

2026 Sister Rose Thering Fund Literary, Digital & Visual Arts Competition

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

1. Make the students (all or some select set of students) aware of the competition; share with them the **General Guidelines for Students**. Agree on a date by which they need to hand in their work to you (a date that will allow you enough time to formally enter them into the competition by the February 6 deadline). Receive student submissions and review their work to be sure each piece complies with the Guidelines for Students.
2. Show or have students watch the 2004 Oscar-nominated documentary *Sister Rose's Passion*. (Link to <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LfSyWVscHDN17kgJ26zh1VMbQ-ZVv6nL/view>).
3. All entries must relate to the 2025 contest theme: ***Transforming Apathy into Empathy***. Only classroom teachers can submit essays/poems/videos. Individual student submissions will not be considered for judging. All work must be original and have a title.
4. To explore the theme of **apathy transitioning into empathy** in an **essay** or **poem**, the student should think about a situation he/she has experienced or a person (a historic figure, someone they know or a literary figure) for whom apathy has been turned into empathy. What actions did this person take that turned apathy into empathy? How did their actions affect the lives of others? What lesson can we learn from this? How does this situation relate to Sister Rose's legacy?
5. **Limits** – Limits to the number of submissions in various categories and from any given teacher or school are as follows:
 - Ten (10) literary arts submissions—**essays, poems**—per grade level per school, with a maximum of forty (40) submissions per high school and twenty (20) per middle school. If a school submits more than ten (10) submissions for a given grade level, the submissions from that school's grade level will be ineligible for consideration.
 - Five (5) **digital** video submissions per grade level per school, for a maximum of 20 per high school and 10 per middle school. If a school submits more than five videos for a given grade level, all videos from that school's grade level will become ineligible for consideration.
 - Five (5) works of **visual art** (painting, drawing or sculpture) per grade level per school, for a maximum of 20 works per high school and 10 per middle school. If a school submits more than five works of visual art for a given grade level, all visual artwork from that school's grade level will become ineligible for consideration.

6. **TEACHER REVIEW PRIOR TO SUBMISSION:** Review student essays and poems with a keen eye for proper punctuation, grammar and spelling. Review all videos and works of visual art to ensure that they comply with the competition guidelines for their categories. Please do not make corrections yourself. For instance, with essays and poems; encourage the student to revise and edit according to appropriate grammatical guidelines.
Submissions will be judged according to student's grade level.

7. **SPECIFICATIONS FOR COMPETITION CATEGORIES:**

- **ESSAYS** must be typed double-spaced in 12 pt. font, with a header listing the following: **Student's Name** and **Grade level (7-12)**. The length of the essay **must not exceed** five hundred (500) words and must include a connection to Sister Rose.
- **POEMS** must be typed single-spaced in 12 pt. font, with a header listing the following: **Student's Name** and **Grade level (7-12)**. They should be between 14–50 lines in length, have an original title and include a connection to Sister Rose.
- **DIGITAL ART (VIDEO) REQUIREMENTS:** Each digital PSA should be 100–200 seconds in length. Videos longer than 240 seconds will be disqualified.
- **VISUAL ARTS REQUIREMENTS:** Paintings and drawings should be no larger than 24 inches x 36 inches and no smaller than 11 inches x 14 inches and should be signed by the artist. Sculptures should measure no taller than 18 inches and no shorter than 6 inches.

8. Be sure the student and parents have completed and signed the **Entry Form**. By signing this form, participants and their parents/guardians grant permission to allow the Sister Rose Thering Fund to use their names and submissions in print or internet form.

9. HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR STUDENTS' WORK INTO COMPETITION:

- **ESSAYS & POEMS** - Students should hand in their essays and poems to you in hard copy along with a signed **Entry Form**. Scan these into a single PDF, one student's submission after another. Email this PDF to mary.mountcastle@shu.edu. The subject line of your email should be "SRTF Arts Competition."
- **DIGITAL ARTS (PSA Video's)**: Following your review, the student is responsible for uploading the video to **YouTube** and for providing the URL for viewing the video (as requested on the **Entry Form**). Directions for uploading the video are provided in **Specific Instructions for Digital Art (Videos)**

If the student has difficulty uploading to YouTube, contact Maisie Mountcastle, competition administrator, to discuss alternative places to upload the video. Maisie can be reached by telephone at 201-354-8071 or via email at mary.mountcastle@shu.edu

Scan signed Entry Forms for all the videos into a single PDF. Email this PDF to mary.mountcastle@shu.edu. The subject line of your email should be "SRTF Arts Competition."

- **VISUAL ART**: Following your review, students should provide you with content for submission as follows:
 - **For Drawings and Paintings** --JPG images of their work PLUS their paperwork (written explanation and signed **Entry Form**). For specifics about naming JPG's and creating the written explanation, see **Specific Instructions – Visual Art**.
 - **For Sculptures** -- a 360-degree video PLUS their paperwork (written explanation, unless they have provided this in spoken form within the 360 degree video PLUS their signed **Entry Form**). For specifics about naming the 360 video and creating the written or verbal explanation, see **Specific Instructions – Visual Art**.

Scan the paperwork for all your students' visual arts submissions into a single PDF and email this to mary.mountcastle@shu.edu. Attach the JPG for each drawing/painting and the 360 degree video for each sculpture. The subject line of the email should be "SRTF Arts Competition."

10. Winners will be recognized at an awards ceremony at Seton Hall University on **Sunday, April 19, 2026**. All winners, their families and their teachers are strongly encouraged to attend.

NOTE: All winning pieces of artwork should be brought to the Celebration of Education for display in April.

11. Any submission that falls outside the guidelines or theme of this competition cannot be accepted as an entry into the Sister Rose Thering Fund competition.
12. If you have any questions before submitting, please contact the competition administrator, Maisie Mountcastle, by telephone at 201-354-8071 or via email at mary.mountcastle@shu.edu.