



Parish SOYO Constitution

Preamble

WHEREAS: It is a primary goal of (Parish Name _____) SOYO, a parish of the Diocese of _____ (put in Diocese Name) _____, a diocese of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (hereinafter "SOYO") to promote the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith, and;

WHEREAS: It is a primary goal of SOYO to foster and encourage the involvement of its youth in the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith, and;

WHEREAS: We believe that the Goal of Orthodox Christian Youth Ministry is the integration of each young person fully into the total life of the Church and We believe that Orthodox Christians must commit themselves to living the Orthodox Faith daily. Further we believe that Worship, Witness, Service and Fellowship are the natural expressions of that commitment and we define them as follows:

Worship - For Orthodox Christians, corporate worship is the sacramental expression of and participation in Holy Tradition, and is the indispensable foundation of ministry at all levels. Upon this foundation, we must cultivate a daily personal prayer life and reading of Holy Scripture.

Witness - Christ calls us to be His witness in the world. We must enable our members to express their faith both for themselves and to others in order to be true witnesses to Christ and the Orthodox Faith.

Service - Christ came not to be served, but to serve. We need to motivate our members to do the same. We honor and glorify God by loving and serving mankind in the name of Jesus Christ, using our God-given gifts and talents.

Fellowship - The Holy Trinity is the perfect model of fellowship; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share perfect communion and exists in perfect love

as a community. By gathering together in fellowship, and by showing love for one another in Christ, we emulate the life of the Holy Trinity in our daily life, and;

WHEREAS: Our ultimate goal must be to see that our youth grow to love Christ and His Church and to pursue a righteous way of life.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that an organization be created to provide a common forum for these expressions of commitment and that the goal of this organization shall be to see that the members grow to love Christ and His Church, and to pursue a righteous way of life.

Article 1: NAME and AUTHORITY

1. The name of this organization shall be: SOYO (Society of Orthodox Youth Organizations) of the Parish of _____, (hereinafter "SOYO"). The organization shall use the name, "SOYO."
2. The name "SOYO" shall be the property of NAC SOYO, and shall not be used for any commercial purpose or any other purpose unless authorized by NAC SOYO.
3. The parish SOYO derives its authority to operate as a subsidiary organization of the Diocesan SOYO, which is a subsidiary organization of the North American Council SOYO within the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America by virtue of the blessings and consent of His Eminence, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archbishop of New York and Primate of North America (hereinafter "Primate"). The parish SOYO owes ecclesiastical allegiance to the aforementioned Archdiocese, its Diocese and this Constitution and the SOYO By-laws shall be consistent with the Constitution of the North American Council SOYO (NAC), its diocesan SOYO Constitution and this parish SOYO Constitution.

Article II: PURPOSE OF SOYO

The Purpose of SOYO is:

1. To enjoin upon the youth of the Diocese a complete devotion to Christ and His Holy Orthodox Christian Church on a daily basis, through worship, witness, service, and fellowship.
2. To equip and encourage Orthodox teens to participate in the Liturgical Services of the Church through chanting, singing and other forms of divine liturgical exercise.
3. To bear witness to Christ with boldness and conviction as witnessed to us by the Patron Saint of SOYO, Saint John Chrysostom.
4. To fulfill the Gospel message of spreading the Good News and loving our neighbor through programs such as Special Olympics, Orthodox

Youth Outreach (OYO) and other local outreach programs and ministries.

5. To create and promote healthy, safe, and uplifting fellowship amongst Orthodox teens on the various levels of SOYO.
6. To raise up a generation of leaders and disciples at the parish, deanery, and Diocesan levels.
7. To promote the existing activities of SOYO and initiate new programs as needed.
8. To initiate and coordinate the spiritual and charitable works and activities of the teens of the parish.
9. To support the activities of the parish.

Article III: POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. SOYO shall have the power, with the blessings of the parish pastor, to carry out and enforce all provisions enumerated in this Constitution and/or the By-Laws of SOYO under the direct supervision of the parish Youth Director (teen Advisor) and the Pastor of the parish.
2. SOYO shall have the power to direct, manage, supervise, and control the business properties and funds of SOYO in the parish, under supervision of the Youth Director and the Pastor.
3. SOYO shall be responsible for and shall have the power and authority to direct and carry out all business affairs, programs, activities, and anything else associated with the SOYO movement on the parish level.
4. The chartering of the local chapters of SOYO shall be the prerogative of the Diocesan SOYO. Chapters being chartered, however, must conform to the provisions set forth in Article II the NAC SOYO Constitution and Article III of the By-Laws of the NAC SOYO Constitution.

Article IV: MEMBERSHIP

The membership of SOYO at all meetings, shall consist of all teens from the parish, as provided for in the parish SOYO constitution, all chairpersons of permanent committees of the parish SOYO, the parish Youth Director, the Pastor, and the Officers of SOYO. Voting members may only vote in person and not by proxy.

Article V: VOTING

1. Voting may only take place at a meeting in which a quorum exists as defined in Article I of the SOYO By-laws.
2. All members of SOYO shall be entitled to no more than one (1) vote at any SOYO meeting.
3. Voting by secret ballot shall be conducted only upon the request of a member of SOYO, unless otherwise specified.
4. There shall be no voting by proxy.

Article VI: OFFICERS

1. The Officers of SOYO shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. General membership of SOYO on the parish level is ages 13-19
3. The Officers of SOYO shall be elected at the (Specify the month)_____ meeting of SOYO held each year in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws. All Officers shall serve for a term of one year, and until their successors are elected and installed. No person may serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in any one office.
4. Each officer shall be a member in good standing of this Parish in accordance with the By-Laws.
5. Any vacancy occurring in any elected office prior to the expiration of the full term shall be filled in a manner prescribed in the By-Laws.
6. The Executive Committee of SOYO shall consist of the Parish SOYO Officers, Parish Youth Director, and the Pastor.

Article VII: COMMITTEES

1. The President, after receiving advice from the Executive Committee and the approval of the Youth Director and the Pastor, may appoint any number of permanent or temporary (Ad hoc) committees to carry out special functions necessary to the efficiency and well-being of SOYO.
2. The Chairpersons of these committees shall be appointed by the President, after receiving advice from the Executive Committee and the approval of the Parish Youth Director and the Pastor. Chairpersons shall serve for the duration of the current administration term.
3. Each Chairperson of each permanent committee shall serve as a member of SOYO, and shall report to SOYO at every regular meeting concerning the activities of that committee.
4. The membership of each committee shall be appointed by the respective Chairperson from the membership and with the approval of the Youth Director and Pastor, with the exception of the nominating committee which is described in Article VIII Section 3 of the By-Laws.

Article VIII: ADVISORS

1. The Pastor shall be the final authority on all matters pertaining to the activities of SOYO.
2. The Parish Youth Director shall be appointed by the Pastor.
3. The Parish Youth Director and the Pastor shall advise and direct SOYO on all matters pertaining to the activities of SOYO. The Parish Youth Director shall serve for a period of time to be determined by the Pastor.

Article IX: PARISHES

1. The Local Synod of the Archdiocese shall define the Dioceses within the Archdiocese, and shall establish the boundaries for membership therein, as provided for in the Archdiocese Constitution. The Diocesan Bishop in accordance with the Archdiocese Constitution shall determine what parishes are in his diocese.
2. Each Parish SOYO organization shall be responsible for the government of its membership, and shall have the right to form a Constitution and/or By-Laws for that purpose which is consistent with the Constitution and By-laws of the Diocesan SOYO. Each Parish Constitution and/or By-Laws shall be approved by the Diocesan Bishop and a copy of the current documents must be submitted to the Diocesan Bishop, the Chairman of the Archdiocese Department of Youth Ministry and the Diocesan Youth Director.
3. In the event that the Parish SOYO should discontinue its existence, for any reason, all funds and files of that Parish SOYO shall become the property of the Parish. All such files and funds shall be held by the Parish in trust for the Parish SOYO until such times as that Parish SOYO may resume activity.

Article X: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

1. All amendments to this Constitution must be consistent with the Constitution of NAC SOYO and the Diocesan SOYO to which this parish belongs.
2. Proposed Amendments to this Constitution shall be formally submitted, in writing, to the Executive Committee, which consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Pastor, and Youth Director, at least sixty (60) days prior to the date of any Official Meeting.
3. The Secretary shall prepare and send a copy of all proposed Amendments to all members of SOYO at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the Official Meeting in which the amendments will be considered.
4. Amendments shall be ratified at any Official Meeting, in which a quorum exists, by a favorable vote of the members of SOYO at that meeting and with the approval of the Pastor, Diocesan SOYO, and Diocesan Bishop.

Article XI: BY-LAWS OF THE COUNCIL

1. All amendments to the By-laws of SOYO must be consistent with the Constitution of the Diocesan SOYO, NAC SOYO and of the Archdiocese.
2. By-Laws of SOYO shall be enacted for the governance of the SOYO in a manner which is consistent with the provisions of the Constitution of SOYO. Approval of the By-Laws of the SOYO shall be upon a favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all members of the council voting, and with the approval of the Pastor and Diocesan Bishop.

3. Any amendment or addition to the By-Laws of SOYO shall be subject to the same procedures set forth in Article X of this Constitution.

Article XII: APPROVAL

Upon ratification of any amendment to this Constitution, the Secretary of SOYO must within ten (10) business days after the ratification, send said amendment to the Archdiocese Chairman of the Department of Youth Ministry for review and to the Diocesan Bishop for final approval. In the event the Diocesan Bishop rejects any amendment or any part thereof, the rejected items shall become null and void.

Article XIII: DISSOLUTION OF SOYO

In the event of the dissolution of the Parish SOYO, all properties and funds of the SOYO shall revert, at once, to the Parish. All such files and funds shall be held by the Parish in trust for SOYO until such times as that SOYO may resume activity.

***** END OF CONSTITUTION *****

BY-LAWS OF SOYO

Article I: MEETINGS

1. There shall be at least a monthly meeting of SOYO, unless otherwise specified by SOYO.
2. Special meetings of SOYO may be called by the President, Parish Youth Director, or the Pastor, upon a majority request of the members of the SOYO, or by special need.
4. The President must send notification of the date and time of every Official Meeting of the SOYO no later than fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the meeting to the Officers, Pastor, Youth Director, the Committee Chairs.
5. Representation of at least 40% of the active members of SOYO that are in good standing, as defined in this document, shall constitute a quorum, provided that notice of the meeting is given as defined in Section 4 of this article.

Article II: REVENUE

1. SOYO shall pay an annual per parish/mission assessment as defined by the Diocesan SOYO By-laws. For purposes of this Article, a "parish" or "mission" is defined by the Archdiocese. The Parish SOYO assessment is due prior to the summer meeting of the Diocesan SOYO.
2. In order to properly calculate the assessments, the Diocesan Treasurer is authorized to receive a complete list of all SOYO members of the parish needed to set the parish SOYO assessment from the Diocese.

Article III: DUTIES OF THE PARISH SOYO to the Diocesan SOYO

1. Each Parish SOYO shall send to the Diocesan Youth Director a list of the names, addresses, birth dates, phone numbers, e-mail address, and other pertinent requested information of its Officers within fourteen (14) days of the election.
2. Each Parish SOYO shall send their SOYO President as one delegate, and shall be free to elect two additional delegates as they may choose to all regular meetings of the Diocesan SOYO in any manner which is consistent with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Parish SOYO.
3. Any Parish that fails to have at least one delegate present at the regular meetings of Diocesan SOYO for two consecutive years shall be considered not in good standing. Any Parish SOYO not in good standing in accordance with this subsection may be readmitted at the discretion of Diocesan SOYO.
4. Each Parish shall submit to the Diocesan SOYO President and the Diocesan Youth Director the minutes of any Official Meeting of the Parish SOYO no later than thirty (45) days after the meeting.
5. At each meeting of Diocesan SOYO, each Parish shall submit a written report of their current activities. At the summer meeting, the report must include the previous year's financial report.
6. Any Parish SOYO that fails to submit any of the reports required by subsections 4 and 5 of this article shall be considered not in good standing until such a report is received by the Diocesan SOYO President, Secretary of Diocesan SOYO and the Diocesan Youth Director.

Articles IV: DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

1. The President shall:
 - A. Preside over all meetings (except Committee Meetings).
 - B. Have authority to execute decisions made by SOYO.
 - C. Have the right to call Executive Committee Meetings with the approval of the Youth Director and Pastor, when deemed necessary.
 - D. Conduct all business in accordance with SOYO's Constitution, By-laws, and, when appropriate, "Robert's Rules of Order".
 - E. Promote, encourage and foster the implementation of Article II of the Constitution.
2. The Vice President shall:
 - A. Act in absence of the President and shall perform such duties as are delegated by the President.
 - B. Be an ex-officio member of all SOYO committees.
 - C. Attend all Meetings.

- D. Conduct all business in accordance with SOYO's Constitution, By-laws, and, when appropriate, "Robert's Rules of Order".
- E. Promote, encourage and foster the implementation of Article II of the Constitution.

3. The Secretary shall:

- A. Maintain all records of SOYO.
- B. Archive all records of SOYO with the Parish Office.
- C. Shall maintain an up-to-date official copy of the SOYO Constitution and have it readily available.
- D. Sign all documents as necessary.
- E. Distribute all materials for the SOYO.
- F. Attend all Meetings.
- G. Assist the President in conducting all business affairs of SOYO.
- H. Keep records and books accessible at all times for the inspection of SOYO.
- I. Take minutes at all Regular, Special, Joint and Executive Committee Meetings.
- J. Distribute minutes of the most recent Regular Meeting no later than fourteen (14) days after the previous meeting and fourteen (14) days prior to the next Regular Meeting.
- K. Conduct all business in accordance with the SOYO Constitution, By-laws, and, when appropriate, "Robert's Rules of Order".
- L. Promote, encourage and foster the implementation of Article II of the Constitution.

4. The Treasurer shall:

- A. Maintain an efficient system of accounting.
- B. Receive all general operating funds paid to SOYO and deposit the same in official depositories designated by SOYO within five (5) business days.
- C. Make disbursements, as approved and ordered by SOYO, within ten (10) business days.
- D. Send a quarterly income and expense statement to the Executive Committee and the Youth Director.
- E. Keep all SOYO accounts and books open for the inspection of SOYO, the Youth Director and the Pastor.
- F. Submit a financial statement at all General Meetings and at such times, as SOYO may require.
- G. Submit an annual Financial Report of SOYO to the Parish Council and General Parish Meeting, as designated by the Parish Council.
- H. Perform all responsibilities in accordance with Article VIII of these By-laws.
- I. Conduct all business in accordance with SOYO Constitution, By-laws, and, when appropriate, "Robert's Rules of Order".

- J. Promote, encourage and foster the implementation of Article II of the Constitution.
- K. Attend all meetings.

Article V: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The Election of Officers shall take place during the ___(Specify a particular Month)_____ Meetings of SOYO.
2. The Advisors of SOYO shall work with the Parish Youth Director to distribute Nomination forms (provided by the Archdiocese Department of Youth Ministry) to all eligible teens of the parish as well as guidelines and rules for eligibility for teens to be nominated and elected on the Parish level of SOYO and work to see that all requirements to be elected to SOYO office are understood and agreed to by the nominee.
3. Any person, who is at least 15 years of age, an official member of their Parish SOYO, present at the election, and having turned in a properly completed and signed Parish Nomination form, shall be eligible for nomination to any elected office of SOYO.
4. All nominees shall be certified by their Parish Priest, as specified on the nomination form, to be a communicant in good standing of their Parish prior to the election.
5. Voting must be by secret ballot. All members of SOYO shall be entitled to no more than one (1) vote. There shall be no voting by proxy.
6. Election for each office shall be determined by a simple majority of votes cast. In the event of a tie, there shall be a second vote with only the tied candidates eligible for election.
7. In the event that an Officer resigns prior to being installed, the runner-up for that office shall fill the vacancy. In the event that said runner-up declines to fill the vacancy, the President shall fill the position pursuant to Section 8 of this Article.
8. Whenever a vacancy occurs in any office (except for President), after installation and prior to the expiration of the full term of that office, the President, with the approval of the Executive Committee and the Parish Youth Director and Pastor, shall fill the position by appointment for the remainder of the term. All appointees must fulfill the requirements of Sections 3 & 4 of this Article.
9. In the event a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall assume the office of President for the remainder of the term and the vacancy of the Vice President shall be filled as prescribed in Section 8 of this Article.

Article VI: DELEGATES TO Diocesan SOYO

1. There shall be three delegates to the Diocesan SOYO General Meeting and all Special Meetings of Diocesan SOYO as follows:
 - a. The President shall be one delegate
 - b. The Vice-President should be the second delegate.

- c. One other delegate shall be appointed by the executive committee, with the approval of the Parish Youth Director and Pastor.
2. The parish Youth Director, or another Teen Advisor approved by the pastor, should accompany the delegates to all Diocesan Meetings.

Article VII: COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES

1. There may be any number of permanent committees formed. The chairpersons of all standing committees shall be appointed by the President, with the advice of the Executive Committee and the approval of the Parish Youth Director and the Pastor, and shall serve for the period of the current administration. The committee chairperson shall select the membership of his/her committee.
2. SOYO Special Olympics Ministry shall be a permanent ministry of SOYO.
3. Orthodox Youth Outreach (OYO) shall be a permanent ministry of SOYO
4. The President of SOYO may establish temporary (Ad Hoc) committees to work on specific tasks. The chairpersons of all temporary committees shall be appointed by the President, with the advice of the Executive Committee and the approval of the Parish Youth Director and Pastor, and shall serve until the assigned task is complete. The committee chairperson shall select the membership of his/her committee.
5. Whenever a vacancy occurs in any committee chairmanship, the President, with the advice of the Executive Committee and the approval of the Parish Youth Director and Pastor, shall fill the position by appointment for the remainder of the term.

Article VIII: Finances

1. The Fiscal Year shall be the same as that of the Parish. The Parish SOYO shall maintain an efficient system of accounts.
2. The President, Treasurer, Parish Youth Director and the Pastor shall be the only authorized signers of all General Diocesan SOYO accounts. No less than two (2) signatures shall appear on all checks, one of which must be either the Parish Youth Director or the Pastor.
3. No authorized signer shall be one of the two signers on a check for themselves.
4. All reimbursements must include a receipt prior to being reimbursed.

Article IX: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws of Diocesan SOYO.

Article X: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these By-Laws may be made as provided in Article XI of the Constitution.

ARTICLE XI: APPROVAL

Upon ratification of amendments to these By-laws, the Parish SOYO Secretary must, within ten (10) business days after the General Meeting, send such amendments to the Pastor for review, and to the Diocesan local Bishop for final approval. In the event the Bishop rejects any amendment or any part thereof, the rejected items shall become null and void.

***** END OF BY-LAWS *****

This Constitution and By Laws were adopted by (Name of the Parish) SOYO (City and State of the Church) on (Month) (Day), (Year).

SOYO President

Pastor

Diocesan Bishop

Duly Recorded and Received _____ (fill in the Month, Day, and Year)

Parish SOYO Secretary