

**FEATURING 2 DIVISIONS:
Mississippi Baptist College Division & Open Division**

“
2025

**MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
STUDENT
SPEAKERS'
TOURNAMENT**
”

**SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2025
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BRANDON**

— Tournament begins at 10:00 AM —

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

Student Speakers' Tournament is designed to develop leadership in students by teaching them Christian doctrine, public speaking, poise, and confidence in leadership through the verbal expression of their faith. It demands serious time and effort, but with a tremendous payoff. Students grow spiritually when engaged in research, study, prayer, and practice of preparing a speech. Today's speakers will be ready to stand for Christ in their churches, schools, work places, and communities. They will develop skills to articulate truth in a way that people will hear and understand. **The personal, spiritual benefits of participating in this tournament far outweigh any scholarships that may be earned through this ministry.**

ELIGIBILITY

Students who are enrolled in grades 10 through 12 who represent a Mississippi Baptist church, that supports the Cooperative Program, are eligible to participate.

Students must participate in their local Church and Association Tournaments. The top eight participants in each division from the Association Tournament are allowed to advance to the State Tournament. Students need to contact their association (**where their church membership is**) to find out the tournament date and let them know that they will be participating. This should be done in the fall or early winter.

Church and Associational Tournaments will need to be held BEFORE the **April 14, 2025**, deadline for qualification. Each association will need to notify Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries of their qualifying winners and submit their written manuscript to Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries by **Monday, April 14**.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Start by telling the appropriate leader in your church that you want to participate in the Student Speakers' Tournament. Tournament brochures are available at your association office or by contacting Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Phone: 601-968-3800

E-mail: tpresson@mbcb.org or khall@mbcb.org

NOTE: Your church will need to contact the association office to determine when the Association Student Speakers' Tournament will be held.

WHAT ARE THE LEVELS OF THE TOURNAMENT?

CHURCH TOURNAMENT

A church tournament should be conducted at the church before an audience of interested persons. The church tournament should be held prior to the Association Tournament, allowing time to notify the association leader that your church has qualified speaker(s) who will be participating. Each church provides its own judges who use the judging information and sample score sheet provided in this brochure. Information on how to conduct a church or association drill can be found at www.mbc.org (on home page, search "Student Speakers Tournament" in the search box).

ASSOCIATION TOURNAMENT

Each church is a member of a local Baptist association. Association Tournaments must be held prior to the **April 14** deadline. **Students must participate in the association where their church membership is.** If your association will not have a tournament, please contact Ken Hall or Tasha Presson in the state office and they will assist you in finding another association to participate in. Each association is allowed to send its top eight finalists (in each division) to the State Student Speakers' Tournament. Speakers will need to decide which division to participate in (please see information on the Tournament Divisions).

At the conclusion of the Association Tournament, Associations will submit the names and church affiliation of finalists to the Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Please include full mailing address and phone number of each participant. Make sure you designate if they will be participating in the **Baptist College Division** or the **Open Division**. You must also send in a copy of the finalists' speeches before **April 14, 2025**, along with a letter from the association missions director stating that they are indeed the winner(s) for your association. These may be submitted by mail or e-mail. This information can be found on the back of this brochure.

STATE TOURNAMENT

The 2025 Mississippi State Student Speakers' Tournament will be held **Saturday, April 26, 2025**, at First Baptist Church, Clinton, Mississippi. The tournament will begin at 10:00 a.m. Students will be notified, by e-mail, of their assigned times to give their speeches. Speech manuscripts will be scored the preceding weeks; therefore all speeches need to be in Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries on or before **April 14**. Each speaker **must** have two levels of experience, **church** and **association**, before the State Tournament and be one of the **eight** divisional qualifiers from the Association Tournament.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST COLLEGE DIVISION

For students who plan on attending one of our Mississippi Baptist Colleges/Universities...

Scholarships in this division are provided and awarded by the individual institutions (Blue Mountain College, Mississippi College, and William Carey University). Each institution reserves the right to modify the requirements for any scholarship and school policies are subject to change without notice. Mississippi Baptist Convention Board does not have any control on these scholarships. Please contact the individual school's financial aid department if you have any questions.

Once a student has won a first place scholarship in this division, he/she is no longer eligible to compete

in Speakers' Tournament. In this division, if a student doesn't place first, he/she may come back and compete again. However, a student is only allowed one scholarship total as schools do not allow students to "stack" these scholarships from previous years. Scholarships are nontransferable. Bible Drill and Speaker Tournament scholarships may not be combined.

***Winners are responsible for contacting their school's financial aid office to let them know they were participants/winners.**



BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

**Scholarship recipients are required to live on campus, and must be a first-time, full-time freshman and maintain a 3.0 GPA for renewal.*

First Place Room and board each year for four years
Second & Third Place \$5,000 Scholarship per year
Fourth Place \$3,000 Scholarship per year

**All scholarships are good for eight semesters (four years) of study.*



MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

**Scholarship recipients are required to live on campus.*

First Place Room and board each year for four years
 (approximately \$11,000 per year)
Second & Third Place \$5,000 per year
Fourth Place \$3,000 per year

WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY

**Scholarship recipients are required to live on campus.*

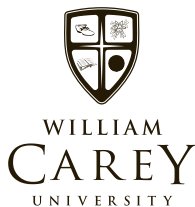
First Place \$9,000 Scholarship
Second & Third Place \$5,000 Scholarship
Fourth Place \$3,000 Scholarship

**All categories are renewable on an annual basis for up to four years.*

Association Winners One-time Scholarship Award for \$3,000

This one-time award is given the first trimester enrolled. *(WCU only)*

**Free textbooks to all WCU undergraduates.*



*All scholarships are non-transferable. Each college reserves the right to modify the requirements. Scholarships and policies are subject to change without notice.

Please note: It is up to the individual college as to its policies on receiving multiple scholarships.

OPEN DIVISION

For students who are not planning on attending one of our Mississippi Baptist Colleges/Universities...

An Open Division Scholarship is a one-time award that is good for any college or university the student chooses to attend.

FIRST PLACE.....\$1,000 Scholarship

SECOND PLACE.....\$750 Scholarship

THIRD PLACE\$500 Scholarship

PLEASE NOTE:

These are one-time scholarships presented by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. A student may receive only ONE scholarship in the Open Division. If a student places second or third, he/she may participate again in this division but is only eligible to receive the highest scholarship earned (scholarships cannot be combined). Scholarships are nontransferable and can only be used by the actual winner.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT FORMAT:

WHY ARE THERE TWO DIVISIONS?

Speakers' Tournament is actually two tournaments in one. The Mississippi Baptist College division is for students who plan on attending one of our Mississippi Baptist Colleges/Universities. The Open division is for students who are not planning to attend one of these three schools.

CAN I PARTICIPATE IN BOTH DIVISIONS?

No. Students must decide which division to participate in prior to the Associational Tournament.

WHY DO I HAVE TO TURN IN A WRITTEN MANUSCRIPT?

Manuscripts are a part of the tournament. These are judged prior to tournament day. The judges then rank the manuscripts based on content, proper written form, and overall quality. These rankings are not shared with the tournament day judges unless there is a tie in the scoring. In the case of a tie, the person with the highest ranked manuscript will be declared the winner.

I GRADUATED BEFORE MY SENIOR YEAR WAS COMPLETED... CAN I STILL COMPETE?

If this would be your senior year and you are not enrolled in college classes, then yes. If you are taking college courses, then you are no longer eligible to compete.

HOW IS A SPEECH JUDGED?

CONTENT/COMPOSITION (50%)

1. Originality & Topic
2. Organization
3. Structure & Grammar
4. Resources & Credit for Quotations
(Biblical references must be included.)
5. Goal & Purpose

DELIVERY (50%)

1. Delivery without Notes
2. Voice & Articulation
3. Poise and Confidence
4. Personal Appearance
5. Within Time Allotment

WHAT IS HELPFUL IN MY SPEECH PRESENTATION?

- Maintain eye contact with the judges as well as those in the audience.
- Use good vocal energy and enunciate clearly. Avoid distracting vocalizations and speak loudly.
- Be relaxed and in control. Appear confident. Be convincing, interesting and understandable.
- Use good posture and effective body movement. Use effective hand and arm gestures.
- Smile and use appropriate facial gestures.
- Know your speech well. If you forget a part of your speech, stay cool. Pause and gather your thoughts.
- This is not a sermon, but a speech.
- It is best to not sing or perform during a speech. No props should be used.
- Microphones or podiums will not be used.

HOW DO I DRESS?

- Dress modestly and comfortably. Appropriate is a big thing! Clothing styles are constantly changing but there is always a line between what's appropriate and what's not for such an occasion. Be aware that you will be in front of an audience of adults and may be up on a stage.
- Dress pants and collared shirts (ties and jackets optional) for boys.
- Dresses, skirts (short is not recommended), pants and non-revealing blouses/shirts for girls.
- Be well groomed.
- If in doubt, more formal dress is encouraged.

NOTE TO JUDGES

- Content/composition and delivery are the two categories used as a basis for judging speakers.
- Participants will be scored in 10 areas on a scale of 1 to 10 (2=poor; 10=excellent).
- Participants will be penalized up to six points for failure to stay within the time allotment of 4 to 6 minutes.
- Speeches are to have at least three sources, the Bible being at least one.

SCORE SHEET

***For church and associational tournament use.**

	PARTICIPANTS				
Content/Composition	1	2	3	4	5
1. Originality/Related to Subject					
2. Organization/Logical Sequence					
3. Structure/Grammar					
4. Resources Chosen/Credit for Quotes					
5. Purpose Accomplished					
Delivery					
1. Vocalic/Clarity					
2. Eye Contact					
3. Nonverbal Communication					
4. Extemporaneous Delivery					
5. Poise/Appearance					
6. Time Limit Penalty: 4-6 minutes (deduct 1 point each 20 seconds over/under time limit)					
Totals					
Time					

Topic/Title	Total Points				
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
Judge					
	POINT VALUES (1-10)				
	2	4	6	8	10
	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN PREPARING SPEECHES

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

- Each speaker must prepare his own speech from one of the tournament topics listed in this brochure. It is okay to be influenced by someone else and to quote others, but you must put everything in your own words except quotes. Only topics in this year's brochure may be used.
- Speeches should be 4 to 6 minutes in length and **MUST BE MEMORIZED**. Point deductions are made for speeches that exceed or fall short of the time limit.
- Your speech should reflect what you think. Your speech should not just quote Scripture (although you need to use Scripture) and tell what others have said. It should reflect what you think and want listeners to know.
- Your speech should deal with your chosen topic. Everything in your speech should deal directly or indirectly with your topic and not just dance around it.
- Content should flow logically. Ideas and information should be properly sequenced in order to make it easier for the judges to understand what you are saying.
- Your speech should have a strong and clearly identifiable core idea. Tell the audience what you want them to know most of all, and say it more than once to make sure they get it. It is good to say it somewhat differently each time.
- You should have a strong opening and closing. The most important part of any speech is the opening. If you don't get the judges' attention and make them want to continue listening, they probably won't. Stories, quotes and gestures make good openers. The second most important part of a speech is the closing. An effective closing summarizes briefly and reminds listeners of your core idea. A good speech starts by making them want to listen and ends with a strong take-away for listeners.
- A written manuscript (with cover sheet) of your speech must be turned in. Use complete sentences and good grammar. Correct punctuation is also an important part of good grammar. The manuscript should include a bibliography page.
- The title of your speech must be the topic you choose.
- Words should be spelled correctly.
- Use paragraphs properly. Paragraphs should be used to signal a shift in content. Good paragraphs are unified, coherent, and well developed. While there is no set length for paragraphs, they should be long enough to adequately develop an idea, but short enough to maintain the focus of readers and listeners.
- Do not use props in your speech.
- Multiple sources (at least 3) should be used. All resources should clearly help the judges understand your topic and your point. Remember, good speeches are built around a clearly defined core idea. All resources should help the judges understand and/or buy into that thought or belief. These sources should be referenced during your presentation.
- Use the Bible as one of your resources. Three to five Scripture references and quotes are about right for a 4 to 6 minute speech. More than this will not give you time to tell what you think. Be sure to mention the source in your speech.
- Give proper credit for all Scripture and resources.

Always use quotation marks to identify quotes and tell where the quote or idea came from. Scripture should be identified by the book and verse, as well as the translation quoted. Quotes from books and papers should give the author's name, book or resource title, date published, publisher's name, the copyright holder, and the page number. Include a bibliography in your written speech.
- Your speech should accomplish its purpose. Your speech should inform, inspire, encourage and/or cause the judges to be concerned. A good speech reveals its objective within the first minute.

COVER SHEET INFORMATION

The written manuscript of your speech will be turned in at your Association Tournament which will be submitted to the state office. This manuscript must contain a cover sheet which includes:

Title (topic), name, full mailing address, phone number, e-mail, Grade in school, church affiliation, and which division competing in (Baptist College or Open). Manuscripts will be judged prior to the tournament and are used in case of a tie at the State Tournament.

Sample Cover Page:

John Doe
123 Anywhere Drive
Anywhere, Anywhere 12345
000-000-0000
johndoe@internetcompany.net
11th grade
First Baptist Church, Anywhere
Baptist College Division
or
Open Division

Title

John Doe
123 Anywhere Drive
Anywhere, Anywhere 12345
000-000-0000
johndoe@internetcompany.net
11th grade
First Baptist Church, Anywhere
Baptist College Division
or
Open Division

TOURNAMENT TOPICS FOR 2025 CYCLE 3

TOPICS FOR 2025:

- How Do I Know the Bible is True?
- Gifted to Serve
- On Eagles Wings
- What's So Amazing About Grace?
- For Such a Time As This
- Only One Way
- Certainties in an Uncertain World
- Is God Calling Me?
- The Cost of Discipleship
- One God or Many Gods?
- Stand Up for Life
- God's Design for Marriage
- Great Commission Christians
- The Best is Yet to Come
- Navigating the Storms of Life

RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

Speaker Power book and a Speakers' Tournament instructional DVD are available to participants and leaders. These are free of charge and can be requested by contacting Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Phone: 601-968-3800

E-mail: tpresson@mbcb.org or khall@mbcb.org

CHURCH AND ASSOCIATION LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

CHURCH:

- Designate a time when all 10th through 12th grade students will be present to introduce Student Speakers' Tournament.
- Provide copies of the Student Speakers' Tournament brochure.
- Personally encourage students to participate.
- Provide support and adult mentors for the participants.
- Make sure all requirements for participation are met.
- Conduct the Church Tournament.
- For practice, provide several opportunities for the student to deliver their speech before the Association Tournament.
- Participate in the Association Tournament.
- Contact your association for date, time and location of the Association Tournament.
- Make sure a written manuscript of the speech is given to judges at the Association Tournament.

ASSOCIATION:

- Plan the Association Tournament well in advance of the State Tournament deadline of **April 14, 2025**.
- Promote Student Speakers' Tournament throughout the association.
- Have the association discipleship leader, or the student ministry leader contact each church and encourage leaders to encourage students to participate.
- **Each association is allowed to send the top eight finalists in each division from the Association Tournament to the State Tournament.**
- Submit the names, contact information and church affiliation of the finalists along with a letter from the association missions director declaring them to be finalists to the Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. These may be submitted by mail or e-mail.

REMINDERS:

Each speaker must qualify for the State Tournament by participating in the local church tournament and placing in the top eight in his/her division at the Association Tournament.

Students must participate in the Association Tournament where their church membership is.

Association Tournaments must be completed before the State Tournament registration deadline of April 14, 2025. Each association is responsible for contacting Discipleship/Sunday School Ministries by e-mail or letter, declaring the winners. Manuscripts must be postmarked on or by April 14. Each manuscript will need a cover sheet with the name, grade in school, full mailing address, phone number, e-mail, church affiliation, and the division competing in.

TOURNAMENT LOCATION:

First Baptist Church
309 South College Street
Brandon, MS 39042
www.fbccbrandon.com

SPEAKERS' TOURNAMENT CONTACT INFORMATION:

601.968.3800
tpresson@mbcb.org
khall@mbcb.org

DISCIPLESHIP/SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRIES:

Dwayne Parker • Director
Andrew Harper • Adult Ministry Consultant
Angie Boydston • Preschool/Children's Consultant
Ken Hall • Student Ministry Consultant
René Edwards • Ministry Assistant
Tasha Presson • Ministry Assistant



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

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