



# Odyssey of the Mind

**Creative Competition**

*Sign up to be on a team!*

**\* \* Information Meeting \* \***

**Monday, September 18 at 7:00pm, Mt. Lebanon Public Library**

### **What's Odyssey of the Mind?**

"Odyssey" is an international creative-thinking competition. Teams of 5 to 7 kids work together to problem-solve & develop their creative talents. Odyssey provides a positive atmosphere for team-work and competition.

Participating in an Odyssey team is exciting and fun, but it is also time-consuming and a challenge. Think of it as a sports team for the creative side of the mind.

Teams are assigned a problem in the Fall and challenged to create an 8-minute presentation with their solution. There is no "right" answer, so the more creative the better. After deciding on the solution, the team writes the script, makes the costumes, props, set, and practices its performance. All this on a limited budget and without parental help. Each team presents at a tournament at Moon High Sch. on March 4, 2017.

**Costs:** A small registration fee & share of the team's expenses will be due from each child. Total costs are usually \$25 - \$50.

### **Strong Commitment by kids and parents:**

It's a weekly commitment of a couple of hours in Nov. & Dec., and more in Jan. and Feb. (meeting times are set by the team's coach). All team members should attend meetings, as a team succeeds only through cooperative effort. Each team must have volunteer parents to coach & judge. Teams and coaches will have a busy February!

### **Sign-ups & Team Building:**

To be a team, you must have a parent who will coach, and at least 5 team members (max: 7). (We often have disappointed kids because we don't have enough parents to coach teams.) Teams compete in their grade categories: K - 2 (non-competitive division); 3 - 5; 6 - 8; and 9 - 12.

Be a coach and assemble a team! We can provide names of interested kids who are looking for a team. If you can't coach, we'll provide your child's name to a coach who is looking for other team members.

**Visit Odyssey's National website at:**

[www.odysseyofthemind.com/learn\\_more.php](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/learn_more.php)

**Visit Odyssey's Regional website at:**

[wpaodyssey.org](http://wpaodyssey.org)

Questions? Contact Howe PTA Coordinator Leah Haywiser 412-980-4657

**Odyssey Response Form** - Please return this form by Oct. 15 to the Odyssey box in the School Office.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: day: \_\_\_\_\_ evening: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check one:** \_\_\_\_\_ **I'd like my child to be on a team.** Please give my name to a Coach.

\_\_\_\_\_ **I will coach a team.** (Check one: I have a: partial team \_\_\_ complete team \_\_\_)

What role(s) will parent(s) undertake? Coach \_\_\_\_\_ Asst. Coach \_\_\_\_\_ Tournament Judge \_\_\_\_\_

List the names of other children who you'd like on your child's team (a Response Form is needed for each child).

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**\*\*\* Odyssey of the Mind 2017-2018 - Additional Important Information \*\*\***

Participating in an Odyssey team is fun and perfect for kids who can work cooperatively in a group, and who enjoy a creative challenge.

Division 1, 2 and 3 teams (grades 3 – 5, 6 – 8, and 9-12) choose one of four problems. These teams are scored at the tournament, and may go on to the state and international level tournaments. All "Primary" teams (K - 2<sup>nd</sup> grades) work on the same problem, in a non-competitive setting.

A second aspect of the team's challenge is to prepare for a spontaneous problem given at the tournament. To get ready, the team practices fast-paced creative challenges at their meetings. The team may have a couple of minutes to name things that climb, or to build a structure made only of paper, spaghetti, and tape. The more creative, the better.

A team consists of 5 to 7 kids, and a volunteer coach (asst. coaches are recommended). Coaches set the meeting times & places. Each team must also have 2 - 3 adults who will volunteer to be tournament judges. The judges must attend a morning of training (on a Saturday) in February.

How sign-ups work: Put a team or partial team together, or submit your name to be matched with a team that's forming. Teams are limited, and we often have more interested kids than teams to place them on. Send in a response form to the school coordinator or call with questions.

Coaching & Team building: If you find it fun and rewarding to enrich kids' creativity and team-building, then you should consider coaching an Odyssey of the Mind team. Rewarding for the coach, and especially the child. Coaches meet with their kids in November - February on a regular basis, and meetings are held at a time and location that is convenient for the coach. Each coach assembles his/her team of 5 to 7 kids (either a complete team, or we will help the coach put a team together.) Call to find out more about coaching a team. New coaches and assistant coaches can attend a free coach's training session on a Saturday morning in November.

*Remember, all children MUST be able to attend the tournament on March 3, 2018!*

**SYNOPSIS OF THIS YEAR'S LONG-TERM PROBLEMS (team's performance is 8 minutes max.):**

**Problem 1: Triathlon Travels:** In this problem, teams will ride on and drive original vehicles in an Odyssey-style triathlon. They will try to score in "curling," hit the right targets when "jousting," and "run track" by navigating a course in two directions. Between these events, the team will entertain the audience. All of the action will take place in a team-created performance that features the vehicles' triathlon travels, a commentator, and a coach.

**Problem 2: Emoji, Speak for Yourself:** Three-dimensional emojis will be used to communicate the life story of a once famous, but now forgotten, emoji. Teams will create a performance where the emojis demonstrate special functions like changing into a different emoji. Performances will also include a choreographed dance, a technical representation of texting, and sounds to enhance the performance. The twist? No spoken language is allowed.

**Problem 3: Classics... Mockumentary! Seriously?** In this problem, characters don't always agree as they recount the classic story where they appeared. The team will select a classic from a list and present different characters in a humorous documentary-style performance where details are added, denied, exaggerated, and disputed. There will be interviews, behind-the-scenes "clips," and voice-overs that present the events as they "really" took place.

**Problem 4: Animal House:** Teams will turn their balsa wood structures into animals! The structure will have its appearance transformed & explained during an original performance. The structure must hold the team-created food while it supports weights.

**Problem 5: A Stellar Hangout:** In the outreaches of the universe, there is an Intergalactic Hangout where all sorts of creatures from different worlds stop, eat, refuel, and relax. Teams will create a humorous performance centered on this science fiction hangout that includes original creatures, foods, and a search for space treasure. There will also be a worker character, entertainment, and a futuristic map at the hangout.

**Primary: We're Cooking Now Grades K-2:** Teams create their own cooking show where a chef gives an original cooking lesson. The show takes place from a creative kitchen where balsa wood is used to support objects. A special guest will visit and learn to cook from the chef by using team-created representations of food. Performances will also include a name for the show, theme music, and a story about the meal they are cooking.