

Catholic Citizenship

Essay Contest

Overview

The Knights of Columbus sponsors the Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest to encourage today's youth to be more connected to their community and their faith. The goal of this program is to involve young Catholics in 8th through 12th grade (public, private, parochial or home schools) in civic discourse and instill in them religious and life-affirming values. The essay should be approximately 500-750 words on a specific subject, changing every other year. Entrants will be judged on grammar, style, and how clearly they present the theme – which should showcase creativity, imagination and overall development of the topic. For Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest resources, visit www.kofc.org/essay.

2025-2026 Essay Topic

Out of the 267 popes that have led the Catholic Church, who are your three favorite popes and why?

Action Steps

1. Identify a program chairman to oversee all action steps and delegate tasks, as needed. If coordinating with the parish or school, confirm pastor or principal approval with grand knight, and then set up subsequent collaboration meetings.
2. Contact your grand knight, financial secretary, or program director to order the *Catholic Citizenship Essay Kit* (#EA-Kit) through Supplies Online via [Officers Online](#).
3. Use the sample [News Release](#) (#10643) as a model to create and distribute a tailored release to local media.
4. Build public interest for the event! Promote the Catholic Citizenship Essay in your parish and larger community through a variety of efforts:
 - Advertise at Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) meetings, in parish halls, and especially in local Catholic schools. Prominently display promotional posters (found in the *Catholic Citizenship Essay Kit* (#EA-KIT)).
 - Reach out and encourage Catholic School English teachers to use this as a class assignment.
 - Bulletin announcements
 - Pulpit announcements
 - Posting on your council and parish website / social media pages
5. Ensure that all essays are collected by the pre-determined date.
6. Assemble a team of three or more judges (consisting of clergy, teachers, and other respected members of the Catholic community) to select winning submissions.
7. Make a formal presentation of winners and invite the media to attend (refer to [Public Relations and Publicity Guidelines](#) #2235)! On the day of the presentation, be sure to wear Knights of Columbus-branded apparel and enlist a fellow Knight or community member to photograph the event.



8. Send winning essays along with the [Entry Form](#) (#4208) to the next highest level for judging. Contact your district deputy to learn where the winning essays should be mailed. If there are no higher levels in your area or jurisdiction, send the essays to the Supreme Office Department of Fraternal Mission through fraternalmission@kofc.org for the final round of judging.
9. Following the Catholic Citizenship Essay Contest, update the community on the success of your program by amending the Catholic Citizenship Essay sample [Winners Announcement](#) (#10644) and distributing it to local media, along with energizing photographs from the event.
10. To gain credit for your program, complete the associated reporting forms.
 - Immediately after your event is finished, complete the [Fraternal Programs Report Form](#) (#10784)
 - At the end of the fraternal year, complete the [Columbian Award Application](#) (#SP-7)

Resources

1. #EA-KIT- *Catholic Citizenship Essay Kit*
(quantities of resources contained in EA-KIT are in parentheses below)
2. #4202-EA- [Guidebook](#) (1 per kit)
3. #4208- [Entry Form](#) (75 per kit)
4. #4209- [Vertical Poster](#) (5 per kit)
5. #4206- [Participation Certificate](#) (75 per kit)
6. #4207- [Winners Certificate](#) (5 per kit)
7. #10643- [News Release](#)
8. #10644- [Winners Announcement](#)

Program resources can be ordered by your grand knight, financial secretary and/or program director on Supplies Online via [Officers Online](#).

Link

www.kofc.org/essay