

Topic ideas for the 2026 essay contest:

Pre K and Kindergarten: After creating the Earth, God created humans. He made Adam and Eve and gave them the beautiful Garden of Eden in which to live. In the garden there were many flowers, bushes and trees but one tree was very special. God told Adam and Eve they were never to eat from the fruit of that tree, but we all know they did not listen. Please draw a picture of the Garden of Eden and do not forget the Special Apple tree.

Grades 1 and 2: Jochebed was Moses's mother. She was a servant. When she gave birth to Moses, she needed to hide him from the evil ruler Pharaoh. She put him in a basket near the river and hid him in the tall grass, so she could go and visit him and take care of him. One day Pharaoh's daughter found Moses and she took him to live with her. Jochebed was one of her servants and she was able to take care of Moses and make sure he was safe. Please draw a picture of Moses in the basket hidden in the tall grass by the river and write two to three sentences on why it was so important that Moses be kept safe.

Grades 3 and 4: In John 13:34-35 Christ says "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." As Orthodox Christians, what do you understand this passage to mean? Please write 50 to 100 words explaining your answer.

Grades 5 and 6: When we say the *Lord's Prayer*, we not only praise God, but we ask him for things. One thing we ask for is protection. In which lines of the *Lord's Prayer* do we ask Him for protection and why is it important for us to do that? Using your teachings as an Orthodox Christian please write 75 -150 words explaining your answer.

Grades 7 and 8: The theme for this year's UOL Convention is from Romans 12:12 – "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation and continuing steadfastly in prayer;" Using your teachings as an Orthodox Christian, explain what these words mean to you. Please write 150 -200 words to explain your answer.

Grades 9 and 10: When we say *The Lord's Prayer*, we say "Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." As Orthodox Christians, what do we understand these words to mean? Please write 200 - 275 words explaining your answer.

Grades 11 and 12: In Hebrews 11:1 it says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." In your teachings about being an Orthodox Christian what have you learned about faith and hope? (Hint: Keep reading the rest of Hebrews 11) Please write 250 to 500 words explaining your answer.

Adults: Is there a connection between our beliefs as Orthodox Christians and Environmental Stewardship? Please write 500 or more words explaining your answer.