CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS®

Date: SEPTEMBER 2025

TO: STATE REGENTS, LOCAL COURT REGENTS, AND TERRITORIAL COURT REGENTS

FROM: NANCY BAMBENEK, NATIONAL EDUCATION CHAIR
2025-2026 SUBECT: NATIONAL EDUCATION CONTEST
THEMES: The Least of These. Matthew 25:40 **OR** The Least of These: Lifting Others Up.

Each local court should make a very special effort to sponsor the EDUCATION CONTEST. The themes selected for the contest encourage lively imagination and freedom of thought when student talent and application go hand in hand. The contest enables students of our communities, schools, and CCD classes to compete and strive for awards while following certain fixed rules. The choice of the categories is:

ART ESSAY POETRY COMPUTER ART MUSIC PHOTOGRAPHY

The local court determines the number of awards to be presented to the first three winning entries in each division, within each category. Plan a special event and invite parents, teachers, and principals. Take a picture of the presentation, write an article, and send to your diocesan paper and National Share Magazine. Ask a representative from your local paper to be present for the awards ceremony. Bring a few membership applications and invite new members into your court.

- All entries in all categories are to reflect the chosen theme. There may be an excellent Art entry, but if it does not identify with the theme, it will not be a winner.

- All entries are to be the original imagination of the participant. He/she should not look at a picture, statue, building, etc. and draw from what he/she sees. **A participant needs to create an original idea for the entry**.

- All rules apply to Local, State and National entries. Local, state, and national education chairs and all judges are not eligible to enter this CDA contest. Local and state officers may enter the contest IF they are not education chairs.

- The Local Court's name, number, city, and state, as well as the Local Court Education Chairperson's name and address should be on both the individual contest information sheet (art, essay, poetry, computer art, music, and photography) **and** on the "2025-2026 Education Contest Entry Form " (Page 4) before contest information is distributed.

- All Local Courts under the jurisdiction of a State Court send first place winners to the State Education Chairperson, using the "State Court Education Contest Cover Sheet" (Page 5). **Ask your local court regent for the name of the State Education chairperson and insert that person's name on the bottom of the sheet. Only one first place winner per division, per category. Please do not send a first-place winner in each theme, as both will have to be disqualified. LOCAL COURTS: DO NOT SEND DIRECTLY TO NATIONAL EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON, AS ENTRIES WILL NOT BE RETURNED.** If you have a State Regent, you have a State Court and a State Education chairperson, to whom the entries must be sent.

- **Local Courts NOT under the jurisdiction of a State Court (Territorial Courts):** Send only first place winners to the National Education Chairperson. Please do not send a first-place winner in each theme, as both will have to be disqualified. Type handwritten first place Poetry and Essay Contest entries before sending to National. Glue or tape "2024-2025 Education Contest Form "(Page 4) to back of typed copy. **DO NOT** use paper clip or staples.

- State Chairperson: **Type** handwritten first place Poetry and Essay Contest entries **before sending to National**. Glue or tape "2025-2026 Education Contest Entry Form "(Page 4) to back of typed copy then staple original entry to typed copy. **DO NOT** use paper clips.

- **Be sure all winning entries meet contest rules.**

PROCEDURES – 2025-2026 EDUCATION CONTEST --- NATIONAL --- STATE --- LOCAL LEVEL

SELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

1. The State Regent appoints a State Chairperson of Education to manage this contest.

2. The Local Court Regent appoints a Chairperson of Education. The Chairperson should be selected because of her interest and enthusiasm for the program. It is most important that all chairpersons have a thorough understanding of the contest rules and desire to promote interest in the schools and CCD classes. The Regent gives **all** the contest material to the chairperson.
3. The Local Court Chairperson may make copies on white paper of **all** the 2025-2026 contest material for the schools. It is **important** to stress the fact that all rules must be followed, and the identification form properly completed. It is the DUTY OF the CHAIRPERSON to check EACH entry BEFORE submitting entries for judging.

DEADLINES

1. Entries being submitted to **LOCAL COURT** chairperson must be handed in or postmarked by date set by the Local Chairperson but no later than **February 1, 2026. Deadline should not be previous year.**
2. Local Deadline FEBRUARY 1, 2026.

3. Entries being submitted to **STATE COURT** chairperson must be postmarked **before**:
MARCH 1, 2026. States have the option of changing this date but keeping in the same year.

4. Entries being submitted to **NATIONAL** chairperson must be postmarked **before**
APRIL 1, 2026.

AWARDS AND JUDGING (Suggested rubric judging on all levels page 7)

1. **LOCAL COURTS**: The judges on the local level should be selected for their expertise in the various categories of the contest and are not Catholic Daughters nor close relatives of the entrants. Local Courts set and pay the judges honoraria and the winning entry awards. Only ONE FIRST PLACE winning entry in each division **(not one per theme)** of the local Court level is to be forwarded to the State Chairperson of Education.

2. **STATE COURT LEVEL:** The State Court selects the judges (Not Catholic Daughters), sets, and pays the judges honoraria and the winning entry awards. Only ONE FIRST PLACE winning entry in each division on the State level is forwarded to the National Chairperson of Education.

3. **NATIONAL LEVEL:** The judges (Not Catholic Daughters) are selected by National. Awards on the National level will be given to the state regents at the 2025 State Officers training in Phoenix.

4. Awards on the National level in each Division are as follows:

First Place: $100.00 **Second Place:** $50.00 **Third Place:** $25.00

PLEASE NOTE: Be sure all entries have been judged at the local and state levels before sending to National. Do not mark on the entries. The Local Court Chairperson of Education is to use the "State Education Contest Cover Sheet" (Page 5) to submit FIRST PLACE winners to State. The State Chairperson of Education is to use the National Education Contest Cover Sheet (Page 6 ATTACHED) to submit FIRST PLACE winners on the state level to National.

NOTE: NO ENTRIES ARE TO BE FOLDED OR ROLLED. NEATNESS IS A KEY FACTOR IN JUDGING!

Winners will be listed on the Catholic Daughters website after August 20, 2026. www.catholicdaughters.org

2025-2026 National Education Contest
Themes/Divisions/Categories/Rules

THEMES OF CONTEST: (Choose **One**) The Least of These. Matthew 25:40 **OR** The Least of These: Lifting Others Up.

Divisions & Categories: Note: Students may be Catholic and Non-Catholic

Division 1	Grades 4-5	Essay, Poetry, Art, Computer Art
Division 2	Grades 6-7-8	Essay, Poetry, Art, Computer Art, Music, Photography
Division 3	Grades 9-10-11-12	Essay, Poetry, Art, Computer Art, Music, Photography
Division 4	Adult **CDA** members	Poetry, Art, Photography

Rules: **All entries must be of contestant's own imagination and creation**

Essay: Typed only, not to exceed 450 words on one page; not front and back.

Poetry: Any style of poetry, typed, not to exceed eight (8) lines

Art: Size: 8 1/2 x 11 No Lettering (your art carries the message). Do not put your name on the Art. How the theme is carried out in Art will be part of the judging, in addition to artistic talent. Medium: Crayon, markers, ink, paints (watercolor, acrylic, oil), charcoal, pencil (black or colored), pastels (chalk) and duct tape. **No computer art and colored in.**

Computer Art: Size: 8 ½" x 11" or 8" X 12", No Lettering. Art must be artist's own creation and should fill the majority of the page. NO clip art or images imported from web sites.

Music: Lyrics and notes must be on professional music score paper (melody, harmony, and accompaniment, all of which must be notated accurately), and **must be contestant's own creation**. Please use composition music paper **with** composer's name. CD or thumb drive (no Mp3, MIDI, or other electronic formats allowed) of the performance must accompany the entry using the music score paper and name on it. While the composition must be the contestant's own creation, the performer of the composition does not need to be the composer. No DVD.

Photography: Size 8" X 10" picture depicting the theme. Do not add matting. The contestant must have taken picture. May not be a computer downloaded image or a picture of a picture. Can be color or black and white. Cannot be a collage. **Cannot be a copy of a photography as it needs to be the photograph. Can have words in the photo.**

Judges will use rules of Clarity, Grammar, Spelling, Interpretation of Theme, and all peculiar rules in the categories listed above.

GENERAL RULES

1) Contestants may enter a Category only once but may submit entries in multiple categories. A local Catholic Daughters Court must sponsor contestants.
2) Entries on other themes or not conforming to the rules will be disqualified.
3) **Entries will not be returned**. All contest material becomes the property of the National Court with the right to display and/or publish any or all material.
4) Decisions of the judges will be final. Judges reserve the right to make no award in a Division or Category. Commercial entries will be disqualified. Judging will be based on the Rubric Scoring provided.
5) A **2025-2026** Entry Form must accompany each entry properly signed and completed. Names must be legible. Forms are to be glued or taped to back of entry, except for Music. **Music** entry forms to be put in plastic sleeve and CD or thumb drive with it.

DEADLINE: **Local Court Deadline is** 2/1/26, **Send your entry, complete with 2025-2026 Entry Form to the Local Court Contest Chairperson. If mailed, entries must be postmarked by** FEBRUARY 1, 2026.

Awards: The one first place winning entry for each Category in each Division (**either theme, not both**) will be forwarded to the State Contest Chairperson and the winning entries at the State level will be forwarded to the National Education Contest Chairperson.

Awards at the local level will be determined by the local Court. Winning entry awards at the state level will be determined by the State Court. National Prizes for each Division are:

FIRST PLACE-$100.00 SECOND PLACE-$50.00 THIRD PLACE- $25.00

2025-2026 Education Contest Entry Form

(Tape or glue this form to the back of your entry *except* for music.)

MUSIC NEEDS TO HAVE PLASTIC SHEET PROTECTOR WITH ENTRY FORM AND CD OR THUMB DRIVE W/NAME ON IT, SECURED AND MUSIC IN ANOTHER SHEET PROTECTOR. BOTH NEED TO BE SECURED.

Please type or print

Category:_____

Division:_____ Grade:_____

Theme: _____

Name:(Please Print)_____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name of School (or Court if adult): _____

Signed Statement: This contest entry is my own creative work. I did not copy all or any part of this entry from any other person's work. I agree that if my entry is a National winner, it may be published by the National Court or put on its website.

Contestant's Signature: _____

DO NOT CUT OFF THE BOTTOM OF THIS SHEET!

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Return to:

Name of Sponsoring Court: _____ No._____

City of Sponsoring Court_____ State: _____

Name of Education Chairperson: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State:_____ Zip:_____

This signed form MUST ACCOMPANY all contest entries and be fully, legibly completed. Do not fold or roll entries.

Note to Education Chairpersons: Please be sure to include your court name, number, city, and state as well as the name and address of the chairperson to whom the entries are to be returned to by the participant.

Winners will be listed on the Catholic Daughters website after August 20,2026.

Catholic Daughters of the Americas website: www.catholicdaughters.org

FOR USE BY LOCAL COURT EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS 2025-2026 STATE EDUCATION CONTEST COVER SHEET

FIRST PLACE WINNERS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL IN THE STATE EDUCATION CONTEST ARE:

CONTEST	FIRST PLACE ATTENDS NAME OF COURT FOR ADULT ENTRIES	NAME OF SCHOOL STUDENT
ART		
DIVISION I		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
DIVISION IV		
POETRY		
DIVISION I		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
DIVISION IV		
ESSAY		
DIVISION I		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
COMPUTER ART		
DIVISION I		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
MUSIC		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
PHOTOGRAPHY		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
Division IV		

LOCAL COURT NAME: _____

NO._____ **City**_____ **State**_____

LOCAL COURT EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY:_____ **STATE**_____ **ZIP**_____

DATE:_____ **PHONE:**_____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LOCAL COURT CHAIRPERSON OF EDUCATION AND SUBMITTED WITH THE FIRST PLACE WINNING LOCAL ENTRIES, POSTMARKED BEFORE MARCH 1, 2026, to your STATE CHAIRMAN OF EDUCATION Send to:

NAME MARGEE KELLER **PHONE** 218-349-4566

ADDRESS 124 6TH AVE N **CITY** CROOKSTON **STATE** MN **ZIP** 56716

EMAIL: margeekeller@hotmail.com

For USE BY STATE EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS
2025-2026 NATIONAL EDUCATION COVER SHEET FIRST PLACE WINNERS ON THE STATE LEVEL

CONTEST

CONTEST	FIRST PLACE	LOCAL COURT NAME AND NO.& City or Town
ART		
DIVISION I		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
DIVISION IV		
POETRY		
DIVISION I		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
DIVISION IV		
ESSAY		
DIVISION I		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
COMPUTER ART		
DIVISION 1		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
MUSIC		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
PHOTOGRAPHY		
DIVISION II		
DIVISION III		
DIVISION IV		

STATE COURT OF:_____ STATE REGENT: _____

STATE EDUCATION CHAIRPERSON: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

DATE: _____ PHONE NUMBER OF STATE EDUCATION CHAIR:_____

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STATE CHAIRPERSON OF EDUCATION AND SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON OF EDUCATION WITH THE FIRST PLACE WINNING STATE ENTRIES, POSTMARKED **BEFORE** APRIL 1, 2026.

Nancy Bambenek

National Education Chairman

P.O.Box 583

St. Charles, MN 5597

SUGGESTED RUBRICS FOR JUDGES

POEMS AND ESSAYS

ADHERES TO RULES SUCH AS LENGTH OF ENTRY	5
NEATNESS	10
GRAMMAR, SPELLING AND PUNCTUATION	15
ORIGINALITY	30
CLEAR DEPICTION OF THE THEME, CONCEPT	40
TOTAL	100

ART, COMPUTER ART

ADHERES TO RULES FOR SIZE	5
NO WORDS ON ENTRY except for photographs	5
ORIGINALITY	30
CLEAR DEPICTION OF THEME	40
NEATNESS	5
COMPOSITION	15
TOTAL	100

MUSIC

ADHERES TO THE RULES	5
PROPER MUSIC NOTATION	20
ORIGINALITY	20
CLEAR DEPICTION OF THE THEME WITHIN THE LYRICS	25
COMPOSTION DISPLAYS AN UNDERSTANDING OF MUSICAL STRUCTURE	30
	100

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adheres to Rules for Size (8 x 10 Photography) i.e. Photo	25
No Words on the Entry	5
Originality	30
Clear Depiction of a Theme	40
	100

REGENTS, PLEASE MAKE COPIES TO GIVE TO YOUR JUDGES