

# 2023 RESPECT LIFE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES & QUESTIONS

## Life is a Blessing—Venerable Dr. Jerome Lejeune

*“Again and again, we see this absolute misconception of trying to defeat a disease by eliminating the patient! It’s ridiculous to stand beside a patient and solemnly say, ‘Who is this upstart who refuses to attacks the patient instead of fighting the disease. We must always be on the patient’s side, always.’”*

*-Venerable Dr. Jerome Lejeune*

### Resources and notes K-8:

Fact Sheet on Down syndrome for all grades

Kinder through 4<sup>th</sup> Grade- Watch the appropriate video provided on our site [sfarch.org/essay-contest](http://sfarch.org/essay-contest)

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### Grades K--8

Students in **Grades K--8** are to respond to the directions for the prompt at each grade level. Submissions may be handwritten or typed. Please **do not** provide the students with **any pre-made pictures for coloring**. You can draw for them an example (s) but let them create the image (s) themselves.

**Kinder-** Watch this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KevpjkZ9XV0> (on our site)

Teachers or parents, have the children draw an image of 2 kids showing how to care for someone who needs their help or needs extra care. A picture that shows that God loves children with Down syndrome.

**1<sup>st</sup>. and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade-** Watch this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KevpjkZ9XV0> (on site)

Teachers or parents, have the children draw an image of 2 kids showing how to care for someone who needs their help or needs extra care. A picture that shows that God loves children with Down syndrome. Write a sentence or two describing your picture.

**3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade-** Watch this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KevpjkZ9XV0> (on site)

Teachers or parents, please point out the different ways Down syndrome children might need our help after watching the video. Have the children create a comic strip highlighting that shows how God loves all children including those with Down syndrome. Use the video for inspiration. Write a sentence explaining your comic strip.

### 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade-

**Watch these videos (located on our site [sfarch.org/essay-contest](http://sfarch.org/essay-contest)):**

1. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D\\_QjrZY4WP4&t=227s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_QjrZY4WP4&t=227s)
2. EWTN’s video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWor6fayRJ0>

**Write (2-3 paragraphs) – handwritten or typed.**

Write a letter to a doctor who has never heard of Venerable Dr. Jerome Lejeune explaining why he was important and how he worked to promote the dignity of those with Down syndrome.

## 7<sup>th</sup> and 8th Grade

**Watch these videos (on our site [sfarch.org/essay-contest](https://www.sfarch.org/essay-contest)):**

1. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D\\_QjrZY4WP4&t=227s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_QjrZY4WP4&t=227s)
2. EWTN's video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWor6fayRJ0>

**Write (3-4 paragraphs essay) – handwritten or typed.**

Based on your knowledge of Venerable Dr. Jerome Lejeune's life and work, write a letter to medical professionals encouraging them to use their skill and vocation in service of the dignity and sacredness of human life, especially those with Down syndrome.

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### Grades 9--12

Students in **Grades 9-12** are to respond to the following directions

**Read the excerpt from *Evangelium Vitae* and the two articles about Venerable Dr. Jerome Lejeune. Then respond to ONE of the two prompts below.**

In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope St. John Paul II said,

*“A unique responsibility belongs to health-care personnel: doctors, pharmacists, nurses, chaplains, men and women religious, administrators and volunteers. Their profession calls for them to be guardians and servants of human life. In today's cultural and social context, in which science and the practice of medicine risk losing sight of their inherent ethical dimension, health-care professionals can be strongly tempted at times to become manipulators of life, or even agents of death. In the face of this temptation their responsibility today is greatly increased.”* (89)

- 1) <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2021-01/decreed-sainthood-canonization-causes-for-saints.html>
- 2) <https://aleteia.org/2021/01/21/vatican-advances-jerome-lejeune-cause-for-canonization/>

**Choose one of the following prompts to respond to:**

1. How was the life and work of Venerable Dr. Jerome Lejeune a reflection of the call to medical professionals to be “guardians and servants of human life,” in particular of those with Down syndrome. How did Dr. Jerome Lejeune respond, by his life and vocation as a medical professional, to the “culture of death?” Write a letter making a case for his canonization.
2. Based on your knowledge of Venerable Dr. Jerome Lejeune's life and work, write a letter to medical professionals encouraging them to use their skill and vocation in service of the dignity and sacredness of human life, especially those with Down syndrome.

### RESOURCES 9-12:

1. Lejeune Foundation <https://lejeunefoundation.org>

2. Encyclical: Evangelium vitae, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25031995\\_evangelium-vitae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html)
3. Pope Francis on down syndrome: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2020-03/world-down-syndrome-day.html>
4. Lejeune cause for canonization: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2021-01/decreed-sainthood-canonization-causes-for-saints.html>
5. <https://aleteia.org/2021/01/21/vatican-advances-jerome-lejeune-cause-for-canonization/>
6. Fact Sheet on Down syndrome.
7. Definition of Venerable <https://www.usccb.org/offices/public-affairs/saints>

### **Submission Instructions for all students in Grades K-12**

**All submissions** will be judged on the student's ability to articulate his or her understanding of the issues, the message of the Catholic Church in relation to those issues, his or her own personal commitment to implementing the Church's message and creativity.

**Please send all entries to:** Respect Life Program, Office of Human Life & Dignity  
Archdiocese of San Francisco, One Peter Yorke Way, San Francisco, CA 94109

**Essays should be postmarked by January 31st, 2023.**

**Please do not** put the name of the student on the front of the essay. **Attach to the back** of the essay---on the form provided---the name of the student, student's address, telephone number, grade, school, teacher, school address & school telephone number.

Please print as legibly as possible so names on awards certificates will be accurate. If the teacher or student would like a copy of the essay, **please copy before mailing**. Due to the number of essays received, we might not be able to photocopy or return copies of essays.

### **Categories of Judging**

Grade K – Grand Prize \$25

First Prize \$10 – one awarded in each County

Grade 1- Grand Prize \$50

First Prize \$ 25 - one awarded in each County

Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

Grade 2 – Grand Prize \$50

First Prize \$ 25 - one awarded in each County

Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

Grade 3 -- Grand Prize \$75

First Prize \$ 25 - one awarded in each County

Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

Grade 4 --Grand Prize \$ 75

First Prize \$ 25 - one awarded in each County

Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

Grade 5 -- Grand Prize \$100

First Prize \$ 50 - one awarded in each County

Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

Grades 6 --Grand Prize \$100  
First Prize \$ 50 - one awarded in each County  
Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

Grade 7 -- Grand Prize \$125  
First Prize \$ 75 - one awarded in each County  
Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

Grade 8 -- Grand Prize \$150  
First Prize \$ 75 - one awarded in each County  
Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

High School:  
Grades 9-12 Grand Prize \$250  
First Prize \$100  
Honorable Mentions awarded as deserved

A Special Mass and Awards Ceremony will be held on Sunday April 30<sup>th</sup> 2023. To RSVP, everyone will go to [sfarch.org/essay-contest](http://sfarch.org/essay-contest) closer to the date to confirm their attendance. Information will be updated on the site as the date for the mass approaches and we will announce the winners on the same site. The information will change accordingly.