

2026 Community Judge Orientation

YouTube Video Link: <https://youtu.be/yz4l943aYPA>

Welcome to NCFCA Christian Speech and Debate! My name is Kim Cromer and I'm honored to serve the league as Executive Director. We believe the world needs more people who can communicate truth with integrity and grace. That's why, for over 20 years, it's been our mission to challenge and equip young people to do just that!

The fact that you are willing to show up, share your smile, and offer our students intergenerational words of wisdom through **your judging feedback makes an impact** in their lives that we can't even begin to calculate. It takes a well-oiled set of rules and protocols to run a smooth tournament, but the heart of what we do is based on authentic connections between competitors and judges and your part in that means so much to our organization.

We hope you will be inspired by what you see and hear with us.

Please be ready to check in approximately 45 minutes prior to the first round you are scheduled to judge so that you can complete our ballot selection process and be assigned to a competition room.

When it's time for the round to start, you can simply listen, evaluate and take notes. It's up to us to make ourselves understandable to you, so if you are confused, that's our fault, not yours. In debate rounds we hold one another accountable for following the rules, and in speech rounds there will be a head judge to monitor protocols.

- **In speech rounds**, you will see up to 8 competitors scheduled at 15-minute intervals. Our ballots will give you some suggested ways to evaluate each speech, but we want your unique perspective and ranking, so please don't confer with other judges.
- **In debate**, we are assigned to debate on both sides of the resolution throughout the tournament, so please be open to being persuaded by whoever best supports the position they are in for the round.

We also ask that in both speech and debate, you actively guard against partiality based on competitor name recognition, known levels of experience, or appearance.

We aren't supposed to answer questions or converse with our judges aside from polite introductions and our assigned speaking times. So, we won't be chatty, but please know that we appreciate your presence more than you know.

At the end of the round, we ask that you do 2 things in speech and 3 things in debate.

One - For both speech and debate, you will need to complete the rubric on your ballot to evaluate the speakers and then rank them from first to last. You may use the rubric for ranking, as long as you break any ties.

Two - We ask that you share comments with us.

- When judges explain the reason for their decision in a debate round, it helps us understand which arguments were most persuasive.
- When they give us comments on our speaking skills we are blessed with knowing what we did well and finding out what we could do better.

Third - If you are judging debate, you will also need to pick the winning side based on who you thought best supported their position in the round.

Please be assured that we are NOT looking for expert opinions or decisions. We're here because we want to improve our real-world communication skills. That means we truly value your honest assessment and feedback.

To recap, we need you to 1) complete the speaker rubrics, 2) share comments, and 3) pick the winner if you are judging a debate round.

If you would like to learn more about things to think about as you judge speech or debate, we have additional information and videos available through the judge pages on our website.

We also ask that you join **our commitment to provide a safe and effective learning environment** for our competitors who range in age from 12 to 18 years old. In alignment with that goal, there are a few key points where you can help:

- We require all participants to be identified by wearing a **nametag** at all times at in person tournaments or by screen name for online events. If you are at an in person tournament, we will also ask you to simply show a form of identification.
- **We ask that you not enter a physical room where only 1 student is present.** For online tournaments, leave your camera and microphone off until 2 more people are present.

- Competition room **doors should be open** unless a debate round is in progress or a competitor is prepping or speaking in a speech round.
- **Be mindful of** personal space and physical **boundaries** and remain within areas designated for NCFCA use.
- **Please do not take photographs or recordings** of our competitors.
- If you have **children under 12 years old** with you, please ensure that they are **under** your **direct supervision** or the supervision of another designated adult.
- Please keep all communication whether verbal or written appropriate and edifying. Beyond being mindful of appropriate topics, we also ask that adults be careful in the tone and content of the feedback they offer. We want judges and observers to **be honest** with constructive critiques that help our competitors know how they can improve, **but please remain gracious and kind**. Please do not include personal contact information on the ballot.
- It goes without saying that **harassment of any kind is not allowed** as it is counter to our mission and our value of constructive community.
- While you are with us, either in person or online, **if you have questions or see anything of concern please notify a tournament staff member** and act immediately to remove any students from imminent harm should the need arise.
- If you'd like to read our full Child Safety Policy, it is available in the resource library on NCFCA.org as well as in our judge resources on the tournament platform.

We sincerely appreciate your time and willingness to help equip our young people for whatever the Lord has for them in the future. Once again, **thank you** for your time and commitment to helping us fulfill our mission and to keeping children safe. We sincerely hope you enjoy your NCFCA experience!