

Number	Entry	Category	Registration Requirements
601	Oral Argument	Performance	Sign up on student registration form. Submit project info and script online. Dates on website.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE PERSUASIVE/DRAMATIC MATERIAL FOR EXCEL CONVENTION

Material should be carefully chosen or written to ensure that evil characters would not be glorified and that the student rehearsing (or the listener) would not be forced to dwell on negative or harmful thoughts or ideas.

PERSUASIVE/DRAMATIC DIVISION GUIDELINES

Students appearing in any platform competition should observe the following important points, as they will enter into judging. Carelessness on these points could detract from an otherwise excellent presentation:

- **Appearance-** Dignity and good grooming should be apparent. Uniformity of dress is recommended for groups.
- **Props/Costumes-** All dummies, puppets, marionettes, and characters in plays should conform to EXCEL CONVENTION dress and hair codes. (Obvious Exceptions: George Washington in powdered wig; Apostle Paul in robe, etc.)
- **Poise/Self-Confidence-**
 - Approach-** The approach is one of the most important elements in speaking, public reading, or singing. The contestant should walk confidently and briskly to the podium or front of the room and establish eye contact, pause for 5-10 seconds, and begin his presentation.
 - Eye Contact-** The contestant should establish rapport with the audience by good eye contact. He should avoid looking down often at his notes or Bible, at the ceiling, or out of the window. His eyes should move up and down, back and forth over the entire audience, slowly and naturally.
 - Posture and Gestures-** The rule for posture is DO NOT SLOUCH! The contestant should stand straight, but not lock his/her knees. Gestures should be free and flow naturally from enthusiasm. Natural movements are more effective than forced gestures.
 - Delivery-** The speaker should project his voice, using the diaphragm. Recreate the mood, experience, emotion, and feelings of the author. Employ voice variations and tempo.
- **Preparation-** Preparation and study are prerequisites for all speaking, reading, or musical performances. Research, organization, outline, and familiarity are the elements of preparation.
- **Platform Presentation-** Introduction of entry before the judges: Contestants in platform presentations are to give their first and last name and title of presentation distinctly ("My name is John Doe and the title of my oratory is...."). For entries involving more than one person a spokesman should be selected.
NOTE TO JUDGES: This introduction is NOT to be counted as time against their presentation.
- **Memorization-** All selections and scripts must be memorized. *EXCEPTIONS:* Oral Arguments, Preaching, and Oratory contestants may use outline note cards.

HINTS FROM PUBLIC SPEAKING JUDGES

In public speaking, the key word is CONVINCING! Whether you present a dramatic monologue, a famous speech, or a recitation, your task is to convince the listener that these are your words, your thoughts, and your feelings. If you are portraying a specific character, you should make the audience believe you really are that person. Many factors contribute to a convincing performance: costuming (if allowed), gestures, posture, voice inflection, and emotion. Match each carefully to your script and character. Perhaps the most frequent comments from the judges deal with "emotion." Emotion should be carefully balanced. If you portray too little emotion, your performance will appear bland and colorless. If you portray too much emotion, you will appear harsh, phony, and overbearing. Also be careful that your emotion does not detract from clear, crisp, easily understood diction. The key: preparation and practice! Practice in front of a mirror and use every opportunity to perform before others.

(601) ORAL ARGUMENTS

Description: In this event, a contestant writes and delivers an original oral presentation similar to that a Christian attorney might present in defense of a pastor and parent who, because of convictions, have been accused of violating an ordinance, regulation, or statute. Time limit: 6 minutes maximum.

The contestant assumes he/she has been asked to defend a pastor or parent in a situation similar to one of the following topics (presented to an appellate court, not to a jury).

1. The defendant might be a pastor of a church which decided to extend its ministry to include a Christian school. Three weeks after the church-school opened, an official from the State Department of Education sent the following letter to a member of the church's congregation.

Dear Mr. And Mrs. Kindheart:

It has been brought to our attention that your son, J. Michael, is enrolled in New Testament Church Academy. Be advised that the above academy is not accredited and the teachers are not certified; therefore, J. Michael is truant. Unless your child is placed in an approved school, you face possible charges of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

Respectfully,

(School Superintendent)

2. The defendant is the pastor of an existing church which operates a day care, boys' home, orphanage, widows' apartments, or medical clinic.

3. The defendants are parents who home school their children and are charged with violation of a compulsory attendance law. (Part of argument can be based on Constitutional 9th Amendment.)

Position Taken by State's Attorney

- A. The church-school is a private school not a church.
- B. The church-school, orphanage, clinic, etc., is not licensed.
- C. The teachers and/or church personnel are not certified.
- D. The church's school, clinic, day care, etc., do not meet regulations, codes, or state guidelines.
- E. The state must assume a compelling interest in the welfare of the child, patient, or widow.
- F. There are no less drastic means by which the state can accomplish its objective of securing a sound education for the child or of maintaining safety or health of patients, orphans, widows.

Pastor and Parent's Position

- A. The church is a body of believers.
- B. Day school Monday through Friday and care of widows and orphans are considered vital parts of the believers' propagation of the church and exercise of Christian responsibilities.
- C. Secular humanism characterizes the philosophy of the local government schools and thereby forces the child (young believer) to study things contrary to biblical commandments.
- D. The church is not above reasonable law, but the question is "to whom do the children belong?" The compelling interest of the state must be overridden when the first Amendment rights are involved and the state must demonstrate that the health, welfare, or safety of the child is in danger.
- E. The compelling interest of the state is also limited if there is a less drastic alternative for the state to meet its interest.

OPTION: The contestant may also develop an argument on another issue such as the following.

- A. Minimum wage and applicability to a church school.
- B. Equal employment opportunity and charges of discrimination based on homosexuality or AIDS.
- C. Corporal correction and child abuse charges against a staff member or parent.
- D. Parental custody case in which parents divorce and the custodial parent enrolls the child in church school, and the dissenting parent files mental and emotional abuse charges against the custodial parent.
- E. City officials file trespassing charges against student Bible club members for handing out tracts on a public sidewalk or parking lot.

RULES

Written Outline:

1. Must be typed, double spaced
2. Include convictions of the defendants
3. Cite at least four cases of precedent
4. Introductory remarks
5. Arguments (outline form)
6. Concluding statement.

Resources Available (suggested)

1. Christian Law Association
P.O. Box 30
Conneaut, OH 44030
2. "C.L.D. and E.F. Notebook" (newsletter)
Christian Legal Defense & Education Foundation
7587 Blanding Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32244
3. Plymouth Rock Foundation .
P.O. Box 425
Marlborough, NH 03455
4. Blackstone Institute of Public Law and Policy
P.O. Box 3358
Abilene, TX 79604
5. The Rutherford Institute
P.O. Box 510
Manassas, VA 22110
6. Truth Forum
P.O. Box 18927
Austin, TX 78760
7. Institute for Christian Economics
P.O. Box 8000
Tyler, TX 75711
8. Court cases: A local attorney can assist you in finding material.
 - a. Local cases, b. City of Concord (NH) v. New Testament Baptist Church, c. State of North Dakota v. Peter Dyck, d. State of Nebraska et al v. Faith Baptist Church et al, e. Wisconsin v. Yoder, f. Sherbert v. Verner, g. In the matter of Rochester Christian Church Inc. v. State of New York Public Service Commission, h. Lemon v. Kurtzman, i. Peoples Baptist Church (Roloff Homes) v. Department of Human Services (Texas), j. Leeper v. Arlington ISD (Texas)
9. Bibliography
Whitehead, John W. *Home Education and Constitutional Liberties*, Westchester, IL: Crossway Books (1986)
Whitehead, John W. *The Second American Revolution*, Westchester, IL: Crossway Books (1985)
Whitehead, John W. *Parents Rights*, Westchester, IL: Crossway Books (1985)
Adams, Blair and Stein, Joel *Who Owns the Children?* Austin, TX: Truth Forum (1983)

HINTS FROM THE ORAL ARGUMENTS JUDGES

In Oral Arguments the contestant simulates a lawyer's summary of his side's viewpoint at the conclusion of a case. For that reason, the actual content and logic of your presentation are more important than your delivery; however, a poor delivery can detract severely from a good outline. Your content should be based on scriptural principles, documented statistics, and clear logic. It should not be based solely on opinion or emotional appeal. In making your delivery, speak deliberately and persuasively without being antagonistic. At the same time you should also try to use variety in movement, gesture, and voice inflection. You may hold a legal pad with notes. PERSUADE - DO NOT PREACH! BE FORCEFUL AND MEEK.

JUDGING CRITERIA

AREAS OF EVALUATION	POSSIBLE POINTS
Preparation	10
Delivery	10
Eye contact, facial expressions, voice inflections	10
Style	10
Persuasiveness	10
Logic of argument	10
Presentation	10
Clarity of presenting pertinent facts	10
Application of Scriptural principles	10
Quality of written outline presented to Convention judge	10
TOTAL POINTS	100

Time limit: six minutes