

Recruitment Devotions

Upper 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.

Upper Grades

I. God Has Chosen You

John 15:16

II. Things Worth Stressing

Titus 3:8

III. Seeing God as He Really Is

2 Corinthians 4:6

IV. Ambassadors of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:19-20

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I. God Has Chosen You

John 15:16 - *"You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit - fruit that will last."*

Nathan and a group of his friends headed for the empty lot down the street, equipped with bats, balls, and gloves for a baseball game. In order to play, they had to choose sides. Normally this wasn't a problem, but today Nathan's nine-year-old brother Travis tagged along - and he couldn't play very well.

When they all lined up, Nathan and his buddy Tom started to choose their teams. Eventually everyone was chosen except Travis. No one wanted Travis on his team. Travis knew this, and it really hurt to know that even his brother didn't want him. He looked down at his feet and rubbed the dirt with his shoe. Then he remembered something his Sunday school teacher had told him - the Bible verse where Jesus said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you." Even if he wasn't on this ball team, he was still on God's team. God chose him. God wanted him. That made him feel better.

Not all such situations end happily, and not all our choices are smart ones. But what a comforting thought that God has chosen us. His choices are never wrong, for God is perfect. He wants us.

Out of grace and mercy the Lord chose us. None of us could have chosen to become one of God's own. God chose us and gave us our faith. Now God wants us, his chosen ones, to bear the fruits of that faith - not just occasionally but always. That means we are to live God-pleasing lives, let our faith shine, and show others our joy in Christ so they may come to share the hope he gives us.

That's where a special choice comes in - a choice that God, in his grace, lets us make. No Christian alone can take care of all the areas of the world. That's why our church trains pastors and teachers, to go where we cannot go. Unfortunately, there just aren't enough pastors and teachers to carry on this work. But perhaps some of you will choose to prepare to be full-time workers in God's kingdom.

God chose each of us to be his own and to bear him fruit. Whatever career in life God leads you to choose, let your faith shine through it. But don't forget that special choice - to be one of God's full-time servants. Maybe God has chosen you to be a pastor or teacher. Think about it. Pray about it. God will guide you.

PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for choosing us to be your own. Help us by your Holy Spirit to bear God-pleasing fruits of our faith. May we also remember to pray for our pastors and teachers wherever they might be, that they may serve you faithfully and fruitfully. And, if it is your will, enable us to bear special fruits of faith by becoming special messengers for you. We pray this in your name. Amen.

Upper Grades Devotion

II. Things Worth Stressing

Titus 3:8 - *"This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone."*

In your home, if there is something important that your parents want you to know, they will stress it. They may repeat it. They may even ask you, "Now do you understand?" Here in the classroom, if there is something important that I want you to learn and remember, I will emphasize or stress it - I may even ask you to repeat it back on a quiz or test.

In our reading today, the apostle Paul was writing to Titus, a young pastor. There were certain things that Paul wanted Titus especially to remember and so he told him, "This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things."

The things Paul wanted stressed were mentioned right before this verse: JESUS HAS SAVED US. He wanted Titus to remember why Jesus saved us and how he saved us.

Why has Jesus saved us? "He saved us not because of the righteous things we have done, but because of his mercy." Jesus didn't save us because we are good. In fact, by nature we are anything but good. We are rotten with sin, all the way through. Instead, God saved us because he loves us. In spite of who we are - sinners - and in spite of how unlovable we often show ourselves to be, God still loves us.

And how has Jesus saved us? "He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit." At our baptism, all of our sins were washed away because of Christ's perfect life and innocent death. It was nothing we did, nothing we could do, that saved us. Instead it was our perfect and loving Savior who willingly gave up his life for us.

These things God still wants stressed today - His Law and His Gospel. He wants them stressed here in the classroom and out on the playground. He wants them stressed from the pulpit on Sunday morning and at home during the week.

Some of you could stress these things in a very special way by preparing to be a pastor, a teacher, or a missionary in Christ's church. Has God given you the heart to put that kind of stress on his Word in your life? It's a question worth considering, because God's truth is worth stressing.

PRAYER

O Lord, in a world that knows so little of your truth, our Law and Gospel deserve to be stressed. Help us to take every opportunity you give us to emphasize your hatred for sin and your love for the sinner. Let others see our Savior stressed in all we say and do. In his name we ask it. Amen.

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III. Seeing God as He Really Is

2 Corinthians 4:6 - *"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."*

There is an old Hindu fable about a group of blind men who were each asked to describe an elephant. Never having seen an elephant, they each reached out to touch the beast. The first man touched a great broad leg and said, "The elephant is very much like a sycamore tree." The second grabbed the ear and said, "No, it is much more like a palm tree." The third had a hold of the trunk and exclaimed, "The elephant is clearly a kind of snake." But the fourth grasped the skinny tail and cried, "You're all mistaken - the elephant is most like a rope of hemp!"

Of course, they all were wrong. Each of them had the elephant in his own two hands, yet none really knew how to describe an elephant because they could not see. They were blind.

When it comes to seeing and knowing God, we sinners suffer from a similar kind of blindness. In our sinfulness, we cannot see God as he really is. One person may look only at the Ten Commandments and decide, "God is like a stern judge who has no time for anyone who does anything wrong." Someone else may read only what the Bible says about God's love and think, "God is really like a kindly old grandpa who just winks an eye when his kids do something wrong."

Those people could even find Bible passages to support their view, but they aren't seeing what God is really like - like the blind men in the story, they aren't seeing the whole elephant.

On our own, you and I would suffer from the same sort of blindness. But God graciously has opened our eyes by introducing us to his Son, Jesus. It is when we come to know Jesus that we come to see what God is really like.

St. Paul tells us that it was a powerful miracle when, at the beginning of time, God said "Let there be light" and the eternal darkness was at last broken. It is the same power of God that lights up the darkness of the sinner's heart - but it is also something more. Not only God's power but also God's grace. We do not deserve the saving gift God gives us. By nature we don't even want it. Yet God, in his grace, knew we needed his gift and gave it - in the form of his Son, our Savior.

As we recognize more clearly the hope we have in Christ, we also understand more fully St. Peter's encouragement: "Be ready always to give answer to this hope in you." Like the Hindu men in the fable, we will be asked to "describe the elephant" - to bear witness to the hope we have in Christ Jesus. You can do that right now. You could do it in the future as full-time servants of the Savior - as pastors, teachers, and missionaries.

We have one great advantage over the men in the fable: in Christ, we're no longer blind. Thank God for opening our eyes to his Gospel. As he reveals it to us, let us reveal it to others!

PRAYER

O Lord God, you have opened our eyes to the light of your Gospel so that we may see Jesus, our Savior, with eyes of faith. Help us also to see how we may best serve you - as witnesses now to the hope you have given us and, perhaps, as your full-time servants in the future in the preaching or teaching ministry. We ask these blessings in Jesus' name. Amen.

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IV. Ambassadors of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:19-20 - *"He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."*

Ambassador! That is a pretty impressive title. The major powers of the world, as well as many smaller countries, have ambassadors serving in foreign embassies throughout the world. Their job is to serve as authorized messengers or representatives of their home nation - to communicate with their host country and act as a spokesperson for their government.

But there are other, more important ambassadors in this world. They are the ambassadors of Jesus Christ - authorized messengers or representatives of God who speak with the authority of God himself. These ambassadors are here to act as God's spokespersons, to tell others how sin makes them enemies of God and how God's love has forgiven them and made them his children.

God places his ambassadors into a world of foreigners - people who do not know about Jesus or the Bible. As God's spokespersons in a world of unbelievers, Christ's ambassadors are to tell these foreigners just what God expects of them (God's Law) and, more importantly, what God has done for all people in Jesus, the Savior (God's Gospel).

Just who are these ambassadors for Christ? In our reading St. Paul tells us: WE are Christ's ambassadors. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are also spokespersons for the saving work he has done for us and for everyone. God has put us into this world to represent him, to speak and act and live for him. When people look at us, do they see the One we represent? Do they recognize us as ambassadors of Christ?

God wants every Christian to be his ambassador, but the Savior also has special spokespersons - ones who speak for Jesus full-time. They are our pastors and teachers and missionaries. These people serve the Lord by speaking to people at home and abroad who need to hear the Savior's voice. The special joy they have is knowing that they speak for Christ. The power of their message is the power of God himself.

Maybe you can become one of those special ambassadors. Consider this special service to the Savior. Can you become a pastor or teacher? As you pray to the Lord for guidance in your life, consider full-time work in his kingdom. It is a wonderful way to be an ambassador for Christ.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to serve and to save all the lost. Help us to make a commitment as Christians to serve you as your ambassadors, speaking your good news of salvation to all who will listen. If it is your will, enable us to make a further commitment by becoming your special ambassadors as pastors or teachers in your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.