Reflective Activity: “This I Believe” Essay

Activity Description
I ask students to write a 400-500 word personal essay that describes their personal philosophy. I share with them excerpts from past student pieces and direct them to read more about the project and see sample essays from the 1950s and now at: http://thisibelieve.org/

Preparation, Handouts, Resources
Assigned readings:


Learning Goals
I want them to think about how their values have changed and how their values today move toward the people they want to be tomorrow. This is nested in a semester-long reflection about vocation.

Challenges/Obstacles
It’s hard to get students to open up and write in this way.

Recommendations
It is bonding for the group and helps me understand some of their foundational experiences. It also gets them to stop and ask themselves what moves them to act in this world.

Additional
I love this activity but I caution folks to not assign it as a one off thing. It would feel awkward placed in the middle of a course. It might help to get to know a student at the beginning of a course or in an advising relationship.

Tool Contributor
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