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AMERICAN LIFE LEAGUE'S
**CULTURE OF LIFE
STUDIES PROGRAM**



Institute for
Excellence in
Writing

Listen. Speak. Read. Write. Think!

PRO-LIFE ESSAY CONTEST

2026

**Are you passionately pro-life?
Do you like to write?
This contest is for YOU!**

We're awarding \$1,000 in cash prizes, cool pro-life gear, and the chance to be published on the CLSP website!

DEADLINE: November 7, at 11:59pm Pacific time. We will notify contestants of the results during the month of December.



This essay contest is an excellent opportunity for young people to think through their arguments and sharpen their pro-life debate skills.



CATEGORY 1

MIDDLE SCHOOL (5TH–8TH GRADE)

Students will reflect on a quote from St. John Paul II and choose one specific stage or circumstance of human life—such as life before birth, disability, serious illness, or old age—and write a 500-word essay defending why that person's life has value and dignity.



CATEGORY 2

HIGH SCHOOL (9TH–12TH GRADE)

Students will reflect on a quote from Dr. Jérôme Lejeune and write a 500-word essay about how abortion, IVF, euthanasia, prenatal screening, or organ donation has become a "mad science."

CONTEST RULES

- Submissions must be the **original** and **unpublished** work of the student. No AI assistance allowed.
- All essays must be submitted by a parent, legal guardian, or teacher.
- All submissions must conform to formatting requirements.

Visit prolifeessay.com for full submission guidelines, formatting requirements, prize details, and TO ENTER!

QUESTIONS?

Contact Susan Ciancio at clsp@all.org.

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CATEGORY 1 MIDDLE SCHOOL (5TH–8TH GRADE)

"Respect for life requires that science and technology should always be at the service of man and his integral development. Society as a whole must respect, defend, and promote the dignity of every human person, at every moment and in every condition of that person's life."

— St. John Paul II

Choose **one** specific stage or circumstance of human life—such as life before birth, disability, serious illness, or old age—and write a 500-word essay defending why that person's life has value and dignity, even when he or she may be dependent on others or facing difficult circumstances.

Your essay should connect your argument to St. John Paul II's quote and use specific examples to support your position. Make sure to include **all** of the following:

- Describe one or more challenges that can threaten the dignity of people in the situation you chose.
- Explain why that person's life has value and dignity, even when he or she may be dependent on others or facing difficult circumstances.
- Give at least one concrete example for how individuals, families, communities, or society can respond with greater respect, compassion, and protection, and explain why you chose this.

PRIZES

FIRST PLACE: \$250; CLSP's *The Beauty of the Developing Human Being* download; *Virtues of the Saints: 5 Heavenly Habits for Children* by Patrick O'Hearn and Fr. Donald H. Calloway (courtesy of Patrick O'Hearn); *Daily Companion for Young Catholics: Minute Meditations for Every Day*; pro-life saint cards; mini rosary; publication on CLSP website

SECOND PLACE: \$150; CLSP's *The Beauty of the Developing Human Being* download; *Did Jesus Have a Last Name?* by Matthew Pinto and Jason Evert (courtesy of Ascension); Jesus figures (one to keep, some to pass out to others); pro-life saint cards; mini rosary; publication on CLSP website

THIRD PLACE: \$75; spiral bound prayer journal; Jesus figures (one to keep, some to pass out to others); pro-life saint cards; mini rosary; publication on CLSP website

HONORABLE MENTION: \$25; mini rosary; publication on CLSP website

CATEGORY 2 HIGH SCHOOL (9TH–12TH GRADE)

"Medicine becomes mad science when it attacks the patient instead of fighting the disease. We must always be on the patient's side, always." — Dr. Jérôme Lejeune

Modern medicine has given humanity remarkable tools to prevent disease, extend life, and diagnose illness. Yet with these advances come difficult questions about what medicine *should* do—not just what medicine *can* do.

Choose **one** of the following ways in which medicine has become a "mad science": abortion, IVF, euthanasia, prenatal screening, or organ donation. Write a 500-word essay explaining how your chosen topic illustrates Dr. Lejeune's quote.

Make sure to include **all** of the following:

- Who is the patient?
- What does it mean to be "on the patient's side"?
- What are the benefits and risks of modern medical technology?
- Discuss the dignity and rights of those affected.
- Discuss the responsibilities of physicians and society.

PRIZES

FIRST PLACE: \$250; CLSP's *Without Mercy: An Introduction to Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, and Other Threats to the Medically Vulnerable* download; *Courtship of the Saints: How the Saints Met their Spouses* by Patrick O'Hearn (courtesy of Patrick O'Hearn); *Daily Companion for Young Catholics: Minute Meditations for Every Day*; pro-life saint cards; mini rosary; publication on CLSP website

SECOND PLACE: \$150; CLSP's *Without Mercy: An Introduction to Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, and Other Threats to the Medically Vulnerable* download; *Disorientation: How to Go to College without Losing Your Mind* edited by John Zmirak (courtesy of Ascension); Jesus figures (one to keep, some to pass out to others); pro-life saint cards; mini rosary; publication on CLSP website

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