



21st ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

July 14-18, 2025

Call for Reflections Study Guide

These questions are designed to help communities begin the process of reflection called for by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon in his August 18, 2024 encyclical.

The questions are merely intended to stimulate discussion and to help us understand the moment in time of the Orthodox Church in America finds itself in. Your community's reflection need not answer these specific questions, and these questions should not be treated as an exhaustive list.

Mission, Education, Finance, and Philanthropy are the All-American Council's areas of competence as defined by our Church's Statute. To help prompt and organize the most productive reflection process, these questions are arranged around those areas.

Your community's reflections will be compiled with those of other respondents for deliberation at the upcoming All-American Council.



Section 1

DEFINING OUR MOMENT

His Beatitude spoke of our time being a moment in the life of the Church. What is this moment like for you?

Do His Beatitude's comments about the strong foundation we can now build upon resonate with you? Why or why not?

What has changed in the life of your community in the last few years? What has remained the same?

Is your parish experiencing growth? Decline? Stability?

Have you discovered any expected or unexpected strengths in your parish life?

If you wish you knew about any potential pitfalls, struggles, or weaknesses your parish has experienced in the last few years, what would they be?

Where do you think the Holy Spirit is calling your parish to be in the next five years?

Section 2

MISSION



What steps have you taken as a community to advance the Gospel in your area?

What examples—from our saints, our holy Tradition, and beyond—have inspired your community's missionary outreach?

What forms of outreach have you used successfully, if any?

Have you tried mission initiatives that didn't see the desired/expected results? In what ways did they fall short? Why do you think they fell short?

Have some forms of communal missionary outreach proven especially sustainable/durable?

What lessons can other communities / the Church at large learn from your community's mission efforts?

Section 3

EDUCATION



Does your community have programs for children's education? Adult education? Education for inquirers? Education for members?

What educational programs have proved popular?

What are the goals of your educational program? How do you set these goals? Do you have ways of measuring progress and assessing outcomes?

Do you see impacts from your educational programs in other areas of parish life?

The Lord tells us, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart."; Christians have always considered themselves disciples of the only Master, Christ our true God, who is our Teacher and Rabbi. How does this / can this shape our approach to education?

Has your community seen success with educational initiatives that can be undertaken elsewhere or scaled up at the deanery/diocesan/national level?



Section 4

FINANCE

What does financial stewardship look like in your community? How does your parish determine a yearly budget?

Does your community put the Gospel at the center of its approach to finances? If so, how so?

Have you undertaken special finance-related projects recently (e.g. fundraising)? Did they succeed? Why or why not?

Are finances an obstacle to Church life and growth? Why or why not?

At a moment of stability, such as His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon believes the OCA is experiencing now, what should be our overall approach to finances?

What lessons in finances, stewardship, budget, fund raising, etc., can the OCA at large learn from your community's experience?

Section 5

PHILANTHROPY



What roles can an Orthodox Christian community play as a philanthropic institution? What are the special challenges? Are there any special advantages?

How do you connect your community's philanthropic efforts with your broader approach to finances?

Do your philanthropic efforts connect with your broader mission-oriented work, and if so, how?

What approach or approaches has your community taken to philanthropic outreach? Have they borne fruit? What sorts?

What lessons can we as a Church learn from your community's philanthropic experience? What new programs/approaches can your experience inspire?