DIOCESE OF BILOXI

50th Anniversary Art & Essay Contests

Celebrating 50 Years of Faith, Service, and Community

Dear Principals and Parish Directors of Religious Education,

We are looking forward to celebrating the Diocese of Biloxi's Golden Jubilee on Saturday, April 3, 2027, during Divine Mercy Sunday weekend. This celebration will be held at the Mississippi Coast Convention Center, beginning with Eucharistic Adoration, followed by a celebration of the Holy Mass. You will receive more information as it becomes available.

We would like to ask our students to share what 50 years of faith in the Diocese of Biloxi means to them. To do this, we are inviting all elementary students (K-6) in our schools and parishes to participate in an art contest and all middle/high school students (7-12) in our schools and parishes to participate in an essay contest. The guidelines for each contest are listed on the attached form(s). Although we are choosing winners at the Diocesan level, schools and parishes may also offer their own prizes as incentives, if they would like to do so.

Schools and Parishes will select one winner from each category in the contests.

Art Contest	Elementary Grades	Middle / High School Grades
	Kindergarten – 3rd – Each school will select 1 winner Kindergarten – 3rd – Each parish will select 1 winner	
	4th – 6th - Each school will select 1 winner 4th – 6th - Each parish will select 1 winner	
Essay Contest		
		7th – 9th - Each school will select 1 winner 7th – 9th - Each parish will select 1 winner
		10th – 12th - Each school will select 1 winner 10th – 12th - Each parish will select 1 winner

The names of the winners, along with their artwork or essays, will be sent to the Diocese. Winners at the Diocesan level will receive a monetary prize, and winning artwork and essays may be shared via Diocesan publications, websites, social media, or anniversary events.

Please be mindful of the due dates for each level of the contests:

Contest Begins: 11/2/2026

Students turn in Artwork / Essays to the School and Parish: 1/6/2027

Art / Essay Winning entries are due to the Diocese: 1/15/2027

Diocesan Winners Announced: After 1/19/2027

Please encourage the young members of our Catholic Diocese of Biloxi to participate in these contests. They are all a very important part of our Church. This Golden Anniversary of our Diocese will celebrate all who came before them, how God is working through them now, and how they will carry out our Catholic faith forward for generations to come.

May God continue to bless us all.

DIOCESE OF BILOXI

50th Anniversary Essay Contest

Celebrating 50 Years of Faith, Service, and Community

In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Diocese of Biloxi, middle and high school students throughout our Catholic schools and students in the youth ministry programs in our parishes are invited to participate in a special essay contest reflecting on the history, faith, and future of our Diocese. For 50 years, the Diocese of Biloxi has served the people of South Mississippi through its parishes, schools, ministries, and outreach. This contest gives students an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be part of this Catholic community and how they can help carry its mission forward.

Contest Divisions

- Division I: Grades 7–9
- Division II: Grades 10–12

Essay Theme

"Celebrating 50 Years of Faith: Our Past, Our Present, Our Future"

Students should write an original essay reflecting on the 50th Anniversary of the Diocese of Biloxi. Essays may consider questions such as:

- What does it mean to be part of the Diocese of Biloxi?
- How has the Catholic faith shaped our communities in South Mississippi?
- How have our Catholic schools, parishes, clergy, religious, and laypeople helped carry out the mission of the Church?
- What does the 50th Anniversary of the Diocese mean to you personally?
- How can young people help continue the mission of the Diocese for the next 50 years?
- What do you hope the Diocese of Biloxi will look like as it celebrates its 100th Anniversary?

Students do not need to answer every question. These questions are provided only to help students reflect and develop their essays.

Essay Requirements

Grades 7–9

- 500–750 words
- Typed and double-spaced
- 12-point, easy-to-read font
- Original title
- Student's own original work

Grades 10–12

- 750–1,000 words
- Typed and double-spaced
- 12-point, easy-to-read font
- Original title
- Student's own original work

Submission Guidelines

Each submission should include:

- Student's full name
- Grade level
- School name
- Essay title

Schools may determine their own process for collecting and reviewing essays before submitting entries for diocesan judging.

Judging Criteria

- **Connection to the Theme –** Clearly reflects the 50th Anniversary of the Diocese of Biloxi.
- **Faith Reflection –** Demonstrates an understanding of Catholic faith, mission, and community.
- **Originality and Creativity –** Presents thoughtful and personal ideas.
- **Organization and Clarity –** Ideas are well-developed and presented in a logical manner.
- **Writing Quality –** Demonstrates appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.
- **Personal Voice –** Reflects the student's own thoughts, experiences, hopes, and perspective.

Originality and Use of AI

The purpose of this contest is to hear the authentic voices of our students. Essays must be the student's own original work.

Students may receive appropriate guidance from teachers regarding brainstorming, organization, grammar, and proofreading; however, the ideas and final written work should belong to the student. Artificial intelligence tools should not be used to generate or substantially write the essay.

School and Parish-Level Selection

Each school/parish is encouraged to allow all eligible students to participate. Schools and Parishes will select their top entries from each age category to advance to the diocesan-level competition.

Grades 7-9: __1__ entry at the school level and __1__ entry at the parish level may advance.

Grades 10-12: __1__ entry at the school level and __1__ entry at the parish level may advance.

Important Dates

Contest Begins: __11/2/2026__

Students turn in Essays to the Schools and Parishes by: ___1/6/2027____

Essay Winning entries are due to the Diocese by: ___1/15/2027_____

Diocesan Winners Announced: __After 1/19/2027_____

Recognition

One winner will be selected from each grade level division:

Winning essays may be recognized as part of the Diocese of Biloxi's 50th Anniversary celebration and may be shared through diocesan publications, websites, social media, or anniversary events.

Monetary prizes will be awarded to the Diocesan winners of the Essay contest.

A Celebration of Our Students and Our Faith

As we celebrate 50 years as the Diocese of Biloxi, we also look toward the future. Our students are an important part of that future. Through this essay contest, we invite them to reflect on the legacy of those who came before them, recognize how God is working in our Diocese today, and consider the role they can play in carrying our Catholic faith forward for generations to come.