



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church  
Sarasota, FL**

**2016-2017**

**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

**Mission (Ministry vs Club)**

The parish priest (Father John Bociu) is responsible for the spiritual well-being of the entire parish. St. Barbara's is a Christ-centered place where parents and their children are welcomed and our young people can develop their self-identity as Orthodox Christians. GOYA is a way for our Church youth to come together in Christian Fellowship. GOYA is a part of Father John's overall ministry.

The mission and goal of GOYA ministry is to lead our young people into experiencing the Holy Orthodox Faith. ***It is not an organization or club but rather a ministry of the Church.*** By developing a personal relationship with Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ and becoming active sacramental members of the living Church, our young people will be equipped with tools necessary to assist them in their journey toward salvation. These young people will undoubtedly one day become parish counsel members, Sunday School teachers, and stewards of the church. ***Friends Forever, Orthodox for Life!***

GOYA activities are meant to be focused events in which teens will have the opportunity to learn about the Orthodox Church, interact with other GOYAns, and help prepare them for success in adulthood. ***This is critical for resilience in their physical and spiritual growth.***

The National Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries recommends that GOYA Ministry be based on 4 characteristics: ***Worship, Fellowship, Service (Diakonia), and Witness.*** All GOYA participants must register by filling out the registration forms every year. A medical and waiver form along with GOYA Rules of Conduct must be filled out completely and signed by a parent or guardian.

**Eligibility**

GOYA ministers to teenagers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (7th to 12th grades).

**GOYA Leaders (Officers)**

GOYAns interested in holding office are encouraged to apply for positions of leadership as defined by the GOYA Advisors. In general, the application process should explore why they want to serve, what talents they have to offer, and how their Orthodox Faith impacts their life (inside and outside the church). The GOYA Advisors, in consultation with Father John, shall decide the manner of selection and may also make special appointments as necessary to further the ministry's goal.



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

**Theme/Orthodox Instruction**

This year's theme is: "Maintaining Orthodox Identity." We will cover the Eastern Orthodox understanding of our Christian faith with special emphasis on the Nicene and Chalcedon Creeds. There will also include discussions and other presentations with Father John about our faith.

A recent study indicates that **6 out of 10 college students leave the Orthodox faith** and over **50% see no value in attending church regularly**. See: <http://myocn.net/orthodox-campus-ministry-is-it-time-for-change/>

**GOYA Advisors**

Under the direction of the parish priest, the GOYA advisors are responsible for planning and carrying out all activities. The lead advisor oversees the delegation of responsibilities and coordinated efforts of the GOYA Leadership Team.

**Guest Speakers – Career Awareness**

The format of GOYA monthly meetings incorporates a different guest speaker from a variety of professions who, in most cases, are also Orthodox Christians. Our goal is to promote GOYA awareness on which areas of study offer the most job opportunities for students looking for a fiscally sound post-college life.

**Good Standing**

***GOYAns are required to attend at least 2/3 of the GOYA meetings in order to have "good standing" status*** (with exception of special circumstances submitted in writing and approved by the Father John). Unless noted otherwise, regular GOYA meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month (6pm-8:30pm). ***GOYAns are also required to volunteer at least four (4) hours during the annual GLENDI festival as directed by the lead GOYA advisor.*** This is part of GOYA fellowship. If these requirements are not met, any board member may be removed and an alternate appointed by the GOYA advisors.

GOYAns must be in "good standing" in order to receive full GOYA-sponsorship to help defray the financial costs for participation in GOYA events such as the Diakonia Summer Camp and Tampa-area GOYA retreats. Full sponsorship does not guarantee that there will be no costs to you. It is your responsibility to comply with the requirements of GOYA for any possible reimbursement (full, partial, or otherwise specified). Your obligation to pay for any registration costs/fees is not contingent upon receiving any reimbursement from GOYA. In the event of a cancellation for an event that GOYA has already provided a subsidy for, you agree to reimburse GOYA for the full amount of such. Any related cancellation fees are also your responsibility.



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

**Oratorical Festival**

All GOYAnS are strongly encouraged to participate at least once as a member of GOYA. The St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith. Public speaking skills are ranked number one among the skill sets of professionals. Other guiding factors for developing public speaking skills include: Discovering an important component of leadership development; Increasing self-esteem, self confidence, and ability to accept feedback; and Expanding skills for planning, preparation and performance.

**St Nicholas Cathedral Epiphany Celebration (Cross Dive)**

All GOYAnS are strongly encouraged to participate at least once as a member of GOYA (subject to cross dive eligibility requirements).

**Letters of Good Standing**

GOYAnS may request a letter of good standing from the Lead GOYA Advisor, which includes their year of participation and current status. To request a letter of good standing, please send an email with the reason to: [SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com](mailto:SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com). Please allow 5-10 days for the request to be processed. If you need the letter addressed to a particular person/organization, please specify such.

**Note:** A GOYA letter of good standing shall not in any way be considered a letter of good standing for purposes of serving as sponsors of baptisms and weddings. Such a letter is available directly from the Church office.

**Parental Expectations**

Please take into consideration that GOYA advisors are volunteers and put their *free time and lots of energy* into the ministry in order to assure that our children are able to participate in events. ***It is a tremendous undertaking!***

**Parents are the “holy grail” in terms of influencing their child’s participation in the life of the Church. GOYA starts with you.** Our kids need to see us pray, and they need to see us make Church a priority. And what if they tell you they don’t want to go? Go anyway. You’re the parent! Kids need structure, and *they need to see you as an example of someone who strives to put God first, before everything else.*

Please understand that our youth are learning by our example and we should ALWAYS try to act accordingly. “Behold how good and pleasing it is when brothers dwell in unity.” (Psalm 133:1).



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

**Gossip and idle talk are distractions.** Anger, bitterness, and resentments lead to a host of problems such as unhappiness. This includes criticizing the bishops, clergy, fellow parishioners or other GOYAnS in front of the youth or with one another. If a situation needs discussion, please contact the lead GOYA advisor or Father John first. *Let's work together toward finding a reasonable solution (when appropriate).*

Parents should ensure that their teen is: ***aware of all events, properly dressed, dropped off on time, picked up on time, fees paid for all events on time, attend monthly meetings and mandatory events.***

#### **Feedback**

GOYA welcomes feedback from GOYAnS (and their parents), both positive and negative, and may use the information in order to improve GOYA in furtherance of our stated mission. ***Feedback should be civil in tone and reflect the charity and respect that marks Christian discourse.*** Slanderous or libelous statements are detrimental to GOYA and Christian fellowship.

#### **Suggestions/Ideas**

Every parish is unique in its own challenges and there's no shortage of good ideas. ***It's important to keep in mind that ideas are easier to talk about than do.*** In order for the GOYA leadership to fully consider a new idea, the following is requested (at a minimum): A) How the idea furthers the stated mission of GOYA; B) The anticipated expenses (including travel, fees, etc), estimated labor/volunteers/participants, and cash flow analysis (if applicable); C) Where else the idea has been used (e.g., parish name/location, contact information for reference); D) How the idea can be applied for us here in the Greek Orthodox Community of Sarasota and Bradenton; and E) What SPECIFIC tasks you are willing to do in order to make sure that the idea is implemented and maintained (if successful).

#### **Parent Volunteers/Chaperones**

Please consider volunteering. Volunteers are the backbone of any ministry. Great volunteers are reliable and dedicated. Parents interested in volunteering to assist with GOYA events must contact the lead GOYA advisor for direction.

#### **Parent Communications**

**\*\***In order to ensure that you receive all GOYA-event communications, please provide your ***primary email address and cell phone*** contact information to: [SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com](mailto:SarasotaGOYA@gmail.com). All parents are strongly encouraged to "friend" our Facebook page for another way to view photos



St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church  
Sarasota, FL  
2016-2017  
GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices

and keep updated on exciting things that are happening with GOYA. The address is:  
[facebook.com/SarasotaGOYA](https://www.facebook.com/SarasotaGOYA).

### Social Media - Background

Being a teenager can be very confusing and difficult. Social media websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, etc., allow us to communicate in real-time with “friends” or the public. These communities of users can share messages, content, photos, videos, and other material electronically. ***Understanding the risks involved in using social media may prevent potential adverse personal and professional consequences.***

***Online speech can be cruder and crueler than our real-life interactions***, in large part due to the literal distance from the people that we’re talking to (and ***not seeing their reactions in-person***). According to a CNN study, “almost all parents -- 94% -- underestimated the amount of fighting happening over social media.” This document is not meant to be all-inclusive and parents are encouraged to research other risks of online teen use such as sexual predators, identity theft, gambling, drug use, violent material and other topics.

### Impact on Teen’s Moral Consciousness

The use of social media occurs simultaneously with their developing identity, emerging sexuality, physical development, and moral consciousness. ***Social media can become a highly influential teacher for youth. Their moral, ethical and intellectual values can be formed by what they read and experience online.*** They may desire to become what the social media community espouses and portrays. Social media also increases our children’s ability to be exposed to negative influences such as drugs and alcohol.

In a world where our youth are torn between reality and virtual reality, we need to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge of the truth as revealed by Christ. ***Communications on such sites are not necessarily monitored by GOYA, but GOYAn conduct may be brought to the attention of GOYA advisors when they are seen as possible violations of the GOYA Code of Conduct.***

### Golden Rule

As a general matter, the social media world is no different than the in-person world. The same laws, rules, policies, guidelines, and best practices that govern our in-person relationships with fellow GOYAnS, friends, parents, and the community all apply online. ***GOYAnS and GOYA advisors are responsible for their online posts*** just as they are for their personal, verbal, or written interactions.



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

**NOTE:** Any reference to “bullying” in this handbook includes cyberbullying (via computer, tablet, smart phone or any other electronic device), whether or not specifically stated.

**Youngsters 'addicted to mobile phones'**

A study from the Pew Research Center indicates that 92% of teens report going online daily — including 24% who say they go online “almost constantly.” **More than half (56%) of teens — ages 13 to 17 — go online several times a day.** <http://pewrsr.ch/1NaUOUU>

A Leading Australian chiropractor has warned about dangers of ‘text neck’ (**hunch back**) and and ‘alarming increase’ in teenage patients caused by bending over smartphones for several hours a day. The condition can lead to cognitive problems and depression. Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3274835/Shocking-X-rays-teenagers-text-neck.html>

**Positive use of technology**

- **Technology for GOYA and GOYA-related events can be used in a positive manner.**
- GOYA seeks to promote safe and responsible use of social media.
- GOYA seeks to explore ways of using technology to support assertiveness, self-esteem, and to develop friendships.

**Social Media Risks**

Information in electronic form is easily distributed, archived and downloaded. The person posting the information may have very little control over who sees it and its use. **The words, ideas, pictures, and things that you put online can later be used against you.** This is true even if your “privacy settings” are restricted.

**Permanent Records**

**Postings to social media sites are generally permanent records that cannot be easily deleted.** You must assume that everything you post is public, will be available to the public forever, and can be forwarded well beyond where you think your comments might land. Copies of deleted information may still exist on search engines or in friends’ (or others’) electronic files.

**“What you chose to post is unfortunately something that cannot be undone.... There’s no delete button on the internet. Those things float forever on the internet.”** “Even Deleted Material on Social Networking Sites Can Be Used Against You.” If you wouldn’t say what you’re saying to a reporter or in a public space, then you probably shouldn’t say it online.



St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church  
Sarasota, FL  
**2016-2017**  
GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices

**Reputation Damage (College Admissions)**

Postings may come back to haunt you. **Many employers (and college admissions) check social networking profiles looking for misconduct or inappropriate behavior.** A report conducted by the National Association for College Admission Counseling indicates that "[a] significant proportion of schools are beginning to research students via search engines (26 percent) and social networks (21 percent)." More @ <http://www.nacacnet.org/research/research-data/Research%20Member%20Only/SocialMediaDiscussionPaper.pdf>

**Before communicating on a social media site, always consider what is said, who might read it and the impact it may have, if viewed by parents, relatives, employer, school, or other group (like GOYA) that is important to you.**

**Be careful and accurate.**

Before you post or comment, check your facts. Review your comments for clarity, grammar, and spelling. **It's your reputation, and you don't want to look foolish.**

**Be thoughtful.**

Always take care in the way you present yourself and your relationship to GOYA. Even with a disclaimer in place, **a personal posting may be interpreted as reflecting the official positions of GOYA and the Church.**

**Use of Cell Phones (smartphones, tablets, electronic devices) during GOYA meetings**

GOYA recognizes that technology can play an important and positive role in teenager's lives, both educationally and socially. GOYA is committed to helping all GOYAnS understand both the benefits and the risks, in order to equip the youth with the knowledge and skills to be able to use technology safely and responsibly.

We understand that many parents want their teens to have cell phones. **All electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, iPods, and iPads, may not be visible, turned on, or used during GOYA meetings.** We discourage teens from bringing cell phones in order to prevent any opportunity for losing them and causing distractions during GOYA meetings.

**Prohibited Use of Email/Internet/Social Media (GOYA)**

Harassment of any kind is prohibited. **No messages with derogatory or inflammatory remarks regarding race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes, or other preferences should be transmitted about any GOYAn, GOYA advisor, GOYA event, or member of the Church.**



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

No abusive, profane, or offensive language should be transmitted through any social media that is sponsored by the Church or GOYA.

***Messages (including posts and photos) should be polite and reflect Orthodox Christian values, and should not be abusive or include vulgar language.*** Each person should use the same degree of care in drafting a message as would be put into a written memorandum or document. Nothing should be transmitted in a message that would be inappropriate in a letter or memorandum. Social Media is not private and may be subject to public disclosure by a third party. ***Great care should be taken, therefore, in the composition of such messages and how such messages might reflect on the name and reputation of the GOYA and the Church.***

**Photos – GOYA events**

***In certain instances, with permission from the lead GOYA advisor, GOYAns may take digital images/photographs or video record participants in GOYA programs, classes, events, or using the Church's facilities.*** Personal photos should comply with GOYA code of conduct rules; ***immodesty or inappropriate physical contact should not be displayed.***

Photos, videos, and comments made online usually can't be taken back once they're posted. Even after a teen thinks something has been deleted, it can be impossible to completely erase it from the Internet.

**Be respectful of others.**

***Do not post information or content that is false, misleading, defamatory, abusive, harassing, threatening, discriminatory, obscene, or harmful to others.*** GOYA policies on a Christ-centered and harassment-free environment apply in the online community as well as in-person.

If a GOYAn sends a mean-spirited tweet (or post) as a joke, it could be very hurtful to someone else and even taken as a threat. ***GOYAns are expected to never use technology to hurt anyone else (through bullying or gossip).***

The GOYA advisors shall respect GOYAns' privacy while making an effort to be part of the social media world (this means GOYA advisors can "friend" and observe GOYANs online activity, but not intentionally post cruel or embarrassing comments about them).

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is the use of Internet-based communication technology, commonly a mobile phone or the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

It can be used to carry out all the different types of bullying; an extension of face-to-face bullying.



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

It can also go further in that it can invade home/personal space and can involve a greater number of people.

It can take place across age groups and school staff and other adults can be targeted.

It can draw bystanders into being accessories .

It includes: threats and intimidation; harassment or 'cyber-stalking'; vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorized publication of private information or images ('happy-slapping'); and manipulation.

### **Complaints/Investigation**

Any GOYAn or GOYA advisor who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in harassment, bullying, or intimidation that is GOYA-related will be ***subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.***

Any GOYAn, parent, or GOYA advisor that knowingly makes a false accusation regarding harassment, bullying, or intimidation will likewise be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from GOYA participation.

GOYAnS who engage in cyberbullying should be subject to discipline if such conduct occurs on Church property or at a GOYA event, including if the electronic information such as a photo was created or received on Church property or at a GOYA event. ***GOYAnS who engage in cyberbullying may be subject to discipline if the conduct has the effect of disrupting the mission of GOYA.***

### **Misconduct**

Generally, misconduct is any activity (*including online and social media*), on or off Church property, during or outside of GOYA events that interferes with, disrupts, or adversely affects GOYA, its advisors, other GOYAnS, or the Church. Misconduct may result in disciplinary action.

***Inappropriate or disrespectful behavior, pranks, or items inappropriate for an Orthodox Christian event will not be permitted.*** If any GOYAnS exhibits inappropriate behavior or any inappropriate items are found, they will be confiscated and parents will be called immediately to pick up their child.

In severe cases, it may be necessary to involve social or law enforcement agencies.



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

**Due Process for Suspension and Expulsion**

Disciplinary actions shall be matched to the seriousness of the infraction (with suspension being the last alternative reserved for serious misconduct). In the unfortunate event that disciplinary actions reach the level of suspension or expulsion of a GOYAn, the following due process process procedures shall be followed: The GOYAn and their parent/legal guardian will be advised of the charges/accusations; Be provided an opportunity to respond to the charges and present their side of the story in detail; Be provided the names of their accusers and given an opportunity to examine them (when appropriate); Be provided an opportunity to submit a list of names of other individuals who might have witnessed the incident; Be advised why they are being suspended or recommended for expulsion.

**Discipline**

Above all, remember that a GOYAn is a member of the Church, and we must make sure that we not unintentionally drive them or their family away from the Church. Therefore, discipline should be approached with great consideration, love and respect. Remember that no matter what they did, God still loves them. Likewise, no matter how hard it is, you must love them as well. That is not to underscore that what they did was wrong—but ***God can still love without liking a person's behavior.*** This does not excuse a GOYAn from the consequences of any misconduct though. Forgiveness does not throw wisdom and common sense out the window. Sins have consequences, and forgiveness does not make those consequences go away. For assistance in dealing with this issue, read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. ***Father John has the final say in terms of disciplinary action.***

**Personal Social Media Accounts/First Amendment**

This policy is not intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression (or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views) that are protected under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

It's "free speech," ***not*** "free from consequences speech" (and remember, it's only government suppression of speech that is illegal). In the court of public opinion, your words can be used against you.

***This policy does not prevent GOYAnS or GOYA advisors from having their own personal social media profiles; it simply notifies GOYAnS what is acceptable and unacceptable conduct with regard to their status as a member of GOYA.***



St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church  
Sarasota, FL  
**2016-2017**  
GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices

**4 Simple Rules for Social Media Use (excerpts from USA TODAY)**

***Don't become the next 'what-not-to-do' example.*** Keep in mind these simple rules for using social media.

**RULE 1: YOU ARE WHAT YOU 'TWEET' (or POST)**

Every post, retweet, link and picture that you share is a reflection of who you are. Your social media profiles tell your story and give you the chance to create a brand for yourself. ***In short, you are what you 'tweet' (or post).***

**RULE 2: THE GRANDMA, FIRST GRADER, BOSS RULE**

Ask yourself, "Would I want my grandma to see this post? What about a classroom full of first graders? My boss?" If the answer to any of those questions is 'no,' do not post it.

What you share online can be found, even when you hit that delete button two hours later. It's better to learn this now than in 20 years when you're running for Congress. ***Make a vow to your "future" adult self that you will refrain from over-sharing.***

**RULE 3: FACE YOUR PROBLEMS, DON'T FACEBOOK YOUR PROBLEMS.**

Remember what Lou Holtz said. "Don't tell your problems to people: 80% don't care; and the other 20% are glad you have them."

Too often, we let our emotions get the best of us and post updates without thinking. This could be posting an angry subtweet (or post), making a Facebook status about the boyfriend that broke up with you or even making an insulting comment on someone else's post.

My advice? ***Sleep on it. Most unnecessary, emotional posts can be avoided by just giving you some time to think it over.***

**RULE 4: DON'T TAKE IT TOO SERIOUSLY.**

Highlight positive stories and give your followers a reason to smile. Trust me, they will appreciate it. ***It's okay to show your personality (actually I encourage it). Just be sure you are not being offensive, vulgar or uploading an embarrassing photo or video of you.***

In short — use your head. Social media was never meant to be a journal for your every thought or action. When in doubt, remember, ***"whenever I'm about to do something, I think, 'Would an idiot do that?'"*** And if they would, I do not do that thing."



**St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Sarasota, FL**  
**2016-2017**  
**GOYA Handbook / Social Media Best Practices**

**REMEMBER**

- Everything we do, whether in word, deed or “text”, we are accountable for. “But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matthew 12:36-37.
- We should assume that anything posted on facebook, text to friends or emailed is not going to remain private. Digital cameras and video cameras are on everyone’s cell phones these days. Something that seems innocent when hanging out with friends can come back to haunt us later on.
- Once something is out there on the World Wide Web (Internet), there’s no taking it back. It’s there for good! Think about how easy it would be for something to copy and paste, for instance, an AIM conversation and post it anywhere!
- As with other things, resist peer pressure and pressure from the opposite sex. 47% of teens say “pressure from guys” is a reason girls send sexually suggestive messages and images.
- Viewing sexually explicit images takes away from our ability to focus on God. When viewing graphic sexual images our mind is on anything but Christ. These images cause us to direct our focus on ourselves and our own pleasure, instead of on Christ.
- Remember that we are made in the image and likeness of God and our bodies are our temples. Is sending sexually explicit photos of yourself the right way to honor yourself and God?
- 15% of teens say they have sent sexually suggestive images or texts to someone they know only online. In other words, someone they’ve never met in “real life”. That person could be a sexual predator! Let them know that they should not be talking to strangers online at all.

Source: Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America



***Policy adopted on:***

Date: 8/23/2016

Signature of Father John Bociu, Proistamenos: [Signature]

Signature of GOYA Advisors: [Signature]

Signature of Parish Council President: [Signature]