

Competition Topics & Criteria for 2027

Website Link: www.nzchristianwriters.org/competitions/

COMPETITION COORDINATOR – DEBBIE McDERMOTT

JUDGES

LEVEL 1



**Debbie
McDermott**

LEVEL 2



**Shirley
Jamieson**

LEVEL 3



**Julia
Martin**

Which Level do I Enter?

- Level 1:** For new members and all other members who haven't competed enough to be promoted to Level 2. Age limit: 16 years old or over.
- Level 2:** For members who have been promoted from Level 1 by the judges. Age limit: 16 years old or over.
- Level 3:** For members who have been promoted from Level 2 by the judges, plus members on the Graduates List. Age limit: 16 years old or over.

Entries are to be the sole work of the writer and no collaboration is allowed.

If you're not sure what Level you are on, please contact the Competition Coordinator, Debbie McDermott, at level1@nzchristianwriters.org.

Formatting and Entry Guidelines and Criteria

Font: Arial, 10 pt **Heading:** Bold Title Case, 18 pt **Line spacing:** Multiple 1.2

Paragraph Spacing: 6 pt **Indentation:** None **Alignment:** Justified

Wordcount: Do NOT include titles, footnotes or bibliographies in the wordcount (unless informed otherwise) and ensure main content is no more than 5% above or below the wordcount. Maximum wordcounts must not be exceeded at all.

Send a photo of yourself for publishing purposes.

EMAILING YOUR ENTRY

Your entry should be emailed to the competition judge as a Microsoft or Open Office Word document attachment, complete with word count, your name and your locality, by the 1st of the month prior to the magazine's publication date. Only one entry per entrant is allowed in any given issue of the magazine.

Prizes and Promotion Criteria

Level 1 contestants who achieve overall 1st, 2nd or 3rd places in the first three competitions of the year will be promoted to Level 2. Level 2 contestants who achieve overall 1st or 2nd places in the first three competitions of the year will be promoted to Level 3. Level 3 contestants who achieve overall 1st, 2nd or 3rd places at least three times across two consecutive years or six-month periods will be promoted to the Graduates List. At the end of the first three competitions of the year, all contestants go back to zero points for the final three competitions of the year and the process of working towards being promoted to the next level begins again. There will be a mid-year and end-of-year awarding of certificates and prizes in the form of gift vouchers to overall Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 winners. To be promoted to Level 2 or 3, contestants must receive points at least three times on their current Level. The judges also require regular entries plus improved writing.

Topics

LEVEL ONE Judge – Debbie McDermott

FEBRUARY – due 1 January

New Year celebrations are often a time of reflecting on the past 12 months. Give a positive account of something that impacted you deeply in 2026. Include an encouraging takeaway message for the reader (350 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

APRIL – due 1 March

Using the third person point of view, write a short story about a character who learns the true meaning of Easter. You may quote a couple of Bible verses to show your story aligns with biblical truth, but they must take up no more than 20% of the stipulated wordcount (500 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

JUNE – due 1 May

All four seasons are mentioned in the Bible, revealing to us God's majesty, creativity and steadfastness so we can grow in faith. Research what Scripture has to say about winter and write an essay on the subject from the biblical point of view (500 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

AUGUST – due 1 July

Write an exciting mystery story that focuses on a puzzling crime, situation or circumstance that needs to be solved in a law-abiding, ethical manner. Ensure you keep your reader guessing until the last couple of sentences and include a strong takeaway message (500 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

OCTOBER – due 1 September

The Beatitudes, taught by Jesus in Matthew 5:3-11, are considered to be foundational principles of the Christian faith. Write a short Bible study for intermediate school children (11-12-year-olds), explaining what each Beatitude means and how it can be applied. Use age-appropriate language (500 words).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

DECEMBER – due 1 November

Fanny Crosby's hymn, *Tell Me the Story of Jesus*, not only describes his birth, but also his ministry and ultimate sacrifice to save our souls. Obtain a copy of the lyrics and—in **your own words**—summarise each verse (not the refrain) and its impact on you. Include the name of the hymn and author in your introduction, as well as a footnote with the online link to the lyrics (400 words, excluding the footnote).

Email entry to Debbie McDermott at level1@nzchristianwriters.org

LEVEL TWO – Shirley Jamieson

FEBRUARY – due 1 January

Write a story about two friends who each decide on entirely different New Year's Resolutions for 2027. Tell what happens when they go out together and realise their resolutions clash. Include humour (500 words).

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

APRIL – due 1 March

There is an important emphasis on light in the Bible. God instructed Moses to make a beautiful lampstand for the Tabernacle in Exodus 25:31-40. In Psalm 119:105 David says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (NIV). Many years later Jesus said, "I am the light of the world..." (John 8:12, NIV). Write an article for your church webpage showing what God's light means in a believer's daily life (400 words).

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

JUNE – due 1 May

In a conversation with your children, tell them a story about something that happened to you in your childhood. Use mainly direct speech (500 words).

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

AUGUST – due 1 July

Write a devotion about winter, encouraging others that God is still with us in the difficult times. Include a Bible verse and a short testimony to show we can trust God (350 words).

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

OCTOBER – due 1 September

Archaeologists have discovered many interesting finds in Israel to prove the Bible is accurate. Research one of these discoveries and connect it with a well-known biblical character (400 words).

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

DECEMBER – due 1 November

Using all the letters in the alphabet at least once, write an email to a close relative about taking your child/children to the zoo. It can be either a true or imaginary story. Tell of the reactions to seeing some of the animals for the first time (500 words).

Email entry to Shirley Jamieson at level2@nzchristianwriters.org

LEVEL 3 Judge – Julia Martin

FEBRUARY – due 1 January

If you were permitted to address a gathering of world leaders, what would you choose to tell them? Write out your speech in 500 words or fewer.

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

APRIL – due 1 March

‘The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the key to the Christian faith.’ Give reasons why you believe this to be the case, backing your answers with scripture (500 words maximum).

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

JUNE – due 1 May

Write a letter of sympathy to a friend or family member who is dealing with grief, tragedy or disappointment and is in need of comfort, encouragement and hope (250 words).

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

AUGUST – due 1 July

Using dialogue alone, create an encounter between two people who engage in an interaction that reveals character and emotion (200 words).

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

OCTOBER – due 1 September

Imagine you are marooned alone on a deserted island in the middle of the ocean. Explain how you would survive and name five items you would want to have with you (350 words).

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org

DECEMBER – due 1 November

Write the script for a skit suitable for a church outreach programme for youth and presented by young people on a moral or social issue which is entertaining but also has a serious takeaway message (400 words excluding directions).

Email entry to Julia Martin at level3@nzchristianwriters.org