

ARMENIAN CHURCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

Departments of ACYOA Seniors & ACYOA Juniors

ACYOA 40th Anniversary Regional Celebrations

GUIDELINE

The following Guideline is to be used by all Celebration Committees in the Regions of the Diocese. A list of suggestions is also provided for additional ideas. If there are any questions, they should be referred to the Directors of the Department of ACYOA.

1. Title for all Regional events: **"ACYOA 40th Anniversary Celebration"**.
2. Format: Banquet-Program-Dance at a formal facility (i.e. hotel ballroom).
3. Seed Money: \$1,000 will be provided for each Regional event. A separate checking account will be opened by the chairman and treasurer of the Host Committee. Both the signature of the chairman and the treasurer will be used.
4. Proceeds from the event: Will be earmarked for the reprinting of the ACYOA publication, "Sacraments and Prayers of the Armenian Church".
5. Host Committee: Will be made up of at least 2 persons from each parish in the region (where possible) - one alumni (over 35 years of age) and one young person (17-25 years of age). Additional committee members may be added as need and event requirements dictate. A "host chapter" may also participate in addition to the participation from the parishes in the Region.
6. Host Committee Responsibilities:
 - a) All arrangements with facility.
 - b) All arrangements for dinner.
 - c) All arrangements for music for dancing.
 - c) All arrangements for tickets, including printing and sales.
 - d) All arrangements for local "sponsor" Anniversary Booklet.
 - e) All arrangements for promotions, advertisements, posters, etc.
 - f) All arrangements for program to follow dinner.
7. High encouragment for both "alumni" and current members of the ACYOA to (1) participate in event, and (2) attend the event.
8. All clergy in the Region shall receive a personal written invitation to the event, along with one complimentary ticket.
9. Minimum officers of the Host Committee: Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary.
10. Report: A complete financial and statistical report will be due 30 days after the event from the Chairman.

11. The ACYOA Department will provide:
- a) Guidance - direction - ideas - experience.
 - b) Booklet: Anniversary edition of the "Storybook of ACYOA".
Sufficient number of which will be available to each Region, and will be given to all attending the event.
 - c) Seed money (see number 3).
 - d) Promotional articles in the Armenian press. Host Committees must provide specifics, photos, program highlights, etc.
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SUGGESTIONS

1. Honor "alumni" from the different parishes, ensuring more widespread attendance. Appropriate Armenian-style gifts can be purchased from St. Vartan Bookstore at the Diocese. Special certificates of "Special Recognition" are available free.
2. Honor, or significantly acknowledge past members of the ACYOA Central Council who now reside in the Region, as well as present Council members.
3. In local booklet, include: photos of each church, background on each chapter, outstanding events, photos of past members, meetings, events over the years. In all aspects, include something from the past, as well as something from the present ACYOA.
4. Promote "weekend" participation via arrangements with hotel at special rates.
5. Basic Program:
 - Invocation
 - Welcome
 - Introduction of Headtable guests
 - dinner--
 - Guest speaker(s) (perhaps, in addition to a formal speaker, an "alumni" and a present-day member could say a few words)
 - Presentations of gifts, certificates, etc.
 - Remarks of presiding clergy
 - Benediction/closing prayer (perhaps the prayer of ACYOA)
6. Anniversary Cake - not just any anniversary cake, but 5 separate cakes spelling out A-C-Y-O-A with eight candles on each. (This is not for fundraising purposes.)
7. Have photos taken during the event for promotional and sale purposes.
8. Decorate the ballroom/hall to give a festive-celebrative atmosphere.

**The Armenian Church Youth Organization of America
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - 1946 - 1986

The Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) was created on January 12, 1946, in Providence, Rhode Island.

The new national, or Diocesan, Organization for Church youth emerged from the crumbling foundations of the then many local junior leagues and clubs that were formed for the young people of the Church. These were primarily of local concern and for the most part were in a state of semi-activity. Archbishop Karekin Hovsepian (d. 1952) during his tenure as Diocesan Primate, had worked and strived to form local youth groups in all the Armenian communities throughout the Diocese. World War II interrupted the activities of these local groups, many of which were simply dissolved or inactive during those difficult years. When Archbishop Karekin was elected Catholicos of Cilicia, Bishop Tiran Nersoyan became Diocesan Primate and placed an even greater emphasis on programs for youth.

The termination of the war and the return of many young Armenian men and women from the armed forces renewed the necessity of re-organizing the local Church youth groups. Bishop Tiran wholeheartedly took on the challenge of a problem which was causing the older generation to question the future of the Church in America. The theme of their lament would be, "What is to become of the Armenian Church? Our young people have no interest in anything Armenian. We are vanishing, and our identity as a national group will soon be completely lost."

This challenge was carried by Bishop Tiran to the Armenian-American youth. For months the Bishop worked untiringly and almost completely alone, traveling from one Armenian community to another - shaping and forming the new ACYOA. To all the communities he passed on the informing spark, so important to the creating and continuation of activities for this new Organization.

The culmination of all this activity and work was in the "Constitutional Assembly" of Church youth, held in Providence, Rhode Island, January 12 & 13, 1946. The Assembly gathered young Armenian men and women from the many Armenian Church communities throughout the Eastern and MidWestern United States. Delegates came from as far West as Wisconsin and as far South as Virginia responding to the challenge presented to them by the Bishop, as well as the elders of the Church.

The two-day meeting resulted in the framing of the ACYOA Constitution, encompassing the objects, policies, activities and administration of the many operations of a national organization. Bishop Tiran presided over all the sessions, solving many statements over obscure points. The delegates at this Assembly elected the first ACYOA Central Council from among their members to carry out the administrative aspects of the ACYOA. These first Council members included: Zaven Hovsepian, John Soursourian, Arthur Yagjian, Matthew Matteosian, Grayce Yeremian, Jack Kazanjian, and Mary Shalakian. A constitutional committee was appointed to prepare a final draft of the Constitution and present it for ratification.

A national Church Youth Organization, functioning under the supervision of the Primate and Diocesan Council of the Armenian Church of America

reality. The young people had proved to themselves, and the larger community, that they were not completely alienated into forgetting or denying their origin as Armenians.

Now, the "chapters", made up of young people in the various communities throughout the Diocese, went into action using the drafted Constitution as a guide. Membership drives, social, cultural and educational programs were sponsored under the banner of the ACYO. Activities were planned and taking place in almost every Armenian Church community with the ACYO growing everyday. In July, 1946, the Primate and Diocesan Council of the Diocese ratified the draft Constitution, and the Organization was officially set in motion.

The Central Council began their work. A series of informative letters and directives for the Chapters were written and sent out. Discussion took place on the design of the logo, stationary, site for the next General Assembly, to be held in May, 1947, in Philadelphia. This Assembly, hosted by the two Philadelphia ACYO Chapters, was the first General Assembly of the ACYO.

Each year thereafter, these Assemblies became a major event on the calendar of the young people of the Church. As the years passed, different chapters hosted the Assemblies throughout the Diocese attracted thousands of young people for the business sessions, but especially the social activities.

As time passed, the ACYO grew stronger in the parishes, as well as on the national level. Activities and projects have included raising sizable funds for the restoration of the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, as well as organize trips to Armenia and the Holy Land.

The ACYO also assisted the Diocese by sponsoring the printing and distribution of important publications. Such as: Sacraments and Prayers of the Armenian Church, A Pictorial Guide to the Armenian Divine Liturgy, Catechism of Christian Instruction, Home Blessings at Christmas and Easter, The Armenian Church and Her Teachings, Handbook to Armenia, and the ACYO Chapter Handbook.

Newsletters and publications have also been an important aspect of the ACYO. For many years, ACYO news and information was delivered to members via the monthly issues of The Armenian Guardian. This publication also included articles on contemporary issues of American society, as well as concerns of the Armenian community.

In the late 1960's, the ACYO went through some very difficult times. American Society in general was in the middle of considerable upheaval. The Organization experienced several years of decline in activities and successful operations, resulting in its dissolution in 1972. This mainly concerned the national organization, as chapters, while fewer in number, continued to function on a local level.

However, the absence of a national organization was not to last long. Armenian Young people continued to gather yearly, first at General Assemblies, which also were suspended in 1973 and 1974, and then at the ACYO National Sports Weekend program, initiated in 1970. It was in 1974 and 1975, under the Primacy of Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, that the young people made an effort to re-organize and re-institute the ACYO on the national level.

In 1975, at the National Sports Weekend hosted by the Miami Chapter of St. John Armenian Church, an Assembly again took place whereat the young people made the effort necessary to re-institute the ACYOA on the national level. A new Central Council was elected and programs initiated again to strengthen and allow the ACYOA to grow. Measures were taken to assist chapters in their membership and programming activities. The General Assembly and National Sports Weekend were designated inseparable and assigned to Labor Day Weekend each year.

The National Sports Weekend has attracted an estimated 5-6,000 participants since 1970, and has become a most popular program of the ACYOA, with young people coming from all over the Diocese, as well as California and Canada. It is also a major fund raiser for the national organization.

Since 1975, the General Assembly has been successfully held. It has made many decisions regarding its Constitution, as well as on ACYOA programming. The St. Vartan Camp of the Diocese, was originally initiated through the efforts of the ACYOA.

The Armenian Studies Programs - "Educational Tour to Armenia" and "Journey to Armenia" have been most successful through 17 annual summer trips to Armenia. The ACYOA has also assisted the preparation of audio-visual programs, including the Divine Liturgy, Symbolism in the Armenian Church, and Vessels and Vestments of the Armenian Church.

Scholarships and special awards are also offered by the national organization, as well as special educational and leadership oriented seminars and conferences.

For many years, the ACYOA has promoted the observance of commemorative events for the victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. A special comprehensive and wholeistic commemorative program was designed and instituted by most ACYOA Chapters for 1985, marking the 70th Anniversary of the Genocide.

For several years, Keghard was the official ACYOA publication. This quarterly of late 1970's was a more literary publication bringing to ACYOA members articles and interviews on Armenian subjects, as well as profiles on contemporary Armenians. Presently, Executive Update is the newsletter of ACYOA. Originally intended for Chapter Executive Officers, this monthly publication has taken over as the official newsletter for ACYOA and is sent free of charge to all names on the ACYOA National Mailing List - approx. 2500. Containing information for Chapters, the newsletter also contains information about the Church, Armenian Community at large, and occasional features such as Armenia, Holy Week, ACYOA, etc.

Over the years, the ACYOA has provided an opportunity for thousands of young adults to participate in the life of the Armenian Church Parish, and thereby continue the customs and practices of the Armenian Church. Indeed, most of the American born Armenian clergy have been active members of the ACYOA.

The ACYOA - 40 Years of Church Service and Armenian Fellowship in America.



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DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA, 630 SECOND AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016-4885 212 686-0710

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate

1 November 85

His Eminence
ARCHBISHOP TORKOM MANOOGIAN
Primate - Armenian Diocese
630 Second Avenue - NYC, NY 10016-4885

Your Eminence:

Enclosed for reference and informational purposes is an outline of tentative plans for the 40th Anniversary of the ACYOA.

We have met with the Vicar General to discuss these ideas, and discussion will also take place at the November 1st & 2nd ACYOA Central Council Meeting.

Immediate needs include possible dates to be confirmed for Your Eminence to attend and preside at the Regional Anniversary Balls. The Vicar General indicated that he will review the dates and inform us accordingly.

In addition, if Your Eminence wishes to include other types of anniversary observances, they should be decided upon very soon.

Your obedient servants in Christ,

Nance Basmajian

Nance Basmajian

James Magarian

James Magarian

c.c. Vicar General

Departments of ACYOA Juniors and ACYOA Seniors
Diocese of the Armenian Church of America

Tentative Plans for the 40th Anniversary of the ACYOA, 1946-1986

1. January: A poster will be prepared and distributed to all Parishes and ACYOA Chapters. The basic design will include: "ACYOA 1946-1986, 40 years of Church Service and Armenian Fellowship in America." The contemporary design will have a youthful look and appeal.
2. March: Palm Sunday/ACYOA Day - parishes to celebrate 40th Anniversary honoring local founders of ACYOA, past executive committee members, Central Council members, etc.
3. May: Diocesan Assembly, Racine, Wisconsin. Friday night affair to be sponsored by the ACYOA (locally) for delegates, etc.

Memorial Day: Juniors' Sports Weekends to have Anniversary theme. Chicago and Watertown.
4. August/September: General Assembly - National Sports Weekend, Philadelphia (Wynnewood) to have Anniversary Theme, etc.
5. October/November/early December: Regional Gala Anniversary Balls/Dinner-Dances - (a) New England, (b) Mid-west, (c) New York-New Jersey (at Diocese). All alumni, seniors and juniors to be invited.

NY-NJ affair to be held at Diocesan Center, and to honor Tiran Surpazan Nersoyan. Also, at this and at other Regional Balls, past & present Central Council Members can be noted...
6. "The ACYOA Story" booklet - giving a unique description to the creation of the organization, will be reproduced and distributed at the Regional Balls.
7. Throughout the year:

Interview with Tiran Surpazan.
Interview with Torkom Surpazan.
Interviews with youth, (Council members.....)
Historical/Promotional articles about ACYOA.
8. Republication of "Sacraments and Prayers of the Armenian Church" to be funded by proceeds from Regional Balls.
9. "40th Anniversary" foil labels to be used on all correspondence in 1986.

WHAT HAS THE ACYOA DONE SINCE ITS CREATION IN 1946???

Here are some highlights . . .

The ACYOA has sponsored annual assemblies for the young adults of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, where at concerns for the national character and programs of the Organization are addressed, and new ideas and projects are initiated.

The ACYOA has raised sizable funds for the restoration of the main altar of the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin, the Mother Cathedral and Holy See of All Armenians in the World.

The ACYOA has sponsored educational tours to Armenia and Holy Etchmiadzin, and, the Holy Land and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The ACYOA has contributed to the former Youth Camp Fund and the Seminary Fund of the Diocese.

The ACYOA has sponsored the printing and distribution of the following noteworthy publications:

Sacraments and Prayers of the Armenian Church.

(First printed in 1956; reprinted in 1959, 1965 and 1968;

it is presently being revised for a fifth printing.)

A Pictorial edition of the Armenian Divine Liturgy.

Catechism of Christian Instruction.

Home Blessings at Christmas and Easter.

The Armenian Church and Her Teachings.

The Armenian Guardian.

Keghard.

Handbook to Armenia.

Chapter Handbook for the ACYOA.

The ACYOA has raised sizable funds for the Armenian Theological Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Through membership in the ACYOA, most of our American born clergymen and layworkers of the Church had their initial experiences of Armenian parish and community life.

The ACYOA has sponsored an annual National Sports Weekend that has attracted well over 5,000 young adults for athletic competition and social activities.

The ACYOA has produced Audio-Visual Programs on:

The Armenian Divine Liturgy.

The Vessels, Vestments and Practices of the Armenian Church.

Symbolism in the Armenian Church: Part One - "The Church as the Temple of Our Faith".

(with three other programs currently in development).

The ACYOA has sponsored a Camp Program for the children of the Diocese.

The ACYOA has offered scholarships to the St. Nersess Summer Studies Conferences.

The ACYOA has promoted the observance and commemoration of the victims of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

The ACYOA has sponsored Leadership Seminars for the officers of the chapters, as well as Armenian young people in general.

The ACYOA has provided an opportunity for thousands of young adults to participate in the life of the Armenian Church Parish, and thereby continue the customs and practices of the Armenian Church begun centuries ago by our forefathers.