

ACYOA - Martyr's Day Commemoration Program

The commemoration of Armenian Martyr's Day by the ACYOA is a sign that the youth is aware of the historical events that occurred during the turn of the century. It is an illustration of sensitivity and concern.

The ACYOA Martyr's Day Commemoration Program is designed to enable each chapter, according to size, opportunity, facility, creativity and need, to participate and demonstrate their feelings for the souls of the martyrs who are now asleep in Christ. The various programs listed below allow the chapter to express themselves and fulfill their needs as a group. Through Church Services, communal meals, community service activities and educational programs, members can participate in worship and devotional customs, community and charitable experiences, as well as learn about the events that were to shape the history of the Armenians for the next 100 years.

Chapters should choose at least one of the following programs to commemorate Armenian Martyr's Day. The event should take place on or close to April 24th, and be in conjunction with, or separate of, scheduled parish commemoration activities.

(Following the event, a one page analysis and comment should be forwarded to the ACYOA Central Council describing the program chosen. A news release should also accompany the commentary and be sent to the Executive Secretary.)

1. Church Services:

The Chapter may, with permission and direction of the pastor, design a worship service praying for the souls of the Armenian Martyrs. The service may include part or all of the Service for the Repose of Souls, as well as selected Biblical passages, meditative music, etc.

The atmosphere of the Church is an important dimension that should not be overlooked. Candle-light is preferred, along with quiet and meditative music. Participation of ACYOA members should be encouraged. The service may be done with just the chapter, or opened to the entire community.

2. Meditation Hour:

Choose a period of the day when people may come to the Church and spend time in silent meditation. Music and appropriate readings may accompany. The ringing of bells (on the hour, or at a designated time) may also be used to add another dimension. Provide refreshments in the Church Hall following the period.

3. Blood Drive:

Suggested for chapters located in metropolitan areas. The donation of blood is a fine demonstration of placing the value of human life on a high level. Contact local Red Cross Chapters to receive information and literature for sponsoring a blood drive. Plan at least one month ahead and organize a large publicity campaign to inform the public, as well as the parish.

4. Road Race / Bike-a-thon:

Members of the chapter solicit sponsors to pledge varying amounts of money for each mile that is run/walked/or biked. Proceeds may be placed toward the Memorial for the Armenian Martyrs at the Diocesan Cathedral, the purchasing of books and materials for local libraries on the subject of the massacres and Armenian history in general, as well as toward Armenian Church funds for the needy.

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5. Memorial Meal / Hokejash:

As is the custom of the Armenians, memorial meals take place for departed souls. The Chapter may organize such a meal, including Armenian foods, for participation by the entire parish. A speaker may be invited, as well as scheduling Church Services before, or, after the meal.

6. Educational Program:

The Chapter may organize lectures, panel discussions, debates, etc., on the subject of the Armenian Martyrs. These programs should be opened to the public and well publicized.

Invited guests may participate, or the members themselves may do the research necessary and make up the panel participants, debate teams, or discussion leaders.

Films dealing with the massacres may also be rented and shown to the parish, followed by discussion and refreshments.