

AUSTIN RHETORIC CLUB MEMBER INFORMATION

The Austin Rhetoric Club (www.austinrhetoricclub.org) is a Christian, homeschooled **family** speech & debate club, where all members of a family are encouraged to join and actively participate. It is a parent-run, student-led family-friendly safe haven, whose purpose is to encourage our children (especially ages 8-18) to effectively share their faith in Jesus Christ. ARC is an affiliate of the National Christian Forensics Communication Association (NCFCA, www.ncfca.org) and supports its mission statement and vision. Club meetings are usually held Fridays at Hope Chapel, 6701 Arroyo Seco, Austin, 78757, from 4:30-8:30 pm. Speech 4:30-5:50; Announcements & Dinner 5:50-6:40; Debate 6:40-8:30 pm.

Mission Statement: We believe that formal speech and debate can provide a means for homeschooled students to learn and exercise analytical and oratorical skills, addressing life issues from a Biblical world view in a manner that glorifies God.

Statement of Faith: The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy *catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

(* The word "catholic" refers to the universal Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, not to the Roman Catholic Church. As Communicators for Christ puts it in their statement of faith: "We believe in the brotherhood of all believers who, through faith, have received the salvation provided by God's grace through the death of Jesus Christ.")

Due to unprecedented and unexpected growth in ARC this past 2006-07 year, new policies will be implemented for the upcoming 2007-08 year. In order to be members of ARC, **both** parents are now required to attend a Member Orientation Meeting prior to Sept. 14, 2007, and a Member Agreement must now be signed by **both** parents and participating student(s). We want to clarify the goal of ARC, the benefits received and responsibilities inherent in being active members of ARC. When parents have clear written information communicated at the beginning of the year, we believe this will go a long way in having a successful year in learning and growing together as a club and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our **Goal and Vision** is to have the students learn how to communicate from a Biblical world view in an articulate godly manner that glorifies God. This goal is achieved through parents encouraging active student leadership and student participation within the club meetings and tournaments.

Our **Dress Code** is one of modesty and professionalism with the intent to glorify Christ. The goal is to minimize the focus on the body or outward appearance and maximize the

focus on the development of ideas and communication skills. For the ladies, modesty includes suits, dresses and skirts with hemlines to at least the bottom of the knee. Tight fitting/low-cut sweaters and slacks are inappropriate. Midriff must remain covered when gesturing in speeches. In professional settings (any competition, including a debate round at a weekly meeting), gentlemen should wear suits or sports coats, tie, dress shirt and shoes. Ladies should wear either dresses or suits with hemline to at least the bottom of the knee.

BENEFITS

There are too many benefits to enumerate. Here are just a few. The students will learn to:

1. speak confidently in front of others
2. write and deliver speeches
3. think quickly and critically
4. disagree with others without taking it personally and without attacking others
5. defend our faith
6. share the gospel boldly
7. hone research skills
8. make friends with opponents
9. win humbly and lose graciously
10. rely on our Lord Jesus Christ in everything
11. manage time wisely
12. be teachable and take criticism well
13. critique others honestly yet lovingly
14. make godly friends in ARC and throughout Texas
15. work together as a team
16. serve others
17. use their communication skills throughout life in whatever God calls them to.

**AUSTIN RHETORIC CLUB
MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

Student Email: _____ Age: _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

Student Email: _____ Age: _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

Student Email: _____ Age: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Parents' Email: _____

Parents' Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Date: _____

AGREEMENT FOR ARC MEMBERSHIP 2007-08
PARENTS AND STUDENTS AGES 12-18

1. **Both** parents must attend one Mandatory “Member Orientation” Parent Meeting (Fri, June 8 or Aug. 24). If one parent is unable to attend due to extraordinary circumstances, such as dad being out of town, please contact a Board Member (Umstattds, Morgans or Rodgers) and set up a separate time to meet with one couple on the Board.
2. **Both** parents and participating student(s) must sign this Membership Agreement.
3. At least one parent agrees to be on Austin Yahoo Parent Group by Sept. 14, 2007. (see groups.yahoo.com/group/austindebateparents. Join group and get Yahoo ID. Contact Brian Morgan constitutionist@grandecom.net with questions.)
Name of parent: _____
4. At least one parent agrees to **read email once daily**. Name of parent: _____
5. Student(s) agrees to be on Austin Yahoo ARC Group by Sept. 14, 2007.(see groups.yahoo.com/group/austindebate. Join group and get Yahoo ID. Contact Brian Morgan constitutionist@grandecom.net with questions.)
6. Student(s) agrees to **read email once daily**.
7. Brand new members (students age 12-18) must take a speech/debate camp/class **prior** to Fri, Sept. 14, 2007, beginning of ARC’s 2007-08 school year. See attached sheet for options.
8. Each student over age 12 agrees to participate in Apologetics regularly and compete in it at tournaments. This is the cornerstone of ARC.
9. This is a **family** club. If student(s) participates in speech, one parent agrees to attend 2 speech meetings out of every 4. Name of parent: _____
10. If student(s) participates in debate, one parent agrees to attend at least 2 meetings out of every 4. Name of parent: _____ The key to student success in debate is **parental involvement**. It is very difficult for students to understand these concepts & progress in debate if the parent is absent. The more involved the parent is, the better the student excels! Plus, the coaches need help!
11. Each student is required to attend two Qualifying tournaments per season. There are usually 3 options for Qualifying tournaments. See attached Tournament Info Sheet.
12. Families having children younger than age 12 must **actively help** with child care. Parents must see the Child Care Coordinator and help regularly, unless they are coaching. Children ages 6-12 should be in the Junior Track Speech class from 4:30-6 pm, or with their parent. Afterwards, they must continually be with the parent (or responsible adult) unless on a supervised playground after 5:50 pm. NO child should ever be on the playground unless a responsible **adult** is supervising.
13. The parents agree to take a rotating turn with facility care (set up/break down/cleanup/vacuum/inspect etc.) under the guidance of the Facility Coordinator. It is the parents’ responsibility to seek out the coordinator.
14. The parents and student(s) agree to abide by the Dress Code of modesty at all times, and professionalism (suits etc.) during any type of competition, including an inner club debate at a weekly meeting. See Member Info for details.

15. The parents and student(s) have read the entire member packet, including: Member Info; Family Responsibilities & Financial Costs; Tournament Information; Speech/Debate Prerequisite for Brand New Members; and Other Rhetoric Opportunities.
16. We agree with the Statement of Faith on the ARC Member Info page.
17. We have both attended a Mandatory Parent "Member Orientation" meeting on _____ (date). If extraordinary circumstances have occurred where we were not both able to attend, we have personally met with the following Board members to discuss this packet:
_____ on
this date: _____.

We have read and agree to comply with this ARC Agreement as well as the NCFCA (National Christian Forensics & Communication Association) policies.

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Many rhetoric clubs charge a \$75 fee to join. Rhetoric classes often charge \$40/student/month for both speech and debate classes respectively.. This would cost parents \$640/year (8 months x \$80/month/student). In order to encourage homeschool families to participate in ARC, the founders have elected to not charge anything to join, nor is there a monthly fee to participate in ARC!

However, there are financial and commitment costs that a family needs to consider before they commit to joining ARC. There are other options available for rhetoric activities on the following page, if a family does not feel the Lord's leading to join ARC.

We need parent volunteers continually!!! Our club has doubled the meeting time, tripled the membership and offered more speech and debate events than in the original year. **This requires every family to commit** to attending, volunteering and participating in order for the club to be successful. **ARC is a very unique volunteer family club, not a rhetoric class.**

The key to a student's success is parental involvement!!! Come catch the vision!! The best way for your child to enjoy, learn and improve is for the entire family to be involved. Be there weekly. Learn with your child. Read the speech and debate books together. **Make time** in your daily school schedule for your child to spend on speech & debate. Speech practice and homework may take 2-3 hours per week until pieces are selected and memorized. Debate research and homework could take 4-6 hours per week, or more, depending on commitment level. Include speech & debate on your student's transcript. At one point, all of us parents knew little about this either! But we jumped in with prayer and trepidation and have been wonderfully blessed with all of the benefits.
☺

We need parents to facilitate and assist in coaching the different speech and debate events. We have found the input from **fathers** to be particularly invaluable in the debate topics that we discuss. Not only are coaches needed, we also need parents to help judge, critique, advise and brainstorm with us weekly. Brand new/inexperienced parents are encouraged to assist weekly just by learning and doing with us!

ARC has been unusually blessed for 3 years by having the privilege of using Hope Chapel. Due to our huge increase in membership, we are now going to have a **Facility Coordinator**, who will be in charge of organizing setup/break down/cleanup/inspection of the building weekly. Each family will be required to periodically participate in this responsibility.

We are also now having a **Child Care Coordinator**, who will be in charge of organizing child care on the playground & who will be responsible for taking care of child care issues. Children younger than 7 will be expected to be with their parent or responsible person at all times. All parents with younger children are expected to

regularly serve on playground time on a rotating schedule, unless coaching. Parents are greatly encouraged to attend speech and debate.

APPROXIMATE FINANCIAL COSTS

1. National Christian Forensics Communication Association (NCFCA) Affiliate Fee: Mandatory membership for each family \$45 (annual fee) www.ncfca.org
2. Debate attire: According to NCFCA rules, when debating, debaters must dress professionally, in a suit, shirt, tie, dress shoes for young men; and modest suit (skirt at least knee length) or pantsuit for young ladies. Students will be informed when to address in debate attire.
3. Books: approximate cost, minimum: Shipe's Argumentation and Debate \$13; Blue or Red Resource Book-mandatory (Team Policy \$30; Lincoln Douglas \$20) As I Was Saying speech book: \$15; fileboxes; notebooks; ink & paper; debate supplies; \$40? Optional debate resource books: \$25, \$50, varies. Many optional additional resources are available.
4. Tournament Fees: varies on student's participation. Typical debate fees \$25 and Speech fee is \$25/2 events and \$10 each additional event. If student debates and does 3 speech events, it's around \$60 (fees vary).
5. Gas to and from tournament.
6. Food: varies. Lunch is offered at tournaments but must be prepaid. Banquet fee is \$8-10 each. Costs may be lowered by bringing cooler with snacks, sandwiches, drinks, etc.
7. Motels: vary greatly, but can be found \$50/night in Houston at group discount with other debaters. Totals: \$175 for 3 nights with tax. One is always welcome to make own arrangements and stay with friends/relatives.
8. Prerequisite speech/debate class/camp for brand new students-varies greatly, approximately \$150 and up.

TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

As fun as tournaments are, they are best enjoyed with proper expectations & preparation.

How many?

There are only two Qualifying tournaments required per calendar year in ARC. Attending the local Austin tournament is easily accomplished. This only requires families to travel to one out of town tournament per year. However, the more one competes, the more a student improves! It is greatly encouraged that students attend as many as possible.

This is subject to change, but typically, they are:

November: 2 day tournament in Weatherford (near Ft. Worth)

January: 3 day tournament in Houston (Qualifier for Regionals)

February: 3 day tournament in Bedford (near Ft. Worth) (Qualifier for Regionals)

March: 3 day State tournament in Austin (Qualifier for Regionals)

April: 3 day Regional tournament (Houston) (by invitation only if competitor qualified)

June: 5 day National tournament (by invitation only if competitor qualified)

Time involved?

Usually the parent and student leave Wed. afternoon and drive to Houston/Bedford (3 hours) to a motel. Tournaments begin at 8 am Thursdays & end late each evening (sometimes as late as 10 pm). Friday evenings end after the banquet around 8-9 pm. The tournament ends Sat. evening after the awards ceremony, around 9 pm or later.

Where to stay?

Typically, one stays at a motel with a discounted price nearby for 3 or 4 nights. Sometimes families have friends or relatives who are willing to house them.

Costs? See Family Responsibility Page

SPEECH/DEBATE PREREQUISITE FOR BRAND NEW MEMBERS IN ARC

In order to use the fall more productively for all of the students, ARC is now instituting a requirement for all brand new members (students) to have some preparation in speech and debate prior to joining ARC in the fall of each year. Each brand new member, ages 12-18, will be required to take some kind of a speech & debate class/camp. The Board of Directors will specifically approve individual camps if not listed below:

1. Communicators for Christ www.communicatorsforchrist.com
4 day conference in Austin, Texas at Crestview Baptist Church
Dates: Tues-Fri., Aug 28-31, 2007
Coordinator: Joanne Louis
(512) 331-9329
cfaustin@gmail.com
2. Creative Arts in Action Speech & Debate Summer Camps
Watauga, Texas
Intro to Competitive Speech-July 16-17 or July 30-31
Intro to Competitive Debate-July 19-20 or Aug. 2-3
Lincoln Douglas Debate July 27-28
Advanced Team Policy Debate Aug 3-4
<http://www.speakoutntx.com/caia.htm>
3. Communicators for Christ Speech & Debate Camp www.communicatorsforchrist.com
3rd Annual Summer Debate Camp
July 8-12, 2007
Henry Horton State Park, Middle Tennessee
4. Team Policy Blue Book Debate Camp
Sept. 5-9, 2007
Brownville, Texas
www.trainingminds.org/debatecamp/minicamp/texas
www.coachcarterdebate.org
5. Team Policy Blue Book Debate Camp
Aug. 30- Sept. 3, 2007
Estes Park, Colorado
www.trainingminds.org/debatecamp

OTHER RHETORIC OPPORTUNITES

You may want to consider other rhetoric opportunities than ARC if:

1. one parent is not willing/able to be actively involved weekly
2. your student is not willing/able to be actively involved weekly
3. your student has no time at all in his/her schedule to do speech and debate homework (speech practice and homework may take 2-3 hours per week until pieces are selected and memorized; debate research and homework could take 4-6 hours per week).
4. your student will not attend 2 Qualifying tournaments (see Tournament Info page-one is local in Austin, and one requires travel).
5. you are not willing to agree to the terms in the ARC member agreement, to be signed by both parents and participating student (see agreement)

Other possible rhetoric opportunities than ARC are:

1. Georgetown Speech & Debate Club, an NCFCA club.
Contact JoAnn Nolte iwork4him@yahoo.com
2. Podium Power Speech & Debate class
Contact Marlene Yousef, 280-5407, www.podiumpower.net
3. Classical Enrichment Academy
www.ClassicalEnrichmentAcademy.com Contact 964-6394
5. Tentatively, North Austin Speech & Debate Club (NASD), an NCFCA club.
Contact Joanne Louis louis7@sbcglobal.net after Sept. 1, 2007.

Our prayer is that the Lord would lead each homeschooling Christian family into the specific activities that He would have them be involved in, and at the proper time and season according to His perfect will. May the Lord richly bless you and your family as you seek His will for your lives.