



# Smith County Right to Life Oratory Contest Guidelines

## **Participants:**

Grades 9-12 are eligible to participate in both the local and state contests. Only students in grades 11-12 are eligible to advance to the National Level per NRLC guidelines.

## **Speeches:**

- ❖ Contestants are to research, write and present an original pro-life speech on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, or stem cell research.
- ❖ Props should not be used in presentation.
- ❖ Speeches are to be 5-7 minutes in length.
- ❖ When statistics are used it should be the most current information available.
- ❖ Contestants are encouraged to memorize their speeches at the local level; however, speeches are required to be memorized for both the State and National levels.
- ❖ Contestants are required to participate in their own county's contest unless there is not an active chapter in their county. In such case participant may participate in the closest county's contest.
- ❖ The 1st place winner will have the opportunity to advance to the State Contest in June. If the 1st place winner is unable to go to the State Contest, then the 2nd place winner will be given the opportunity, and so forth.
- ❖ A typed copy of the speech is required to be turned in on the date of the contest.

## **Prizes:**

The top 3 winners will receive cash prizes in the amounts of:

- 1st place     \$100
- 2nd place     \$75
- 3rd place     \$50

# Smith County Right to Life – Oratory Tips

## The Opening and Closing

**A** good speech takes a lot of preparation! Structure it well and practice it often. Get off to a good start. Research shows that your audience forms its impressions of you very early on. Experts advise the best openers could include one of the following:

1. A story from your own experience
2. A question.
3. A striking quotation
4. A startling fact.
5. A funny story – if you can!
6. A reason why the topic is relevant to the audience.

Finishing well is important too and should leave your audience with a strong message. Always plan your ending and don't just fizzle out or trail off with a feeble "thank you." Some suggestions:

1. Never end with "that's all I have to say" or "I think that's enough"
2. Summarize or re-state main points
3. Appeal for action.
4. Raise a laugh
5. Use a quote

**Remember:** always stop before your audience wants you to stop but don't talk about stopping.

Judges will rate your introduction and conclusion.

## Developing your Theme

In between the short introduction and the hopefully brief and effective ending, lies the core of the speech. In terms of High School Oratory Contest, this is where content, research, relevant and up-to-date statistics and references are vitally important. It is also important that participants give the impression that they understand all this material, that they can draw implications and conclusions from them, that they are advancing certain theories because they believe in them, not because they have been told to do so.

**Remember,** artificiality is quite noticeable. Your talk will be better if it is original and based on your own thoughts and feelings about the topic. Say what you want to say not what you think should be said. Adjudicators will be marking on two aspects of your speech – your content and your delivery.

### *What You Say...*

- Keep it interesting
- Keep it relevant
- Make it your own
- Avoid unnecessary padding
- Mind your language. Use spoken everyday language and avoid jargon.

### *Your Notes...*

Don't rely too much on either your notes or your memory. Notes should not distract the audience and are the most effective when used as a prompt or a reminder.

Memorizing your speech is not required at the local level but is encouraged.

- **Approach** – The approach is one of the most important elements in speaking. The contestant should walk confidently and briskly to the podium or front of the room and establish eye contact, pause for 5-10 seconds, and begin his presentation.
- **Eye Contact** – The contestant should establish rapport with the audience by good eye contact. He should avoid looking down often at his notes, at the ceiling, or out of the window. His eyes should move up and down, back and forth over the entire audience slowly and naturally.
- **Posture and Gestures** – The rule for posture is **DO NOT SLOUCH!** The contestant should stand straight, but not lock his/her knees. Gestures should be free and flow naturally from enthusiasm. Natural movements are more effective than forced gestures. Feel free to utilize the space on the stage or presentation area.
- **Delivery** – The speaker should project his voice, using the diaphragm. Employ voice variations and tempo.

### How You Say It

- ❖ Be enthusiastic and sincere
- ❖ Speak slowly and pause for effect
- ❖ Vary your tone of voice
- ❖ Make sure your audience can hear you
- ❖ Maintain eye contact with your audience
- ❖ Use movement and gesture appropriately
- ❖ Speak to the audience and not to the floor
- ❖ Watch your time. Pace yourself so your ending is not rushed.



### Check out these pro-life resources to get your research moving!

#### Websites:

<http://www.tnrtl.org>

<http://www.lifenews.com>

<http://www.nrlc.org>

#### Contact Info:

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