

SUPPORT: FINDING HELP

✚ I am with you always, to the close of the age.
(Matthew 28:20)

The SCOBA OCF Movement

The first thing you should realize is: *YOU ARE NOT ALONE!* According to Christ's own promise we can be confident that He will be with us always.

In addition, for decades the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) has blessed the OCF movement as a part of the Church's mission here in North America. You are a part of an ever growing group of people from across North America who are dedicated to this ministry.

Time to Discover Your Support Network

Bottom line is, there are people who can help you. In fact, as the scripture says, you can't do it alone. If anyone is to accomplish anything in Christ's name, he or she must do it with other members of the Church, His Body here on earth.

So who are the other people who can join you in this ministry?

1. The leaders and starters of other OCFs across North America
2. The North American OCF Office
3. North American and National Young Adult Ministry Offices
4. Dedicated priests and lay people in nearby parishes.
5. Orthodox Christian faculty on campus
6. Other Orthodox students on campus

While the accessibility to Orthodox clergy and parish communities varies from school to school, no matter where you are there are places you can find help.



OCFs are some of the Church's most successful Inter-Orthodox efforts in North America. This is because they — by necessity — draw people from all Orthodox Christian jurisdictions regardless of ethnic background.

OCFs bring together Orthodox Christian Americans, Canadians, Russians, Romanians, Greeks, Antiochians, Serbians, Albanians, and Bulgarians (to name just a few) from across this continent and from throughout the world.

This means that there are probably a lot more potential OCF members than you may have been thinking!



Go to Appendix 1: [The North American OCF Resources Directory](#) can help you locate nearby Orthodox communities, contacts from successful OCFs across North America, and Church-wide OCF/Young Adult contacts.

At this point, you probably will have a tough time finding everything you need, but you should be able to identify enough people to get started.



LOOKING FOR ORTHODOX FACULTY

Two great places to start are the language departments and the cultural studies departments. Be open, however, to the fact that the only Orthodox faculty member might be the physics professor or one of the coaches.

LOOKING FOR ORTHODOX STUDENTS

In addition to posting flyers and asking the Chaplain's Office (if your school has one) or the Admissions Office (if your school provides a place to indicate their religious affiliation), a couple of other great places are cultural clubs and Christian groups on campus.

Finding Support

Having checked out the North American OCF Resources, your next step is to contact one of the North American Offices in appendix one about what you are trying to do.

After that, start contacting the clergy from nearby parishes as well as asking around school about any faculty who are Orthodox or who are interested in the Orthodox Church and might be willing to help out with an OCF. This is an important step when you go to register the OCF with the school administration.

In addition, you will want to begin talking to other students about what you are trying to do.



Start filling out the following worksheets:

- Worksheet 2: [Parish Listings](#)
- Worksheet 3: [Parish Contacts](#)
- Worksheet 4: [Campus Contacts](#)

Wondering what to say?

If you have clearly identified your goals for the OCF in the first section of this Starter Kit, you already know what you are trying to accomplish and how to articulate it. Use this when you are talking to others about becoming involved.

When you contact people, especially clergy and interested lay people, here are some questions to keep in mind.

- What kind of involvement do these people seem to be willing to offer?
- What interaction have they had with the campus community in the past?
- Have there been or are there any OCFs in this area?
- Have they ever had or do they know people in the area who have had experience with OCFs.

Building an OCF Team

Running an OCF effectively and efficiently takes a lot of time — something of which most college students don't have.

It is crucial that you start thinking about setting up a team of people that will help the OCF function effectively and efficiently. If you try to do it all yourself (though it may seem easier at times) you will quickly start losing track of things, frustrate your membership, and burn yourself out. Building a team will also help ensure that there are others to take over the leadership of the OCF when you graduate or can't be involved for a period of time because of your personal or academic life.

While it may take you a while before you are able to fully establish the team, keep it in mind as you go. It is also a great way to break down what tasks need to be done.



Officers and the OCF Team

When forming groups such as these and discussing how to run the group, people usually think in terms of "officers."

While understanding the need for these roles in organized groups, the *OCF Team Approach* includes other responsibilities that can be managed by either officers or willing volunteers.

As you talk to people and begin to determine their level of interest and the areas in which they want to help, be careful not to use them only as "tools" to build the OCF. Your main interest in them should be as persons created in God's image with whom you hope to develop a friendship.

One of your goals in section one was probably about meeting new people and forming lasting friendships. Don't forget this as you plan.

In the end, the greatest rewards you will receive from your efforts with the OCF movement will be all the people you will meet and the things you were able to do together, not just with the people who had similar interests as you.



It is highly suggested at this stage to find one or more persons who can help you and eventually be part of a larger team to plan and run the OCF. These people (clergy, faculty, and fellow students) are invaluable sources of support physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Go through the exercises in section one with them so that you all can agree on a common vision. Make sure, as well, that they are aware of the contacts you have been able to make.



The OCF Team

The following list is presented to give you an idea of the kind of tasks and support that are involved in keeping an OCF up and running. Creating a team is a goal to have for the end of the school year to help you move more smoothly into next year. It is *not* a goal for your first meeting.

- **OCF Coordinator/President:** Someone to facilitate meetings, follow-up on assigned tasks, and to serve as the main contact person for the OCF both on and off campus.
- **Treasurer:** Someone who manages OCF funds and costs.
- **Secretary:** Someone to record what is accomplished at meetings.
- **Communications Manager:** Someone to keep members informed of events and group news through newsletters, web pages, e-mail lists, phone trees, and campus publications.
- **Contacts Manager:** Someone who maintains a database of all OCF contact information for use by the communications person.
- **Calendar Coordinator:** Someone to maintain an up-to-date list of campus activities and events as well as group activities to avoid potential conflicts.
- **Food Coordinator:** Someone to coordinate the food at all events — a very important position!
- **Event Coordinator:** Someone to plan, host, or facilitate a specific event. This could and should change from event to event.
- **Resource Persons:** Persons who coordinate, lead, and help with activities based upon their interest and ability.

Remember! Do not try to finish forming this team in order to get things going. This is a process which the OCF, itself, will have to be part of to create the most effective team for its needs.

☒ **Evaluation Check-list:**

- ☐ I am aware of the OCF resources available to help me.
- ☐ I have made a list of all the nearby Orthodox parishes.
- ☐ I have identified and contacted people both on campus and off who can offer help and support in starting the OCF.
- ☐ I have created a directory with names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of these people so that I can refer to this information easily and share it with others.

WORKING WITH THE CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION/COMMUNITY

✚ "Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription — to the unknown God. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.'

(Acts 17:22-23)

REGIONAL OCFs

While most OCFs serve a single college or university community, sometimes Orthodox Christian students from a variety of schools in an area choose to function regionally.

In these situations it is extremely important to connect the OCF with a specific parish or an Orthodox clergy brotherhood and identify a clergy advisor.

As this type of group grows it is encouraged to form individual OCFs on their respective campuses in order to increase the visibility of the Orthodox Church in the area as well as benefit from the perks of being an on-campus group.

Connecting with the Campus Community

Like Athens during the time of St. Paul, centers of learning have always been hotbeds of philosophic debate and religious pluralism. This, in fact, makes them very fertile (though not always easy) environments to preach the Gospel.

This section will take you through all the "why's" and "how's" of working with the campus administration, particularly the Office of Student Life or equivalent. Like Section Two, it will direct you to investigate local resources.

Why Register on Campus?

You may be asking yourself, "Why bother with all the bureaucratic red tape? It's only going to slow me down." It is true that this does take some time. You will find, however, that there are many benefits for registering on campus.

1. Many schools only allow registered groups to advertise on campus or in school publications.
2. Registered groups are often allocated a certain amount of school money to help them with their activities.
3. Registering on campus gives you the ability to use certain school facilities for meetings and other activities.
4. Registering on campus can give you the ability to have a booth at freshman orientation for you to promote your group.
5. Many schools offer to registered groups a mailbox, web space, and e-mail address. This way you don't have to change contact information every time you change leadership.

The requirements may seem silly and the process difficult, but registering your OCF on campus will dramatically increase its visibility and provide resources to help it realize its goals.