



**MALANKARA ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH
NORTHEAST AMERICAN DIOCESE**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSIGNED COMPETITION 2024
GUIDELINES
FEBRUARY 2024**

O.S.S.A.E.
Northeast American Diocese
— Let the Little Children Come to Me —



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Objective

The Assigned Competition is designed to showcase the creativity of all of the Sunday School children in the Northeast American Diocese through their artistic and writing skills. Children will use their talents to create content based on the Orthodox Christian faith and Biblical teachings.

Competition Categories

The Assigned Competition categories are as follows:

1. Drawing – open to all grades from Nursery – Grade 12
2. Poetry – open to Grades 1 – 4
3. Story Writing – open to Grades 5 – 8
4. Essay Writing – open to Grades 9 – 12

Please note: all children can only participate in ONE of the above categories

Levels of Competition

The competition will be conducted in two levels:

1. Parish Level

Participants must be present physically at the competition venue to compete. All Parish Level competitions must be held by **Sunday May 26th, 2024.**

2. Diocese Level

Only the participants scoring at Tier 1 – Gold for drawing, poetry, story writing, or essay writing competitions can participate in the Diocesan Level competition. Area coordinators must send all submissions to the Diocesan Assigned Competition Coordinator by **June 16th, 2024. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DEADLINE.**

The submissions must include the scoring received at the Parish Level. Please refer to Appendix D (page 14) for information regarding how to send submissions for Diocesan Level evaluation. Results for the Diocesan Level competition will be published on September 29th, 2024.

Group Assignment

Group	<i>*Sunday School grade as of January 1st, 2024*</i>
Group 1	Nursery & KG (USA), JK & SK (Canada)
Group 2	Grades 1 & 2
Group 3	Grades 3 & 4
Group 4	Grades 5 & 6
Group 5	Grades 7 & 8
Group 6	Grades 9 & 10
Group 7	Grades 11 & 12

Award Structure

Assigned competitions at the Parish Level and Diocesan Level will follow a Tiered Award Structure:

- Tier 1 – Gold – Participants scoring 95% and above
- Tier 2 – Silver – Participants scoring 90% - 94%
- Tier 3 – Bronze – Participants scoring 85% - 89%

Conducting Parish Level Competitions

Individual Parishes will conduct Assigned Competitions in their respective Parishes under the guidance and supervision of the respective Sunday School Principal. It is the Parish’s responsibility to provide the paper for the drawing and essay competitions.

General Guidelines (FOR ALL GROUPS)

1. The time limit for the competition is 1 hour.
2. Each participant must be assigned a 6-digit unique number, which includes three letters and three numbers (i.e. GHM432)
3. No notes/reference materials are permitted for the drawing competition. including the use of mobile devices.
4. No participant identification is to be provided on any submission pages. ***Any violation of this requirement will result in the disqualification of the submission.***

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5. Each submission must have a cover page (refer Appendix C for the cover page template) indicating:
 - a. Student Number (to be assigned by the Parish Principal)
 - b. Group #
 - c. Grade (grade in school as of January 2024)
 - d. Topic
6. Parish Name and Area #

Drawing

1. Drawings must be:
 - a. on one single paper of White Copy Paper 8 1/2" x 11"
 - b. on one side of the paper
 - c. completed using tools such as pencils, crayons, colored pencils, watercolors, or markers.
2. No additional tools such as stencils or rulers are allowed.

Poetry

1. Poetry must be written:
 - a. in English
 - b. using black or blue ink pens or No. 2 pencils.
 - c. on College Ruled Paper 8 1/2" x 11", 3 – hole punched with margins
 - d. only on one side of the paper.
2. Poetry must be the writer's own creation (No copied lines)
3. Length must be at least eight lines
4. Written in a poetic style – can include any of the following:
 - a. Rhymes/rhythm/repetition
 - b. Descriptive words (i.e. colors)
 - c. Describing feelings, emotions, or observations
 - d. Literary elements (metaphors, alliteration, similes, personification, etc.)
 - e. Use of stanzas
5. Poems may be written in any poetry style, including Haiku, Acrostic, Limerick, Free Verse (freestyle), etc.

Story Writing

1. Story must be written:
 - a. in English
 - b. using black or blue ink pens. Pencil written submissions are not accepted.
 - c. on College Ruled Paper 8 1/2" x 11", 3 – hole punched with margins
 - d. only on one side of the paper.

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2. Story should contain a theme/central idea to inspire the story.
3. Story length should be minimum of 1 page with at least 3 paragraphs.
4. Story should contain point of view, setting, tone, and mood.

Essay Writing

1. Essay must be written:
 - a. in English
 - b. using black or blue ink pens. Pencil written submissions are **not** accepted.
 - c. on College Ruled Paper 8 1/2" x 11", 3 – hole punched with margins
 - d. only on one side of the paper. There is no limit on the number of pages.
2. Essay length should be minimum of 1 page with at least 5 paragraphs.

Appendix A – Topics

Drawing

Open to Groups 1 – 7 – Choose from the following topics:

- **God’s Creation**
Illustrate the beauty of God’s creation based on the creation story
- **The Good Shepherd**
Depict Jesus as the Good Shepherd, emphasizing His care, guidance, and protection for His flock
- **Parables of Jesus**
Choose one of Jesus’ parables, and illustrate its story and lesson
- **Miracles of Jesus**
Draw one of the miracles performed by Jesus

Poetry

Open to Groups 2 & 3 – Choose from the following topics:

- **Friendship with Jesus:**
What is it like to be friends with Jesus?
- **My Church Family:**
Describe how the people at your church are your family.
- **Easter:**
Describe the Feast of Resurrection from your point of view.
- **Bible Heroes**
Choose one or a few Biblical characters and write about how they inspire you.

Story Writing

Open to Groups 4 & 5 – Choose from the following topics:

- **Power of Kindness:**
What are the effects of showing Christ-like kindness to people around us?
- **Made in the Image of God:**
How are we made special by God?
- **Friendship & Fellowship**
Demonstrate the importance of fellowship and what it means to have friendship and fellowship.
- **Faith in Miracles in Modern Times:**
What role does faith play in miracles? Describe/demonstrate what miracles look like in the modern age.

Essay Writing

Open to Groups 6 & 7 – Choose from the following topics:

- **The Influence of Music on Spiritual Life:**
Reflect on the role of music in worship and personal spirituality, considering different genres of Christian music and their impact on faith.
- **The Role of Christian Stewardship in Nurturing a Sustainable World:**
Describe how the role of the Christian involves a call to responsible care & ethical management.
- **The Role of Prayer in Personal Growth:**
Examine the role of prayer in Christian life, discussing its impact on personal development, decision-making, and relationship with God.
- **Navigating Life as a Christian – From a Teen’s Perspective:**
Analyze and explain what it means to be a Christian while also being a teen with a social life in the modern world. Where do you see young people in the Church setting examples for your life (i.e. Church fathers/mothers/saints, in the Bible, in role models, etc.)?

Appendix B – Judging Criteria & Rubric

Drawing

Criteria	Points				Total points
	0-2	3	4	5	
Clarity of Topic	Drawing does not depict the topic	Drawing has basic depiction of the topic	Drawing has good depiction of the topic	Drawing has exceptional depiction of the topic	
Sketch	Sketch done with no care or attention to detail	Sketch done with basic care, attention to detail & neatness	Sketch done with good care, attention to detail & neatness	Sketch done with exceptional care, attention to detail & neatness	
Coloring	Coloring done with no care or attention to color variations	Coloring done with basic care, color variations & neatness	Coloring done with good care, color variations & neatness	Coloring done with care, color variation & neatness	
Creativity & Originality	Drawing appears copied, not unique or interesting	Drawing has some creativity & originality	Drawing has good creativity & originality	Drawing has exceptional creativity & originality	
Overall Presentation	Elements of the drawings not in proportion and lacks presentation	Elements of the drawing show basic proportion & presentation	Elements of the drawing show good proportion & presentation	Elements of the drawing show excellent proportion & presentation	
TOTAL POINTS					/25

Poetry

Criteria	Points				Total points
	0-2	3	4	5	
Content	Unable to determine the alignment of the content with the topic	Vague content that is loosely related to the topic	Content is clear and align to the topic	Content is very clear and matches the topic	
Relevance to Christian Faith	Poem does not relate at all to the Christian faith, no references	Poem relates somewhat to Christian faith, no references	Poem relates to Christian faith, no references	Poem relates to Christian faith, at least one reference to faith concepts/saints/prominent Christian figures	
Poetic Elements	Poem does not contain any poetic elements (rhymes, metaphors, stanzas, rhythm, etc.)	Poem contains one poetic element; elements used incorrectly or inconsistently	Poem contains some poetic elements, lacks descriptions or creative language	Poem contains multiple poetic elements; descriptive & creative language	
Creativity & Originality	Poem appears copied, not unique or interesting	Poem has some creativity & originality	Poem has good creativity & originality	Poem has exceptional creativity & originality	
Language Conventions	Inaccurate spelling and/or poor grammar; unable to decipher poem	Multiple spelling and/or grammar mistakes	Few spelling mistakes, appropriate use of grammar	Ideas are clear, message is conveyed with minimal spelling and grammar mistakes	
TOTAL POINTS					/25

Story Writing

Criteria	Points				Total points
	0-2	3	4	5	
Content	Unable to determine the alignment of the content with the topic	Vague content that is loosely related to the topic	Content is clear and align to the topic	Content is very clear and matches the topic	
Relevance to Christian Faith	Story does not relate at all to the Christian faith, no references	Story relates somewhat to Christian faith, no references	Story relates to Christian faith, no references	Story relates to Christian faith, at least one reference to faith concepts/saints/ prominent Christian figures	
Presence of Setting, Tone, Mood, Point of View (POV)	Story does not contain literary elements of mood, setting, tone, POV	Story contains some literary elements; some elements are unclear; poor organization	Story contains setting, mood, tone, POV; lacks some flow to the story	Story demonstrates clear literary elements of setting, tone, mood, POV; story has a flow and clear organization for the reader	
Creativity & Originality	Story appears copied, not unique or interesting	Story has some creativity & originality	Story has good creativity & originality	Story has exceptional creativity & originality	
Organization & Grammar	Unclear organization of ideas and/or poor grammar	Some signs of logical organization of ideas and adequate grammar	Good organization of ideas. Appropriate use of transitions and grammar	Organization of ideas is effective with transitions between them; perfect use of grammar	
TOTAL POINTS					/25

Essay Writing

Criteria	Points				Total points
	0-2	3	4	5	
Introduction	Introduction is missing	Introduction is somewhat obvious	Introduction is clear and original	Introduction develops fresh insight that challenges the reader’s thinking	
Organization & Grammar	Unclear organization of ideas and/or poor grammar	Some signs of logical organization of ideas and adequate grammar	Good organization of ideas. Appropriate use of transitions and grammar	Organization of ideas is effective with transitions between them; perfect use of grammar	
Content	Unable to determine the alignment of the content with the topic	Vague content that is loosely related to the topic	Content is clear and align to the topic	Content is very clear and matches the topic	
Use of Bible Verses & References (ie. Liturgical, Church Father Homilies, etc.)	Neglects the use of Bible verses/ references	Only one use of Bible verses/ references; errors in Bible verses & references	Some use of Bible verses/ references to support the contents & ideas; correct use of all Bible verses/ references; overuse of Bible verses/ references	Excellent use of Bible verses/ references (at least 3) to support the contents and ideas. Correct use of all Bible verses/ references without overuse	
Conclusion	Conclusion is missing or conclusion does not relate to the topic	Conclusion is vague & does not relate to the ideas in the essay	Conclusion is substantial and logical; somewhat connects to the ideas in the essay	Conclusion is substantial and logical, shows the concrete development of ideas throughout the essay	
TOTAL POINTS					/25



Appendix C – Assigned Competition Cover Sheet

**Northeast American Diocese
Sunday School Assigned Competition 2024
Parish Level Assigned Competition**

Competition Category: Drawing / Poetry / Story Writing / Essay Writing **(Please circle)**

Student Number: _____

Group: _____

Sunday School Grade as of January 1, 2024: _____

Topic: _____

Parish Name: _____

Total Points: _____/25_____

Appendix D – Sending Tier 1 – Gold Submissions for Diocesan Level Competition

Sunday School Principals: Upon the completion of judging Parish Level competitions, Sunday School Principals are to scan the Tier 1 – Gold awarded drawings/poems/stories/essays and send it to their respective Area Coordinator. If there are no Tier 1 – Gold awards in a group **do not submit the Tier 2 – Silver award, it will be automatically disqualified.**

Timeline for completion – May 26th, 2024.

Area Coordinators: Upon receiving the scanned Tier 1 – Gold awarded submissions from the Parish Sunday School Principals, save them in the Google Folder that will be shared by the Assigned Competition Coordinator. Access to the Google Folder is restricted to the Area Coordinator and should not be shared with anybody, including the Sunday School Principals.

Timeline for completion – June 16th, 2024.

Appendix E – Announcement Before Start of Competition (in competition venue)

Drawing:

1. Time limit for the competition is 1 hour.
2. No notes /reference materials including mobile devices are permitted during the competition.
3. Drawings must be on the paper provided by the Parish.
4. Complete the cover page.
5. No participant identification is to be provided on the drawing submission pages. Any violation of this requirement will result in the disqualification of the submission.

Poetry:

1. Time limit for the competition is 1 hour.
2. No notes / reference materials should be permitted for the poetry competition, including the use of mobile devices.
3. Poems must be written:
 - a. in English.
 - b. using black or blue ink pens. Pencil written submissions are not accepted.
 - c. on Parish provided paper.
 - d. only on one side of the paper. There is no limit on the number of pages.
4. Please stay within the margins and lines of the page.
5. DO NOT squeeze information in the margins and borders. Ask for extra paper.
6. Poems may be written in any poetry style, including Haiku, Acrostic, Limerick, Free Verse (freestyle), etc.
7. Complete the cover page.
8. No participant identification is to be provided on the essay submission pages. Any violation of this requirement will result in the disqualification of the submission.

Story Writing:

1. Time limit for the competition is 1 hour.
2. No notes / reference materials should be permitted for the story writing competition, including the use of mobile devices.
3. Essay must be written:
 - a. in English.
 - b. using black or blue ink pens. Pencil written submissions are not accepted.
 - c. on Parish provided paper.
 - d. only on one side of the paper. There is no limit on the number of pages.
4. Story length should be minimum of 1 page with at least 3 paragraphs.
5. Please stay within the margins and lines of the page.

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6. DO NOT squeeze information in the margins and borders. Ask for extra paper.
7. Complete the cover page.
8. No participant identification is to be provided on the essay submission pages. Any violation of this requirement will result in the disqualification of the submission.

Essay:

9. Time limit for the competition is 1 hour.
10. No notes / reference materials should be permitted for the essay competition, including the use of mobile devices.
11. Essay must be written:
 - a. in English.
 - b. using black or blue ink pens. Pencil written submissions are not accepted.
 - c. on Parish provided paper.
 - d. only on one side of the paper. There is no limit on the number of pages.
12. Please stay within the margins and lines of the page.
13. DO NOT squeeze information in the margins and borders. Ask for extra paper.
14. Complete the cover page.
15. No participant identification is to be provided on the essay submission pages. Any violation of this requirement will result in the disqualification of the submission.