



2025 RESPECT LIFE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES & QUESTIONS

Theme: Respecting and Loving Our Elderly

Sirach 2:11 – “For a man's glory comes from honoring his father, and it is a disgrace for children not to respect their mother.” Leviticus 19:32 “stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God.”

Students in **Grades K-8** are to respond to the directions for the prompt at each grade level.

There are videos for all the grade levels. Articles are provided starting in grade 4.

The submissions for K-4 are drawing essays. The submissions for 5th grade-high school are written essays.

Grades K--4

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.

Kindergarten

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgu5-z0CUyw> St Anne & Joachim short cartoon prayer (0.42 secs)

Share with the children that the Catholic Church celebrates the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne (July 26), Jesus' grandparents. The cartoon prays at the end one way to respect our elders, but you can share many other ways that children can show love and respect.

Ask children to draw an image of a way they or someone else can be loving or care for the elderly. You can use the cartoon as an example or give other examples to them (like visiting an elder in a nursing home, helping them with chores, etc.). It could be helping a grandparent or any elderly person in their community, such as a parishioner at church.

There is an optional cartoon story about respect for the elder in the Resources of K-4

1st and 2nd Grade

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgu5-z0CUyw> St Anne & Joachim short cartoon prayer (0.42 secs)

Share with the children that the Catholic Church celebrates the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne (July 26), Jesus' grandparents. The cartoon prays at the end one way to respect our elders, but you can share many other ways that children can show love and respect.

Ask children to draw an image of a way they or someone else can be loving or care for the elderly. You can use the cartoon as an example or give other examples to them (like visiting an elder in a nursing home, helping them with chores, etc.). It could be helping a grandparent or any elderly person in their community, such as a parishioner at church. **Have children write a sentence or two describing their picture.**



There is an optional cartoon story about respect for the elder in the Resources of K-4

3rd and 4th Grade

Watch the two videos:

[Pope Francis: "Do not abandon the elderly" \(youtube.com\)](#) (3.28 minutes)

and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqu5-z0CUyw> St Anne & Joachim short cartoon prayer (0.42 secs)

Share with the children that the Catholic Church celebrates the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne (July 26), Jesus' grandparents. Please have the children create a comic strip highlighting how we can respect/love the elderly. Use the videos for inspiration. Share other examples with them (like visiting an elder in a nursing home, helping them with chores, etc.). It could be helping a grandparent or any elderly person in their community, such as a parishioner at church.

Fourth grade teachers, feel free to use any article in the resources below as well (located in **Resources for grades 4 through 8**). **Remind the children to write a description (a few lines) on each section of their comic strip so we know what each strip on your comic describes.**

There is an optional cartoon story about respect for the elder in the Resources of K-4

Optional Resource for grades K through 4:

[Why kids should respect their Grandparents \(youtube.com\)](#) (2.54 minutes)

5th and 6th Grade

Watch the two videos:

Pope Francis' messages on the value of old age

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHpHfwm58W4> (2.17 minutes)

and

[VATICAN | Vatican announces 2024 theme for World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly \(youtube.com\)](#) (1.39 minutes).

Share with the children that the Catholic Church celebrates World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne (July 26), Jesus' grandparents.

There are 2 articles on the resources list below (located in **Resources for grades 4 through 8**) titled "Pope Francis: The Elderly are the firm foundation of the future" and "Pope: Care for and Respect the Elderly, Storehouses of Wisdom" to help you elaborate, if needed.

After listening to the short reflections from Pope Francis and articles provided, draft an essay that highlights the value of the elderly and ways in which we can contribute to being there for them, love them, care for them and make them feel part of our society and discuss how we can resist the throwaway culture of our times.



Write 2-3 paragraphs – Submissions may be handwritten or typed.

7th and 8th Grade

Watch the following three short videos (about 6 minutes total watch time):

Watch Pope Francis' messages on the value of old age

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehpHfwm58W4> (2.17 minutes)

and

[VATICAN | Vatican announces 2024 theme for World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly](#)

[\(youtube.com\)](#) (1.39 minutes)

and

[Pope Francis Addresses the Loneliness Epidemic Among the Elderly \(youtube.com\)](#) (2.33 minutes)

Share with the children that the Catholic Church celebrates the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne (July 26), Jesus' grandparents.

There are 3 articles on the resources list below titled "Pope Francis: The elderly are the 'firm foundation' of the future"; "Pope: care for and respect the elderly, storehouses of wisdom"; and "Elderly at special risk in a 'throwaway culture'" to help you elaborate.

After listening to the short reflections from Pope Francis and material provided, draft an essay that highlights the value of the elderly. Children can highlight the theme of not allowing the elderly to become victims of the throwaway culture. Think of the value of the elderly and the ways in which we can contribute to being there for them, love them, care for them and making them feel part of our society.

Write 3-4 paragraphs– Submissions need to be typed.

Resources for grades 4 through 8:

Pope Francis: The elderly are the 'firm foundation' of the future

[https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-05/pope-message-world-day-for-grandparents-and-elderly-2024.html#:~:text=Family%20and%20Life,-,In%20his%20Message%20for%20the%20Fourth%20World%20Day%20for%20Grandparents,Peter%20%3A5\).%E2%80%9D](https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-05/pope-message-world-day-for-grandparents-and-elderly-2024.html#:~:text=Family%20and%20Life,-,In%20his%20Message%20for%20the%20Fourth%20World%20Day%20for%20Grandparents,Peter%20%3A5).%E2%80%9D)

Pope: care for and respect the elderly, storehouses of wisdom

<https://www.ncregister.com/news/pope-care-for-and-respect-the-elderly-storehouses-of-wisdom>

Elderly at special risk in a 'throwaway culture' <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2017/06/elderly-special-risk-throwaway-culture> (more appropriate for upper grades).



HIGH SCHOOL

Grades 9--12

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

Choose one of the following 2 prompts and respond to one of them:

- 1- Write a speech or letter arguing against the proposed bills around the country as stated in the article titled "Catholics call for vigilance as more legislatures advance medically assisted suicide bills". Use the teachings on end-of-life care, located on the webpage of the California Catholic Conference and aid yourself with the documents from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (*Declaration on Euthanasia*) and on item 51 from the document *Dignitas Infinita*, located in the resources below (on the Resources 9-12 section).

Or

- 2- Write an essay highlighting ways in which we can build a better world for our elderly and how we can advocate for their wellbeing. Also highlight the theme of not allowing the elderly to become victims of the throwaway culture. Refer to and cite Resources 9-12 provided in the section below.

RESOURCES 9-12:

Catholics call for vigilance as more legislatures advance medically assisted suicide bills
<https://catholicreview.org/catholics-call-for-vigilance-as-more-legislatures-advance-medically-assisted-suicide-bills/>

Example of a California Bill SB1196 - <https://legiscan.com/CA/text/SB1196/id/2963562> Bill SB1196 is dead now but expected to be brought back again with another number.

SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH-*Declaration on Euthanasia*

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19800505_euthanasia_en.html

Paragraph 51 on the Declaration of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith "*Dignitas Infinita*" on Human Dignity, 08.04.2024:

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2024/04/08/240408c.html>



California Catholic Conference: Frequently asked questions about end-of-life care:

<https://cacatholic.org/teachings/embracing-our-dying/frequently-asked-questions-about-end-life-care/>

Pope Francis: The elderly are the 'firm foundation' of the future

[https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-05/pope-message-world-day-for-grandparents-and-elderly-2024.html#:~:text=Family%20and%20Life,-,In%20his%20Message%20for%20the%20Fourth%20World%20Day%20for%20Grandparents,Peter%20\(%3A5\).%E2%80%9D](https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-05/pope-message-world-day-for-grandparents-and-elderly-2024.html#:~:text=Family%20and%20Life,-,In%20his%20Message%20for%20the%20Fourth%20World%20Day%20for%20Grandparents,Peter%20(%3A5).%E2%80%9D)

Pope: Care for and respect the elderly, storehouses of wisdom

<https://www.ncregister.com/news/pope-care-for-and-respect-the-elderly-storehouses-of-wisdom>

Vatican announces theme for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

<https://www.usccb.org/news/2024/vatican-announces-theme-world-day-grandparents-and-elderly>

Elderly at special risk in a “throwaway culture”

<https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2017/06/elderly-special-risk-throwaway-culture>

Any of the Pope Francis Videos above.

Vatican News article on the Good Samaritan

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-09/samaritanus-bonus-summary-cdf-doctrine-faith-euthanasia-suicide.html>

summary of church teaching

[The Magisterium of the Church on euthanasia - Vatican News](#)