

Recruitment Devotions

Middle Grades

These devotions are written for classroom use. Each devotion includes a key Bible verse, a lesson outline with suggested discussion questions, teacher notes in italics, and a closing prayer. They may be used as-is or adapted freely.

Middle Grades

I. We Can't Help Speaking

Acts 4:18

II. God's Bricks and Bricklayers

Ephesians 2:21-22

III. Living in the Sonshine

Isaiah 60:2-3

IV. A Unique Pulpit and Classroom

Luke 5:1-3

Middle Grades Devotion

I. We Can't Help Speaking

Acts 4:18 - *"For we cannot help speaking about the things we have seen and heard."*

Peter and John spoke these words when they were standing trial for telling others about Jesus. When they were commanded not to preach or teach about Jesus at all, they said: "We cannot help speaking about the things we have seen and heard."

What were some of the things Peter and John had seen and heard? For three years they had walked and talked with Jesus. They had seen him change water into wine, make the blind see, heal the sick, and feed 5,000 men with a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish.

But they had seen even more! Peter was in the courtyard during Jesus' trial. John stood at the foot of the cross and witnessed his death. Both men had looked into the empty tomb on Easter morning. They were also there when Jesus gave the great command to "Go and make disciples of all nations!"

Suppose, after school today, you went outside and saw two people lift a car over their heads. I don't think they can do it - but suppose they could. I would be willing to say that when you got home from school today, even if no one asked, you would tell them. That would be something you just had to share.

But when you really think about it, we hear and see things even more spectacular than that every day when we study God's Word. We hear the wonderful news that even though each of us has sinned and deserves to go to hell, God still loves us. We hear the amazing truth that God's Son became a human being who lived a perfect life because we can't. We see how Jesus died the death that we deserve. We learn the good news that God calls each of us righteous for Jesus' sake.

That's amazing! That's a miracle! And it is what we have seen and heard.

It also is what many others still need to see and hear - the message that Jesus is their Savior from sin. I think there are some of you here today who could share that message in a very special way someday - by becoming a Lutheran pastor or teacher. If you have never thought about that before, today would be a good day to start.

Let's be thinking, and let's be speaking - speaking to others about Jesus. Because, just like Peter and John, we just can't help speaking about the things we have seen and heard!

PRAYER

Gracious God, what wonders you show us in your holy Word as you teach us about Jesus, your Son. You sent him to save us and all the world. Make us ready, willing, and able to speak to others the Good News that your Word speaks to us! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Middle Grades Devotion

II. God's Bricks and Bricklayers

Ephesians 2:21-22 - *"In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit."*

In 1989 the World Series was interrupted by a terrible earthquake in California. As the earth shifted, sections of bridges fell, highways collapsed, and many buildings crumbled. But not all of the buildings fell. Some had been built with such fine foundations and flexible steel structures that they remained standing with little or no damage. What wonderful safeguards were designed by the architects!

Our reading today talks about another building and another architect. The building is the holy Christian Church, made up of all believers throughout the world. We cannot see this building with our eyes but we know it is being well built because the architect is Jesus Christ. Under his guidance, believers everywhere are joined together by a common bond - faith in Jesus for their salvation. Their foundation is God's Word, and Christ is the cornerstone.

Jesus made us the "bricks" of his church. Each one of us is a living brick that fits together with other bricks. What kind of a brick are you? Is your foundation the Word of God? Is Christ your cornerstone? Do you eagerly tell others about Jesus? Do you ever think about entering full-time work in God's kingdom as one of his special workers?

Many still do not believe in Jesus and aren't part of his church. There are still plenty of raw materials out there just waiting for someone to bring them God's Word so they too might become "bricks" added to the building of Christ's church. Lovingly, our Lord Jesus lets us serve as "bricklayers" in his building process - by telling others about our Savior and showing that he is important in our lives by the way we speak and act.

But you can also be Christ's "bricklayer" in other ways - special ways. By training to be Lutheran pastors or teachers at Martin Luther College, you can become a full-time worker in God's kingdom. Think about it. Then pray about it. Put yourself in God's hands. He will lead you in the right direction.

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, you sent to us our church's one foundation - Jesus Christ, our Lord. Give us the strength to withstand the earthquakes of our lives. But also, help us to be bricklayers for your church - first as Christians, through the example of our lives and our witness to others, and then, if it is your will, as full-time workers in your kingdom. Guide our lives so that we might fully see your plan for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Middle Grades Devotion

III. Living in the Sonshine

Isaiah 60:2-3 - *"See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn."*

Two of the most beautiful times of the day are sunrise and sunset. The pinks, reds, golds, purples, and blues of the rising or setting sun can fill our hearts with joy and wonder at our amazing Creator-God. As we watch the sun rise or set we can also be filled with peace at the reminder that the very same God is in control of all things, including our lives.

Try to imagine what your life would be like without God. It would be dark and empty. That calls to mind an old commercial slogan: "A day without orange juice is like a day without sunshine!" We could easily say that a day without Jesus is a day without Sonshine - not the light from the sun in the sky, but the light from the Son of God. That SONshine!

Our reading refers to light and darkness. Imagine total darkness - like an underground cave with no light from any source. So dark you wouldn't be able to see your hand in front of your face. You wouldn't know if there was a path ahead of you, or a wall, or a drop-off.

Believe it or not, we all were in deep darkness just like that. Before we had faith in Jesus, we were in the darkness of sin and death. But as we heard God's Word, the Holy Spirit worked faith in our hearts and we began to see the dawn of our salvation. Now the radiance of our Savior shines before us and all other believers.

How tragic it is to realize that there are many people in the world still living in that utter darkness. Perhaps even some of your neighborhood friends. They have no light to guide their way. They could be lost forever.

Don't you want them to see the same SONshine you see? You could train to become one of God's pastors or teachers. With training at Martin Luther College, you could become a full-time minister of Christ and reach many people with the light of God's saving Word.

PRAYER

Dear Heavenly Father, who gave your Son to shine as the light of the world, teach us to appreciate the knowledge of salvation which we enjoy. Help us to be useful instruments in the spreading of your Word - not only as Christians, but if it is your will, as pastors and teachers in your kingdom. Help the light of your Son to shine on all people, that they also may be saved from the darkness of sin and unbelief. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Middle Grades Devotion

IV. A Unique Pulpit and Classroom

Luke 5:1-3 - *"One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God... he got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat."*

What do we call the stand from which the pastor preaches on Sunday morning? What do we call the place where teachers teach and students learn during the school week?

(Discuss how pulpits might be on different sides of the church, some classrooms bigger or smaller than others, etc.)

Today in our Scripture lesson we learn of a unique and special pulpit or classroom that Jesus used. What was it?

(A boat.) We are not used to hearing God's Word taught from a boat. But even though the pulpit was a little different, the message was the same.

No doubt the message that Jesus shared was simple - the message of who he was and why he came. It's the same simple message shared today from the pulpits in our churches on Sunday and in our classrooms during the week. Jesus is God's Son; Jesus came because you and I and all people break God's commandments every day; Jesus died to redeem us all from the penalty of those sins.

Think for a moment of all the pulpits and classrooms around us, for us to use. Maybe that pulpit might be in a car on the way to the movies with a friend. Maybe that classroom might be a playground in the park after a ball game. There are many different pulpits and classrooms for us to share God's Word right here, right now!

And who knows - perhaps some of you one day might stand in a pulpit as a pastor, or be in a classroom like this one, teaching others the message of Jesus, the Savior from sin. Of course, where that message is spoken and even who speaks it are not the important things. What is important is the message - a message we can share whenever and wherever we tell others about our Savior.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you were always willing to preach and teach your Word to others. Help us to follow in your footsteps, always willing to tell others about you. And, if it is your will, guide us to serve you with our lives by filling pulpits and classrooms as pastors and teachers in your church. We ask it in your name. Amen.