

*Give young people the chance to  
write about their own laws of life*



*laws of life*  
ESSAY CONTEST



*"The world operates on spiritual and moral principles just as it does on the laws of physics and gravity. It is up to us to learn what those laws of life are and then to live by them."*

*Sir John Templeton*

*"When I read the essays each year, it is clear that the laws of life—love, generosity, patience and courage—'live' in our community. All I do as the sponsor of the essay contest is encourage young people to write about these universal principles."*

*Leo J. Hawk  
Contest Sponsor  
Lima, Ohio*



## *Helping children learn what matters most*

Honesty. Perseverance. Gratitude. Compassion. These are some of the universal values, or "laws of life," that we take with us wherever we go and whatever we do. But when do we think about our core values? How do we identify which ones will guide our lives? For young people especially, isn't it important that they have opportunities to focus on their own *laws of life*?

In 1987, Sir John Templeton created the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest in his hometown of Winchester, Tennessee to encourage kids to reflect and write about their values. At that time, Sir John never imagined that the contest would spread throughout the United States and around the world, that thousands of students would write a *laws of life* essay each year, or that individuals, business leaders, and civic groups would fund and sponsor their own contest.

## *Sponsoring a Laws of Life Essay contest is easy*

All you really need is a desire to help young people focus on their ideals and principles. At the John Templeton Foundation, our Program Coordinator Peggy Veljkovic will help you figure out the best way to secure funding, organize, and launch an essay contest within your local community. Peggy will provide you with easy-to-use guidelines for starting a successful contest, and she will assist you every step of the way.

Across the United States and in other countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Russia, and China, more than 70 *Laws of Life* Essay Contests have been launched, and each one is unique. Peggy will work with you to design a contest tailored to the needs of your community.

*Encouraging young people to do the right thing -- it's all about character education*

Across the United States, educators are developing ways to inspire young people to "Do the right thing" even when it's hard, to care for those less fortunate, and to take responsibility for their behavior. The *Laws of Life* Essay Contest gives students the chance to *reflect* and *write* about their values—two cornerstones of an effective character education.

*Something amazing happens when young people are asked to write about their own laws of life*

They come alive. You can almost feel the electricity as pen hits paper. Teachers say that's because the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest encourages students to think about the people and experiences who have helped to shape their values. It challenges them to take a stand for what they believe in.

And nothing can compare to the joy a young person feels when his thoughts and ideas are honored, especially at an awards ceremony...or the pride his parents feel as they listen to their child's heartfelt essay...or the happiness that his teachers, neighbors, and community share as they celebrate their young people.



*"There is a common saying that character education is about helping young people know the good, desire the good, and do the good. By helping young people reflect on the laws of life that mean the most, we know they are more likely to live by those principles and ideals throughout their lives."*

*Sanford N. McDonnell*

*Chairman Emeritus*

*McDonnell Douglas Corporation*

*"This has truly been the most rewarding program I have ever participated in. The contest is a win-win for everyone who gets involved — students, families, and the community as a whole."*

*Amy Butler*

*Contest Organizer*

*Atlanta, Georgia*

*"I can't say enough good things about this program! My students really get involved in their essays, and their enthusiasm makes a real difference in the quality of their writing."*

*Karyl Kelly  
English Teacher  
Napa, California*



*"The Laws of Life Essay Contest gives students the opportunity to look within themselves and decide which ideals are important to them. Your sponsorship of the essay contest will not only make a difference to the children in your community, but will bring joy to your life as well."*

*Former First Lady Barbara Bush*

## *When you sponsor a Laws of Life Essay Contest, teachers win too!*

Dedicated teachers involved in the *Laws of Life* Essay Contest are publicly recognized for the support and encouragement they give to their students. Within a community, a contest often grows from school to school as teachers talk about the extraordinary benefits of the contest.

A "Teacher's Guide," written by a teacher who has participated in the contest for many years, offers easy-to-follow activities that reinforce important writing skills and engage students in the writing process. Students often don't realize they are working on their writing skills as they focus on the most fascinating of subjects: themselves!

*"Before I participated in the contest, I never really thought about what I stand for. Writing the essay was really challenging, because I had to be honest. No excuses. Putting my values down on paper really made me take a hard look at myself. This is an experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life."*

*Adolpho, Age 17, New York City*



Give kids the chance to write about their own *laws of life*.

Contact Peggy Veljkovic at the John Templeton Foundation

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