

## Why You Should Join Odyssey of the Mind (OOTM)

Odyssey of the Mind is a competition, a challenge, and a club. And it's *fun!* OOTM teams - each made up of 5-7 students - will choose a Long Term problem in the fall, and spend the months until the Region Tournament in March working on their solution to that problem. *A very important part of Odyssey is that the students do ALL of the work themselves, from writing scripts, to creating scenery, to building vehicles or engineering towers.* Everything comes from the team members, who find that working together, they can do some pretty fantastic stuff. As they develop the Long Term solution, they will also practice Spontaneous problems with their Coach, in preparation for that portion of the competition. At the Region Tournament, teams will compete against other Houston-area teams, and probably do well enough to go on to the State Tournament. Top teams from State advance to World!

## Interested?

Email Melanie Cremins ([melcremins@gmail.com](mailto:melcremins@gmail.com)), MMS's OOTM coordinator to coach and/or find a team. You can also phone her at 281-414-7366.

## Team-Driven, Team-Created

The biggest rule for Odyssey team members and their families to learn is **NO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE!** While it might seem impossible for parents to stop themselves from giving their ideas about the problems, and to let the students figure out for themselves how to construct, write, act, engineer, or even fail to engineer the solutions they've envisioned - it's awesome to see what they come up with when the rule is followed. *Odyssey kids are brilliant, inventive, creative, goofy, and amazing.* The No Outside Assistance rule gives all of those qualities a real chance to shine, and their parents will find their restraint more than rewarded when they go to the tournament and see what the teams have accomplished entirely on their own.

## Tournament Dates

**March 3, 2012** is the **Region Tournament** for all Houston-area teams. Placing teams go on to the **Texas State Tournament** on **April 14, 2012**. **Last year, 2 MMS teams advanced to WORLD!** (end of May, 2012.)

## Resources

<http://odysseyofthemind.com/> - official OOTM site  
<http://odysseyofthemind.com/> - Odyssey Texas site

## FAQ

### What is the time commitment for students?

Each coach will set their own meeting schedule, but a guideline is that teams meet 2-4 times per month in the autumn, and weekly in 2012, for about 2 hours per meeting.

### What if we have a conflict?

It's important to remember that the team has to create and present the solution on their own, and that once a team of 7 begins working together, none of them can be replaced or switch teams. In other words, if you quit the team, they're stuck going to competition with fewer members. (If a team starts with fewer than 7 members, more can be added, but all original members will stay on the roster.)

That said, missing the occasional meeting isn't usually a problem. But you don't want to start Odyssey unless you can commit to being at Region and at State.

### How much does it cost?

Your team will be funded by its participants. Each problem has a cost limit, and recycling/repurposing items is encouraged, but in general each team member should expect to pay about \$75 over the course of the year.

#### **About coaching....**

Coach! It's absolutely fun, you don't have to know how to do anything but provide space and time for the team to work, and you'll love seeing the team thinking and growing together.

There are tons of resources, training, and people who will help you with any questions. But as long as you're good-humored, patient, and willing to give some time to the students, you're super-qualified to coach a team.

#### **What can I do to help, besides coaching?**

Your coach will appreciate any help you can give - assisting with keeping order at meetings, making a snack schedule, finding a judge to represent your team, volunteering at the tournament, etc. Just making sure that your student is on time to meetings and following the **No Outside Assistance** guidelines is the most important help of all!