



2023 TOPICS

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (DRE)
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA



SENIOR DIVISION

(GRADES 10-12)



TOPIC 1

The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople is the highest seat and the Mother Church of Orthodox Christians. The Ecumenical Patriarch is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. Discuss how the Patriarchate has been a symbol of unity, a source of missionary growth, an advocate of dialogue among Christians, and a defender of the historical Orthodox Faith.

TOPIC 2

During times of crisis, our faith is tested. How are Orthodox Christians taught to understand and manage pain and suffering?

TOPIC 3

The Christian message in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* has influenced many believers of Christ. How has another work of fiction inspired people to seek Jesus Christ?

TOPIC 4

We have lived through a pandemic and emerged with deep societal divides. How can our faith in Christ heal us and take us forward together?

TOPIC 5

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ both transforms the relationship between God and humanity and alters the course of history. How would you explain its significance to someone who has not heard about it or is unsure if God exists?



JUNIOR DIVISION

(GRADES 7-9)



TOPIC 1

Orthodox tradition teaches that the saints remain spiritually active beyond their earthly life. Discuss how we ask the Saints to intercede and pray for us and why.

TOPIC 2

Orthodox Christians honor the Virgin Mary, the Most Holy Theotokos. What does the Orthodox Church believe about her and her role in our salvation?

TOPIC 3

The sacraments are the mysteries of the Church through which God gives us His grace by actions, words, and material objects (for example, oil, wine, and bread). Pick one sacrament and explain its meaning.

TOPIC 4

Jesus models and teaches humility throughout His life and ministry. Discuss the challenges of living according to Jesus' teachings in a society that does not necessarily emphasize humility.

TOPIC 5

Consider and discuss why and how icons are central to our faith and Orthodox practice.

