



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
Office of Catholic Education and Formation

2026 RESPECT LIFE CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND: Since 1979, the Respect Life Apostolate has partnered with the Office of Catholic Education and Formation to sponsor an annual writing competition for eighth grade students in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Students reflect, pray, research, and write about the Gospel of Life for a chance to earn scholarships and other awards.

2026 RESPECT LIFE CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST: Eighth graders from elementary schools, Parish School of Religion (PSR) programs, and Catholic home school programs in the Archdiocese of St. Louis are invited to enter through their school/program. Schools/programs will then conduct their own in-house judging and submit up to three of their top entries to the Respect Life Apostolate by February 27. All school and parish decisions are final.

The Respect Life Apostolate will select finalists from the school, PSR, and Catholic home school entries. Finalists will be announced March 20 and invited to an awards luncheon at the Cardinal Rigali Center on Thursday, April 9 with Very Rev. Carl Scheble, Vicar General. Scholarship and award winners will be announced at the luncheon.

SCHOLARSHIP & AWARD OPPORTUNITIES: Students compete for finalist prizes, awards to the 2026 Steubenville STL Mid-America Conference, and partial one-time scholarships towards their freshman year Catholic high school tuition.

ESSAY SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS: Please type entries on 8 ½ x 11" white paper and staple together with:

- Completed entry form.
- Short typed statement/letter from student as to why he or she should be considered for the scholarship.
- Original typed entry of 250-500 words on one writing prompts provided. The entry may take any form of written communication: story, personal narrative, essay, prayer, poem, interview, etc. (If used, quoted text must be properly cited with sources).
- Word count (250-500) noted on entry (citations are not included in the word count).

Please keep a copy of the student's complete submission. *If any of the above items are missing, the entry will be considered incomplete and may be disqualified.*

JUDGING: Entries will be evaluated: 60% content, 20% creativity and originality, and 20% spelling and grammar.

QUESTIONS? Contact **Katrina Becker** at 314.792.7557 // katrinabecker@archstl.org or

Naseem Ahmad at naseemahmad@archstl.org

Important Contest Dates:

- Friday, February 27: Submission Deadline
- Tuesday, March 20: Finalists Announced
- Thursday, April 9: Awards Luncheon, Winners Announced
- Steubenville STL Mid-America Conference: July 10-12 & July 17-19

Postmark entries on/by February 27, 2026 to:

Respect Life Apostolate
Creative Writing Contest
20 Archbishop May Dr.
St. Louis, MO 63119