



Pentecostal Youth Fellowship of America, Inc.

A United Endeavor of Youth Fellowships of Malayalee Pentecostal Churches.
25 Jericho Turnpike, Jericho, NY 11753 • info@pyfa.org • www.pyfa.org

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2026 PYFA TALENT COMPETITION GUIDELINES

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Age Groups	
Kindergarten	January 1, 2021 and Younger
Primary	January 1, 2018 - December 31, 2020
Middlers	January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2017
Juniors	January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2015
Teens	January 1, 2010 - December 31, 2012
High Teens	January 1, 2006 - December 31, 2009
Seniors	January 1, 2001 - December 31, 2005
Adults	December 31, 2000 and Older

Category Items	Age Groups	TC
<u>Solo</u>	All Age Groups	TC1
<u>Instrumental Music</u>	Middlers & Under, Juniors & Teens, High Teens & Senior	TC1
<u>Bible Quiz</u>	All Age Groups	TC1
<u>Essay</u>	Teens & Under, High Teens, Seniors	TC1
<u>Poetry</u>	All Age Groups - Online Submission	TC1
<u>Group Song w/o Instruments</u>	One Group Per Church	TC2
<u>Group Song w/ Instruments</u>	One Group Per Church	TC2
<u>Artwork</u>	All Age Groups - Online Submission	TC2
<u>Speech</u>	Juniors & Under, Teens, High Teens, Seniors, Adults	TC2
<u>Memory Verse</u>	All Age Groups	TC2



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General Guidelines

- Pastors and youth directors are fully responsible for verifying the date of birth of each contestant from their respective churches. They should personally verify the entry made in the form provided by PYFA.
- The PYFA Talent Competition Committee reserves the right to request proof for the date of birth of any contestant any time before or after the contest.
- A contestant must be 25 years or younger to participate in the Talent Competitions, except for Solo, Bible Quiz, Memory Verse, Group Song, Poetry, Artwork, and Speech.
- The names of all contestants must be forwarded to the PYFA Talent Competition Committee on or before the deadline that will be set by the Executive Committee at the Board Meeting. No entries will be accepted after this date.
- A list of all contestants and churches will be published one week before the scheduled competition. Churches are expected to review the list. No additions will be allowed to the final contestant list.
- All contestants are obliged to fully abide by the guidelines for all the contests. Any violation of the same will result in disqualification of the candidate.
- All contestants must dress and conduct themselves appropriately, as pleasing unto the Lord. Please see the section on dress code for additional clarifications. A contestant who does not comply with the dress code will be disqualified. The Pastor and youth director of the church will be notified as well.
- A contestant can only participate in four items, excluding Group Song.
- A maximum of two contestants from each church will be permitted to participate in each item, except for Instrumental Music (1 contestant per category). There is no limit to the number of contestants who can participate in the Group Song competitions.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each written program. For the written contests, the contestant must be present in the room before the contest begins. Once the first participant completes their contest and leaves the room, admittance into the room to participate in the contest will not be permitted.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each stage program. A contestant will be marked as "absent" if the contestant is not present at the time when their name is called. Once a contestant is marked as "absent", the contestant will not be allowed to participate in the program.
- First, Second, and Third prizes will be awarded for the winners of all competitions. All contests will be conducted regardless of the actual number of contestants that show up on the day of the contest and prizes will be awarded accordingly.



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- Decisions made by the judges will be final. However, any dispute arising from the decision taken by the judges must be referred to the PYFA Talent Competition Committee who in turn will issue a ruling on the issue. The contestant's church pastor/youth director will be notified of the disqualification.
- Only churches that have paid the membership fees as established at the Board Meeting of the calendar year will be permitted to participate in the talent contests. All membership fees must be paid by the due date.
- The guidelines will not be altered during or after the competition, under any circumstances unless approved by two-thirds of the Executive Committee. Should any change be made prior to the competition, the participating churches will be notified of the same in writing before the deadline to submit names. These guidelines may be amended, added to, or replaced at any time by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Executive Committee provided that the notice of the proposed change shall have been given in the notice of the meeting.
- For those writing answers, answers can be written only in one language. You cannot mix English and Malayalam in the answer sheet.
- For all written competitions, stamped papers will be provided to be used by contestants. Contestants are not allowed to use their own paper. For all written competitions, contestants can only use a black or blue pen with no eraser. No pencils are allowed.

Dress Code

- PYFA dress code is that all participants must dress and conduct themselves appropriately, as pleasing unto the Lord. PYFA recognizes that the dress code can be interpreted in different ways. We know that consistency is important, and for that reason the PYFA Talent Committee has identified specific guidelines for contestants of what is and what is not acceptable.
- The Talent Committee has the right to disqualify any individual who does not meet the dress code guidelines. The contestant's church pastor/youth director will be notified of the disqualification.
- We ask that parents and church officials take responsibility to make sure their participant complies with the dress code. All dress code requirements are in effect while a contestant is on stage during their program.
- The following dress code has been set in place for all PYFA Talent Competition stage programs. Stage Programs include the following categories: Solo, Instrumental Music, Speech, Group Song w/ Instruments, Group Song w/o Instruments.
- The standard of dress is designed to reflect modesty, neatness, and appropriateness.



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- o Modesty can be defined as making sure our bodies are covered in such a way as to honor the Lord and not to offend and/or tempt those around us.
- o Neatness can be defined as a look that is clean with clothes that are proper fitting and in good repair.
- o Appropriateness can be defined as wearing clothes that fit the occasion.
- All contestants must wear the following:
 - o A minimum of business casual clothes
 - o Appropriately worn and sized clothing
- Examples of items that should not be worn include, but not limited to:
 - o Tight, form fitting articles of clothing
 - o Any article of clothes that have holes that are not permanently repaired
 - o Oversized / baggy / sagging articles of clothes
- Dresses/Skirts
 - o Dress and skirt lengths are to be knee level and below
- Accessories and Makeup & Hair
 - o Hats, hoods, and sunglasses are not permitted
 - o Makeup applied in a manner that is not a distraction
 - o Extreme hairstyles, including an insignia shaved or dyed into hair, or coloring that gives an unnatural appearance are not permitted.

Guidelines for Individual Items

Memory Verse

Age Group	Memory Verse (ESV)
Kindergarten & Primary	Psalm 1-50 (ESV)
Middlers & Juniors	Psalm 51-100 (ESV)
Teens, High Teens, Seniors & Adults	Proverbs 1-31 (ESV)

- Kindergarten and Primary groups are required to recite the verses from the memory verse packets prepared and uploaded to the PYFA website. Middlers and up are required to write the verses from the memory verse packets prepared and uploaded to the PYFA website.



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- The Kindergarten group is not required to recite the references. The Primary group is required to recite all memory verses with reference. Middlers and up are required to write the references.
- For the Kindergarten and Primary groups, parents/guardians of the contestants will be allowed to be in the same room as their child when they are competing. The parent/guardian cannot assist the child in any way or form, such as with words or gestures. One point will be deducted for each verse that is said with assistance.
- Kindergarten and Primary competition will be held individually or collectively. Fifteen seconds waiting period will be allowed between verses.
- If you are writing from the same book or chapter, the same (book or chapter) need not be repeated after it is written once.
- Missing words, additional words and wrong references will be counted as wrong. This applies to both oral and written.
- No abbreviations for words are allowed.
- Correct spelling should be always followed. The following point deduction will be utilized using 5 spelling mistake increments:

1 – 5 overall spelling mistakes	1-point overall deduction from final score
6 – 10 overall spelling mistakes	2-point overall deduction from final score
11 – 15 overall spelling mistakes	3-point overall deduction from final score, etc.

- All writing should be legible, and the Judges/Executive Officials reserve the right to mark Memory Verses incorrect if they cannot read what is written.
- Contestants in the Teens, High Teens, Seniors and Adults age groups must write a minimum of 50 memory verses with reference to qualify from the memory verse packets. The Juniors and Middlers age groups would be required to write at least 30 memory verses with reference to qualify. If a contestant fails to write the minimum, such contestant will be disqualified. There are no minimum required verses for Kindergarten and Primary age groups.
- The memory verse packages have been designed using the English Standard Version (ESV). All contestants must use the prepared packages that are posted on PYFA's website. Contestants writing in Malayalam, must use the memory verse package provided by PYFA.
- Time limit for writing is one hour.

Bible Quiz

Age Group	Bible Book(s) in ESV
Kindergarten & Primary	Matthew (ESV)



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Middlers & Juniors	Genesis(ESV)
Teens & High Teens	Exodus(ESV)
Seniors & Adults	Nehemiah & Daniel(ESV)

- The quiz will be oral for Kindergarten and Primary whereas it will be written for Middlers and up.
- For the Kindergarten and Primary groups, parents/guardians of the contestants will be allowed to be in the same room as their child when they are competing. The parent/guardian cannot assist the child in any way or form, such as with words or gestures. Points will be deducted for each question that is answered with assistance.
- The books for the Bible Quiz for all age groups will be determined at the Board Meeting and all member churches will be notified of books.
- All Bible Quiz questions will be requested from member churches and will be selected by the PYFA Talent Competition Committee prior to the event.
- All answers should be legible, and the Judges/Executive Officials reserve the right to mark incorrect anything they cannot read.
- Time limit for writing will be thirty (30) minutes.

Essay

Essay Topics	
Leaving the Nets: What following Jesus requires today?	Mark 1:16-20
Empowered to Serve	1 Peter 4:10-11; Isaiah 61:1
Truth in the Age of Misinformation	Ephesians 4:25; John 8:32
Empowered for Purpose	Acts 1:8
Social Media and Identity: Who are we becoming?	Romans 12:2; 1 Samuel 16:7

- The TC Committee will decide and post five topics for all groups on the PYFA website. This will give the participants the opportunity to prepare themselves for the competition.
- On the day of the competition, one of the five topics will be selected by the PYFA Talent Competition Committee for each group.
- Contestants should substantiate their viewpoints with biblical references.
- Essays can be written in English or Malayalam. Only one language can be used in any given essay.
- All essays should be legible, and the PYFA Talent Competition Committee reserves the right to disqualify any essays if they cannot read what is written.



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- Contestants will be scored based on content; specifically, knowledge of the topic and its relation to the Bible and their writing style.
- Contestants are allowed to bring only one Bible, which must be bound and cannot be electronic in any way. A Bible with concordance is allowed. The Bible cannot be a study or commentary Bible. No external material or notes are allowed to be used during the competition.
- Contestants will be given a maximum of two sheets and allowed to write on the front and back (4 pages in total).
- Time limit for writing will be **45 minutes**.

Solo

- Contests will be held separately for males and females. However, only a maximum of two contestants from each church regardless of gender will be permitted to compete.
- For the Kindergarten group, parents/guardians of the contestants will be allowed to go up on the stage with the child when they are competing. The parent/guardian cannot assist the child in any way or form, such as with words or gestures.
- Only Christian Songs in English, Malayalam, or Hindi can be sung except for Christian Rap, which will result in disqualification.
- Participants must sing at least one stanza and chorus or 2 stanzas of a song.
- Contestants will be scored on weighted categories of Melody/Vocal Tone (3), Rhythm (3), Performance/Delivery (3) and Memorization of Song (1). Please see updated Dress Code policy.
- Maximum time allowed is three (3) minutes. Time Taken above the allocated maximum will result in points being deducted as per the Tabulation Guidelines.
- No warning bell will be given.
- Contestants must sing without the use of any accompaniment/tracks.

Speech

General:

- Please see updated Dress Code policy.
- A warning bell will be given at the end of the fourth minute, signaling the contestant that the speech should be concluded at the sounding of the bell which will be given exactly sixty seconds later. In other words, every contestant has five (5) minutes to deliver the speech. Time taken above the allocated maximum will be deducted.



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- English and Malayalam are the only languages that can be used for the speech competition.

Juniors:

- Topic for Juniors Speech: **Empowered By The Spirit - Colossians 1:11**
- Contestants will be scored on weighted categories of Content, Delivery, and Memorization. No electronic devices may be used during the speech. Content (which includes Accuracy and Substance) will be weighted at 5 points; delivery will be weighted at 4 points; and memorization will be weighted at 1 point.
- All content must be original, without assistance from **any AI tools**. **Any violations will result in disqualification.**

Teens & Above

- The subject will be given only ten minutes prior to the contestant's turn to give their speech.
- Contestants will be scored on weighted categories of Content and Delivery. Content (which includes Accuracy and Substance) will be weighted at 6 points; delivery will be weighted at 4 points.
- A contestant can only use one bound reference Bible. A bible with concordance is allowed. The Bible cannot be a study or commentary Bible. No electronic device can be used. No external material or printed notes are allowed to be used during the competition or competition preparation time.

Instrumental Music

- The following four items comprise Instrumental Music: Keyboard, Strings, Percussion, and Wind.
- Groups are broken down as follows, specifically for Instrumental Music: Middlers & Under, Juniors & Teens, High Teens & Seniors.
- Percussion instruments do not consist of any noise generated vocally, clapping, stomping, or snapping of the fingers.
- A contestant will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes to set up. The timekeeper will inform the contestant when 2 minutes have expired. The clock will automatically start at the end of the 3 minutes setup time regardless of if the contestant is ready or not. One point/minute will be deducted for any additional time taken above the allocated maximum.
- No vocal accompaniments are allowed.
- No pre-recorded musical accompaniments or built-in rhythms/beat are allowed.
- Only Christian songs are to be played (exception of Instrumental Music Percussion).
- All instrumental music participants must play a song (stanza and chorus – minimum) from the song list provided for the group song categories listed in the next section. A song cannot only consist of



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chords, but the melody of the song should be played as well. This does not apply to participants in the percussion category.

- Maximum time allowed is three (3) minutes. Time taken above the allocated maximum will be deducted as per the Tabulation Guidelines.
- The contestant should state the name of the song(s) before they begin.
- A member church may only send one person per group for a maximum of 3 contestants overall per each church for each item.
- Contestants are responsible for bringing their own instruments, except for the basic drum set. Drummers are requested to bring their own drumsticks.
- Contestants will be scored on weighted categories of Melody (3), Rhythm (3), Performance/Delivery (3) and Memorization of Song (1). (exception of Melody for Instrumental Music Percussion)

Group Song With & Without Instrument

ENGLISH SONGS	MALAYALAM SONGS	HINDI SONGS
Been So Good	Yeshu Oru Vaathil Thurannal	Yeshu Anewala Hai
Jesus Be the Name	Kalvary Kunnil Nadhan Yagam	Gin Gin Ke Sthudhi Karun
The Wonderful Blood	Vallabha Nee Kotta	He Jeevith Parameshwar [Hallelujah Hosanna]
Worthy	Paramonadhan Paripavanan	Hazaaron Zubane
Agnus Dei (HYMN)	Ithramel Ithramel Enne Snehichchuvu	Studhi Aradhana uper Jati Hai
Yahweh Will Manifest	Yeshuve Aradhyane	Mukhti Dilaye
In Jesus Name	Nin Simhasanam	Aradhana Teri Aradhana
What A God	Ennikothasha Verum Parvatham	Ghor Andhere Mein
I Thank God	Albuthamalla Ethu Albuthamalla	Yeshu Jaldi Aayega Vo Zaroor Aayega
The Joy	Nin Sneham Paaduvan Nin Naamam Uyarthuvan	Neele Aasmaan

- There will be no age limit restriction or limitation on the maximum number of participants in Group Song With and Without Instrumental Music. However, a minimum of three vocalists are needed for each group per category.
- Two groups are permitted from each church, one for Group Song With Instrumental Music and one for Group Song Without Instrumental Music.



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- Each member church will then select a song(s) from the published list to be sung for Group Song With Instrumental Music and a song(s) for Group Song Without Instrumental Music. No other songs can be sung during the competition except from the published list. The selection list is listed above.
- Use of preprogrammed or prerecorded loops/software is not allowed; any looping or sequencing technology must function only in response to manual and live hands-on control.
- A group must sing at least one stanza and chorus of a song or 2 stanzas of a song.
- Other songs with the same lyrics from the predetermined list will not be permitted. YouTube links to the correct songs are provided.
- Secular lyrics of any kind will not be allowed. Styles of rap/rock/alternative music are not allowed when performing the songs during the competitions.
- Instruments are defined as any item that is categorized in this Guideline as Instrumental Music Wind, Instrumental Music Keyboard, Instrumental Music Strings, and Instrumental Music Percussion.
- A group is responsible for bringing their own instruments, except for the basic drum set. Drummers are requested to bring their own drumsticks.
- Groups will be scored based upon Melody/Vocal Tone (3), Rhythm (3), Performance/Creativity/Delivery (3) and Memorization of Song (1).
- Groups will be selected at random on the day of the competition. The list will be selected from a hat. The officials will select the order of the Group Song Competitions prior to the start of the contest. This will eliminate the same church order every year and try to prevent any churches from going first for both competition and performing back-to-back. The order is not guaranteed as it is being picked at random.
- **Group Song Without Instruments:** Maximum time allowed for each group's performance is five (5) minutes.
 - Additionally, groups are allowed 5 minutes to set up. After 4 minutes are over, a verbal notification will be given by the timekeeper to the groups that they have 1 minute left to be ready. If the group finishes prior to the set preparation time, they are to inform the timekeeper that they are ready to proceed. If the group is not ready after the 5-minute preparation time has expired, the clock will start immediately for the song. Groups will then be penalized one point/minute for any additional time taken above the allocated maximum.
- **Group Song with Instruments:** Groups are allowed a maximum of twelve (12) minutes, which includes setup time and performance time. Groups will be penalized one point/minute for any additional time taken above the allocated maximum. PYFA will designate a representative to pause the time in the event of a technical issue related to the Talent Competition venue equipment. This exception applies



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only to issues caused by the Talent Competition venue equipment and not to problems with the group's own instruments or setup.

- The sound system will be cut off for any team that goes beyond thirteen minutes.
- Only songs from the published list to be sung for a given category can be used for the competition. No other songs can be sung during the competition except from the predetermined list.
- Imitation of Rhythm, including beatboxing, stomping, clapping, and snapping are permitted for Group Song without Instrument.
- The sound system can only be adjusted during the setup time. Once the given church begins their performance, the sound system will not be adjusted. Only in the case of feedback or disruption, the sound technician will have the right to adjust the volume to fix the issue.

Artwork

- Hand drawn image in response to the verse: **Empowered By The Spirit - Colossians 1:11**
- This competition is open to participants in all age groups, two per age group/per church.
- The following judging criteria will be utilized to evaluate submissions.
 - Relevance to the theme - 50%
 - Creativity/Style and Originality - 30%
 - Aesthetic quality (design, composition, color/tones) - 10%
 - Professional quality (neatness and craft) - 10%
- Submit image in pdf, png and/or jpeg formats via pyfa.org/tc.
- Artwork may not use any computer or electronic assisted graphics.
- All images submitted must be original and drawn solely by the participant, without assistance from others **or any AI tools. Any violations will result in disqualification.**
- Image submissions will be disqualified if they contain hateful images, or concepts opposing the gospel.
- Image submissions may not have been previously published.
- Image submissions may not contain words.
- By submitting an entry for this competition, participants grant permission to PYFA to share and/or publicize their entry.
- After PYFA's Talent Competition is completed, the rights will revert to the original submitter.



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Poetry

- A poem written in response to the verse: **Empowered By The Spirit - Colossians 1:11** (200 words maximum).
- This competition is open to participants in all age groups, two per age group/per church.
- The following judging criteria will be utilized to evaluate submissions.
 - Relevance to the theme - 50%
 - Creativity/Style and Originality - 30%
 - Coherence of form and structure (harmony of words, flow) - 10%
 - Clarity of imagery and language - 10%
- Submit poems via pyfa.org/tc.
- All poems submitted must be original and written solely by the participant, without assistance from others **or any AI tools. Any violations will result in disqualification.**
- Poem submissions will be disqualified if they contain expletives, or ideas opposing the gospel.
- Poem submissions may not have been previously published.
- By submitting an entry for this competition, participants grant permission to PYFA to share / publicize their entry.
- After PYFA's Talent Competition is completed, the rights will revert to the original submitter.

Prize Conferral

- All trophies and prizes given in connection with the PYFA competitions shall be sponsored and funded by PYFA. New church trophies will be given on a yearly basis at the PYFA Anniversary.
- Trophies will be given for individuals as well as the churches who scored the most points (Championship), the second most points (First Runner-up), and the third most points (Second Runner-up) overall during the competitions. Points will be generated utilizing a 5-3-1-point grading system where first prize will receive 5 points, second prize will receive 3 points and third prize will receive 1 point.
- Points will be generated utilizing a 10-7-5 point grading system where first prize will receive 10 points, second prize will receive 7 points and third prize will receive 5 points for the Group Song Competitions only.
- There will be a President's Award of \$300 presented to the contestant who wins four First prizes. The Kindergarten (KG) group will only be required to win three First prizes to qualify for the President's Award.



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Attestation

By providing electronic signature on the Talent Competition registration forms, you are agreeing to all rules set in this Guidelines. PYFA Talent committee and officials have the right to disqualify contestants for failing to adhere to guidelines. Disqualification can occur before stage performance if proper dress code is not followed.