

***Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest:
Frequently Asked Questions***

Can students already in college enter the essay contest?

No. This contest is only open to current high school students (juniors and seniors) in the graduating classes of 2018 and 2019.

What are the prizes?

Grand Prize – \$2,000 & a trip for two to Washington, D.C.

Second Place – \$1,000

Third Place – \$500

What does the trip to Washington, D.C. include?

The trip includes actual airfare costs to Washington, D.C. (up to a predetermined amount) and one night of lodging for the contest winner and one accompanying parent/guardian to present the winning essay and/or be interviewed at the BJC board meeting.

Do I have to identify as Baptist to enter the contest?

No. There are no religious requirements to enter. Students of all faiths or no faith are welcome to submit an essay.

Will I be automatically disqualified if I am under or over the word count?

Yes. Students must submit an essay between 800-1,200 words, not counting the title and bibliography.

Does my essay have to be typed?

Yes. Submitted essays must be in 12-point type, and should be double-spaced and printed single-sided.

Can I email my essay to be entered into the contest?

No. Any email submissions will be automatically deleted. Your essay, student registration form and essay adviser form must be mailed *together* to the following address:

Baptist Joint Committee Essay Contest

200 Maryland Avenue, N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20002

If my name does not appear on the essay itself, how will I be identified?

Your name will appear on the student registration form and essay adviser form only; essays will be accounted and tracked with a numerical count. The judges will be given essays without registration or adviser forms to ensure fairness.

Should my essay have a title?

Yes. Essays *must* have a title at the top of the first page of the essay. *Do not* use a title page.

Is a bibliography necessary?

Yes. Sources must be used, cited and credited in a bibliography. Sources must also be consistent with an accepted citation style (MLA, Chicago, etc.). Wikipedia may **not** be used as a source.

When will the winners be announced?

Winners will be announced by the end of summer 2018.

Can an essay adviser work with more than one student?

Yes. An adviser may work with more than one student, but each essay must be submitted with its own adviser form.

Will I get my essay back after the contest?

No. Due to the large volume of submissions, all essays become the property of the BJC and cannot be returned.

When is the essay due?

Entries must be *postmarked* by March 9, 2018.

How many times may I enter?

Each student may only enter the essay contest once, per year of eligibility.

What are the judges looking for?

Students should develop a point of view on the issue and demonstrate critical thinking, using appropriate examples, arguments and other evidence to support their position. Essays should be free of grammatical errors and should be clear, concise and well-organized. Entries will be judged on the depth of their content, the mastery of the topic and the skill with which they are written.

Who sponsors the contest?

This annual contest is sponsored by the Religious Liberty Council of the Baptist Joint Committee and serves to engage high school juniors and seniors in church-state issues by directing them to express a point of view on a religious liberty topic. As the individual donor organization of the Baptist Joint Committee, the Religious Liberty Council cultivates an understanding of religious freedom among Baptists and the larger public. Based in Washington, D.C., the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty is an 81-year-old religiously based organization working to defend religious freedom for all people and protect the institutional separation of church and state in the historic Baptist tradition.

Where can I go for more information on the contest?

Visit **BJCOnline.org/Contest** for more information or contact Charles Watson Jr., the BJC's Education and Outreach Specialist, at cwatson@BJCOnline.org.