

# **CHURCH GROUP DEVOTIONS**

2020 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS



## CHURCH GROUP DEVOTIONS

#### Materials needed for all church group devotions

Because of COVID-19 and the CDC guidelines all BeDoTell camp materials will be delivered through BeDoTell virtual camp experience. (You will receive an email with the BeDoTell student workbook, as well as information of where to order your student books to enhance your small group time.)

For more information on obtaining these materials, please contact the Youth Evangelism & Discipleship Office at (800) 395-5102 ext. 5566 or Youth.Disciplemaking@ncbaptist.org.

These Church Group Devotions can be used however you plan your 2020 summer camp, retreat or however these can best fit your program.



### **CAMP THEME**

**Say:** What an astonishing time we are living in. Astonishing originally meant being stunned or bewildered; now, astonishing means to be extremely surprised. That is how I see this COVID-19 virus and the effects it has had on our country and the world. No one would have ever predicted the world would stop because millions of people got sick! However, it did. We have hit a "pause" button with how we have been doing things forever. One thing never changes and that brings peace in the midst of this storm: Jesus is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

This summer, BeDoTell virtual camp experience will be focusing on what this pause means for us. There are lessons we need to focus on as a foundation for our relationship with Jesus. No matter what crisis comes in the future, our hope is built on Jesus Christ and His promises.

Today's teenagers are busier than any generation before them. They are pulled in so many directions with schools, sports, jobs, youth groups, volunteering and just hanging out with friends and family. When they are not doing any of these things, they are being bombarded by the overwhelming amount of media they have at their fingertips, especially over these last few months with following the "stay at home" guidelines.

Sadly, even with more time at home, most are not stopping to spend time in meaningful communion with God. Jesus teaches us that hitting pause in the midst of our busy lives is crucial to staying connected with God. Spending meaningful time alone with God is the key to living the life God desires for all of us to live.

We will spend time looking at prayer, participating in Scripture memory and being in God's Word. For teenagers to have an impact on the world around them, they must know what God expects of His followers.

**Please let the parents know:** The PAUSE curriculum provides a parent piece to help you know what your student will be learning.

#### **Student Workbooks:**

You may want to create student workbooks that contain your schedule and note taking pages to be used through your virtual camp experience. They need to bring them throughout the day and end with them in church group devotions. You can add church group devotion pages that include scripture and themes from each lesson to help students focus.



# **DAY ONE DEVOTION**



### DAY ONE DEVOTION

Each night at church group devotions, have the youth bring their Bibles. If you have someone who can lead in worship, provide the words with a projector or bring printed copies of the song lyrics.

**Scripture:** "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." — Psalm 119:10-11 (NIV)

#### Materials needed:

- Bibles.
- Student workbook. (If you created one)

#### Reminders and announcements:

Along with any announcements that you may have for your group, it is a good idea to remind students of the following information each evening.

#### QUIET TIME INSTRUCTIONS

**Say:** Each morning we will start with quiet time. This is a time for you to be alone with God for a few minutes and have a one-on-one conversation with Him. You will need your Bible and your "Pause" student workbook for quiet time. You will find the quiet time section listed in the "Pause" student workbook. (If you have a specific place or time designated for your students to have their quiet times, be sure to remind them of that now and at the end of this time together.)

#### **DEVOTION**

#### Daily Review (Lead in)

**Leader's note:** Each night it may be good to spend a few minutes reflecting on the day — a daily review. If a reflection starts to be something embarrassing to someone, be sure to move on quickly. Also, if someone shares a decision they made for Christ that they did not make publicly in the worship service, please be sure to share it with the BeDoTell staff before the last morning so the student can receive follow-up materials. You can use the decision card forms in their book and turn it in to one of the staff. Celebrate every decision!

**Say:** Each night at this time, we want to take a moment to review the day. I want to remind you to be positive. It is meant to be a time of fun and celebration, so do not share anything that could cause embarrassment or hurt. With those guidelines firmly in place, let's begin.



- How has this time started off for you?
- Is there something you have already heard that has helped you see that God wants to do great things this week?
- Is anyone a little confused about something and have a question about something that the answer may help you figure things out? If you want to ask me privately later that is OK. We just want you to get the most out of this week and want to help you.

Has anyone already experienced a "God moment" that you would like to share quickly? (A God moment is where you have witnessed God working in a situation or a person.) We are expecting many God moments this week and want to share those moments as a time of encouragement for all of us.

Say: Each night as we begin our devotion time, I am going to review our Scripture and remind us of the reason for this devotion time.

Read: Theme verse: "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." — Psalm 119:10-11 (NIV)

Say: Do we seek Him with all our heart? Do we hide His word in our heart?

How do we hide His word in our heart anyway? I mean, think about it. How do we apply something like this? Actually, we hide His Word in our heart by memorizing it. That's right. Memorizing it. But that's too hard right? I mean, that is a lot to memorize. But is it?

#### Activity: What do you memorize?

Directions for game: Tell your students that when you say go they have to list everything they can remember that takes memorizing. Give them one minute to write down a list. Examples: addresses, school work for tests, phone numbers, websites or blogs you enjoy, how to find your way around camp, schedules, songs, movie lines, etc. At the end of the minute, go around in a circle and ask each student to share. They cannot repeat anything they have already heard. Be prepared to give out candy or something as a prize to the one who had the longest list.

Say: How many songs do you have memorized? Think about it. You can hear a song from years ago and without even trying, the next thing you know, you are singing it word for word.

There are a lot of things, useless things, we have memorized. If we spend countless hours remembering useless things, what should we be doing with the important things?



**Say:** Sometimes it seems that we may think that we do not need to learn this lesson (prayer, Scripture memory, Bible reading) again because they are the basics, right? Maybe we need to take to heart the reason why the Bible gives so many reminders about it. Think about it. How many times have you fallen to the same sin over and over? You knew it was sin and you still fell to it, again.

So, is it bad to be reminded that we should do these things to stay connected to God — to also help us stay away from sin or other distractions from this world? Should we really approach that as something basic or even elementary? Or should we approach our time to pause each day to spend time with the Lord?

\*Share about your testimony or another chaperones testimony of how you came to know and place your faith in Jesus. Share how you have learned the basics of spiritual disciplines and how spending time with God and His word has changed your life.

**Say:** During this time, God is going to be seeking to speak to each of us — grown-ups included. We can all listen, or we can miss the message because of distractions. What are some of the distractions we can have? (Ask for responses.) I hope we will all seek to try our best to listen in small-groups, worship, quiet times and church devotions.

Close with a time of prayer with your group.



# **DAY TWO DEVOTION**



### DAY TWO DEVOTION

**Scripture:** There are many located within this devotion.

#### Materials needed:

Bibles.

Student workbooks (optional).

#### Announcements and reminders:

• Give any specific instructions that relate to your group.

#### Daily review (lead in):

**Say:** Each night at this time, we want to take a moment to review the day. I want to remind you to be positive during this time. It is meant to be a time of fun and celebration, so do not share anything that could cause embarrassment or hurt. With those guidelines firmly in place, let's begin:

- What was something funny that you experienced today?
- What was something that you witnessed today that made you feel good?
- Were there some decisions made today that we can celebrate?

**Leader's note:** If a reflection starts to be something potentially embarrassing to someone, be sure to move on quickly. Also, if someone shares a decision they made for Christ, please be sure to share it with the us at youth.disciplemaking@gmail.com. This way we can send the student follow up material. Celebrate every decision!

**Say:** Each night as we begin our devotion time, we will review our Scripture to remind us of the reason for this devotion time.

**Read:** Theme verse: "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." — Psalm 119:10-11 (NIV)



#### **DEVOTION**

**Say:** Today we have focused on prayer. Prayer is a two-way conversation; it is our talking to God and His talking to us. As a Christian, you have a heavenly Father who hears and answers prayer. Jesus said in Matthew 21:22, "All things, whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive," (KJV). You cannot afford to be too busy to pray. A prayerless Christian is a powerless Christian. Jesus Christ spent many hours in prayer. Sometimes, He spent the night on a mountaintop in solitary communion with God the Father. If He felt that He had to pray, how much more do we need to pray!

Let's talk about some questions people often ask about prayer.

**Leaders note:** For variety, you may want to ask different people to share the following questions and then the statements.

#### How do I talk to God?

Billy Graham said that prayer is simply talking to God. And the most important thing that can be said about this is that God wants you to talk to Him. He loves us, and He has promised to hear us when we pray. How can you learn to pray? First, understand why prayer is possible.

Prayer is possible because Jesus Christ has removed the barrier between us and God — a barrier caused by our sins. You see, sin separates us from God, and because of that, we have no right to come before Him. However, by His death on the cross, Christ paid the penalty for our sins and removed the barrier. God then gives us the privilege of coming into His presence when we commit our lives to Christ.

Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (NIV). If you have never done so, ask Christ to come into your life today.

Then understand that God now welcomes you into His presence and promises to hear you — and He cannot lie. The Bible says in 1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (NIV). Trust His promises and learn to bring every concern to Him in prayer.

God wants you to come to know Him more and more each day. Jesus' disciples repeatedly asked for His help, and so should we. On one occasion they said, "Lord, teach us to pray," (Luke 11:1, NIV).



God hears our prayers on all occasions, whether we are praying aloud or praying silently in our hearts and minds. After all, He knows all about us and knows what is going on inside us — both good and bad. The Bible says that God "judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12, NIV). The Bible also says, "The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him" (Proverbs 15:26, NIV).

God even hears our prayers when we cannot even put them into words. For example, these may be times when our hearts are too burdened or confused to even speak. Romans 8:26 says, "And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words." (NLT).

#### Does God really answer prayers?

Prayer is one of our greatest privileges as God's children, and even if God does not seem to answer your prayers at first, do not stop praying. God loves you, and no prayer goes unanswered.

**Ask:** Will someone read Luke 18:1-8 to the group?

Jesus once told a story about a poor widow who repeatedly asked a corrupt judge to do what was right.

Repeatedly the judge refused — not because her request was wrong, but because he just did not care. Because of her persistence, he eventually gave in and granted her what she deserved. In a far greater way, Jesus said, God who is righteous and does care for us hears the prayers of His people, and we must never give up.

Remember two things. First, realize that sometimes God is actually answering our prayers when we do not realize it and the reason is that His answer may be "no" or "wait." Yes, we think we know what is best for us, but God sees the whole picture. Sometimes He lovingly refuses to give us what we request because He knows it is not according to His perfect plan.

Second, remember that we have the privilege of coming to God only because Jesus Christ died for our sins. Have you given your life to Him? If not, let your first prayer be one of confession and faith, asking Him to come into your life as your Lord and Savior.

**Leaders Note:** Have students answer the following questions silently to themselves. Give them time to think about each question.

- 1. Have you given your life to Jesus?
- 2. Can you remember when you placed your trust in Jesus to be your Lord and Savior?
- 3. Who helped you by sharing their testimony or maybe how they lived their life that pointed you to needing a relationship with Jesus?



**Ask:** Would anyone be willing to share their experience with the group?

Have one of the chaperones share how prayer changed something specific in their life and how prayer allows them to stay connected to God even when they were stressed about a situation in their life. Give time for testimonies.

**Ask:** What would be different in our lives if we made prayer a priority?

**Say:** Your generation is the most anxious generation of all time. As followers of Jesus, our first response should be to pray when we feel anxious. One of God's greatest gifts to us is the privilege of prayer — a privilege that is possible because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. Thank God for the privilege of prayer and learn daily to "cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7, NIV).

Close in a time of prayer. Ask students to pray for whatever God brought to their mind today about prayer. Maybe they realized they aren't consistent in praying, maybe they need to pray to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives or maybe they need to cast their anxieties on Jesus and realize only He has the power to help them face each day's problems — real or imagined fears. Offer these possibilities and pray.



# **DAY THREE DEVOTION**

### DAY THREE DEVOTION

#### **Materials Needed:**

Bibles.

Student books (optional).

#### **Announcements and Reminders:**

• Give any specific instructions that relate to your group.

#### Daily Review (Lead in)

**Say:** Each night at this time, we want to take a moment to review the day. I want to remind you to be positive during this time. It is meant to be a time of fun and celebration, so do not share anything that could cause embarrassment or hurt. With those guidelines firmly in place, let's begin:

- What was something funny that you experienced today?
- What was something that you witnessed today that made you feel good?
- Were there some decisions made today that we can celebrate?

**Leader's note:** If a reflection starts to be something embarrassing to someone, be sure to move on quickly. Celebrate any decisions for Christ that have been made this week.

**Say:** Each night as we begin our devotion time, we'll review our Scripture to remind us of the reason for this devotion time.

**Read:** Theme verse: "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." — Psalm 119:10-11 (NIV)

Ask: Who has memorized the theme verse?



#### **DEVOTION**

Say: Today, we looked at Scripture memory and tomorrow we will look at how to study God's Word.

God has given you all you need to know about Him, His ways and His work throughout history, as well as the guidance you need to live like one of His children. At camp, we have been looking at ways to connect daily with God.

**Ask:** What have you learned about prayer over the last few days? (Give time for people to share.) What did you learn today about Scripture memory? (Give time for people to share.) Why do you think we stop memorizing Scripture as we get older? In elementary school, there was much more emphasis on memorizing Scripture at church. What excuses do we give? (Allow time for people to share.)

Say: One of the biggest excuses is, "It's so hard." Let's see how easy or difficult it is to memorize by playing a game.

#### **Activity: Song Categories**

If you can, divide your group in sections — I know this is difficult with social distancing, but see if you can have four teams. Call out a category and have each group jot down as many songs that fit into the given categories. Give them 90 seconds to make their list. Here are some categories: love songs, Christmas songs, songs about breaking up, Disney songs, etc.

At the allotted time, each team will have to sing at least a line or two as an entire group. This way they cannot just jot down songs and not all know how to sing it. As soon as one group sings their song, go straight to the next group. Songs cannot be repeated. Continue each round until they have no more songs. Keep score of who was the last group still singing under each category. Award a prize to the winning group.

**Say:** Isn't it funny that we say, "It's too hard?" Look how many songs you have memorized. What can we learn from this game that would help us memorize Scripture? (Allow for answers.)

**Say:** There is no other single practice in the Christian life that is more rewarding than memorizing Scripture. No other discipline is more useful and rewarding than this. No other exercise pays greater spiritual dividends. Your prayer life will be strengthened. Your witnessing will be sharper and much more effective. Your attitudes and outlook will begin to change. Your mind will become alert and observant. Your confidence and assurance will be enhanced. Your faith will be solidified.

**Say:** God's Word is filled with verses that tell us to meditate and put His truth in our hearts. David says that a young man can keep his life pure by treasuring God's Word in his heart (Psalm 37:31; 119:9–11). Solomon refers to this in Proverbs 4:4: "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live." The words hold fast come from a single Hebrew term meaning, "to grasp, seize, lay hold of."



Scripture memory gives you a firm grasp of the Word and allows the Word to get a firm grasp of you! Solomon also mentions writing the Word "on the tablet of your heart" (Proverbs 7:3) and having Scriptures kept within you so "they may be ready on your lips" (Proverbs 22:18). God created our brains with the capacity to memorize His Word.

(FYI — Did you know that listening to music as you study might help improve your study habits and recall on tests? Not just any music though; classical music can especially help.)

**Say:** We speak in rhythms. Our brains operate by rhythms. Creating a steady beat helps to achieve and maintain focus, clarity and creativity. Music can help us memorize. By repeating something often, we strengthen the bond between neurons and memory creation. Music brings in a state of mind that relaxes the brain. The effect of music on memory is that it allows our brains to become more disengaged from distractions. Keeping a steady beat helps to achieve and maintain focus to memorize.

**Ask:** Have you ever watched the National Spelling Bee? Many of the top winners tap along as they spell. That is how they memorize words. The more you can keep a beat by tapping along, the more you can memorize. There are even apps similar to a metronome that help with memory. Children do this by putting a cadence to things they memorize —like a sing-along.

**Say:** Let's try it. Who can come up with a simple rhythm? We want to use it to memorize our theme verse. (*Let them decide what beat they want to use and then have all say the theme verse together. It may take some time, but have fun showing them how a beat helps us memorize.)* 

Psalm 119:10-11, "I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you," (NIV).

Have the students practice saying these verses repeatedly to a beat and see how much easier it is to memorize.

**Say:** Here are some more tips to help memorize Scripture:

- 1. Choose a time when your mind is free from outside distractions (perhaps soon after getting up in the morning).
- 2. Learn the reference by repeating it every time you say the verse(s). Numbers are more difficult to remember than words.
- 3. Read each verse through several times both in a whisper and aloud. Hearing yourself say the words, helps cement them into your mind.
- 4. Break the passage into its natural phrases. Learn the reference and then the first phrase. Then repeat the reference and first phrase as you go to the second phrase. Continue adding phrases one by one.
- 5. Learn a little bit perfectly rather than a great deal poorly. Do not go on to the next verse until you can say the previous one(s) perfectly, without a glance at your Bible.



- 6. Review the verse(s) immediately after you have gone through this process. About 20 to 30 minutes later, repeat what you have memorized. Before the day has ended, firmly fix the verse(s) in your mind by going over it 15 to 20 times.
- 7. Share these verse(s) aloud as soon as possible. Use the verses in conversation, in teaching, in counseling and in everyday opportunities. Relate what you have learned to your daily situation.

**Ask:** Does anyone have a favorite verse? Ask them to share and have others write down the verse. This may give others ideas of verses to memorize.

Close by asking the students to commit to memorizing at least one verse after they get home and then to do so weekly or monthly. Suggest they write them down in a notebook where they can continually go over their list. This will help them retain them to memory.

Ask everyone to close in prayer by praying short prayers of what they are thankful for that they have seen God do as you focused on pausing to learn more about prayer, scripture memory, and studying God's Word.

You may want to take time and plan for a sharing time with the entire church on what the students have learned from this experience. Maybe plan a prayer meeting the really concentrate on praying for God to work in your church and youth group. Or set up a continuing schedule for memorizing scripture as a group. Pick a verse you want to post somewhere in your youth area for this year. Have places where you all can record how that verse was used or how you saw God use that verse all year.