

Annual Archdiocesan Respect Life Essay Contest
2020-2021 School Year
Grades K – 8

THEME: OPEN WIDE OUR HEARTS

Loving and caring for everyone from conception until natural death, little babies and grandparents, school friends and neighbors, those who share my religion and culture and those who do not, those who share my country of origin and those who do not – for we are all created in the image and likeness of God, and no one is excluded from the love of God

“But Racism still profoundly affects our culture, and it has no place in the Christian heart. This evil causes great harm to its victims, and it corrupts the souls of those who harbor racist or prejudicial thoughts.” *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love: A Pastoral Letter Against Racism*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2018 (<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf>)

“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.” Matthew 10:40

QUESTIONS:

Grades K -2: How can we take care of the life God has given to us and to all the human lives He has created?

Grade K

Draw a picture of how we can **take care of the life God has given to us and to all the human lives He has created.**

Grade 1

Draw a picture of how we can **take care of the life God has given to us and to all the human lives He has created.** Write one sentence to go along with the picture.

Grade 2

Write a paragraph to show how we can **take care of the life God has given to us and to all human lives He has created.** Show one to three ways we can help God in this work of caring for one another. Explain how no one is left out. Draw a picture to illustrate your paragraph.

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Grades 3-5: What are the ways we can help God protect the lives of those around us?

Grade 3

List three **ways we can help God protect the lives of people around us** and illustrate examples. You may use a comic strip to illustrate. Write an explanation below each panel or write in paragraph form.

Grade 4

Write a three-paragraph essay in which you list the three most important **ways we can help God protect the lives of people around us**. Explain clearly with an example why you chose each example.

Grade 5

Fifth graders can help God protect life. Write an essay (3, 4 or 5 paragraphs) explaining how a **fifth grader can help God protect life in his/her family, among his/her friends, at school, in his/her neighborhood, on his/her team**. Give an example of helpful behavior in each situation you chose.



Grades 6-8: How can we show respect for the sanctity of life, and how we can we promote treating each person as a child of God in our society?

Grades 6, 7

To be a disciple of the Lord is to show respect for the sanctity of every life from the very first moment of conception in his or her mother’s womb, throughout all stages of a person’s life, until the last breath a person takes before God takes him/her home to heaven.

Because of original sin, we are often challenged by this demand of discipleship. We find people in our way, and we may exclude them for a variety of reasons. We hurt people in some way because we feel they haven’t done or haven’t been what we wanted. Sometimes we see people hurt and we walk away. Sometimes we threaten or bully.

Choose a situation in which you recognize failure to respect and care for life. Explain why this situation is a pro-life issue, and what changes in behavior can help remedy the injustice, exclusion, bullying, and/or abuse that is causing hurt and brokenness and sadness.

Or

Choose a few situations (no more than three) in which you recognize failure to respect and care for life. Explain why each situation is a pro-life issue, and recommend a behavior which could help heal the situation.

Grade 8

To be a disciple of the Lord is to show respect for the sanctity of every life, which means to care for everyone to whom God has given life from the very first moment of that life at conception to the last breath a person takes before God takes him/her home to heaven.

Because of original sin, we are often challenged by this demand of discipleship. We find people in our way and we exclude them for a variety of reasons, we hurt them in some way because we feel they haven't done or haven't been what we wanted; we see people hurt and we walk away.

Choose a situation where you recognize failure to respect and care for life. Explain why this situation is a pro-life issue and what changes in behavior could help remedy the injustice, exclusion, bullying, and/or abuse that is causing hurt and brokenness and sadness.

Or

Choose a few situations (no more than three) where you recognize failure to respect and care for life. Explain why each situation is a pro-life issue, and recommend a behavior which could help heal the situations you describe.

A competitive essay will show a clear connection to Catholic Social Teaching as evidenced in relevant quotation or paraphrasing and appropriate referencing from at least two of the below resources.

RESOURCES for Grades 6,7,8:

1. The Gospels, which recount Christ's life and teachings
2. The Archdiocese of San Francisco Office of Human Life & Dignity webpages <https://sfarch.org/combating-racism> & <https://sfarch.org/culture-of-life>
3. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter on racism, "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love - A Pastoral Letter Against Racism." Found at sfarch.org/combating-racism.
4. The Gospel of Life, *Evangelium vitae*, linked at sfarch.org/culture-of-life.
5. Pope Francis has many homilies, talks, presentations, which are easily available on YouTube or on www.vaticannews.org. You may find a quote that helps focus your essay on an issue that is of particular note at this time for example: Racism, Immigration, Protection of the Unborn, Protection of the Elderly, The Death Penalty
6. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, may help ground your essay in Catholic teaching. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/>
7. During the summer many priests and bishops have spoken regarding the sacredness of human life in particular about the sacredness of Black lives at this time. Their homilies, articles, comments may also be found online.
8. Walter Hoyer, a Black civil rights leader in the Bay Area, has gone to jail in Oakland for his beliefs. He works against racism and for life particularly in the Black community. <https://issues4life.org/>