



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ministry of Education

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## Family Island students take top prizes in 2009 Templeton Essay Competition



**Students use Templeton Foundation “Laws of Life essay contest have their say on topical issues.**

Pictured L-R (front row) are: Mrs. Mena Griffith, Templeton Foundation; Mrs. Leanora Archer, Deputy Director of Education; Pastor Allan Lee, Calvary Bible Church; Mrs. Elma Garraway, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Dr. John Templeton Jr. and Mrs. John Templeton.

Back Row: Edward Moss, Bishop Michael Eldon High School; Myrkeeva Johnson, Doris Johnson High School; Toi Johnson, Queen’s College; Admad Pratt, Queen’s College; Justin Jack, Junior Winner, South Andros High School; Bernique Pinder, Crooked High School, Senior Winner; Morgan Adderley, Queen’s College and Tanisha Adderley, L. W. Young Junior High School.

Bernique Pinder, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student of the Crooked Island High School and Justin Jack, a grade eight student of South Andros High School were the senior and junior winners respectively of the 2009 Templeton Foundation “Laws of Life” Essay Competition. The competition which was a collaborative effort between the Templeton Foundation and the Ministry of Education attracted over eighty entrants who were required to write on the topics: “***If you don’t use it, you’ll lose it,***” in the Senior Division, and “***Crime doesn’t pay***” in the Junior Division. The competition was open to both private and public school students in New Providence and the Family Islands.

Minister of Education, The Honourable Carl W. Bethel, spoke at the event and expressed pride in the fact that two Family Island students won the national competition. He stated that this affirmed that the Ministry is executing its mission of “ensuring that there is equality of access to quality education by public school students wherever they are in The Bahamas.”

He also commended Justin Jack for his victory and the other male finalists for their achievements in the competition. He noted that they demonstrated that not all young men are engaged in anti-social behaviours and that some are thinking and working towards a brighter future.

Minister Bethel alluded to the cut in the education budget, but he told parents that their involvement in their children’s education can make up for any monetary shortfall. He encouraged them to support and monitor their children and to turn off the televisions and the computers except for research and promoting reading at home.

Dr. John Templeton Jr, son of the late philanthropist, Sir John Templeton founder of the “Laws of Life” Essay Competition, also spoke at the awards ceremony held at the Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort. Dr. Templeton stated that his father would be proud of the students’ work. He revealed that his father based his Laws of Life on the book that had the most impact on him throughout his life – The Bible. Dr. Templeton also shared that his father’s success was motivated by his own father’s inability to pay his college tuition. This act caused his father to work three part-time jobs to pay for his education and to become an astute student at the same time.

During the ceremony Bernique and Justin read their essays. Bernique’s essay titled “If you don’t use it you’ll lose it”, expanded on Sir Templeton’s 4<sup>th</sup> Law of Life which encouraged individuals to use whatever talents and gifts they have to advance themselves and humanity.

Bernique referenced Saint Luke Chapter 23 to support her point of view. It tells the story of the two thieves who were nailed on crosses beside Jesus and were give opportunity to change their lives before death. One thief decided to use his time to mock and ridicule Jesus, while they other asked for repentance. The former’s reward was death and the latter received eternal life in Paradise with the Saviour.

The three-time national essay contest winner, further made her case for using one's talents in the story of American John Roebling, an engineer who in 1883 was inspired to build a bridge connecting New York to Long Island.

Although people doubted him he persisted in his quest only to be derailed by a construction accident that caused severe brain damage that resulted in him being unable to walk or talk. Mr. Roebling realized that his mind was still functional and together with one finger that he was eventually able to move, he tapped out a code of instructions to a group engineers that resulted in the completion of the bridge 13 years after he started.

Justin's essay told the story the first sin in the Garden of Eden and how it has impacted humanity throughout the ages. He affirmed that no matter the type sin one commits, it is wrong and it causes internal and external shame. He acknowledged that he had committed the sin of bullying which hurt someone. He also noted that the sin of murder affects the families' of the victim and the perpetrator. The junior winner also stated that children, who have lost a parent to murder, lose hope and are financially disadvantaged because their parent is not there to support them. Alternatively, children of murderers are scarred with the stigma of their parent's crime and have a difficult life.

The senior and junior winners were awarded laptops, while the other finalists received either digital cameras, I pods or cash prizes.

The "Laws of Life" Essay competition was introduced by Sir John Templeton in the 1990's but was inactive in recent years. After a series of meetings between Templeton Foundation and the Ministry of Education, the competition was reinstated.