

## **Armenian Church Youth Organization of America**

### **The Organization**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) is to bring together the Armenian young people of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America for the following reasons:

1. To prepare and equip the young people for responsible and intelligent service in the Armenian Church.
2. To educate the young people concerning the teachings of the Armenian Church and history of her people.
3. To motivate and stimulate creative thinking and illustrations of faith among its members.
4. To provide a vehicle through which the young people may express themselves and demonstrate their abilities skills, interests, concerns, willingness to try, and faith.
5. To develop programs through which the young people may participate, receive information, experience meaningful relationships, feel a sense of belonging, and be exposed to the, Armenian Church and cultural heritage.

#### **Role In the Diocese**

The role of the ACYOA within the structure of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America is of vital importance. The ACYOA is charged with the responsibility of organizing the young people of the Diocese and preparing them to participate in leadership capacities when they mature.

The ACYOA also provides a social vehicle through which Armenian young people may relate to one another and build friendships and lasting relationships.

The ACYOA develops programs that try to include the diverse interests of the young people throughout the Diocese, enabling them to participate and learn about their faith, heritage and culture. The interaction and experience of the ACYOA programs with the young people leads them in the direction of future participation and leadership roles within the parish and the Church at large.

The ACYOA is the only sanctioned, National Youth Organization of the Diocese, and is responsible to the Primate and the Diocese. Parishes organizing youth programs must follow prescribed guidelines and

constitutional rules and regulation, whereby the young people from throughout the Diocese participate in an overarching schematic with specific goals and orientation.

#### **Structure**

The structure and procedures of the ACYOA follows a similar outline as that of the Diocese itself. The following is an outline of the administrative and operational aspects of the Organization: (Note Constitutional references.)

#### **Primate**

Hierarchical leader of Armenians within the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. A celibate priest, usually a bishop or archbishop. He is the President of the ACYOA on the National level and presides at the annual ACYOA General Assembly-

#### **Executive Secretary**

Appointed by the Primate

Responsible for the administrative and developmental aspects of the National Organization on the Diocesan level. Assists the ACYOA Central Council in executing the decisions of the ACYOA General Assembly, as well as in carrying on the operations of the National Organization. (Article 11, Sec. 16)

#### **General Assembly**

Presided over and convened with the permission of the Primate.

Convened by the ACYOA Central Council  
Annual assembly of representatives (delegates) from the Organization's Chapters  
Decides polity, constitutional changes, major programming, general direction of the National Organization. Elects its own officers, ACYOA Central Council Members, and other committee members and officers as it deems necessary. All the decisions of the ACYOA General Assembly are approved by the Primate. (Articles 10 & 11)

#### **Central Council**

Elected by the ACYOA General Assembly for a two year term. Responsible for executing the decisions of the ACYOA General Assembly and maintaining the operations and programs of the National Organization. Must act in the best interests of ACYOA, and, fulfill requirements, meet standards through coordinating, directing, supervising and initiating ACYOA programs and activities. The Council elects its own officers, and each member is assigned to represent a region of the

Diocese, as well as take on specific assignments in the operations of the ACYOA on the national level.

### **Regional Conference**

Usually convened by ACYOA Central Council Regional Representatives

A Conference for Chapters of a geographically defined area. Opportunity for Chapters to meet and discuss regional programming and social activities, as well as national events. May decide to organize on a more structured basis. The main purpose of the Regional Conference is to stimulate interaction between ACYOA Chapters and provide an opportunity for the Chapters to meet and discuss concerns and new ideas. Regional programs are also addressed at the Conference.

### **Chapters**

The core of the ACYOA is the local Chapter. This level of the National Organization is comprised of young people (ages 18 & up for the Senior Division of the local Chapter) who wish to belong to the ACYOA. The Chapter is organized under the guidelines and structure of the ACYOA and follows its Constitution. Five members are necessary to form a Chapter.

The life and activities of the local Chapter are influenced by the local parish (of which every chapter is affiliated), national standards and procedures, programs and events, as well as the creativity and enthusiasm of the membership. Chapter meetings usually take place once or twice a month. Other gatherings of the membership include educational, religious, cultural, social, athletic, recreational and other activities of interest to the membership. Assisting in parish sponsored events is also a part of the Chapter schedule of activities and events. As a group, the Chapter attends and participates in regional and national events, which are many times designed as weekend excursions.

Coming together as a chapter, whether it be for a meeting, to assist the parish in a program, spending an evening out on the town, attending a Regional Conference, or participating in national events provides time for the members to interact and become familiar with each other - individually, and as a group. They may discover many ways and means of justifying their coming together as "ACYOA Members" and not simply as a group of young adults with something in common. The underlying question to be asked is, "How may we serve the Church best, and in doing so enrich our lives and stimulate us to further ourselves as Armenians?" The range of activities is endless, and with this question in mind, the activities take on new meaning and can become very worthwhile.

## **The Chapter**

### **STARTING & ORGANIZING**

The functioning ACYOA Chapter is the very heart of the National Organization. It keeps the members (and potential members) in touch with the rest of the Diocese, providing opportunity and experiences which can be very rewarding.

Participating in the life of the Chapter, as an interested and concerned member will create enthusiasm among others. Through this participation the many experiences of the Church and community come alive and opportunity is made to participate and learn about them. You no longer are a spectator, you are a participant.

Organizing a Chapter takes desire and dedication. You must believe in your Church and Armenian identity for it to work. In Armenian communities that have never had an ACYOA Chapter before, the group of interested young adults who wish to form a Chapter (at least 5 are needed) must ask their pastor and/or parish council to write a letter of application to the ACYOA Central Council requesting admission into the National Organization. Upon admission, a meeting of all the young people within the area must be held to elect officers and begin activities. Membership dues must be collected and a selected meeting date established (i.e. 2nd Sunday of the month).

In parishes that have inactive ACYOA Chapters, re-organizing and re-activating can be a long process. But again, desire and dedication is necessary to see it through. Those young adults of the parish, recognizing the need to re-activate the Chapter, should work to bring together all the potential members to again participate in a functioning and alive ACYOA Chapter.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

The members of the ACYOA are those young adults who join together to make up the local chapter. They are individuals who wish to serve their Church and participate in the Armenian community, whereby they will enrich their lives, learn about their faith and heritage, and continue the traditions and customs of the Armenians.

Members must be at least 18 years of age or high school graduates, and communicant members of the Armenian Church. (A communicant member is one who has been either baptized or confirmed in the Armenian Church, or any Church which is in Communion with the Armenian Church. When in doubt or in need of further explanation, consult your pastor or the Executive Secretary to the ACYOA at the Diocese.)

Members have the right to vote and hold elected and appointed office. Associate Membership is offered for those who are not communicant members of the Armenian Church, but wish to belong to the ACYOA. Associate Members are not allowed to vote or hold elected office. (Article 4)

All members are required to pay annual dues to the local Chapter. Dues must be at least five dollars, two fifths of which are forwarded to the ACYOA Central Council for deposit in the National ACYOA Treasury. (Article 5)

The members of the ACYOA are entitled to participate in all ACYOA programs, activities and events, and receive at no additional charge periodicals and literature dealing with the National Organization and the Church.

### **GETTING TOGETHER**

It should be noted that large numbers are not necessary to form or re-organize Chapters. Small groups are usually the most efficient and most fun-oriented. Many times, small ACYOA Chapters accomplish more than larger ones. Don't become frustrated when only 10 or 15 members attend an activity or meeting - after sending out over 50 invitations or announcements. **WORK WITH WHAT YOU HAVE!**

If you are active, publicize your events thoroughly, and show a friendly spirit when new (or old) people show up your numbers will grow.

In communities which do not have a local Armenian Church Parish, Chapters may form Affiliating themselves under the jurisdiction of the nearest Armenian Church. In cases such as these, the Executive Secretary and ACYOA Central Council should be consulted for proper procedures.

At the first meeting of a new Chapter (a re-organizing chapter, or of an established chapter with new officers) goals for the coming year should be addressed and discussed thoroughly. Several major events should be selected with committees formed. A balance between the various aspects of the ACYOA the religious, cultural, social, recreational and athletic should try to be established to provide everyone with a means of participating and enjoying themselves while doing it. Special projects to assist the parish should also be a part of the year.

The requirements and administrative procedures of the ACYOA Central Council should also be discussed. This should be taken up during a meeting of the Chapter Executive Committee. Any questions or areas not fully understood should be noted and asked of the

ACYOA Central Council Regional Representative for your area.

Reports, dues, Regional Conferences, interaction with other Chapters, and even the updating of youth mailing lists should all be taken into consideration if the Chapter itself is to run smoothly and consistently.

### **CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE-**

The Chapter Executive Committee consists of five or more persons elected by the membership to serve a term as an officer of the Chapter. Elected and appointed officers should always be dues-paying members for at least one year.

The Executive Committee of a well-rounded Chapter includes;

President  
Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Recording Secretary  
Corresponding Secretary  
Treasurer Delegates  
Publicity Coordinator  
Religious Coordinator  
Cultural Coordinator  
Athletic Coordinators  
Advisors

The effective and efficient operating of a Chapter depends on the dedication and ability of the Executive Committee. Elected and appointed officers should understand that during their term in office they must sacrifice some of their personal time and energy in fulfilling their respective responsibilities.

Chapter Executive Committee Meetings should thoroughly discuss the business of the Chapter, so as to not make the general chapter, meeting any longer (or boring) than necessary. The Executive Committee is charged to make decision and carry on the work -- so do it!!! Before a typical general chapter meeting, the Executive Committee should have already decided various details on a given subject and leave only the general and major consequential decisions for the vote of the entire membership. If the Executive Committee does not do its job, then general meetings will be drawn out, much too long, and a "turn-off" for the average member. The result is a poor chapter and poorer operations.

It is highly suggested that the Delegates of the Chapter participate in the meetings of the Executive Committee. As the Delegates are representatives of the Chapter on the regional and national levels, they should understand the feelings and concerns of the Chapter as a whole, and especially the concerns of the elected officers. Many times, Delegates are past officers or

long standing members. Their experience and areas of expertise should be tapped by the current Executive Committee. Their opinion and advice taken into serious consideration.

It is important to note that the Executive Committee should share the over-arching goals and ideas of the ACYOA. Working together for an entire year means discussing a variety of issues and dealing with my personal and not so personal feelings and motivations. Everyone should work hard to assist the Chapter in progressing

## **CHAPTER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

### **The President**

The priest assigned to the local parish is the President of the affiliated ACYOA Chapter. In the absence of the priest, the parish council chairman shall act in his place.

The President, along with the entire Executive Committee, has a duty to ensure that all steps taken by the chapter are in accordance with the objects and policies of the ACYOA Constitution.

The President shall preside at all, Chapter membership and Executive Committee meetings, and advise when necessary. He shall also affix his signature to those documents of the ACYOA that require it.

### **The Chairman**

Careful selection should be made in the selection of the Chapter Chairman. He or she should have responsible character, possess good executive skills, and be familiar with ACYOA procedures and the ACYOA Constitution.

The primary responsibility of the Chairman is to conduct the Chapter membership meetings, and follow up on the work of other chapter committees that are formed. The Chairman also represents the ACYOA Chapter at appropriate functions and conferences.

The Chairman should attend all meetings and functions of the Chapter. The Vice Chairman should be kept informed of all aspects of the chapter to enable him to take the Chairman's place when necessary.

The Chairman should prepare the agenda for the Executive Committee meetings and consult with the President when serious questions arise. He should assist the Executive Committee in preparing the agenda for the Chapter membership meetings. When other committees are formed, the Chairman should select a chairman for the committees - based on that person's ability, expertise and dedication.

The Chairman is responsible for the relationship of the Chapter to the Parish community, the Chapter to other Chapters, and the Chapter to the National Organization - ACYOA Central Council.

The following is a partial list of duties and responsibilities:

1. Upon assuming office, send (or direct the Corresponding Secretary to send) a list of the new Chapter officers with their addresses and phone numbers-to:

Local parish council  
ACYOA Executive Secretary ACYOA Central Council  
ACYOA Regional Committee

2. Arrange with the Pastor for the Service of Installation of Officers. (See later section.)

3. Arrange for a joint meeting of the former and newly elected Executive Committee officers to receive files and records, treasurer's books, as well as ideas and considerations for the upcoming year. Provide for a smooth transition.

4. Understand all requirements and procedures of the Chapter, as well as Central Council requirements and deadlines. An informal meeting with the Pastor and past chairman is helpful.

5. Delegate responsibility to persons who are able to help and are responsible. Direct and supervise committee work and activities.

6. Maintain good administrative practices and keep records in order. Understand protocol and courtesy and ensure its practice.

7. Appoint committees in areas that need development (i.e. membership, religious programming, etc.)

8. Contact the pastor and/or ACYOA Central Council if problems arise that require special attention or assistance. Request visitations from Central Council to explain procedures and requirements.

9. Keep well informed on all current events involving your parish or community, as well as other parish or chapter activities in your region. Plan in advance for all aspects of chapter operations and activities.

10. Keep in touch with the Executive Secretary to the ACYOA and ask for assistance when needed. Request visitations from the Executive Secretary at needed or appropriate times.

### **The Vice Chairman**

The Vice Chairman should have the same qualifications as the Chairman, and maintain an awareness of all chapter operations and procedures in the event that he must represent the Chairman and take over some or all of his duties.

Specific duties include: ability to assume the responsibilities and perform the duties of the Chairman in his absence or in the case of resignation.

It is custom for the Vice Chairman to Chair the Membership Committee, and develop means for recruiting new members, as well as welcome new members and see to it that they are introduced, welcomed and become involved in the chapter.

The Vice Chairman may also be appointed to other committees in varying capacities depending upon areas of expertise and experience.

### **The Recording Secretary**

The Recording Secretary maintains the records of the chapter throughout the year. This includes recording the minutes of meetings, filing reports with the ACYOA Central Council, as well as regards all other pertinent information and records as the "history" of the Chapter.

The Recording Secretary must be reliable, efficient and accurate.

Some of the duties of the Recording Secretary include:

1. To keep brief and accurate minutes of all regular Chapter meetings and Executive Committee meetings, and to read the minutes at the next meeting. (See section on "Sample Minutes".)
2. To take attendance at all meetings and incorporate it in the minutes.
3. To handle all applications for membership. Present, receive and check all applications (in duplicate) with one copy to be kept on file with the Chapter, and the other to be forwarded by the Treasurer to the ACYOA Central Council (together with dues within 30 days after the application is made.)
4. To report at once to the ACYOA Central Council the names of members who have resigned, been expelled or who have not renewed their membership.
5. To preserve all documents of the Chapter, and maintain files. Usually some file space is provided in the parish office for this purpose. Contact the pastor for assistance.
6. To authenticate all documents of the chapter by written signature as Secretary.

7. To bring to each meeting:

- A copy of the ACYOA Constitution
- A list of chapter membership
- A list of all standing and special committees
- The prayer of the ACYOA
- Other pertinent materials

8. Prepare, along with the Chairman and Executive Committee the necessary and required reports for the ACYOA Central Council.

### **The Corresponding Secretary**

The Corresponding Secretary handles the correspondence of the Chapter. This is accomplished in a business-like manner with clarity and neatness. He should be familiar with standard procedures and protocol.

Some of the duties and responsibilities include:

1. To send with proper notice announcements for meetings and activities of the Chapter.
2. Handle all incoming and outgoing correspondence. Maintain a file of both and report to the Chairman when correspondence is received.
3. Send letters of thanks and appreciation to individuals who have assisted the Chapter, participated in, programs, donated time, resources, etc.
4. For any formal or informal occasion, the presence of clergymen, Church official, ACYOA official or other invited guests should be sought through written invitation. This type of correspondence should be done properly and with good taste as it reflects the organization and what it represents. Knowledge of protocol is a must here.
5. All official correspondence requires the use of official ACYOA Chapter stationery.
6. Maintain an accurate and up-to-date mailing list of all Armenian young people within the jurisdiction of the Parish. Consult past records and the pastor for assistance in this very important list. Announcements of upcoming events and activities should be sent to all Armenian young people in the area - not just those who attend regularly, or those who are known, but every one.
7. The Corresponding Secretary's mailing list should include:
  - Chapter President (pastor or parish council chairman)
  - All members
  - All Armenian young people in the area
  - ACYOA Executive Secretary

ACYOA Central Council Regional  
Representative  
ACYOA Central Council Chairman

8. Forward to the Recording Secretary all correspondence for recording and filing purposes.

### **The Treasurer**

The Treasurer handles all the funds of the Chapter. He should be conscientious and careful of details, and especially proficient in financial matters.

Some of the duties and responsibilities include:

1. To collect dues, initiation fees and all other monies pertaining to the chapter.
2. To deposit all monies in a bank designated by the Executive Committee to be kept in the name of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, with your Chapter name preceding the name of the organization.
3. To keep all financial records of the Chapter.
4. To produce up to date financial reports for all meetings, and any other time. which may be necessary. Prepare annual report.
5. Send dues along with copies of membership application forms to the ACYOA Central Council. (Include initiation fees along with application forms for new members.)

### **Publicity Coordinator**

The "Advertising Agent" of the Chapter. This Coordinator is responsible for activities and events advertising.

This is accomplished by designing, printing and sending out circulars, posters, articles and letters. This person should also be the photographer of the chapter and record on film the events and special activities that are sponsored.

The Publicity Coordinator should have basic writing skills and an ability to have the desired information in the hands of the media. (See sections dealing with: - Preparing News Releases - Publicity Directory

It is suggested that:

1. Keep a reference file of all local media for advertising purpose. City and community newspapers usually include sections for local news. Radio stations usually allow nonprofit organizations a "spot" for announcing coming events.

Local businesses with a large of traffic usually have bulletin board displays for community news and happenings.  
(Almost all of the above is free and should be utilized for every event of the chapter.)

Articles should be sent to the Armenian weekly newspapers in order to inform the Armenian Community of upcoming events, as well as publicize the ACYOA Chapter name. These newspapers also include a "Calendar of Events" section – there is a small charge for inclusion here.

2. Ask members to submit articles and information on activities and events.
3. Send all chapter news for inclusion in the parish newsletter.
4. Send Articles and news to the Executive Secretary for inclusion general and special ACYOA articles. (See Chapter Monthly Fact Sheet form.) This will also cover the publication of the Diocese that is sent to all members of the Church in America.
5. Take appropriate photographs of all activities and events and send them along with articles and news releases.

### **The Religious Events Coordinator**

This Coordinator should work with the pastor to present ideas and assist in developing religiously oriented programs and activities. This person should coordinate chapter participation in regional and national activities and events that deal with religious agenda.

Some suggestions:

1. Know the various religious programs offered by the ACYOA and the Diocese and inform the Chapter Executive Committee of the schedule, deadlines, and details.
2. Discuss with the pastor the various religious programs of the parish and how the chapter may assist and participate in their execution, and/or develop new programs for the parish and chapter to participate in.
3. Consider the Church Calendar when planning events and programs (i.e. Easter, Christmas, Assumption, Holy Cross....)

### **The Cultural Coordinator**

The Cultural Coordinator performs along similar lines with the Religious Coordinator. In consultation with the pastor (and Cultural Committee of the parish if there is one), this coordinator suggests and develops programs

and activities keeping in mind Armenian cultural themes.

Some suggestions:

1. Know the various cultural programs offered by the ACYOA and the Diocese and inform the Chapter Executive Committee of the schedule, deadlines and details.
2. Discuss with the pastor the cultural programs of the parish and community. Find out how the chapter may assist and/or develop new programs for the parish and community.
3. Work with the Religious Coordinator as many themes and topics overlap. Try to avoid conflicting schedules.
4. Consider the calendar when planning events. Certain times of the year are appropriate for cultural programs and will be received well.
5. Possible themes and ideas:  
Armenian Christmas customs in the home, Saints Vartanantz Day, Lenten customs, Martyr's Day Commemoration, Lecture/discussion/debate on Armenian subjects, guest speakers, Armenian art exhibit, films, slides and books on Armenia, etc.,

### **The Athletics Coordinator**

The Athletics Coordinator of the Chapter is responsible for the athletic activities and competitions involving the membership. A women's and a men's coordinator may be appointed to handle the various aspects of both.

The coordinators should plan and develop teams, practices, facilities, competitions and tournaments. They should be aware of ACYOA regional and national athletic programs and events.

It is suggested that the chapter become involved with local leagues, and sponsor activities with other chapters. The coordinators should realize that the teams represent the chapter, the ACYOA, and the Church, and should thereby ensure that all participants are worthy representatives.

It is the responsibility of the Athletics Coordinator to understand the various rules and regulations governing leagues, tournaments, and general play to ensure the proper entry of chapter teams and individuals in the ACYOA competitions, as well as other competitions that the chapter may enter.

### **The Advisors**

The Advisors of a chapter may be selected from past Executive Committee members to assist and advise

the chapter. All selections should meet with the approval of the pastor.

The President (pastor) may also appoint advisors who are knowledgeable of the aims and policies of the ACYOA and who may assist the chapter and facilitate operations.

Many times the ACYOA liaison from the Parish Council acts as an advisor as well.

### **The Delegates**

The Delegates of the Chapter represent the Chapter on the National and Regional levels of the Organization. The Delegates must faithfully attend All conferences and assemblies of the Organization wherein the chapter is represented.

Delegates should prepare reports on the conferences and assemblies for the general membership of the chapter, as well as the Executive Committee.

The President and Chapter Chairman are ex-officio delegates of the Chapter.

Other delegates are determined by election. The number of chapter delegates are determined by the number of chapter members. (See Constitution, Article 10 section 2)

### **Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee is regarded as a Standing Committee. This Committee should be composed of at least three members who are out-going friendly, self-starters, and have the capability of convincing others to join and participate in the Chapter. The Committee should make it a point to meet the new people of the parish and invite them to attend functions, events and meetings. They should introduce the new prospective members to the group and assist them in becoming familiar with ACYOA objectives and operations.

One of the most important ways of maintaining a strong membership is for every member to be friendly when new people show up, and to serve without expecting to be served.

Some of the duties of the Membership Committee include:

1. The members of the Membership Committee should thoroughly acquaint themselves with the ACYOA Constitution, especially the sections dealing with "membership", "scope", "objects" and "policies".
2. The Committee must have the addresses of all the members of the chapter as well as all potential members. A complete list of all Armenian youth of the parish should be developed to Assist in this area. This

list should be kept up to date, adding new names as new families move into the area, and deleting those that move away. In addition, the year of birth should always be included in this master list". As young people become of age, they should be added to the list - as well as deleted later on.

3. Keep in touch with the Recording Secretary to know who has been absent from meetings. Those who have been absent should be contacted by telephone to see why they are have not been attending. This information should be given to the Pastor and Chairman.

4. Prospective members should be approached personally by this Committee. Visitations should be made to their homes and special letters of invitation sent.

5. Although certain prospective members may fail to respond and participate, their names should never be deleted from the Chapter mailing list. They should continue to receive all, chapter announcements and meeting notices. We should never give up on anyone.

6. The Membership Committee should meet to discuss means of implementing their programs to solicit new members into the Organization. They should work closely with the Executive Committee and suggest activities and programs that might attract new members.

7. A "Host Team" should be established to see that prospective members are not left alone during ACYOA activities and events. They should introduce new members to the group and try to make-them feel included.

8. The Membership Committee should have at least one annual Membership Drive. During such a Drive, it may be publicized that special events and activities will take place and that all youth of the parish are invited. A special effort must be made to contact all youth and encourage them to attend.

Some suggestions for a Membership Drive include:

- a) Open House - specially arranged program for all members and prospective members. (films, table games, music, food, etc.)
- b) Present awards to those persons who bring it the most new members.
- c) Maintain a recreation room (if parish facilities allow) so that it may be available following meetings.
- d) Display posters, photos of activities and flyers at dances, parish events and other time's when a large number of people from the parish will be present.

e) Attend meetings of the Men's Club, Mr. & Mrs. Club, Women's Guild, etc. and explain about the Membership Drive and ask for names of young people who may be asked to join the Chapter.

f) Plan the Membership Drive to precede the ACYOA Day program and include the new members as invited Guests.

### **Publicity Directory**

See Handbook

### **Preparing for the Annual Chapter Membership Meeting**

During the month of June, the ANNUAL CHAPTER MEMERSHIP MEETING should take place. At a meeting preceding this, two committees should be formed (unless already elected as Standing Committees).

1. NOMINATING COMMITTEE Duties include:

a) To prepare a list of member eligible to be elected to the positions on the Executive Committee of the Chapter, as well as the Delegates.

b) To prepare a list of members as prospective candidates to the ACYOA Central Council, ACYOA Nominating and ACYOA Auditing Committees, with a brief resume on each candidate. This will be presented at the Membership Meeting.

c) To contact prospective nominees to ascertain their availability and willingness to serve as an elected officer.

The success and effectiveness of an ACYOA Chapter depends upon the abilities and dedication of the elected officers. It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to seek out qualified individuals who can best fulfill the duties of the office.

Some of the traits of good leadership are:

- + handles responsibility well
- + has common interests with group
- + works well with people
- + capable of delegating responsibility
- + knows own limitations.
- + can handle leadership demands
- + respects the rights and opinions of others
- + greets new people with a friendly image
- + encourages leadership development in others
- + sets an example for others to follow
- + dedicated to the purpose of the Organization
- + willingness to sacrifice to get the job done properly

Nominees should be experienced with the operations and procedures of the ACYOA.

However, since this is not always possible, nominations should include a blend of experienced and not so experienced individuals.

2. AUDITING COMMITTEE Duties include:

a) To examine and approve the records of the Treasury of the Chapter.

Meetings should be arranged accordingly.

b) To report to the Annual Chapter Membership Meeting and opinion of the Financial status of the Treasury.

### 3. NOTICES

Notices for the Annual Chapter Membership Meeting should be sent out to all members two weeks in advance of the date set. The purpose and agenda should be included in the notice.

### 4. PREPARATIONS

Materials for the meeting should be prepared. They include: ballots for voting, chalk-board, handouts, copies of the prayer of the ACYOA and any other pertinent materials.

### SUGGESTED AGENDA

I. Opening Prayer (the prayer of the ACYOA). All  
II. Roll Call to establish quorum. Recording Secretary  
III. Minutes of Previous Annual Membership Meeting.  
Recording Secretary

IV. Report on the Treasury of the Chapter with recommendations. Treasurer

V. Address or Remarks. President

VI. Clear up any Old Business. Chairman

VII. New Business:

a) Election of Executive Committee Officers  
Nominating Committee

b) Approval of proposed candidates to the ACYOA  
Central Council, ACYOA Nominating & Auditing  
Committees

c) Election of any Chapter Standing Committees

d) Presenting of Annual Reports-

1- Financial Statement

2- Members of the Chapter

3- Other committees

e) Presenting of Proposals:

1- Chapter By-Laws

2- ACYOA Constitution (upon approval, to be  
Auditing Committee

Treasurer and Recording  
Secretary

sent to the ACYOA Central Council for consideration at  
the ACYOA, General Assembly)

3- Other

f) Any Other New Business

VIII. Adjournment. Chairman

IX. Closing Prayer The Lord's Prayer, and final  
blessing -by attending clergyman

(NOTE: It is highly suggested that the fundamental forms of parliamentary procedure be employed at this (and most) meeting. This will allow for the due process to be accomplished without wasting time.)

### Suggestions and ideas

The following are some suggestions and ideas for Chapter Chairmen and Executive committees

#### Meetings

Determine a favorable day and time for Chapter meetings. Consistency helps in good attendance. (i.e. Regular Chapter meetings are held on the 2nd Sunday evening of the month.)

Do not Conflict with other parish or community functions. Consider the calendar and work around holidays and other event-filled times of the year.

Give members and guests plenty of notice of upcoming meetings or gatherings.

Unless the circumstances are unusual, there is no need for more than 2 major chapter meetings per month. The meetings should last no more than one hour and start at the scheduled time.

Following the meeting, some type of program, function, excursion should take place. (social, educational, athletic/recreational, etc.) The members should become accustomed to attending meetings and participating in the planned activity that follows it.

Executive Committee meetings should always take place before the regular chapter meeting - usually the week before is the custom.

Executive Committee meetings should handle the bulk of the "business" that will be discussed at the regular chapter meeting. In this way, the regular meeting does not become bogged down with details, and the Executive Committee can be more efficient and effective.

Be sure that appointed committees are, meeting/working between Chapter meetings preparing to present reports and information on their work.

All meetings should follow basic forms of 'parliamentary procedure.

(See section on accepted rules of parliamentary procedure for the ACYOA.)

In doing so, meetings progress at a comfortable pace and control can be maintained. Many times discussion becomes totally off the original subject and much time is wasted. Parliamentary procedure in the ACYOA, is a good introduction to the forms of carrying on business in other areas of work, organizations, and in the upper levels of the Church itself.

All meetings should also follow a rudimentary form of agenda:

- 1- Opening prayer
- 2- Roll call
- 3- Minutes of previous meeting
- 4- Treasurer's report
- 5- Correspondence
- 6- Other officer's reports
- 7- Committee Chairmen s reports
- 8- Old business
- 9- New business
- 10- Announcements
- 11- Adjournment
- 12- Closing prayer

Keep order from beginning to end allow only enough discussion to handle pertinent aspects of the topic. Too much discussion and/or disorder and the meeting will last too long and the members will become restless and less likely to attend regularly.

No one likes long meetings - let the Chapter Executive Committee, or appointed committee itte4 handle the details.

Handle "big talkers" who monopolize meetings by:

- giving them responsibility.
- ask direct questions to other members.
- allow them two minutes to speak their mind.

Don't always ask for volunteers - appoint. Seek out and observe individuals to notice who performs and handles responsibility well.

The chairman (of the chapter or of any committee) should never publicly criticize other committee members, as dissatisfaction means replacement not criticism.

Plan meetings well with activities planned for the entire group afterward. Proposals and new ideas for events and fundraisers should always be coming up to keep

the spirit of the members high and ,motivated. It is suggested that a reachable and realistic goal be set for the year so that the members will know what the entire chapter is going toward. Social interaction on the part of all the members is another important element in successful chapters. If the members enjoy each others company and coming together is something that they all look forward to, then meetings and functions will always have good attendance and committee work will be easy and fun.

### **Inter-Chapter Activities**

If the geography allows, chapters should plan activities whereat the members of two or several chapters come together to participate in an organized program.

Educational programs, socials, beach parties, recreational outings, athletic events and competitions, religious programs, cultural days, evenings on the town, picnics, are all part of this very good aspect of the ACYOA Chapter.

Meeting with other members, exchanging ideas and concerns, having fun and meeting new friends can help in motivating a group to increase its activity as well as its membership.

Inter-chapter activities should be well planned and announced with plenty of notice to all members. Host chapters should be considerate of chapters that travel a long distance and providing refreshments while preparing for the planned events. The Pastors of the parishes should also be invited to join the groups when trips and activities of this type are scheduled.

### **Programming**

Effective and attractive programming for a chapter is difficult. When deciding on the types of programs that should be offered, the membership must be taken into consideration. However, successful chapters have always maintained a balanced schedule of programs - something for everyone. We cannot expect everyone to attend all programs that are offered. Therefore, a variety of programs ranging from serious discussions to relaxing tavloo tournaments should be considered by the chapter.

Resources within the parish and community should always be tapped. Search out individuals with special talents and form a committee to present interesting programs for the membership.

Here are some suggestions:

- slide programs on Armenia
- discussions and debates on controversial topics as well as lectures on divorce, the draft, celibacy, sex,

inter-marriage, abortion, language used in Church Services, women priests, structured religion, segments of Armenian history, the Bible, "born-again Christians", modern miracles, etc., trips to points of interest in the area

- pilgrimage to the Diocesan Cathedral
- organizing athletic teams to participate in local leagues And ACYOA tournaments
- understanding the Church Services
- participation in Church Services
- conversational Armenian language "mini-lessons"
- Armenian cooking sessions
- visiting the Armenian elderly
- participating in local ethnic festivals

.....and there are countless other topics to choose from.

Keep in mind the programs that are offered by the ACYOA on the regional and national levels. Participation by the chapter in these offered programs indicates an awareness and support of the National Organization and is included when considering a

### **SUGGESTIONS ON THINGS TO DO**

The ACYOA has an important role in the Diocese. It is the chief vehicle through which the youth of the Armenian Church grow, relate, experience and mature. It may determine how involved, and uninvolved, a person may be when they reach adulthood and begin a family of their own.

Some basic things should be understood when scheduling activities and deciding on programs and projects for the Chapter.

1. Every member should understand why the group is called the Armenian CHURCH Youth Organization of America. This is important in giving the group its basic orientation.
2. The Chapter should recognize the needs around it - in the parish and community.
3. The Membership should want, (in varying degrees) to respond to these needs.
4. The most efficient method of responding as a group is through organization.
5. Every member must be committed to doing the work involved in accomplishing the task and moving toward completion of the project.
6. Through working together, accomplishing tasks, inter-relating and completing designed projects, the

entire group should discover an underlying meaning to the whole meaning of the ACYOA and its purpose in the Church. In this way we are sensitized and made aware of our roles, individually, in the Church, and specifically, in the parish the family of the faithful.

### **SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

Many times, in our quest to build up a treasury, or accomplish mechanical tasks, we forget that we can be of service to the parish and community. Moreover, we should be of service and gladly serve the Church in whatever way possible.

Here are some examples of what the Chapter can do:  
**SERVICE IN THE PARISH PROGRAM AND AROUND THE PARISH CHURCH BUILDING**

- General clean up
- Yard work/landscaping
- Fix-up and repair
- Office related work
- Regular maintenance
- Painting
- Nursery/child care
- Ushering/assist Parish Council
- Mass-mailings assistance
- What else can you think of?

**SERVICE TO MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH AND PARISH COMMUNITY**

- Emergency housekeeping
- Child care
- Yard work
- Friendship calls
- Visitation to sick, shut-in, etc.
- Provide transportation to Services Welcome wagon for new families
- What else can you think of ???

**SERVICE THROUGH COMMUNITY AGENCIES**

- Nursing Homes
- Programs for the elderly
- Hospitals Programs for children
- Retirement homes
- Meals-on-wheels programs
- Red Cross Activities
- What else can you think of?

**-Service In Social AREAS**

- church School
- teachers assistants
- choir singers/musicians
- Cultural Committee
- Counseling Programs

Armenian Language School teachers/assistants

Altar servers  
Religious Education Committee  
What else can you think of?

## WHAT ABOUT RECREATION AND ATHLETICS

No ACYOA Chapter is complete without its recreation and athletic programs. Some people think you need large numbers of athletes, or At least interested persons, to form teams for ACYOA sponsored tournaments. This is not true. Who ever is interested in coming together to represent the parish and the ACYOA Chapter is sufficient - simply go with what you have.

All Chapters should seriously look into local leagues - such as:

Basketball Volleyball  
Softball Bowling  
Aquatics Gymnastics

Where possible, Chapters should get together with other Chapters and develop inter Chapter competition in Tavloo, chess, checkers, table-tennis, etc., in addition to team oriented sports.

Be imaginative!

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE A MUST

One of the best ways for a Chapter to serve the parish, as well as be visible and show the serious side of ACYOA, is to sponsor, organize and produce educational programs for the parish. These can be highly successful if handled in the right way, utilizing the right resources.

Although in its initial stages, ACYOA Audio-Visual Educational Programs should be presented by the Chapter to the parish at appropriate times of the year. These programs will deal with religious and cultural topics which may be used to initiate discussion and dialogue. In addition, local College and University Libraries house many educational programs and films, as well as other religious centers. Chapters should work closely with the Pastor in arriving at appropriate topics, themes and materials to be used.

Specific programs for the Children of the parish is also important. Organizing field trips to museums, points of interest, other Armenian Churches, ball games, etc. increase the amount of interaction between bur Armenian young people thus helping in the development of friendships and lasting relationships. This is an important aspect of the parish life that is often overlooked. The results from these labors is a closer-knit "family of the faithful - which can only serve

to strengthen the parish and maintain a bright and active future for the Church.

## BUDGETING

The average ACYOA Chapter does not operate with an established budget. We realize that in most parishes, the ACYOA Chapter offers programs and activities for its members more or less on a day to day, month to month basis. Therefore, budgets are not always practical. However, it is recommended that all chapters work out some form of a budget for the year, itemizing at least those operations that will be used. (i.e. postage - everyone has postage expenses, or the guaranteed annual events, etc...

Budgeting should be used in all events, no matter how small we may think they are.

Budgeting, or the use of budgets, simply means that a set amount of money (or time, or any measurable amount of something) is determined for a specific known item.

For example: The Chapter decides that they will sponsor and educational program with a guest speaker. They make up a list of known items that will be needed to sponsor the program: Total --\$220.00 allotted.

guest speaker 75.00 honorarium  
announcements/flyers 40.00 paper and printing  
postage 20.00 bulk mail  
refreshments 25.00 coffee, pastry...  
hall rental 60.00 3 hours 20.00 per hour

It is now up to the Chairman and Committee of this event to work within these amounts to put on the educational program.

For example, they would like to have Dr. Hagop Hagopian as their speaker. But Dr. Hagop requires an honorarium of 100.00. To stay within the prescribed budgetary limits prevents them from inviting Dr. Hagop to speak. Perhaps they can get the paper and printing for the announcements donated and thus save 40.00. They may then stay within their over-all budget and still invite Dr. Hagopian.

What is important to note here is that a learning Process is taking place.. In almost all aspects of our society, budgets are used to govern the ways in which the programs and activities take place. In the Church (parish), budgets are set every year at the annual parish assembly. The budget is used by the parish council as a spending guide for the coming year. It tells the parish council where money should be spent and how much. In the ACYOA, the national budget is

determined at the annual General Assembly. The budget is determined by the delegates from all the chapters of the Diocese, which serves as a guide for the ACYOA Central Council during the year.

A budget is not a set of rules, rather it is a predetermined guide that helps the committee members in planning the activities and events. Budgets can be used for small activities, such as parties, lectures, field trips, as well as large scale events, such as annual dances, banquets, educational series, regional and national events, etc.

As an Organization, we should try to increase our efficiency and methods of operation. Budgets, and their proper implementation, is a step in the right direction in making bur ACYOA a fun-filled learning experience as we prepare to participate in the leadership and participatory roles in our-parishes, and the Church at large.

### **ACTIVITY OR EVENT REPORT**

All organizations have "reports" of-one form or another. In the ACYOA, we have tried to minimize the number of required reports, especially on the local level.

However, the last part of an activity or event comes when the final report is filed with the Chapter '(or parish). Many times the activities of a chapter are so simple that filing a report seems almost a waste of time. But reports are very helpful to reference and determine if the activity or event is worth trying again.

On the national and regional levels of the ACYOA, reports are required to be filed with ACYOA Central Council within a reasonable length of time following the event. 'For example, a chapter that hosts the National Sports Weekend should file their final report with the ACYOA Central Council within 60 days. Although this is a long period of time, the event calls for many reports from the various committees, and requires a careful compilation of materials used and recommendations for next year. This report is very important to the next host of the National Sports Weekend. Another example would be a Regional ACYOA Anniversary Ball.

On the local level, reports should include the following:

1. Name and description of activity or - event.
2. Name of Chairman and Committee members.
3. Names of subcommittees, their chairmen and committee members.
4. Individual sub-committee reports.
5. Breakdown of the following:

- a) people and places contacted
- b) items and materials needed

c) subcommittee recommendations,

6. General Financial Report:

- a) income
- b) expenses
- c) gross and net profits
- d) unusual income or expense
- e) donations

7. A complete critique by the chairman of the activity or event.

8. Recommendations by the chairman.

9. Photographs.

10. News release.

11. Examples of all flyers, major correspondence and other "exhibits".

The report should' be filed in dossier form and contain all announcements printed in newspapers, flyers sent out, etc.

**THE OFFICIAL PRAYER OF THE ARMENIAN  
CHURCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA**

O Lord our Savior Jesus Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, give us, the youth of the Church of Armenia, we beseech You, the wisdom to know, to love, and serve You in our personal lives severally, and in the corporate life of our Organization.

You that lead men in the way, lead us, Your children, that we may be able to serve the Church through our people, with courage and vision, and in the faith of our illustrious forefathers. Inspire us, O Lord, and open our eyes to Your light, that we may cherish and profit by the heritage which our forefathers have left to us, and that we may be aware of our responsibilities as citizens of our beloved country, the United States of America (or Canada).

Fill us, O Christ our God, with Your Holy Spirit, that we may be the obedient and unselfish servants of the will of our Heavenly Father, to Whom, together with You and the Holy Spirit, is befitting Glory, Dominion and Honor, now and always and unto the ages of ages. AMEN.

#### **THE PLEDGE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA**

"I solemnly promise and declare upon my honor, that as a member of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, I shall, to the best of my ability, be a faithful son of the Armenian Church; shall be a devoted upholder of the Armenian cultural heritage; shall be a loyal citizen of the United States; and I shall diligently abide by the objects, policies and decisions of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America. I shall not strive for personal recognition and pleasure, but will serve our Church, our community, and our country, for the greater glory of God"

#### **THE EMBLEM**

The Emblem of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, adopted at its inception, is interpreted as follows:

The Cross marks the true character of the ACYOA. The radiations behind the Cross symbolize the truths of Christianity that shine forth through the centuries.

Under the horizontal bar of the Cross are:

(on the right) The double peaks of Mount Ararat, representing the Armenian people and its destiny. Mount Ararat has been the silent witness of the victories and defeats of the Armenians through their existence as a people and a nation. Its representation here means that the members of the Organization make the pledge of standing for the ideals for which the Armenian nation has always stood.

(On the left) The United States Eagle with its wings wide-spread and a star above each wing. The eagle looks proudly into the distance, and holds a batch of arrows. The eagle represents the United States of America. Its presence on the ACYOA Emblem symbolized the loyalty of the members of the Organization to the Constitution of the United States and its principles of democracy and freedom.

The Chain that encircles the Cross represents solidarity among the members of the ACYOA in their service to God and to people.

These symbols are designed on a shield which stands for the determination with which the objects of the ACYOA are to be carried out. The shield also stands for defense against dangerous encroachments.

It will be noted that the dominating feature on the Emblem is the Cross. This indicate the fact that Christ is our Lord, and that to Him we owe obedience above all.