

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Starter Kit

*Helping you
get your OCF
off to a great
year!*



Orthodox Christian Fellowships are the official campus ministry effort of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA)

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OCF Starter Kit

Introduction

Hi! If you're reading this, you are interested in Orthodox Christian Fellowships (OCFs) on college and university campuses. Maybe you want to know more about them. Maybe it's time to start a *new year* for your OCF. Maybe you want to start a *new* OCF. Regardless of which situation you are in, the **OCF Starter Kit** is for you!

OCFs have been called “life-lines” for college students, providing them with opportunities to stay connected with and grow in the Faith. They also act as “mission centers” allowing members to share their faith with people who are not Orthodox Christians. In order to provide guidance for these groups, the Young Adult Ministry Directors from various Orthodox jurisdictions have come together to create this tool for you.

The **OCF Starter Kit** provides simple, easy-to-follow steps to help you start or restart an Orthodox Christian Fellowship. The techniques in this kit can be used by students, clergy, or any interested person and are based upon techniques used and developed by successful OCF groups across North America.

OK! So before you roll-up your sleeves and start trying to do step one, take a little time and read through the entire *Starter Kit*. You will probably find that you will have to tackle more than one step at a time or perhaps in a different order. Make yourself familiar with the entire process so that you can get things done faster and easier.

God bless you in your efforts!

DOCUMENT FORMAT

Sample Page

Spiritual Reflections:

A passage from the Bible, the Fathers, or some thoughts to provide you with some spiritual reassurance and vision as you work on each step in your planning.

Suggestions

These notes include ideas, hints, and warnings about situations that commonly arise during planning.

Evaluation Check-lists:

These help you determine if you have accomplished the necessary steps in the section.

Be careful, however, not to think of these as “commandments.” Your situation will determine the actions you need to take and which outcomes apply.

HOW TO USE THE OCF STARTER KIT

While the Starter Kit does have a specific order to it, you may find that you will need to jump around a bit to get things accomplished faster.

Each section has a number of areas to help you as you work. Each area is designated by a specific symbol and/or style or box.

The sections are presented on this page as they appear in the remainder of the Starter Kit.



Key Ideas: These describe core concepts about Orthodox Christian Fellowships.

Make yourself familiar with these symbols since they will help you go through the Starter Kit.



Worksheet/Appendices

These are directions to turn to various worksheets at the end of the Starter Kit.

At the end of the Starter Kit there are also a number of Appendices with helpful information such as a sample OCF constitution, a FAQ sheet, contact information for Church-wide offices, and ideas for activities.

DEFINING YOUR VISION

✠ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

(John 1:1-3)

“IF YOU DON’T HAVE A VISION YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE ACHIEVED.”

Before starting, it is essential that you know what you are hoping to create and accomplish. Without a vision — or more accurately, a vision based upon God — it is easy to become quickly discouraged.



What is an Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)?

An OCF is a group of people on a university or college campus who come together for fellowship, to learn more about the Orthodox Christian Faith, to worship God, and to serve Him and His creation out of love.

To understand how an OCF should function, you can also break it down another way:

Orthodox: Defined as “true belief” or “true glory,” all things connected to the Orthodox Christian Church strive to witness to the Truth in every part of life.

Christian: For the Orthodox Christian the Truth is not an abstract or intellectual concept. It is found in the person of Jesus Christ, by Whom we identify ourselves. It is He Who reveals and demonstrates the realities of life to us.

Fellowship: Orthodox Christians understand that no one can acquire the Truth of Christ by strictly intellectual means. It is found and experienced by developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as He reveals Himself in and through His Church. This is a communal endeavor where our relationships with others (both inside and outside the church) become our “training ground.”

OCFs are the official campus ministry effort of (SCOBA) the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas.



By becoming involved with the OCF movement you will have a great opportunity not only to meet other Orthodox Christians, have fun, learn new things, and help others; you will also have an incredible opportunity to explore your own spiritual life and grow closer to Jesus Christ. Your own spiritual state will influence how you handle both the gifts and challenges of leading an OCF.

Through it all remember what you are doing involves God, Himself. “Without Him nothing was made that was made.” Any success you will have will be because you began and ended with Him.

What do I want?

While all OCFs have certain common goals, it is important for you to consider your own reasons for starting an OCF. Take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Be honest with yourself. There are no right or wrong answers.

Do yourself a favor. Write down your answers to force yourself to be clear.

- * What are some reasons I want to start an OCF?

- * What will be the advantages of starting an OCF?

- * What challenges might I face?

✠ In the Gospel according to St. John Jesus also says, “A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another just as I have loved you.” (John 13:34)

This must be the basis for everything you do.

Afraid you don't have what it takes?

There are three pre-requisites for starting an OCF:

1. A deep sense of **helplessness**: This is a big task. You'll never get it done without help — from God and from others.
2. A real **willingness** to spend time with college students of all kinds, not just those similar to you.
3. A belief in the **importance** of what you are trying to do. OCFs are ways Christ and His Church reach out to people on campuses across North America. By working with the OCF you will be part of God's plan for His creation and will have Him to guide you and give you strength as you go.

So how did you do? Feel a little better?



Go to Worksheet 1: [Visions, Goals, and Objectives](#)

☒ Evaluation Check-list:

- ☐ I know my personal motivations for starting an OCF.
- ☐ I have identified some initial challenges that I will face starting an OCF.
- ☐ I have an underlying vision directing my actions and the actions of those working with me to start an OCF.