



**Knights of
Columbus®**
**Connecticut
State Council**

CATHOLIC CITIZENSHIP ESSAY CONTEST 2026-2027 GUIDELINES

This contest encourages today's youth to be more connected to their community and their faith. The goal of this program is to involve young Catholics in grades 8 to 12 (public, private, parochial or home schools during the current school year) in civic discourse and instill in them religious and life-affirming values. Entrants will be judged on grammar, style, and how clearly they present the theme in a way that showcases creativity, imagination and overall development of the topic.

For Council Planning and Promotional Resources, click [here](#)

2026-27 Essay Topic

“The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.”

In an essay of 500-750 words, explain what this quote from former U.S. President and Knights of Columbus member John F. Kennedy's 1961 Inaugural address means and its importance for the flourishing of a nation.

Eligibility:

- The Connecticut State Council Contest is open to all Catholic students in grades eight through twelve, in public, private, and parochial schools.
- Essays must reflect the assigned theme/topic and be submitted by the published deadline
- Essays must be formatted for 8 1/2" x 11" paper, double spaced, with 1" margins
- Students name should appear only on the Knights of Columbus Essay contest Form which should be submitted as a cover sheet to the essay

Councils must submit their winning essays by email State Program Director Darryl Barrios

program.director@ctstatecouncil.org

Submission deadline is January 17, 2027

Program Timetable:

June - October: Councils order Knights of Columbus essay contest kits from Fraternal Supply Store; Contact parish religious education directors and catholic school administrators to promote program in their parish and community.

November-December: Councils judge essays submitted and make appropriate awards to the contest winners. Councils submit first place essays in each grade level to State Council for judging.

January 17: DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO STATE COUNCIL

January: State Council Essay team will judge essays in 2 categories - Division 1: 8th and 9th graders, Division 2: 10th through 12th graders. The Supreme Council will be judging all first-place essays at each grade level, 8 through 12. Therefore, councils should make sure they submit first place winners in each grade level. State Council winning essays are submitted to the Supreme Council for International judging.

February-March: State Council will make plans for awards to the first, second, and third winners in each category. Winners are also recorded in the programs report at our State Convention.