it means to be a Youth Minister and Leader
- ✦ Definition of Roles and Responsibilities
- ✦ Developmental Issues
- ✦ Ideas, Resources and Planning for Ministry
- ✦ Legal Issues of Ministry

PARENTS

Parents should be invited and highly encouraged to attend the youth worker training at the beginning of the year. Additionally, hold a parent meeting at the beginning of the year. This will lay the foundation for your partnership in the spiritual education of young people. In order to encourage participation at this meeting, a few suggestions include: a potluck dinner for the whole family, providing supervision and activities for the young people as the parent meeting is conducted, and joint youth ministry/parent meetings when appropriate. The initial meeting should cover the following topics:

- ✦ Goals of GOYA Ministry
- ✦ Plan for the year
- ✦ Parental role in the ministry
- ✦ Address questions, concerns, and ideas the parents might have
- ✦ Lay a plan for ongoing communication

In order to continue to build the parent-youth worker relationship, parent meetings should be held periodically throughout the year

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Training young people in the tenets of Orthodox Christian leadership is foundational to promoting healthy Church leaders of the future. It is important that young people be encouraged to reach out and minister to one another. The young people, sharing roles of leadership in their group ministry, will benefit from learning the skills of listening, public speaking, organizing, dealing with group dynamics, time management, crisis intervention, delegation, working with people, and mediation. When training leaders, the emphasis should focus on their service to GOYA Ministry as well as the entire parish. A leader always needs to be aware of his/her responsibility as a leader of the group, leading by example, at all times.

As a participant of GOYA Ministry and the Greek Orthodox Church, I realize that I represent my parish and church in all activities. As a participant of GOYA Ministry I agree to comply with all of the rules and meet all of the expectations stated below:

- ✦ I will come to GOYA Ministry activities with an open heart and mind, ready to have fun, learn, and grow in my faith.
- ✦ I will fully participate in the GOYA Ministry activities that I attend.
- ✦ I will treat the clergy, my advisors, my fellow participants, and visitors with love and respect.
- ✦ I will not bring tobacco, alcohol, drugs, weapons, fire works, or pornographic material to any GOYA Ministry event, and I will not use them at any GOYA Ministry event. I understand that my parents will be notified, and that I may be sent home at my parent's/guardian's expense if I fail to meet this expectation.
- ✦ I will wear appropriate clothing while at GOYA Ministry activities. None of my clothing will exhibit vulgar, suggestive, gang related, or irreligious language or images. None of my clothing will advertise or promote the use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, weapons, or violence. I will wear clothing that covers my stomach and underwear. I will dress in a modest fashion and I understand that the dress code will be enforced at the discretion of the advisors.
- ✦ I will use appropriate language and will not curse, use obscene hand gestures, or participate in vulgar conversations. I will not harass my advisors, fellow participants, or visitors in any way.
- ✦ I will treat the property of others and the church with respect. I understand that I will be held responsible to pay for any property I willfully or recklessly damage, destroy, or steal.
- ✦ I understand that for my safety and the safety of others, advisors may search my baggage and belongings on GOYA Ministry excursions. I will be present if my items are searched and I will know why they have decided to search my belongings.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

When things go wrong, how we deal with them is crucial. Above all, remember that the teenager is a member of the Church, and we must make sure that nothing we do drives them or their family away. The problem should be used as a springboard to bring them closer to Christ and His Church. Therefore, discipline should be approached with great consideration, love and respect.

Creating basic procedures and conveying them clearly to the teenagers will prevent discipline problems. Young people need structure and guidelines to feel secure. If purposeful expectations are clearly communicated, they usually do their best to comply. Make them partners in deciding standards for group behavior, consequences, and boundaries. Ask their help in suggesting ways to manage the group, creating useful procedures together.

Things to consider . . .

- ✦ Create a climate of respect. Rules should be centered on love and respect for self, others and the Church. Through fostering mutual respect between all who participate in your group, fewer problems will arise.
- ✦ Set rules (centered on respect) with the teenagers. Phrase them in a positive way whenever possible. Post and review them at the meetings.
- ✦ Before major outings, outline expectations. Review them with the group. If it is an overnight trip, you may want to have young people and their parents sign the form after reviewing.
- ✦ Remember this is a ministry for young people. They should have some control and ownership. If they feel like they have no control in the planning of activities and other decision making, they will let you know, sometimes in the form of defiance.
- ✦ Avoid power struggles at all costs. *No one ever wins.*
- ✦ Refrain from making threatening statements that you cannot or do not intend on keeping.
- ✦ Be consistent. Don't look the other way when there is a problem. Addressing issues immediately even if it seems small will prevent future problems. Remember to follow up on these issues too.
- ✦ Create a code of conduct not only with participants, but also their advisors. Guide each group, then exchange and share these codes of conduct so that everyone involved understands the commitments made.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Compose a code of conduct for GOYA Ministry that meets the needs of your community. This code reflects desirable behavior for participants. To the right please find a sample *GOYA Ministry Code of Conduct*:

It is recommended that specialized training take place prior to the beginning of the ecclesiastical year for GOYA Leaders. The training should be led by the parish priest, parish youth director, and the advisors. Additionally, training should continue throughout the year for teenagers so that they can continually build on their Christian leadership skills.

PRAYER FOR GOYA LEADERS

As Orthodox Christians, the greatest pledge our young leaders can offer is a prayer for God to guide them in their ministry. The Archdiocese Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends that the GOYA Leaders recite the following prayer in place of the traditional Oath of Office:

O Lord and God, you have taught us that, “whoever of you desires to be first shall be a slave of all.” Lord, help us to lead the ministry by serving our fellow GOYA Ministry participants, our advisors, and our parish as a whole. Lord, enlighten our minds and strengthen our bodies, that we may direct this ministry according to Your will. Guide us to bring about works of goodness to Your service and glory.

We thank You, Lord for the many blessings and mercies You continually bestow on us. In everything we do, in word or deed, may we always do so in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through His Holy Spirit. Amen.

Give the leaders a copy of this prayer so that they continually remember the ministry in their personal prayers.

TRAINING RESOURCES

Youth worker and leadership training is available from the Archdiocese Department and Metropolis Offices of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. In-depth training for youth workers, parents, and leaders on a parish, regional, and Metropolis level is available on the following topics:

- ✦ How to start an Early Childhood, HOPE, JOY, GOYA, and Young Adult Ministry
- ✦ Orthodox Youth Ministry
- ✦ Building Bridges
- ✦ Relational Ministry
- ✦ “Nuts and Bolts” of Youth Ministry
- ✦ Family Ministry
- ✦ Creative Teaching
- ✦ Christian Leadership

For further information, contact the Archdiocesan Department or your local Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

GOYA MINISTRY MEETINGS

GOYA Ministry meetings should be dynamic and engaging—everyone should look forward to attending. When the young people come to the meeting, they should have fun while learning more about their Orthodox Faith. They should grow closer to each other as they grow closer to Christ. If there is apathy toward meetings, it is time to refocus the ministry.

It is recommended that there are **at least** two meetings each month. Meetings should incorporate some of the following elements: prayer, ice-breaker, lesson, business, and refreshments. For a sample meeting schedule, please see *Appendix B*.

The family is the single greatest influence on the faith development of a young person. All meetings should take a family ministry approach. Consider occasionally having a parent discussion going on in another room during the meeting. On some occasions, have parents come to the meeting and have a special lesson planned for all. Every effort should be made to inspire the young people and their families to integrate the Orthodox Faith into their daily lives. It is important that the parents are considered vital and active partners in the ministry.

PRAYER

Since GOYA is a ministry of the Church, the meetings (and all activities) should begin and end with prayer. Prayer should not be mechanical recitation, but rather a time of connection with God. Take some time before beginning to inspire and direct the hearts of the young people toward prayer. Allow time to explain the prayer in order to encourage proper worship, that is, worshipping not only with empty words, but with one's entire being—mind, body, and soul.

Making prayer an important and exciting part of your gatherings will lay the perfect foundation on which to build your ministry. For additional information, speak with your parish priest and consult *The Four Circles* and the *Resources for Ministry* sections of these guidelines.

the ministry and get input from the families present. People support what they create, so really listen to what the parents and teens tell you. Have a flyer for the next meeting ready to hand out at this time. Make sure to gather everyone's email address and contact information. It will most likely take a few activities to get the desired attendance; be patient and don't become discouraged.

YEARLY MAINTENANCE

Participation in GOYA Ministry will vary from year to year. Special efforts should be made to keep the ministry vibrant and healthy. When it is evident that a certain individual is not participating, a special effort should be made to reach out to them in order to bring them back to the group. Always consult with your parish priest first, as he may be aware of sensitive situations that may be preventing the teenager's participation.

Ways to do this are:

- ✦ Have the parish priest contact them
- ✦ Send a "we miss you" letter
- ✦ Make a home visitation

It is important to make sure that GOYA Ministry truly meets the needs of young people who participate. From time to time, and at least annually, evaluate the program to see if it is accomplishing its goals. While the adults might think the ministry is meeting its goals, the young people might disagree. Both groups need to be happy with the ministry for it to be successful. See *Appendix F: End of the Year Program Evaluation*.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ✦ Annual Events - When something works well, make it an annual event. It gives the teenagers something to anticipate.
- ✦ Consistency - Be consistent! This will build your ministry. Hold meetings at the same time each month.

PROCEDURE AND PREVENTION

It is very important that the GOYA Ministry Team spend time planning how to manage groups in order to prevent disciplinary problems.

- ✦ What purpose will this ministry serve?
- ✦ How will we meet this purpose? (meetings, activities, etc.)
- ✦ What resources are available to support the purpose of this ministry?
- ✦ When is the best time to hold activities?
- ✦ What do we want to do for our initial activity?
- ✦ What will be the different roles and responsibilities of people involved?
- ✦ How will we communicate activities?
- ✦ How will we plan activities?
- ✦ What obstacles might we encounter?

PUBLICITY

This committee should organize a list of potential participants. To compile this list, look through the parish directory, church school list, baptismal records, and consult with your parish priest. Send an introductory letter to all of these young people and their parents letting them know about the formation of a GOYA Ministry. Send an invitation to the first activity, and follow up with a phone call or personal e-mail from the planning committee. Recruit other families in the community to assist in the personal contact so that the burden does not fall on one person. Make sure to also list the activity in your parish weekly and monthly bulletin.

As your group grows, you can have different families take turns calling about meetings. It is not necessary to call everyone all the time—but it is important to call new participants or those who don't come as frequently. E-mail is a quick way to send out meeting notices and quick reminders. An excellent resource can be *Evite* invitations www.evite.com (*Evite* is a free service which sends event invitations and reminders). This service is invaluable, as it lets you know who has responded and who hasn't even opened the e-mail. The group will grow over time through consistent communication.

INITIAL ACTIVITY

The initial activity should be an activity indicated by the *Needs Assessment* as something the young people like to do (picnic, skating, etc.), and it should involve their families. The purpose of this activity is not only fellowship, but also to build interest—start off with a bang. The activity should be free and having food is always a good idea. At the end of the activity, take 10 minutes to go over what the plans are for

ICEBREAKERS

All meetings should begin with an icebreaker. Icebreakers can relate directly to the needs of the group or serve as an introduction to the theme of the presentation. Whatever their purpose, they should be fun and encourage full participation. At this age, icebreakers can encourage young people to get to know each other, building camaraderie and helping to unify the group. Icebreakers should take around 10 to 15 minutes. Examples of fun icebreakers are:

- ✦ If You Were a Millionaire - Have everyone share 3 things they would do if they were given 10 million dollars today.
- ✦ The Song Game - Break everyone into groups of 4-6. Give all the groups the same word (perhaps one related to your lesson that day). Allow them 2 minutes to think of a song that has that word and prepare to perform it as a group. Judge them based on originality, creativity and group cohesiveness. Time permitting, do several rounds of this using different words.
- ✦ Bible Scavenger Hunt - Break the young people into groups of 4-6. Prior to the activity create a scavenger hunt sheet using the bible (find a passage about love, find the 7 last words of Christ, etc.). Give each person a Bible with a concordance and the scavenger sheet. The first group to find everything on the list wins.
- ✦ Word Game - Break everyone into groups of 4-6. Give all the groups the same word (perhaps one related to your lesson that day). Allow them 2 minutes to brainstorm as many things as possible that are related to that word. When the teams report back, only give points to ideas that no other team thought of.
- ✦ 2 Truths and a Lie - Have young people go around and share 3 interesting and unique things about themselves. One of these three things should be a lie. It is up to the rest of the group to guess which one is made up.
- ✦ Super Powers - Have the young people share what super hero power they wish they could have and why.
- ✦ Speed Round Charades - Split the group into two teams. Prepare a bunch of slips of paper with different Bible characters on them. Each group gets 2 minutes to get as many points as possible. If time permits, do several rounds using different categories such as feasts of the Church, parts of the Liturgy, etc.

For more information on icebreakers, see the *Resources for Ministry* section in these guidelines.

LESSON

The core of the meeting is the lesson which can take on many different forms. Keep the lesson timely, interesting, upbeat, and most of all, full of opportunities for interaction. The goal of the lesson is to provide the young people with the tools and knowledge to become active participants in their spiritual development. The lessons can work toward this goal in many different ways:

- ✦ A group discussion on a relevant topic (sex, drugs, violence, competition, etc.)
- ✦ A guest speaker (OCMC missionary, police officer, iconographer, etc.)
- ✦ A meditation on a particular writing (scripture, quote from the Fathers, article from a teen magazine, etc.)
- ✦ A video with discussion after (Orthodox Teen Video Series, current popular films, television show, etc.)
- ✦ Hands-on experience (painting icons while learning about them, learning about the hymns while chanting, preparing a meal for the homeless while learning about charity, etc.)

Whatever direction the lesson takes, make sure there is ample time for the young people to process what they have learned. This can be done through a group discussion, small group breakouts, writing in journals, and even taking 5 minutes of silence. Using one or several of these methods will increase the chances that the lesson will stay with the teenagers after they leave. Also to give them a specific challenge that would help them integrate the lesson into their lives. Whenever appropriate, give them things to take home: prayers, quotes, articles, copy of the Challenge, etc.

Above all, be creative! Constantly search for new and interesting ways to get your message across. Remember that you are building a foundation of faith so pray and let the Holy Spirit guide you. For information to assist you in planning, see the *Resources for Ministry* section of these guidelines.

BUSINESS

While the teenagers will be active in the planning and implementation of their ministry, there needs to be time to do business at the meeting. This portion of the meeting should not be more than 15 minutes long. The GOYA Leadership team should prepare an agenda. Things that might need to be covered in the business portion of the meeting include the following:

HOW TO ORGANIZE GOYA MINISTRY

Starting GOYA Ministry where one has not existed is a difficult but worthwhile task. Through the guidance of the parish priest, organize a small committee of interested Orthodox Christians. This committee should consist of the priest, youth director, advisors, parents, young adults, a parish council member, and professionals that work with young people (teachers, psychologists, educators, doctors, social workers, etc). This group should be diverse in its makeup but united in its mission, gathering initially to plan the first activity, and meeting regularly thereafter to determine goals as well as consider the needs of the ministry.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is important to take an inventory of your community and the young people in it. Consider the following as you begin to develop a GOYA Ministry:

- ✦ How many young people could this ministry potentially serve?
- ✦ What are these young people already involved in that might conflict with GOYA Ministry activities?
- ✦ What do the young people like doing with their family and friends?
- ✦ Where do they like going with their family and friends?
- ✦ What do the young people want from this ministry?
- ✦ What do parents want from this ministry?
- ✦ How often should this ministry meet?
- ✦ What resources does the parish have to assist this ministry?

By understanding your needs and resources, you can properly determine the goals for GOYA Ministry. A good formula to follow is:

Needs + Resources = GOALS

GOALS AND PLAN

After completing the assessment of your parish community, develop some preliminary goals of GOYA Ministry. Be realistic and start small—you can build from there. Consider the following questions using information from your *Needs Assessment*:

Things to consider as you plan for the ministry are:

- ✦ What is of interest to the teenagers?
- ✦ What issues are they dealing with in their lives?
- ✦ What will help them build on their concept of who they are as Orthodox Christian individuals?
- ✦ How will we make our lessons relate to their lives?
- ✦ How can we be sensitive to individuals in the group?
- ✦ How can we make everyone feel included?
- ✦ What problems might occur with each activity? (costs, logistics, safety, behaviors, etc.)
- ✦ What questions might arise during each lesson and how will we answer them?
- ✦ How can we schedule meetings and activities to fit into the busy schedules of teenagers?
- ✦ How can we communicate and share information with parents?

BEFORE ANY GOYA MINISTRY GATHERING

- ✦ Remember to pray for direction as you prepare to lead all activities and events.
- ✦ Make sure to properly publicize the meeting (phone calls, e-mails, flyers, church bulletin).
- ✦ Be prepared and organized—have an agenda.
- ✦ Make sure everyone knows what his or her role is (refreshments, discussion leader, etc.).
- ✦ Have a few young people greet others at the door.
- ✦ Prepare handouts for discussion with appropriate materials.
- ✦ Remember to have fun.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- ✦ Record and Review - Make sure to document every gathering's date, time and location. Review what went well and what did not at the end of each meeting and activity. Write full explanations of your lessons, activities, volunteers, snack, etc. Keep receipts for records. This will make future planning much easier (see *Appendix E: Activity Review Questions*).
- ✦ Cost - Be careful of the cost when planning gatherings. No young person should ever feel excluded because an activity is too expensive. If you have an outing that is a little more expensive than others, find a discrete way to make arrangements for the teenager whose family may be experiencing financial difficulty to participate. A group fundraiser is always good in this instance (see *Budgeting for Ministry*).

- ✦ Committee updates (worship, service, fellowship, and witness)
- ✦ Checking in on any current projects that are being planned
- ✦ Deciding on future activities and meeting topics
- ✦ Detailing out action plans for upcoming projects
- ✦ General announcements (Type out announcements to hand out to all attending. Mail it to those who were unable to attend. Consider also including this announcement page in the parish bulletin.)

REFRESHMENTS

It is always nice to have some type of refreshments at gatherings. Assign each family a specific day so that the responsibility does not fall on a small group of individuals. Insist that the refreshments are kept simple no matter who is bringing them.

GOYA MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

GOYA Ministry represents the Orthodox Christian Faith. All activities and interactions should be a witness to this. It is recommended that at least one activity be planned per month in addition to the regular meetings. Activities can be even more enjoyable if youth groups are invited from other Orthodox parishes in your area. Whatever the activity, allow enough time to plan all the details, making sure that there is proper support and supervision. Also, special attention should be paid to the church calendar, making sure the activities do not conflict with the feasts and liturgical life of the church. Consult with the parish priest when selecting dates for all activities.

RETREATS

A great way to heighten fellowship and to begin living and learning the Orthodox Faith is through retreats. While serving as significant tools in enlightening lives, retreats set aside a special time for a change of pace, fellowship, reflection, growth, and bonding as a community of faith. Retreat themes need to be relevant and challenging to the group. GOYA Ministry should participate in retreats at least two times per year. If you are interested in holding a retreat at your parish, contact your Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Ministries for assistance. For sample retreat schedules, see *Appendix C* and *D* in these guidelines.

SERVICE AND WITNESS

Young people can be stewards and witnesses of their faith by giving of their time, talents and treasures. It is critical that this be part of the GOYA Ministry, and at least two service projects are recommended per year. Service projects can be short term, such as packing school kits for children in impoverished countries (see www.iocc.org for more information on this project), or more long term, like collecting and serving food at a local shelter every month. There are so many opportunities to help them learn about giving and witnessing their faith. For additional examples, see *The Four Circles* section of these guidelines.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Since GOYA Ministry is also a ministry to the family, consider hosting several family events throughout the year. When appropriate, partner with the other youth ministry groups in your parish to plan the activity. Be sensitive of all families (single, adoptive, grandparents, etc.) so that everyone feels included. There are many different activities that can be done with families to build on their relationships with each other and with Christ, for example:

- ✦ Host a potluck dinner with a game night and end with a brief prayer service.
- ✦ Have concurrent lectures for teenagers and their parents, bringing the groups together and facilitating dialogue.
- ✦ Have a lesson for the entire family to attend and participate in.
- ✦ Host a family camp or family retreat.

Consider sending home activities that engage the whole family, especially after a family activity, encouraging parents to build on previous lessons.

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Fellowship activities are a great way to build unity in your group. Some of the greatest ministry can occur when nothing educational is planned. Do not underestimate the power of spending time with your group participating in fun activities. It is these activities that are going to build your group as a community. When planning fellowship activities, always involve the young people; consider what the teenagers like doing in their free time. Some fun activities include: going to a movie, lunch, ball game, bowling, day trip, etc. For additional fellowship ideas, see *The Four Circles* section of these guidelines.

Since GOYA is ministry, celebrations such as parties, dances, or socials should reflect the Orthodox Christian Faith. Special emphasis needs to be

placed on group interaction; no one should feel excluded. This can be achieved through icebreakers, welcoming committees, and activities that will encourage group interaction.

At social activities, you may get teenagers that have not been to church in a long time. Through fellowship with other Orthodox Christians, young people may become more involved in GOYA Ministry and the spiritual life of the church.

ATHLETICS

Athletics also provides a great opportunity for fellowship. A variety of sports should be planned so as not to discriminate the non-athletic teenager from participating. Athletics can enhance camaraderie, developing the idea of healthy competition. To discourage cliques, try not to allow participants to pick the teams themselves, but rather pick teams by favorite color, favorite food, etc. If there is a GOYA Ministry sponsored team, the teenagers that participate should be active participants of the ministry and active sacramental members of the Church. If your GOYA Ministry is participating in a league with other Orthodox Churches, contact your local Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for local league guidelines.

INTER-ORTHODOX ACTIVITIES

Our Orthodox Faith reaches far beyond our culture. It is recommended to plan activities and events with teenagers from various Orthodox Christian jurisdictions. Attending services at other Orthodox churches with the group can help emphasize the oneness of the faith. Encouraging friendships with other Orthodox Christians will prove to be beneficial in the life of young people, especially if the ministry does not have many participants. Have your parish priest call another local Orthodox church in the region and join efforts to make it more enjoyable for your teenagers.

PLANNING FOR GOYA MINISTRY

Often times in youth ministry we fail to take the necessary time to plan. Planning may take extra work initially but it saves time in the long run. The most successful youth programs plan ahead not just by one week or one month, but a whole year in advance. Sit down with your GOYA Ministry Team and take the time to outline and set goals each year.