

## 2018 WABC Oratorical & Essay Contest Guidelines

SPONSOR: Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church

THEME: “African Americans in Times of War”

REGISTER BY: **February 12, 2018**

ELIGIBILITY: Students from kindergarten – 12th grade and college students (community college and undergraduate students). Students will compete in one of six divisions based on their grade division.

GUIDELINES: Contestants will have the opportunity to participate in this year’s competition by reciting one of the required poems/speeches and/or submitting an original essay to be reviewed by the essay competition committee. Excerpts to be presented for the oratorical competition vary by division of participation.

PARTICIPANTS: Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Division  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Division  
4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Division  
Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grades)  
High School (9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades)  
College (Undergraduate/Associate Degree)

## **Oratorical Contest Guidelines**

DIVISIONAL SELECTIONS:       **Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grades**- Students must be able to recite *one (1)* of the following poems:

1. "I, Too" by Langston Hughes
2. "Dream Variations" by Langston Hughes

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades** - Students must be able to recite *one (1)* of the following poems:

1. "If-ing" by Langston Hughes
2. "Dawn Revisited" by Rita Dove

**4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades**- Students must be able to recite *one (1)* of the following poems:

1. "Go to the Back, Rosa Parks" Author Unknown
2. "Caged Bird" by Mayou Angelou
3. "Danitra's Family Reunion" by Niki Grimes

### **Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> grades),**

Students will be responsible for reciting a response to the given prompt. The response must be between 3 and 5 minutes.

### **High School (9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades)**

Students will be responsible for reciting a response to the given prompt. The response must be between 5 and 6 minutes.

### **College (Undergraduate, Associates Degree)**

Students will be responsible for writing an essay that adequately responses to the given prompt.

MAXIMUM LENGTH OF ORATORICAL PRESENTATION:

<i>Division</i>	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Time</i>
Kind. & 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>K – 5</b>	<b>4 minutes</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>		
4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup>		
Middle	<b>6 – 8</b>	<b>5 minutes</b>
Senior High	<b>9 – 12</b>	<b>6 minutes</b>

**WINNERS:**                   **Winners and runner-ups in each division will receive an age appropriate prize!**

**JUDGING:**                 Refer to guidelines.  
All decisions by the judges are FINAL.

**DATES:**                   To accommodate the number of students who will participate, we will hold preliminary hearings on February 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. Students who make it to the final round will deliver their oration in competition with other finalists on Saturday, February 24, 2017. Contestants **MUST** be registered for the competition no later than February 12, 2018 via the church website ([www.wheelerbc.org](http://www.wheelerbc.org)) Contestants will be scheduled by appointment. Contest registrants will be notified of their appointment.

**LOCATION:**                 Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church

**TIMES:**                     Approximately 9:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m. (may vary)

## 2018 WABC Oratorical Contest Rules

- The contest is open to students in kindergarten, grades 1- 12 and college students (community college and undergraduate students).
- Contestants must register for participation in the contest via the Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church website ([www.wheelerbc.org](http://www.wheelerbc.org)) no later than February 12, 2018. Upon the completion of the general registration period, contestants will be notified about their appointment time for the preliminary rounds. Prelim hearings are filled on a first come, first served
- Contestants are expected to compete in one of the four divisions and their presentations will be timed. Each division has a maximum time limit for presentations as outlined below:

Grades K-5	4 minutes
Middle (grades 6-8)	5 minutes
Senior High (grades 9-12)	6 minutes
College	Essay Competition

- Time begins when contestants begin speaking. Time includes a brief introduction wherein students will provide for judges their name, grade (or college classification), school (or university) and age.
- Point deductions will be taken for every 30 seconds or fraction of time over the time limit. There is no penalty for completing ones presentation under the allotted time limit.
- During the contest, the contestant may request one (1) 30 second timeout to regain composure or recover part of his/her speech.
- In the event that a contestant may forget part of his or her speech presentation the contestant has up to the maximum time limit of each category to recall the speech. After this time the contestant will be judged on the performance as given.
- The use of costumes is permitted and encouraged. Students are permitted to dress up in costume appropriate to the time period or the role. Students are not allowed to use props in their presentation. This is a speech competition. The emphasis of the contest is on the delivery, accuracy and emotional appeal to the audience.

- A contestant who reads their speech from note cards, paper, etc...will be disqualified
- Contestants, parents and family are expected to be respectful of other contestants and conduct themselves professionally. Any contestant or parent that willfully or maliciously harasses, intimidates, and/or disrespects fellow contestants; parents, or contest officials will be disqualified. Contestants will be disqualified from contest if their parents, guardians, or family members violate this stipulation.
- Contestants must be on time. Failure to arrive within fifteen minutes of the scheduled appointment without prior communication with the Oratorical Contest Committee will result in disqualification.
- Contestants' supporters may videotape competition presentations of **their** child, family member or friend if contestant is over the age of 18. Personal videos **may not** be made of other contestants without their consent or the consent of the parent or guardian of a contestant under the age of 18. Personal videos **may not** be used to dispute or challenge judges' rulings.
- All judges' rulings are final.
- Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church retains the right to amend the rules without notice.
- Excerpts of the speech to be learned by students are included in this packet. Memorization requirements per division are listed above.
- Additional questions and concerns may be addressed to Rev. Joshua Mitchell or Sis. Kim Washington via email at [jmitchell@wheelerbc.org](mailto:jmitchell@wheelerbc.org) and [kwashington@wheelerbc.org](mailto:kwashington@wheelerbc.org).

## 2018 Essay Competition Guidelines

This year our college students (associate degree, undergraduate degree, military academy) will have the opportunity to participate in our essay competition. The Essay Competition gives students the opportunity to engage our “Redefining Black Genius” theme through original reflective essay submissions. College Students are welcome to participate in the essay competition and students must also be registered to participate by February 5, 2018. Essay submissions must be submitted to [college@wheelerbc.org](mailto:college@wheelerbc.org) by no later than Monday, February 12, 2018 by 11:00 p.m. CST. Essay prompt and guidelines are below:

### **Essay Prompt:**

“I want to say one other challenge that we face is simply that we must find an alternative to war and bloodshed. Anyone who feels, and there are still a lot of people who feel that way, that war can solve the social problems facing mankind is sleeping through a great revolution. President Kennedy said on one occasion, "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." The world must hear this. I pray to God that America will hear this before it is too late, because today we're fighting a war.”- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In March 1968, Dr. King made the above statement as a part of a speech entitled “Remaining Awake Through A Great Revolution”. In the speech, Dr. King expressed his opposition to America’s involvement in the war in Vietnam and addressed the moral and humane consequences of the nation’s participation in an “unjust war”. Fueled by his faith, Dr. King utilized his voice during times of war to address the leaders of the nation and the people of our nation. In 2018, many fear that America is once again on the doorstep of war. If you had an opportunity to speak to the leaders of the nation today, what would you tell them in light of the threat of impending warfare? How does your faith inform you in this respect?

### **Submission Guidelines:**

Written essay should be **600- 700** words. Please include your name, contact email and phone number, and school/university and classification (freshmen, sophomore, etc.) in the essay submission.

**2018 WABC Oratorical and Essay Competition Prompt**  
**Middle, High School and College Students**

“I want to say one other challenge that we face is simply that we must find an alternative to war and bloodshed. Anyone who feels, and there are still a lot of people who feel that way, that war can solve the social problems facing mankind is sleeping through a great revolution. President Kennedy said on one occasion, "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." The world must hear this. I pray to God that America will hear this before it is too late, because today we're fighting a war.”- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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## Kindergarten and First Grade

### I, Too

By Langston Hughes

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

**Dream Variations**  
**by Langston Hughes**

To fling my arms wide  
In some place of the sun,  
To whirl and to dance  
Till the white day is done.  
Then rest at cool evening  
Beneath a tall tree  
While night comes on gently,  
Dark like me-  
That is my dream!

To fling my arms wide  
In the face of the sun,  
Dance! Whirl! Whirl!  
Till the quick day is done.  
Rest at pale evening...  
A tall, slim tree...  
Night coming tenderly  
Black like me.

## Second and Third Grades

### If-ing

By Langston Hughes

If-ing If I had some small change

I'd buy me a mule,

Get on that mule and

Ride like a fool.

If I had some greenbacks

I'd buy me a Packard,

Fill it up with gas and

Drive that baby backward.

If I had a million

I'd get me a plane

And everybody in America'd

Think I was insane.

But I ain't got a million,

Fact is, ain't got a dime —

So just by if-ing

I have a good time!

**Dawn Revisited**  
**by Rita Dove**

Imagine you wake up  
with a second chance: The blue jay  
hawks his pretty wares  
and the oak still stands, spreading  
glorious shade. If you don't look back,

the future never happens.  
How good to rise in sunlight,  
in the prodigal smell of biscuits -  
eggs and sausage on the grill.  
The whole sky is yours

to write on, blown open  
to a blank page. Come on,  
shake a leg! You'll never know  
who's down there, frying those eggs,  
if you don't get up and see.

## **Fourth and Fifth Grades**

### **Go to the Back Rosa Parks**

#### **Author Unknown**

Go to the back of the bus, Rosa Parks

Go to the back and stay

“No, I won’t, I think it’s unfair

And I’m just too tired today”

But everyone knows the rules, Rosa Parks

Everyone knows if you’re black

You can’t eat at white restaurants

And on busses, you sit in the back

So now it’s time to move, Rosa Parks

“No, I’m not moving at all

I’ve got a voice and I’m going to use it

And thousands will hear the call”

We’re coming to sit with you, Rosa Parks”

People black and white did say

“We’re coming to change America

And bring equality here to stay!”

**Caged Bird (193)**  
**By Mayou Angelou**

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

**Danitra's Family Reunion (103)**  
**By Nikki Grimes**

On the Fourth of July,  
my cousins and  
I ran sack races,  
played kickball  
and tug-of-war  
before  
we heard  
our stomachs  
growl.  
We stopped for  
deviled eggs,  
battered corn,  
coleslaw,  
fried chicken,  
potato salad, and  
Strawberry Pie Jubilee.  
We sipped lemonade  
and listened to  
Grandma Brown's stories  
of when our folks were little.  
Then Uncle Joe  
handed out prizes  
for this year's graduates  
and for the best all-round student,  
which I won.  
By the time  
the day was done,  
I was full of fun  
and food  
and warm feelings,  
knowing that I am more  
than just me.  
I am part  
of a family.