



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

Toronto Diocesan Council

CWL YOUTH AWARDS PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR PARISHES & REGIONS

The Toronto Diocesan CWL Youth Awards Program is a combination of contests which are intended to support Catholic youth to hone their skills in becoming people of faith dedicated to following in the footsteps of Christ to serve God and Canada. The program reflects the Objects of the Catholic Women's League of Canada. The following information is provided to assist councils in their important task of implementing and supporting the program.

Regional Chairs and Service Chairs:

- Based on the Diocesan Level due dates provided at the end of this document, set the date, location and time for your region's Mary Matthews Public Speaking Contest and the submission due dates for the Mary Dobell Pro-Life Essay & Poetry Contest and the Jean McCann Youth Service Award. Communicate the Regional due dates to your parishes so they can set their contest due dates accordingly.

Guidelines for Parish Presidents and Parish Service Chairs:

- Start planning when you receive this package.
- Upon receipt of the regional due dates, set the date and location of your council's Mary Matthews Public Speaking Contest and the submission dates for the Mary Dobell Pro-Life Essay & Poetry Contest and the Jean McCann Service Award.

Tips to help ensure a successful Youth Awards Program:

These contests are good confidence builders for the students and an opportunity for them to share their views and values on important Catholic teachings. Let each principal know, for the Parish Level Contests, that your parish will provide awards for those placing 1st and 2nd and certificates of participation to all the students. If appropriate, these can be presented at a school assembly

1. Check that your contact information for your elementary and secondary Catholic schools in your parish is up to date. Reach out to each school's secretary to confirm the names of the principals and the appropriate teachers of the respective grades.
2. Obtain from the parish office, a list of Confirmation candidates who are attending public/private schools in order to invite them to participate in the contests.
3. Make sufficient copies of the applicable information in the Awards package to distribute as follows and remember to retain a complete package for your files:
 - ✓ Complete school package: a copy to each school principal
 - ✓ Mary Matthews package: a copy to each grade 7 and 8 teacher
 - ✓ Mary Dobell package as appropriate: Intermediate level to grades 7,8 and 9 teachers and the Senior level to grades 10,11 and 12 teachers
 - ✓ Jean McCann package – for youth 15-18: a copy to the appropriate teachers and the person(s) in the parish
 - ✓ St. Michael's Scholarship package: Distribute as per instructions in the package. This will be of particular interest to the secondary schools' Guidance Counselors.

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- 4 Arrange to meet with the principal or delegate from each school to discuss the different contests and distribute the copies of the packages as outlined in step 3.
 - ✓ Review each contest's *Rules and Guidelines for Schools and Participants*.
 - ✓ Review and promote the St. Michael's Scholarship, encouraging those who qualify to apply.
 - ✓ Emphasize the importance of the impromptu speech component for the Mary Matthews Public Speaking Contest.
 - ✓ Point out that the possible topics for the Mary Dobell Pro-Life Essay and Poetry Contest include all aspects of respecting the dignity of human life and the environment.
 - ✓ Provide the date of your Parish's Mary Matthews Public Speaking Contest and the date the schools need to provide you with the names of the participants.
 - ✓ Provide your parish's submission due date for the other two contests - Mary Dobell Poetry and Essay and Jean McCann Service Award.

- 5 **Parish and Regional Levels:** If the contest awards are not included in your council's budget, make sure that a motion is made to cover all the contest expenses.

CONTESTS SUBMISSION DUE DATES

Each Region will set their own contest due dates based on when the Regional submissions are due to the Diocesan level. Each Region will communicate their due dates to their Parishes so the parishes can set their own due dates. *Councils are to contact their Regional Chairs with submission due date questions.*

The Due Dates are as Follows:

TDC Mary Matthews Public Speaking Contest: *Saturday March 28, 2026, location TBD*
(From Regions by March 13, 2026)

Mary Dobell Pro-Life Essay & Poetry Contest: *Friday, March 13, 2026*

Jean McCann Service Award: *Friday, March 13, 2026*

St. Michael's College Scholarship: Applications are to be sent directly to the Diocesan contact and are due no later than *May 31, 2026*.

Refer to each Contest package for full details.