

The Forum

Speech & Debate Club Handbook Summary

Revised June 2021

General Information

This club is indebted to the leadership of both the LOGIC and RHETORIC clubs. They have gone before us paving the way for The Forum.

Motto

The Forum's motto: *Per angusta ad augusta* (based on Rom. 5:3-4) or in English: through difficulties comes greatness. We intend that students learn and internalize this motto, encouraging them to continually strive to better their own personal abilities, giving all glory to God.

Name and Meaning

A **Forum** was the main center of a Roman city. Usually located near the physical center of a Roman town, it served as a public area in which commercial, religious, economic, political, legal, and social activities occurred.

The Forum was a community gathering place where ideas as well as goods were shared. With this in mind, our goal as a club is for families to learn how to debate ideas, and communicate clearly with the culture around them.

Christian Communicators of America (CCA)

We are a local club that participates under the umbrella of CCA. We adhere to their policies.

CCA Mission and Vision

“The mission of Christian Communicators of America (CCA) is to assist parents who are home educating their children with the development of communication and critical thinking skills, equipping these children to be faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ by preparing them to give a defense of their faith to everyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is within them, and to do so with grace, seasoned with salt.”

CCA Vision

“To accomplish this mission CCA will provide opportunities for the above stated home educated children to participate in competitive speech and debate tournaments where an emphasis will be placed on excellence in speech, critical thinking from a Biblical worldview, and Christ-like character development. Students will be encouraged to recognize and develop their God-given

gifts, to work as unto the Lord, to acknowledge God's sovereignty in all events, and to give God the glory in all that is done.”

CCA Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God, and the final authority for faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16) We believe that there is one God, eternally existent, in one essence, yet three co-equal persons, the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4:4-6, Matthew 28:19, John 14:9-11, John 15:26). We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:16, Mark 8:27-29, Luke 9:18-20), His virgin birth (Luke 1:29-35), His sinless life (1 John 3:5), His miracles (Acts 2:22, John 3:2), His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood (Romans 3:25, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 1 Peter 1:18-19), His bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:3-5), His ascension (Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-11), and His personal return in power and glory (Acts 1:11, John 14:2-3). We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men; the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (John 5:28-29, John 5:24). We believe that all men are sinful by nature, and that salvation is the gift of God given to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 3:22-24). We believe that we should live in such a manner as to not bring reproach upon our Savior and Lord (Matthew 5:16, Philippians 1:27). We believe it is our obligation as believers to witness by life and word to the truths of the Gospel and proclaim these truths to all mankind (Matthew 28:19-20).

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that Scripture delineates only one specific meaning for the term “marriage”, that is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Gen 2: 18-25). We believe that the gender terms “man” and “woman” as used in Scripture refer to biological sex, as determined by a person’s chromosomes, and identified at birth by anatomy. We believe that God intends no intimate sexual activity to occur outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4), and that any sexual activity outside the bounds of such a marriage is sinful. We further believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

The Forum Board of Directors

Four Directors lead The Forum and serve as officers of the organization. Their roles are all equal, and their terms of office are perpetual until resignation or removal. The current Directors will select additional Directors as needed. Spouses and Coaches serve as Board Advisors.

Student Categories

Competition Year defined: Competitors must be these ages as of January to compete in the Feb – May tournaments.

- **Varsity** students must be at least 13 and no older than 18 by January 1 of the competition year, and must not have graduated from high school.
- **Junior Varsity (JV)** students must be at least 9 and no older than 12 by January 1 of the competition year.
- **Junior** students must be at least 5 and no older than 8 by January 1 of the competition year. Junior competitors prepare for one individual event per tournament season.

Club Participation Policy

The Forum has been established to function as a family activity. The goal is to build a strong community of families who learn together, and challenge and encourage each other, to the glory of God -- upholding our motto, Per angusta ad augusta.

The Forum is a parent-run club. Each **Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Junior student**, as well as at least **one** parent from each family is required to attend **all club meetings** (both parents will be strongly encouraged). At least **one parent** from each family will be **required** to serve in at least one area throughout the year: Speech; Debate; Coordinator; Administrative; Facility; Party. General duties and resources for each team/position will be provided by the Directors. Attendance sign-in will occur at all meetings.

Total absences (including illness) may not **exceed 4** per semester. Notification of absences must be submitted to the Board prior to the club meeting (as early as possible) so that the Coaches can plan club activities accordingly. Although illness and emergency may require last minute notification, generally the Board should be informed of planned absences no later than **two weeks in advance**. When considering planned absences for your family (vacation, etc.) please ensure that you keep some absences available for unexpected illness or emergency. A Board member will be in discussion with the family when several absences have occurred.

Club Schedule Expectations

Arrive no later than 5 minutes prior to opening, hang up coats, sign in, and be seated for opening prayer beginning promptly on time, after which students and parents will immediately proceed to their various instruction or practice rooms.

Club instruction and activities will include 2 hours of directed content and will dismiss accordingly. **We strongly encourage**, (but do not require,) families to stay after club weekly for 15-30 minutes of informal fellowship. It is our desire that all parents and students use at least some of this time to get to know someone new, building and strengthening our community. All families are asked to exit the building after our fellowship time.

Role of Member Parent Volunteers in Club Meetings

At least one parent from each family will be asked to serve in a teaching, feedback, or support role during club nights. As specific areas of service may vary due to club needs on a particular evening, parent flexibility and understanding during club meetings is appreciated.

The Forum uses the term “Coach” to denote the lead instructors in our club; however, it is truly each parent who will be coaching their student at home. It is imperative that you learn along with your student, so that you will be prepared to assist them during the week. Parents may be asked to lead various sections during club night.

Families with children too young to meet student membership requirements should plan for one parent to attend club with the older children and one parent to remain at home with the younger children.

Tournament Participation Policy

- All **Varsity** students must participate in the Practice Tournament (in January) and compete in a minimum of 2 tournaments.
- All **Junior Varsity** students must participate in the Speech Practice Tournament and compete in a minimum of 1 tournament.
- All **Juniors** must participate in the Speech Practice Tournament and may choose whether or not to compete at tournament(s).

It is strongly encouraged that all The Forum families consider attending more than the required tournaments. Significant growth often occurs at additional tournaments undertaken within the same season. In addition, experience has shown that participating in fewer than three tournaments during the first year of Debate can limit a student’s ability to fully grasp policy debate techniques even after significant preparation efforts.

➡ Please note: Tournament participation is mandatory at The Forum hosted tournament(s). **BOTH** parents are required to serve. Please plan in advance to request absence from work or other commitments. Both parents are expected to be present for the entire day and evening on both Friday and Saturday of The Forum-hosted tournament only, regardless of the involvement of their student(s). These are best practices. Please direct concerns to a board member.

A Speech Practice Tournament is typically held on a regular Club day in January. The Debate Practice Tournament (required for at least **one** parent with a Debate competitor) is typically held on a Saturday in January and lasts all day.

Families registering more than one student for any other tournaments are required by CCA to register both parents (or, in some circumstances, a replacement person such as a grandparent, older sibling, or family friend). **NO** exceptions to this policy.

Photography Policy

Parent volunteers and non-member adult volunteers give their express permission for the compensation-free use of their and/or their minor children's photograph(s), brief video clips, and first names for public promotion of the club and/or league. These images may be used in print or online publications, presentations, or websites. However, last names of individuals will not be attached to the photographs or video clips unless express written permission for a particular use is obtained.

Dress Code (save this page for reference)

In an effort to accustom our students to choosing and wearing appropriate business attire, as well as to underscore the type of behavior expected during club meetings, The Forum members are required to adhere to a **“business casual”** dress code during club meetings. Please ensure that your attire would be suitable to wear to work and adhere to the following:

Boys: Dress pants or khakis (no cargo pants) with a collared shirt or sweater (no writing). Hair not touching collar. Cleanly shaven or with neatly groomed facial hair. Closed toed leather-type shoes (no athletic shorts, athletic shoes or Crocs).

Girls: Dress pants, khakis, skirts, or gauchos that touch the kneecap (no cargo or denim items, leggings, or footless tights). Modestly cut and modestly fitted shirt, blouse, and/or sweater (no writing). No midriff or undergarments visible.

All: No flip-flops, athletic shoes, or Crocs. Moderate jewelry and hairstyles. Hair not covering the eyes. Hair must be a natural hair color (not necessarily YOUR natural hair color, but a natural hair color). Clothing that does not present the individual as the opposite gender. Hats appropriate to business attire may be worn, but are to be removed once the meeting starts (at prayer) and may not be put back on until after the meeting is over and students are dismissed.

This dress code is comparable with that of other CCA clubs in our area. We ask that parents adhere to the dress code for club meetings, and additionally we adhere to the CCA professional dress code required for tournaments. We refer to this as “tournament attire” -- please note that it differs from The Forum business casual in several ways, including skirt length. The Forum will periodically require tournament attire for club meetings beginning in January.

“Casual Club” will be scheduled regularly during club meetings (usually monthly), although modesty will still be expected. (Please do not wear excessively tight clothing, shorts shorter than the fingertips, athletic shorts, pajamas, spaghetti straps, low cut shirts, etc. If skirt length falls above the knee, please wear leggings or shorts underneath.)

Facility Use Policy

Club Meetings will be held at local church facilities, according to location. These churches have graciously allowed us to use their facilities. We are not affiliated with these churches, so please do not call the churches with questions about The Forum meetings, tournaments, or other activities.

CCA Code of Conduct

For Members of Christian Communicators of America (CCA), and those attending CCA tournaments:

1. The conduct of the leaders, parents, coaches, and participants who attend a CCA event or who associate themselves with CCA will be guided by Biblical principles.
2. Everyone associated with a CCA event will be treated with, and will treat others with, respect before, during, and after rounds, regardless of the outcome.
3. Language will be wholesome, and Christ honoring. No crude or vulgar language or conduct will be tolerated.
4. In order to show respect for the activity, opponents, and judges, professional business attire is required for all CCA participants. All clothing shall be modest.

Membership Fees

The Forum charges a per-family fee of \$150 per year. This fee covers liability insurance, website costs, legal and financial costs, facility donation, awards, general teaching supplies, and miscellaneous expenses. The family fee is due and payable by mid-September.

All tournament registrations/fees are the responsibility of each family. These fees vary and will be payable in the Spring to each Tournament registrar. Prior fees have been: Varsity student \$30 for Debate (if applicable), plus \$25 for the student's first Speech event, plus \$5 for each additional Speech event; JV: \$25 per student; Junior: \$20 per student. One day tournaments have reduced costs.

Families also are responsible for hotel costs for non-local tournaments, but group rates often apply. (Occasionally, host housing with members of a local club can be made

available for families who have financial need.) Tournaments may be in the states of: Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, or Michigan.