

# St. Paul Joint Committee Essay Contest 2012

## Catholic Order of Foresters

### I. OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

We want to challenge our youth members in a creative activity that allows them to sharpen their writing skills, reflect on their personal values, and engage them to think clearly about meaningful topics.

### II. ESSAY TOPIC

Expressing "gratitude" is an important value in our personal lives. So answer the following question:  
*What are you most grateful for?*

### III. RULES & GUIDELINES

1. Eligibility: COF youth in grades 6-12 that are also members of the following courts: St. Matthew 367, St. Anthony 491, St. Martinus 550, and Stillwater 821.

\* Level I: Grades 6-8

\* Level II: Grades 9-12

2. Judge Selection & Scoring: The contest administrators will choose the judges. Every effort will be made to ensure that our judges are qualified and impartial. Please see note below.

**Note:** In order to conceal the identity of each participant, the contest administrator will assign a number to each essay. This number will appear on the first page of the essay and its cover page - see **Rule-Guideline 4**. The cover page will be detached and retained by the administrator until judging is completed; only the essay, minus its cover page, will be given to the judges for scoring.

3. Timeline: Essays must be submitted by **March 31, 2012**, (see Submission Procedure). Winners will be notified by **April 30, 2012**, and will receive their award in person or by mail shortly thereafter.

4. The essay must include a cover page containing the following information: The topic; the word count; the participant's name, address, phone number, and email address; the name of the participant's school and her or his grade; and the name of the participant's court.

5. The word count requirement for the essay is as follows:

\* Level I: No less than 300 -> no greater than 400

\* Level II: No less than 400 -> no greater than 500

**Note:** Every word is counted. The only exceptions are those on the cover page, footnotes, and a Works Cited page, if applicable.

6. The essay must be typed, double-spaced, and must use 12-point Times New Roman font. If this font is not available, use a similar style. A page number must appear on each page of the essay, except the cover page, and must be centered at the bottom of the page. In addition, all paragraphs must be indented.

7. The essay must be the result of the participant's own ideas and writing. If the participant refers to someone else's ideas or information, however, he or she must use a footnote or the MLA (Modern Language Association) system to cite those sources.

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**Note:** The participant may ask a parent or a teacher for help with how to construct a footnote or use the MLA Style of citation. Any words used in a footnote or Works Cited page will NOT be counted in the essay. Failure to identify material that is not the participant's own will result in disqualification.

8. In order to maintain anonymity, the essay must NOT contain any identifiable names including those of the participant, the participant's parent(s), and the participant's school.

### IV. JUDGING (see Scoring note)

The essay will be judged on how well it adheres to the following criteria (a maximum of 50 points are possible):

#### 1. Content - 20 Points: 1-5 points per item.

Does the essay...

- Have a thesis statement that, 1) states the topic... 2) states the main point the writer intends to make?  
For example: 1) Learning to play a musical instrument... 2) takes time and patience.
- Support the main point with examples, details, and/or relevant personal experiences?
- Reveal something about the writer's personality and/or perspective by using good word choices?
- Communicate the writer's ideas clearly by using good sentence construction?

#### 2. Organization - 16 Points: 1-4 points per item.

Does the essay...

- Have an "introduction" that grabs the reader's attention?
- Develop the main point with one "body paragraph" for each supporting point?
- Have a "conclusion" that makes it memorable?
- Flow smoothly and logically? Can the reader easily follow the writer's train of thought from one idea to the next?

#### 3. Mechanics - 6 Points: 1-2 points per item.

Does the essay...

- Follow all structure and formatting guidelines - including the MLA Style and/or footnotes?  
Please refer to Rule-Guideline 7 for more information.
- Use correct grammar and punctuation?
- Spell all words correctly?

#### 4. Overall Impression: 1-8 Points.

### JUDGING STATEMENT

We want to encourage all our eligible youth to write and submit an essay regardless of where their writing skills are, currently. To help them in this effort and to ensure a meaningful writing experience, we have provided the preceding scoring criteria as a guideline.

We do not, however, wish to overwhelm the participants with this process. Rather, we want them to express their unique voice and perspective in writing. To help ensure fair and consistent scoring, therefore, all essays will be judged in two categories: First, by how completely they adhere to the scoring criteria. Second, by the overall impression they present to the judge. Note that a separate judge will score each category.

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**V. AWARDS**

1. Cash prizes will be awarded to the TOP THREE winners in both levels:

\* Level I: First place \$75.00, Second place \$50.00, Third place \$25.00

\* Level II: First place \$100.00, Second place \$75.00, Third place \$50.00

2. Winner Recognition: The first place essays will be published on Court 367's Website. In addition, a letter will be sent to the COF High Court for recognition of those winners and their essay.

**VI. SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

Essays must be submitted electronically to the St. Matthew Court Website by **March 31, 2012**. To submit an essay, click on this link: [Submit your essay here](#). Participants can also email their essay to: [submitessay@cofstmatthew367.com](mailto:submitessay@cofstmatthew367.com). Essays, with cover page, must be sent as a Microsoft Word Document attachment or a compatible word processor document. If a participant does not have Internet access, arrangements will be made for him or her to mail in the essay – please contact the administrator below. *Important: If you experience any problems submitting an essay, contact Mike Shirek at 651-451-2542 as soon as possible.*

**Note:** By submitting an essay, participants give permission to the St. Paul Joint Committee to send notification to the Catholic Order of Foresters High Court for possible recognition. Participants also grant permission to St. Matthew Court 367 to post the first place essays on its Website.

**VII. NOTES**

1. Scoring Note: You may ask a parent or a teacher for help with how to deal with the dimensions of Content, Organization, and Mechanics. The ideas and writing, however, **MUST** be yours alone.
2. To download a copy of these rules in PDF format click [here](#).

**VIII. QUESTIONS?**

Please email Mike Shirek at: [contactus@cofstmatthew367.com](mailto:contactus@cofstmatthew367.com) or call him at 651-451-2542. Please include your phone number and email address in the message box along with your question(s).

Thank you and **GOOD LUCK** to each one of our participants!