



Devotional Book



This book belongs to

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Dear Girl Guard _____,

Be proud of being a Girl Guard.

Week after week, you and your troop go on adventures learning about world knowledge, pedal pushing, baking cakes, or Bible studying. Not only do you learn what these aspects are composed of, but you also put these experiences into practice, constantly building your character- which is a foundation of who you will be in the future. Isn't that kind of mind blowing?

Now, you may be thinking- "Is this really another thing I *need* to do to be a Girl Guard?" The short answer is yes. However, the long answer is- although this book is not mandatory, a devotional life is something you *need* to have in order to grow as an individual in Christ. Don't get me wrong, what you learn week to week at the corps is important, but who you are when you are alone is who God wants to know fiercely. He yearns for a time where you can grow together and know each other on a higher level, that will continue even through adulthood. Are you willing to set aside the time to take this journey with Him?

If you answered yes and don't know what to do next, this book is here to help. As you work on a badge, set aside some time to be still- at home or on your own time, read along, soak in the devotional thought and experience growth and depth in this new journey. It is in this devotional and prayer time where God reveals Himself in a unique way and meets you where you are, exactly how you are. As you grow in Him by reading your Bible and keeping a healthy prayer life, you will begin to see God's power, unconditional love and unending grace in a new and refreshing way.

Lastly, you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise. God has proclaimed it and claims you as His, daily.

He's waiting for you. Take a deep breath. You got this.

Will you accept that promise and step into this new journey with God?

Your friend in Christ,

Krystina Macias

Christian Education Director for Outreach

Scripture: Job 29:20 (NIV)

"My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand."

Arrows have been used throughout recorded History or even earlier. When looking at arrows we also must consider the bow as well. We can ask what does a bow do? Of course we know the answer, it is needed to shoot the Arrows. Shooting the arrows requires skills such as accuracy and aim but it also requires us to have strength in order to draw back the bow string. When living a Christian life, it requires strength as well. We cannot live a Christ centered life on our own. We have to rely on the Strength of the Lord and we can attain this strength by reading His word and fellowshiping with other Christians that builds us up. So how do we keep that strength renewed in our hands? I think the parts of an arrow can help us.

There are four parts of the Bow that we can look at to guide us in our Christian walk.

1. Stabilizer: This part of the bow provides stability for the arrow as it glides through the air. What gives us as Christians stability? Reading God's word, Prayer and fellowship with other believers. Read Hebrews 4:12.
2. Arrowhead: The penetrating end of the entire arrow. How does this relate to us as Christians? We are the ones that bring others to Christ. Read 2 Cor. 5:15 & 5:20.
3. Noche: Holds the Arrow in place. What keeps us in place? Our Prayer lives of course! When we spend time in prayer it keeps us focused or grounded. Read Hebrews 4:16
4. Shaft: The body of an arrow. When we look at this we can say that Salvation is our Salvation is our beginning. Salvation is what we build upon as a Christian. We have to have that in place first. Accepting Christ is key before we can build a relationship with Him and sharing His word and love with others. Read John 1:12.

Sometime you need to restring your Bow to make it strong again. We can "restring" or renew of faith by reading God's word and keeping our prayer life active. Sometimes we think "If I could just have more rest I would be great" but the case is Our rest must come from the Lord. When we rest in his word and love our path becomes straight and true, just like the arrow guiding through the air when all components of the bow and arrow are set.

Write Out Your Prayer

Submitted by:
Captain Jan Pemberton, Divisional Youth Secretary
Intermountain Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Romans 12:4-8 (NIV)

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

Have you ever thought of all the pieces it takes for an engine to work? Car engines are basically built around cylinders that burn fuel, which move pistons that work with a carburetor to set off a spark plug which helps to move a crankshaft, which powers a gearbox, and then turns the wheels. All of these parts are partnered with gaskets, coolants, belts, batteries, fuses, valves, and more to make an engine work. If one part chooses to not work or breaks down the whole engine suffers. If a small part is missing it can cause the whole engine to not work.

In the book of Romans Paul compares us to a body and claims each of us has a gift to share with the others. Sometimes we can consider ourselves unimportant or unnecessary but just like an engine won't function right without a working piston, so will your church struggle if you don't use your gifts. Do you have the gift of teaching, of service, or of encouragement? How does God want you to use these gifts? Do you have the gifts of prophesy (proclaiming God's truth), mercy or teaching? Are you using these gifts?

Name a few ways that you can serve at your Corps:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Remember that you are a vital part of God's kingdom and that he has a plan and a purpose for you. When we all do our part the church is a healthy body or a smooth running engine that will bless others by its message and service to the community.

Close in Silent Prayer

*Submitted by:
Captain Rio Ray, Divisional Youth Secretary
Alaska Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:12-17 (NIV)

"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Knowing the bible is essential to the maintenance of our faith. But why is it important to study it?

Think of all the reasons why we need to study in school. What is the number one reason why you study in school?

We study in school to make sure we get good grades, pass tests, and know the material our teachers are covering because we need to graduate, right? Well, the reasons we study the bible are similar to the ways we study in school, but deal with much more than temporary things – they deal with our souls.

Knowledge of the bible can help us through trials in our life. There's nothing better than going into a test and realizing you are completely prepared. In your life, you will face tests all the time, and just like scripture says, scripture is useful and can fully equip you for the work God has planned for you.

Knowing the Bible = knowing God. The first verse of the book of John goes *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* As you start to engage in a meaningful relationship with God, studying the Bible gives you access to the very character of God. Through bible study and prayer God will reveal who He is and just how much he cares for you!

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever! Amen." 2 Peter 3:18

When I was in school, my grandparents would pay me for good grades. They created a system in which each letter grade would be a dollar amount, and anything lower than a C would actually cost me money! My main motivation when studying was to make money. As I gained in knowledge, I was rewarded. In the same way, you are rewarded when you study Scripture. You are rewarded with growth in your relationship with God. You graduate into a mature Christian.

So start by reading the Bible, ask God to guide you through it. Pray over it and see what God will reveal to you. Then discuss it with others and partake in a knowledge of God and his plans for your life!

Close in Prayer with a Friend

Submitted by:
Melissa Henderson, Administrative Assistant
Cascade Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Colossians 3:15-17 (NIV)

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Theory is very important to music, without it there would be no music. This is the first important step to being able to play an instrument or sing. Learning theory isn't about who is the smartest or knows the most about music. It is about knowing how to read the notes on the page so you can make beautiful music. We are considered to be the instruments of God. We all the ability to make a sound come out of our lives, the question is what kind of sound will that be. Some people choose to make beautiful music from their lives, while others may just look impressive, but their selfish attitude does not give off a pleasant sound. Anyone can hold an instrument up to their mouth and look good, it takes practice to sound good.

In the bible there is a story of a woman named Esther. She was very beautiful and stood out among the young women of her time. The king was looking for a bride, and because Esther was so beautiful he chose her. Esther could have lived her life as a beautiful bride, who sits by the king and does nothing. But she chose to sing a song of freedom for her people. She spoke up to the king telling him that her people, the Jews, were being treated badly and that he need to fix it. To this day there is even a festival in the Jewish religion called Purim celebrating her actions. Esther relied on God to tell her the kind of woman she should be, not society or culture. Just like in music we must rely on theory and the notes to tell us what kind of piece we are playing or singing.

It's your choice what kind of song your life will be. Will you use it to glorify God, and show others how amazing he is? Or will you use it to sound like the world and fit in? You can change your song. You have that choice everyday as to who you are going to sound like.

Closing Prayer

God we pray today that you will help us to sound like you. In the world where people are searching for something to follow, something to believe; let us show them you. It is very easy however to make a beautiful song with our lives and only live that on the outside. I pray today that your beautiful song will permeate us, and it will be more than just a song, but it will be our every breath. May even our smallest songs reflect you, and your glory. Amen.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

This emblem may have been called cake decorating, but in order to truly take part in cake decorating, you must have a cake (or some other sweet) to decorate. What fun would it be to use delicious frosting to decorate something that you can't eat? The tasty treat you are decorating is just as important as what you are decorating it with.

Let's think back to the ingredients- would you ever eat any of those ingredients as a tasty snack? If you were walking around your kitchen looking for a bite to eat, I doubt you would even stop and think about taking a nice long drink of cooking oil. But these ingredients (and a few more) can come together and make something delicious!

What if we didn't have one of these ingredients, would it still be possible to have a delicious cake? If we were baking a chocolate cake for a fundraiser and we didn't have any baking soda, our chocolate cake would not turn out very nicely. It would be hard as a rock, and probably wouldn't taste too great either. Could you still frost this cake, and decorate it well? Of course you could. It would be pretty flat, but you could use your excellent cake decorating skills to liven it up, and make it look perfect. But as soon as the cake was cut and the first bite was taken, it would be obvious that the cake was bad. The outside of the cake might have looked beautiful and tasted sweet, but the inside would be hard and unappealing.

At times, it may seem like our outward appearance is all that matters. If we look pretty, have nice teeth, or shiny hair, then we are more valuable. Even if we look great on the outside, sometimes our insides are not beautiful. God doesn't care about what is on the outside. God cares about our hearts. He cares about our motives, thoughts and intentions. If you look into your own heart and see that maybe it is not as pure as God wants it to be, don't be discouraged. Confess less than pure motives to God and not only will He forgive you, but He will guide you back on the path of becoming more like Christ.

Closing Prayer

Lord, I do not always want to look into my heart, for I fear what I will find. Grant me the courage to see what You see and to bring everything before You. Transform me into the likeness of Your Son, Jesus. In His name I pray, Amen.

Submitted by:
Kayla Sebastian, Discipleship Associate
Western Division
USA Central Territory

Scripture: Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

*"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?'
And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"*

"When I grow up I want to be an astronaut! Or a teacher! Or...maybe even...the President of the United States!" For many of us, more familiar words have never been spoken. Growing up we all have dreams, even if many of those dreams have changed or evolved from time to time. What may start out as a pipe dream can, with hard work and perseverance, be fully realized and brought to fruition. As it says in Philippians, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength!" (Phil. 4:13)

And isn't that the point? That with God's help, any career in which we put forth the devotion of our time and energy can be ours. But of equal importance, is that we look to God and His plan for our lives when pursuing different career choices. When we set aside our selfish desires in favor of God's plan for our lives, we will be blessed with abundance and goodness. That's not to say we shouldn't work towards our goals, but to remember to put our faith in Christ first and foremost, so that His love can shine through us in whichever career we find ourselves. Even in times when it seems that things are not going our way, if we trust in the Lord and live our lives according to His will, His plan will be made clear.

When the Israelites were exiled into Babylon, their futures probably seemed pretty grim and devoid of hope. Even in these circumstances, God told them, "For I know the plans I have for you...plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11). God's plan would be fulfilled, and the exiles would return home to Israel. Through all the trials and tribulations of captivity in Babylon, God's promise would shine through.

While we hopefully never have to experience captivity in a foreign land, we can still find comfort in those words. God has a plan for us – and it is for good! However, we need to do our part as well, by continuously seeking His will for our lives and working hard to the best of our ability. When you work for the Lord with all your heart you will find a deep peace only achievable through God and be a joy for those that work around you, showing God's love and compassion to the world. When the Lord calls upon you, whether a janitor, youth worker, business leader, public servant, pastor, or even the President of the United States, and says "Whom shall I send?" my only hope is that your reply will steadfastly be, "Here I am, Lord, send me!" (Isa. 6:8)

Close in Prayer with a Friend

*Submitted by:
Daniel Tollerud, Youth Specialist
Alaska Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Candy Cane season is here and they are everywhere. You've probably seen them hanging on Christmas Trees, in someone's candy bowl, or on top of peppermint mochas! Yum! There are several stories about the history and meaning of the candy cane, and it's funny that a popular Christmas treat like the candy cane can teach us about the true meaning of Christmas.

J

First, if you look at the candy cane upside down it looks like the letter J. The J should remind us of Jesus. The Christmas season isn't just about getting presents, it is a time to celebrate the birth of our savior, Jesus.

Shepherd's Crook

If you look at the candy cane right side up it looks like a shepherd's crook. The shepherd used his crook to keep the sheep from wandering away from the flock and getting lost or eaten by wild animals. John 10:11 says, "The Lord is my shepherd." The candy cane reminds us that Jesus is our shepherd. The devil likes to distract us from Jesus, so that we get lost and he can come in and mess with our lives. Jesus will keep us from wandering if we keep our eyes focused on him.

White

The candy cane is mostly white. White is a symbol of purity. 1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." This should remind us that Jesus was the spotless Lamb of God and he came to be the sacrifice for our sin, so that we can become as white as snow.

Red Stripes

As you can see, the candy cane has red stripes. The Bible tells us that before Jesus was crucified, he was beaten with a whip which made blood-red stripes across his back. Matthew 26:28 says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." The Bible says that we are healed by those stripes. The stripes on the candy cane should remind us that Jesus suffered and died, so that we could have everlasting life.

Sweet

The sweetness of the candy cane reminds us that God Loves us and wants us to enjoy the many gifts He has given us. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." The greatest gift was the gift of His Son, who came into the world, suffer, died, and rose again. When Jesus rose, he defeated death and now we can have victory in Jesus Christ.

To many people, the candy cane is a meaningless decoration seen at Christmas time or just a piece of candy to be eaten and enjoyed. But, this year, every time you see a candy cane be reminded that Jesus is the Reason for the Season. He was sent by God to earth in order to save us from our sins.

Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your savior? What part of the Candy Cane Story do you like the most? What are some blessings that God has given you this season that you could thank him for?

Remember, we don't want to keep the story of Jesus to ourselves. Jesus wants us to tell others about him. Your challenge, if you choose to accept it, is to give a candy cane to a family member or friend who doesn't know Jesus and tell them the Candy Cane Story. That little candy cane gift could change their life. Have a Merry Christmas!

Submitted by:

*Captain Jillian O'Brien, Divisional Youth Secretary
Southern California Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Psalm 33:3 (ESV)

"Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts."

Your voice is a gift. Just listen to Adele. Like right now! She is living proof of what it is to sing skillfully. But the sad truth is, we can't all sing like Adele. But you still have a voice and that's exciting.

God has given you the freedom to do whatever you want with your pipes! Scream during a school game, laugh at your friend's terrible jokes, or sing ridiculously loud to your favorite Disney song! You have the choice on how to use your voice. The verse says "Sing to Him", when you sing along in worship, congratulations! You are doing exactly what God created your voice for.

Unfortunately, we don't always use it to "Sing to him", sometimes we use it to attack. We yell at our annoying sibling or talk behind "that one kid's" back. In the Marvel Studio's movie Thor, His father said of Thor's hammer "It's a weapon to destroy or a tool to build." Our voice is the same (minus the magical powers). The truth is we have all been guilty at one time or another of using our voice to destroy. But being a Christian and using our voice for destruction don't really mix.

Read James 3:10-11 (NLT)

The illustration used here in the bible is like comparing kind words to fresh drinking water and abusive language to toilet water. Both probably shouldn't be coming from the same place. We should not use our voice to curse and hurt but to build up. Being a Child of God and a person who uses hurtful words shouldn't mix together.

Read Ephesians 4:29 (NLT)

When kind words are spoken it can be like hearing a beautiful song (sung by Adele). It will build up the hearer if they're feeling down and make the speaker a person others feel great being around. This is the purpose of your voice.

Who are some people around that you think need to hear words of encouragement? Write 3 names down.

So what are some words of encouragement you can say to them?

Closing Prayer

God give us the strength to control our voice. Help us to remember the love you've shown us in your word and let us show others the same love.

*Submitted by:
Abraham Guevara, Youth Media Producer
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Matthew 13:45-46 (NIV)

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

Just like the treasures the girls collected, God also is a treasure collector. As the song says, “children” are his treasures – the gems for his crown. If in the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus is the merchant looking for fine pearls hidden in the field, we might assume that when He first came to earth He was looking for gems. He lived here and collected a few, but in order to collect “the one of great value” he had to pay the price. He gave everything he had – his life – as a way to buy it. He died for his gems, his children.

You are the pearl. The pearl that clenched His heart and made it a no brainer to give up everything he had for you. Without hesitation. Without a doubt.

Song – “When He Cometh”

When he cometh, when he cometh- To make up his jewels
All his jewels, precious jewels- His loved and his own.
Like the stars of the morning- His bright crown adorning
They shall shine in his kingdom- Bright gems for his crown.

He will gather, he will gather- The gems for his kingdom.
All the pure ones, all the bright ones- His loved and his own.
Like the stars of the morning- His bright crown adorning
They shall shine in his kingdom- Bright gems for his crown.

Little children, little children- Who love their redeemer
Are his jewels, precious jewels- His loved and his own.
Like the stars of the morning- His bright crown adorning
They shall shine in his kingdom- Bright gems for his crown.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we are so humbled that you choose us to be your gem, your pearl. We are even more grateful that you were willing to give everything up, through Jesus Christ, so you and I could be in relationship and I could live freely through Jesus. Thank you Lord, we are undeserving, and yet you love us in this way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Submitted by:
Deborah Bowin
Manchester Citadel Corps
Southern New England Division
USA Eastern Territory

Scripture: Psalm 145:21 (NIV)

“My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.”

David says his mouth will speak, or in this case- *communicate*, his praise of the Lord and that one generation will pass on the praises of God to the next. Until now, we have heard and read about all of God's goodness and power through many stories that were passed on from people long ago. The only way we are able to know truth is through clear and accurate communication as well as faith. A good example of someone who expressed himself to God often was David.

Take time to look at the praises David communicates to us.

- Psalm 23
- Psalm 121
- Psalm 138

What attributes of God does David praise?

Think about all that has happened this past week. Why are you praising God this week?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Close in Prayer with a Friend

Submitted by:
Krystina Macias, Christian Education Director for Outreach
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Matthew 25:44-45 (NIV)

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ “

What is your opinion of people that spend their lives helping others? Do you think that police officers, teachers, or nurses care more for people than others do? While it is true that it takes a very special person to dedicate their life and profession to serving others, we are also called to help and serve those around us.

As Christians we are called to live a life of service, just as Jesus did. That means that we feed the hungry, stand up for the weak, care for the sick, and show kindness to everyone. This does not mean that we are Christians because of the good deeds that we do. It simply means that because we have accepted Jesus into our hearts, we are following Christ's example and living our lives for Him and others.

What are 3 ways that you can serve your community?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Remember that the last sentence of the Girl Guard aim states, “I will grow socially by being respectful, friendly, of service to others and loyal to my country.” This is both the Girl Guard aim and the will of God. Go out and be respectful, friendly, and serve others.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, we pray for the strength and courage to serve people just as Jesus did. We are very thankful when presented with opportunities to show our faith in you, by your service to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Submitted by:
Lieutenant Dustin Rowe, Divisional Youth Secretary
Golden State Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Romans 12:1-3 (MSG)

"Be a good citizen. All governments are under God. Insofar as there is peace and order, it's God's order. So live responsibly as a citizen. If you're irresponsible to the state, then you're irresponsible with God, and God will hold you responsible. Duly constituted authorities are only a threat if you're trying to get by with something. Decent citizens should have nothing to fear."

As citizens of our community, we are responsible for following laws, respecting others and caring for the well-being of our society. Sometimes we tend to isolate ourselves in a box instead of looking at what is outside and around us. Have you ever looked around what needs to be improved from your community?

What should change in our world to make it a better place?

As you get to know the community, you must realize that there is one thing that can ignite and change the world- the love of Jesus Christ.

Now, you might be discouraged with how corrupt society is- but it is important that we cling onto hope. What is hope? It means to feel expectant and certain that something will happen to change a circumstance. There is a lot of hope to give to a world that really needs it. There are millions that need to know that God loves them and understands their pain.

If you are one that has committed yourself to Christ, you have hope. Our hope is not found in religion, idols, money or even doing good works. Our hope is found in one person- Jesus Christ. He rescued and saved us from our sins. He is coming again to restore peace to our broken world and community. Until He comes again, we (you) are His hands and feet. You can provide help for those in your community.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we thank you for being our everlasting hope in a world that does not have enough. We thank you for reminding us that we should be good citizens and lead by example. We ask that your spirit guide us in situations where we may want to take the easy way out. Give us courage to take a stand for you and be the change our communities need. We love and thank you for empowering us. Amen.

Submitted by:

*Krystina Macias, Christian Education Director for Outreach
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:9 (NLT)

"But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren."

Today, we are fully capable of capturing our memories with a simple click of a button. We have cameras readily available to us by way of the digital world. Almost gone are the days of taking film to the store and waiting days for our pictures to be processed. We simply take our little cell phones and snap a picture then sync those pictures onto our computers and print them instantly. We can also instantly share these photos on social media sites. We must however take caution with the world of social media because once our pictures are out there for everyone to see, we can't take them back.

In this portion of Scripture, Moses was giving God's instructions to the Israelites before they entered into to their new land. He wanted the Israelites to remember everything that had happened to them before arriving in the Promised Land. He also wanted them to follow the life giving instructions God was giving to them. Moses wanted the Israelites to live God honoring lives and to pass on these instructions for future generations to live by. These instructions could have been easily lost throughout the centuries, but God loves us so much that He made absolutely certain that it didn't happen. Today, we still have those same God given instructions set before us to follow and hold true to. Our instruction book is the Bible.

It's simple,
Set yourself before God each day in prayer.
Follow what He is calling you to do.
Be very careful of the sin that lurks around to tempt you.

If there are trials in your life, turn to God along with Godly people that love you to help guide you through the tough times. Negative, hurtful social media postings along with negative pictures of yourself on your computer will only make things worse for you and those around you who love and care for you. I know at times life is difficult and sometimes we learn the hard way of what to do and what not to do, but just be who you are the young woman God created you to be. Strive each day to live a holy life and set good examples for those around you; then pass on what you have learned from Jesus for future generations to come. Remember follow God's instructions and leave good memories behind.

Write Out Your Prayer

Submitted by:
Captain Leti Crowell
St. Paul Citadel Corps
Northern Division
USA Central Territory

Scripture: Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)

“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.”

What is one of the most delicious smells on earth? Fresh baked bread. As soon as you smell it, you know you are going to have a great day. What can go wrong when you have a soft, warm piece of homemade bread, maybe covered with a little jam or butter? And knowing that you made that little piece of homemade goodness yourself? That you followed the recipe and the right ingredients and came out with a great loaf? That would definitely make you feel like quite a Confident Cook!

Bread is a pretty simple recipe. Mix flour, water, salt and yeast together and you'll get a nice crispy, and especially tasty, loaf. But while the ingredients are simple, when you knead the dough and let it proof, something amazing happens. It begins to rise. Your small pile of dough begins to double in size, sometimes even rising out of your bowl! When you mix the right ingredient and give them time to work together, they cause an overflowing reaction. However, take out an ingredient, especially the yeast, or don't allow them enough time to work together, you'll end up with a mixture that may fill a bowl, but doesn't overflow. And it definitely won't make a delicious loaf of bread.

Our hearts can work the same way. Add in a few great ingredients such as prayer, reading of the scriptures, love for others and especially Jesus Christ, and you have the beginnings of a very delicious life! And when you give yourself time to allow all of these things to work together in your life, I guarantee that you will have a heart that is overflowing! And an overflowing heart can be a blessing and comfort to everyone, just like a loaf of freshly baked bread.

But there is one ingredient that is absolutely necessary to cause that overflow in our lives. Just as yeast causes dough to rise, so does our faith and belief in Jesus Christ. Without Him in our lives, those other ingredients just don't do enough to cause our hearts to overflow. They may feel as though they fill it, but that overflow just won't be able to happen. When we allow Jesus to be the active ingredient in our lives, the amount of love that He gives us can rise and overflow to others. We are able to be a better recipe, a better loaf of bread, when we make sure we have all the right ingredients and time.

After all, isn't Jesus the Bread of Life?

Close in Prayer with a Family Member

Submitted by:
Jackie Raihl, Youth Program Specialist
Southern California Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Matthew 6:26 (ESV)

“Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?”

Noah and the ark is one of the most famous animal stories in the bible. For some of us it has been a long time since we read the story for ourselves. Take a moment and read Genesis 7. There are some really cool facts about Noah and the Ark that we don't always remember. Did you know:

- The Ark was 510 feet long, 85 feet wide, and 51 feet high (seven stories tall and as long as a football field and a half).
- The Bible says that God told Noah to take with him on the Ark two of every kind of animal, and seven pairs of the clean animals and flying creatures.
- In Genesis 7:2 we see that Moses was to take with him seven pairs of clean animals, birds and one pair (2 animals a male and female) of all unclean animals (about 7000 total animals). The bible clearly excludes fish and other sea creatures and probably excludes insects and invertebrates as well.

Noah's faithfulness to the Lord was incredible. Even as those around him probably thought he was crazy, he pushed through and built this unbelievable Ark. Has God ever asked you to step out in faith and do something so bold that others might assume you are irrational or wild? Did you do it? Why or why not? What propelled you? What held you back?

Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to listen to the Lord. God in his faithfulness and love will lead us and help us navigate this world of darkness and sin. However, we must be listening for His voice; pushing through the negative messages of the world to hear His Truth.

Animals are constantly mentioned in the Bible. Our God created all living creatures including you and me. If God created us, then he must care for us as well. Read Mathew 6:26 again. God sent Noah to save the animals and birds. God sent His one and only son to save you and me from being separated from himself for all eternity. The Lord loves you and cares for you. Every day and especially when we are in the middle of suffering and trials we must remember that God loves us, and we must live like it. We must live loved!

Close in Prayer with a Friend

*Submitted by:
Lieutenant Jessica Stack
Divisional Youth Secretary
Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

When we have a plan to create a masterpiece—a beautiful work of art, we set in place specific steps and instructions to make sure that what we are creating turns out beautiful and perfect. In designing and decorating we all have a plan so that there are no mistakes. We put some much time and commitment into what we are creating, that by end of it, we are drained—and have nothing left to give. At times we will sit there and shout for joy that we are finally done and that we can rest, but not fully appreciate what we just took time in creating.

Describe something you have created, what steps you took to complete and how you felt once it was accomplished.

In the beginning when God created the world, he had a specific design and plan in mind. It took a lot of time, and a lot of hard work, but by the end of it, he looked at everything he created, and said, *“It is good.”* He appreciated his work—and our God, our creator is perfect. He doesn't make any mistakes. Although God's design for our lives may not be ideal to how we picture what our lives will be like, He has a specific plan for our lives. A plan to create a beautiful masterpiece and that plan takes time.

“He will make everything beautiful in its own time.”
Have faith and trust in God's design!

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, You are a loving and gracious God, a mighty counselor. Guide us today in the path you have planned for us. Place people around us that will help encourage and direct us. Help us to see ourselves as you see us, as beautiful masterpieces. We place ourselves into your hands, because we trust You. Thank you, Heavenly Father for believing in us. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen

Submitted by:
Kelly Mackneer & Kaela Lampkins
Western Pennsylvania Division
Eastern United States Territory

Scripture: Psalm 119:73 (NASB)

“Your hands made me and fashioned me; Give me understanding, that I may learn
Your commandments.”

Development, creation, new life, renewal, doubt, changes, vision, hope, turmoil, discovery. These are words that can be used to describe from a personal view point the events of Genesis 1:1-10, if a mere human had been wielding the creator's wand, in the creation story. Scripture clearly states in verse 2 of Genesis 1, that the earth had no form and it was dark and empty- but as scripture continues you can see God taking this shapeless, dark and empty place and spoke life into it which was always there and gave it a purpose. God is not shy about revealing what might feel or seem too different, to unveil the most unexpected. He will take what the world mistakes for formlessness or imperfection and He will mold it to His perfection.

Do you at times feel that there are things about yourself that even YOU don't understand? Have you felt that there is more to you than what people can see?

Do you think that the treasure that is yet to be revealed in your life can be relevant to the building of God's kingdom here on earth? God is fully aware, ready and willing to help you!

Remember that God is in the middle of your changes, development and discovery, your doubt, turmoil and your hope! Just as in the creation story where there was uncertainty and lack of direction, God provided the template and the guide post for what was intended out of what was incomplete, as is His intention for you.

You can take heart, rejoice in the fact that if you can allow yourself to trust and rely on the Lord, He WILL fulfill you. His hands made you and fashioned you. Job reminds us that “...I know that my Redeemer lives... Job 19:25a”. He knows you and understands.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, it's me again, I am so much in need of you right now. I know that you have so much in store for me and for my life, and I know that there are so many parts to me. I thank you for the assurance that you know me and that you will help me to use all that I am to be who you intend me to be. Thank you Lord for always being there. Thank you for understanding me and fulfilling my every need. I trust you and I love you for who you are and what you mean to me. Amen.

Submitted by:
Corey Moore, Corps Sergeant Major
Torrance Corps, Southern California Division
USA Western Territory

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:18 (NIV)

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty,"

Having a father figure in life is something that all of us crave and want. When you think about what a good father is, what comes to mind? We know that in some families, it is hard to picture what a good father is, because maybe your father was never around and all you have are pictures, stories and memories of who he was, if that.

What a wonderful God we have that He looks down upon each of us, and says, "It is good!" Each one of us was created for a purpose, and the best purpose is knowing that God created us to be His daughters! God loves you like no one else in this world does! He will never, give up on you, never lie to you, never hurt you, and most importantly never leave you! He cares about who you are in this world, and He wants you to know that you are loved beyond words.

Song—"Father, I Adore You"

Father, I adore You
Lay my life before You
How I love You

Jesus, I adore You
Lay my life before You
How I love You

Spirit, I adore You
Lay my life before You
How I love You

Closing Prayer

Dear God, thank you so much for creating each one of us perfect in your sight. God, as we leave this place, help us to know who you are in our lives so that we may live as your daughters in everything that we do. Thank you for your Word. And most of all, thank you for your salvation. Amen

Submitted by:
Captain Regina Shull, Associate Divisional Youth Secretary
Golden State Division
USA Western Territory

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 6:19 (NIV)

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.”

There is purpose in everything that God does. He has purpose in creation and your body is no exception. There is divine value in you, and your body can be used as a blessing to serve God.

Psalm 139:14 says *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well.”* God created you and loves you. God's works are wonderful. His creation is wonderful, and you can find your worth in that. Know that your identity is in Christ and your body is where God dwells. In our Scriptures, we are told that our bodies are temples. Do you treat your body as a temple? You live in a world where there are so many ways to abuse and mistreat this temple.

What are things that harm your health or body?

So many things can easily hurt you, everything from fast food to not getting enough sleep can affect your health. We are members of Christ's body; we cannot subject the body of Christ with such things. The world will try to pollute your body, and how you see that body, but instead look towards things that nourish your body. Seek things that build yourself up, make you stronger in the hope that you are living your life for God.

Romans 12:2 says to *‘offer your body as a living sacrifice for God, to live holy and pleasing to God.’*

What does living holy and pleasing to God look like? What are examples in your life?

Keeping your body healthy and taking care of what God has given you is an essential part of keeping your faith healthy and taking care of your relationship with God. You were bought at a price and the Creator of the universe lives within you so honor God with your bodies.

Close in Prayer with a Fellow Girl Guard

Submitted by:
Melissa Henderson, Administrative Assistant
Cascade Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Social media, television, and Hollywood are all competing for your attention. They will tell you what the latest fashion trend is, the newest language spoken, how to act, and even what to eat. All of these combined can become very overwhelming. The socially acceptable standards that the world will hold you too is often different from the standards God expects from you. Don't be afraid ladies, through the Bible God gives us directions to follow. The scripture in Philippians reminds us that the only things we (as Christians) need to be focusing on are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy things. Everything else is toxic (and not the Britney Spears kind either).

Think about leftovers. When you are saving food for later it generally goes into Tupperware of some kind and into the fridge. The lid is sealed on, because the point is to keep air out. When air gets into the container, the food becomes contaminated and is no longer safe to eat. You may not be able to see the effects of the air right away, but if you give it time you'll notice that the air is destroying the food. Our minds are the same way. Although there is no brain Tupperware to use we still need to protect our minds, or they too will rot, just like the leftovers.

As you complete this badge, are you watching what you think about? Are you taking inventory of what you let into your mind? To better keep track of what you let into your mind, write down three things you can do to better evaluate what you focus your thoughts on.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

After you write down three suggestions, pray that God will help you remain focused on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.

Close in Silent Prayer

*Submitted by:
Captain Harryette O'Brien, Divisional Youth Secretary
Southwest Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Discovering- My Relationship with Others

Girl Guards

Scripture: Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV)

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

Think of a few people you respect- people whose example you would follow. People mentioned can be living or from the past, historical figures or even fictional characters.

- Why do you like/respect this person?
- What is it about him/her that makes them be a person you would follow?
- Does this person have qualities/characteristics you might not emulate? Do you still respect that person? Why or why not?

Now, reading the scripture above, think about the following questions:

- What does it mean to walk in way of love?
- Do the people we just talked about walk in the way of love? Have you seen evidence of that in what you know about them/seen from them?

God gives us many examples in the Bible about how we should live our lives. Ephesians 5 has even more of these characteristics.

What about you? How are you walking in the way of love? When your friends, family members, co-workers, class mates see you do they see someone walking in the way of love? Getting along with others is not always easy. Earlier you thought about people you admire and respect. It would have been just as easy to name people who annoy and irritate us. We all encounter those types of people. God calls us to walk in the way of love toward everyone! It's what Jesus did for us. He walked in the way of love all the way to the cross, to be our sacrifice.

There will always be people we respect and admire, and people we might have to work a bit harder to respect and admire. Remember it's the example of Jesus we are to follow. We should always be walking in the way of love.

Closing Prayer

Lord, help me be better at fostering my relationship with others. May I be the example I hope to see in others, so we may all grow in harmony and continue to walk in the way of love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Submitted by:

Major Shevaun Malone

Divisional Youth & Candidate's Secretary

Northwest Division

USA Western Territory

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:2 (MSG)

"We refuse to wear masks and play games. We don't maneuver and manipulate behind the scenes. And we don't twist God's Word to suit ourselves. Rather, we keep everything we do and say out in the open, the whole truth on display, so that those who want to can see and judge for themselves in the presence of God."

Masks have been worn by different societies for centuries. Some groups wear them for rituals, some for celebrations, and still others for the dramatic arts. In New Orleans, Louisiana, masks are a staple of society during Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) celebrations. People from all over the state and country come join in the parades. In the beginning, masks were worn during Mardi Gras to allow the wearer an opportunity to escape from society and class constraints. When wearing a mask, carnival goers were free to be whomever they wanted to be, and mingle with whatever social class they desired. Today, everyone wears masks during Mardi Gras. In fact, those in the parades are required to wear masks by law. The people of New Orleans find this time of celebration magical and the masks add to the excitement around the city.

Masks can be fun, but the Word of God gives us a bit of caution about wearing spiritual and social masks. Just like the masks worn during the Mardi Gras celebration, you have the ability to put on an invisible mask and pretend to be anyone you want to be. You can socialize with whomever you want. But, be very careful because these invisible masks often get you into a lot of trouble. Remember the movie Mean Girls? Lindsay Lohan's character, Cady Heron moved to a new school and wanted to take down the mean, snobby, popular girls. She became friends with these girls only to embarrass and humiliate them publicly. In her manipulative maneuvering she was able to take them down, but not without hurting a lot of people and degrading her own self-image. She wore a mask of manipulation and played games with other people's lives. This is not God-honoring in any way. Be careful that you are not wearing a mask that misrepresents God's presence and light in your life. As Christians, we are meant to shine the glory of God within us, but too often we are scared that we won't be liked or we will be misunderstood and made out to be a joke; so we put on a "mask" and hide the truth of who we are while also hiding the light of God within us. This doesn't help anyone. You were created to shine; so shine! You are more than whatever mask you choose to hide behind. Be bold and show the world a beautiful truth - you! Masks can be fun, but they often hide the truth. Remember to keep everything out in the open, honest and true so that your life can shine the light of God.

Close in Prayer with a Friend

Submitted by:
Captain Jennifer Taylor
North & South Carolina Divisional Headquarters
USA Southern Territory

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:11a (NIV)

"He has made everything beautiful in its time."

As girls, we love to decorate ourselves with pretty jewelry! The idea of wearing diamonds or pearls makes us smile and we dream of one day receiving the perfect diamond ring or strand of pearls. Have you ever wondered why diamonds and pearls are so expensive? Sure you can buy jewelry that looks like diamonds and pearls for fairly cheap, but the real thing costs a lot more. Why? Real diamonds and pearls are rare and go through difficult and long processes to become so beautiful.

Diamonds, real diamonds, are made deep within the earth. Diamonds can only be formed under very high temperatures and extreme amounts of pressure. Pearls are made when something irritates the oyster, and to protect itself a substance forms that over time forms a beautiful pearl.

Real diamonds and pearls may be pretty, but they are only that way after they have overcome these difficult processes. The same is true for us! We will sometimes go through tough circumstances in our lives, where we feel extreme amounts of pressure, or something is irritating us, but God wants to use these difficult situations to create something even more beautiful in us.

Write a situation that started off rough but through a process, became valuable.

The Bible tells us in Romans 8:28 (NIV), *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

God can work in any difficulty in your life. If there is trouble at home, if you are struggling at school, if you feel insecure in yourself, or you are lonely or sad, God wants to use these pressures and irritants to form you into an even more precious stone for His glory. He loves you so much and wants to transform your pain into diamonds and pearls that are real and beautiful.

Close in Prayer with a Fellow Girl Guard

*Submitted by:
Lieutenant Gretchen Granados
Norfolk Corps, Virginia
USA Southern Territory*

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here!"

When you think of the word "recycle" what is the first thing that comes to mind? There are several things that may come to mind such as repurpose, reclaim, or save. When thinking about these words we think of making something new out of something we already have that we hold dear but we want to make it into a new creation. Have you ever thought about the word "recycle" and your life with Christ? Like repurposing something we hold dear in our lives the Lord, who love us unconditionally and dearly loves us, can take our lives and repurpose them as well. When we begin our new lives with the Lord and start our new Christ centered lives we are renewed and remade into a new creation. Does this mean we will look different? Does this mean that people will be able to tell that there is something new about us? The answer is YES!

When we are made into a new creation by accepting Christ as our Savior we may not physical look different to the those who don't know us but to the people we come into contact with everyday there is a noticeable difference. How can we be different if we are still us? We, as a new creation in Christ Jesus, can have a better outlook about the situations in our lives, we have a have a positive attitude when things look bleak, and we will have a new appearance, such as holding our heads high not with self-pride but have the confidence that only Christ can give.

When thinking about when you renewed your faith what are three differences people noticed about you? If you are still on the path of renewing your faith or even just beginning your faith journey, list three things that we as new believers and those of us that are just starting our journey need to help guide us. Remember, your faith journey is yours and each path is different.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Remember, living a life with purpose and Christ centered is a decision we must make on our own. We must be ready for the changes that will be made in our lives. When we change our lives to be one that is honoring to God we might have to go through a refining process to be made a new creation. Are you ready for your renewed life to begin?

Close in Silent Prayer

*Submitted by:
Captain Jan Pemberton, Divisional Youth Secretary
Intermountain Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do and he will show you which path to take.”

Trust noun \ 'trəst\ *belief that someone or something is reliable, good, honest, effective, etc.*

Trust is such a small word but means so much. We all trust someone or people we find worthy of our trust. Whether it is our best friend, our siblings or our parents we trust them to tell them our deepest most inner secrets and trust that they will not go and tell anyone else about what we told them. We trust when we go to a restaurant to eat that the food was prepared properly and we will not get sick. We trust that when sit in a chair it will hold us up and not break. We also trust our loved ones to not steer us wrong and give us bad advice that may harm us.

With all of these examples of how we trust why then is it so hard to trust in God? If anyone, God is the one being that will never fail us, disappoint us mistreat our trust or steer us wrong. When we have the ability to show how we trust in God we tend to have doubt that He will really take care of our needs. Is it because we can't see Him?

The Bible says to trust in God with all your heart and do not depend on your own understanding. If we totally 100% trust in God and quit doubting Him then the sky is the limit as to His abundant blessings that you will receive. It is not always going to be easy to follow God's will and go against the grain but in those times is when He will give you the strength to push through and persevere. If you trust in God with all of your heart you will not have to worry for His will is exactly what you need and all things will work out in the end for your good. You may not recognize it at first but at the end of the journey you will see you are better off because you put your trust in God.

Write Out Your Closing Prayer

Submitted by:
Wanda Newton, Territorial Character Building Director
Territorial Youth Department
USA Southern Territory

Scripture: Genesis 1:1 (NIV)

"In the beginning God created..."

That's it! God is the ultimate artist. From day one He has been creating beauty from nothing. The earth was formless, empty and dark but as the days went on He added bits and pieced to make life as we know it. Something unique. Something of purpose. Something of worth. At times art can be frustrating. The thought of perfection creeps in and ruins the masterpiece. That frustration can cause the artist to completely destroy an idea before it has completely formed.

Art is not perfect.

For example, Picasso's cubism. We can look at his painting and see that the shapes are supposed to be a face or maybe even house but those shapes are in all the wrong places. It's not right. It's not perfect in our eyes. The thing about perfection is that it's a human standard. God does not hold us to that standard.

We are God's creation and though we are different we are perfect in His eyes.

Have you ever felt that maybe God made a mistake when making you?

List 3 things that make you perfect because God created you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

At the end of each day the Bible tell says "God saw that it was good."

You are God's creation. You are good.

Closing Prayer

Lord, you created the heavens and the earth and they were good. You created all the things that filled the earth and they were good. You created Adam and Eve and they were good. Though we make mistake and sin against you, you did not make a mistake when making me. Amen.

Submitted by:
Cynthia Cordero, Youth Program Specialist
Southwest Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Hebrews 12:15 (NIV)

“See that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

Go to your kitchen and grab the saltshaker. Now, shake a small amount of salt into the palm of your hand. Next, dab some salt into your mouth- but make sure it's enough to where this becomes a challenge. Now let's go over the following questions:

- Did you enjoy that exercise? Why or why not?
- Can you have too much salt in something? What happens if you do?
- How do you get rid of too much salt?

Remember, once the saltiness is there, there's not too much you can do to remove it, especially in food. Too much salt creates bitterness.

Bitterness can be like a poison, like too much salt, that can infect our lives. In this verse of Hebrews, the author compares bitterness to a root that overtakes our hearts and causes trouble in many other areas of our lives. We might think our feelings of bitterness, anger, and resentment are justified, but they aren't. Those feelings will only be hurtful and destructive—to ourselves as well as to the person who hurt us. God's Word teaches us to forgive and also not let the sun go down while we're angry. (Ephesians 4:26).

When we hold onto bitterness and anger, we give the devil a place to work in our hearts and in our relationships. Don't allow the enemy room in your heart to plant weeds of bitterness between friends. Instead chose forgiveness and don't let a bitter root take hold in your heart.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, search our hearts. If there is any bitterness in us, help us to forgive. Help us, through the power of Your Holy Spirit to let go of all our bitterness and extend your amazing grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Submitted by:

*Major Shevaun Malone, Divisional Youth & Candidate's Secretary
Northwest Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Galatians 5:22-25 (NIV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other."

In order for a tree to bear fruit, many things need to fall into place. The tree needs to be rooted deep in the soil. The tree needs water from either rain or irrigation. It also needs the right amount of sunshine. Other elements also affect the growth of the tree. Too much cold or too much heat can affect how a tree produces fruit as well. In our lives, in order to produce fruits of the spirit, we must also make sure that we are rooted in the Right Soil. Take a moment to re-read the verse above.

Keeping in step with the Spirit, like gardening, takes a lot of tending. In order to feed our soul, we must keep our minds in God's Word. This gives us direction and guidance when we wonder how to keep on the path God's wants us to. In order to keep rooted, we must also pray to our Lord. A good prayer life allows us to connect to God. It is a physical, emotional, and mental way to be a reciprocal part of the relationship between you and God. This allows His nutrients, His blessings, to flow to you.

In order to continue to grow in His light, we must open our hearts to His leading. A flower that is wilted, cannot drink in the sunlight. We must be open to His prodding. Open up fully, and soak Him in. A tree that produces fruit, does so to spread seed to grow more trees. The fruit of the Spirit does the same. Each of the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control) are seeds that when placed in the outside world can plant the seed of God into others. We can't be afraid to let go of the fruit and to use it for God's kingdom. So don't hoard the fruit! Allow it to spread the love of God!

Write Out Your Prayer

*Submitted by:
Captain Carey Richmond
Nashville Citadel Corps
Kentucky-Tennessee Division
USA Southern Territory*

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Growing leaders does not happen overnight, it requires a series of intentional connections and teaching points. As Christians, Matthew 28:19-20 describes what we are leading people to in verse 20, *"teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* Our job as leaders is to help people see Jesus in us, tell people about Jesus, and ultimately help them learn to follow His commands for themselves! Good leaders will help people see what they are doing is good and worth following.

Read the following scriptures and reflect on the message:

There are at least three things that we need in order to grow into Christian Leaders:

1. We need to become strong in spirit - Luke 1:80
2. We need to have encouragement and an example to follow - 1 Thess. 2:10-12
3. We need to build healthy relationships with other Christians - Acts 2:42

Being a leader is not always easy or fun. People are quick to judge your way of doing things, you will need to learn different skills as you grow in your leadership, and you it takes time to become the leader you want to be!

The Bible teaches us a lot about good leaders. Many of them did not feel they could be good leaders. They felt they did not have the skills to do the job God wanted them to do. Some lacked courage, some were afraid of criticism, and some were just afraid of being knocked down.

Moses was meek and became one of the greatest biblical leaders (Exodus 3), David was the least likely candidate for a leader but God made him the greatest king that Israel ever had because he was a man after God's heart (1 Sam 16:7), and Daniel was obedient to God even when in captivity the king tried to knock him down in the lion's den, but God protected him and made him a great leader because of his obedience.

Which area from the three above do you need the most? Start with reading scripture, then find someone to encourage you and is a good example, and finally, be a part of a group of people that are wanting to help you be the best you can be.

Close in Prayer with a Friend

Submitted by:
Major Paula Wild, Territorial Youth Secretary
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future'."

Have you ever tried to build something from scratch? A birdhouse or spice rack or a house?

Ok maybe not a house. What would happen if you tried to build a house from just looking at a house from the outside? It just would not work out very well! Architects are people who make the plans to build houses and other buildings. They know where to put the plumbing and the doors. They plan it all out and give it to the construction workers to look at and build. If the construction worker decides to not use the plans that were made for them by the architect it would be a disaster.

We are like the construction workers. We have been given plans to help build our lives as Christians. God has plans to give us a hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11 says," For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

God is the ultimate architect and his plans are perfect. If we do not look at the blueprints in God's word how are we to know what he has for us? We need to open up the Bible and find out what his plans are for us. Just looking on the outside or carrying it to Sunday school just does not work. Gods plans are perfect and all we must do is look at the plans to find out what kind of future he has for us! It is wonderful plans to prosper us and to not harm us!

What blueprints are you following? God is the ultimate architect and we as construction workers must look to the plans he has for us in His word! What a wonderful future awaits us if we look to him for our plans!

Closing Prayer

Lord, we ask that you reveal your blueprints to us, so that we may follow what you want for us and what is best. Continue to teach us what your word says so that we can be equipped and fully understand what you require of us. Thank you for creating us and choosing us to change this earth and help it know you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Submitted by:
Major Laura Sullivan, Divisional Youth Secretary
Del Oro Division
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

As discussed with the badge work, having a concise plan of action for our hike and trip is important. What is one reason you can remember why having a clear plan is very important?

Having a plan is important because without it, we don't know what our destination is going to be; where the hike will take us; what we will need for the trip; etc. Without a plan, the hike is likely to fail.

Life is the same way. Although we cannot plan for the future ourselves, God already has that under control. His plan is for our ultimate destination to be with him in Heaven enjoying eternal life. He has it all planned out, every little detail! Isn't that amazing?

His plan is for our good and benefit. It will bring joy to us and to God, and will not harm us. We just need to trust in him through walking and following his awesome plan for our lives.

Take some time to answer the following questions.

How can I ensure I am walking within God's plan for my life?

What steps am I now willing to take to align my plans with God's plan for my life?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for choosing me and reminding me that you have already prepared a plan for my life. May I continue to understand that your plan is always better than mine, even when I doubt it and want my way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Submitted by:
Janette Kirk, Program Specialist for Outreach Ministries
NEOSA Division
USA Eastern Territory

Scripture: Romans 12:13 (NIV)

*“Share with God’s people who are in need.
Practice hospitality.”*

Sometimes we think being hospitable is something we only do in our homes and while it’s certainly important to make family and friends feel welcome in those places the Bible also asks us to do this for people who are in need. These people might be found in our churches and schools, or more likely homeless on the street. Look at the verse above and think of it like a command by placing “Practice hospitality” at the front of the sentence. Practice hospitality, share with God’s people who are in need. What God’s word is asking us to do is simple but requires us to see or look for the needs of the people around us.

Who are some people in need that you can think of? What are their needs and how can you help? List two people and what you can do to help. (ex: Ask a parent to help you feed a person who is homeless)

- 1.
- 2.

Often times I find myself thinking more about things I can give to someone rather than simply spending time showing those people I care for them. It’s the get in and get out quick approach where we feel better because we think we’ve helped when really we’ve only given a band aid to someone who needed to go to the hospital. When you’re trying to see those needs around you try to put yourself in the person’s shoes...Ask yourself if I was homeless would I want a meal or a place to stay?

Our homes are an important place of comfort, but they can also keep us focused inward. Practice hospitality by sharing with those in need where ever you are so that God might be honored in your daily walk with him and others.

Write Out Your Prayer

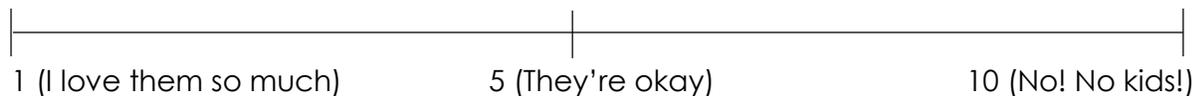
Submitted by:
Lt. Micheal Stack, Divisional Youth & Candidates Secretary
Hawaiian & Pacific Islands Division
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Psalm 127:3 (NLT), Proverbs 22:6 (NLT)

"Children are a gift from the LORD, they are a reward from him."

"Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it."

On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel about kids?



So, here's the thing... people feel differently about kids. Maybe it's the stage you're at in life, or maybe it was your annoying kid brother? How do you feel about kids, and why do you think you feel that way?

The fact is, no matter how you feel about kids now, they are a huge part of life! So, you've got to figure out how you are going to relate to them. There are two key things to consider when deciding how you relate to children:

1. They are a gift from God. (Ps 127:3)
2. They are individuals undergoing massive development (Pr 22:6)

Knowing these two important facts should greatly impact our interactions with children. Firstly, no matter what the child's behavior, it is important to remember that they are gifts from God. It is also important to remember that children are growing. They are sensitive to the examples set for them. It is our responsibility to set good examples.

Challenge

Take a moment to think about one or two children in your sphere of influence. Firstly, see if you can take time to encourage these children this week. Secondly, remember that they are a gift from God, and see if you can show them that in some small way this week.

For a further challenge, consider volunteering to help teach a youth Sunday School.

Close in Silent Prayer

Submitted by:
Captain Ashley Koebel, Divisional Youth Secretary
Sierra del Mar Division
USA Western Territory

Insight for the Future: Surviving in an Adult World

Girl Guards

Scripture: Psalm 119:105 (NIV)

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

A scary truth is that one day we will all grow up. Some of us later than others, but yes it's true, we will eventually grow up and have to become an adult (yikes). The reason I think most of us resist the idea of growing older is responsibility. The idea of "adulthood" is scary because we know that we have to make our own decisions. We have to decide how we will earn money, where we will live, who to hang out with and feed ourselves. What life choices would you put on your scary list?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I think the reason why making life choices is hard is because we don't want to be wrong. When we seek advice from adults they often respond with "God has a great plan for you! That plan will be filled with blessings." But what is that plan????

Psalm 119:105 sheds light in how to seek his plan. As we dig into God's word, His path becomes more clear. His Word directs us in all our doubts and difficulties, and comforts us in all fears and distresses. His Word keeps us out of the darkness.

We need to seek His will and be in the word in our daily life so that we may remain in the light. There will be difficult times ahead, but He will remain faithful.

Can't help but think of the first verse of Sara Grove's "He's Always Been Faithful"
*Morning by morning I wake up to find
The power and comfort of God's hand in mine
Season by season I watch Him, amazed
In awe of the mystery of His perfect ways
All I have need of, His hand will provide
He's always been faithful to me*

Close in Prayer with a Family Member

Submitted by:
Jim Sparks, Youth Leadership & Development Director
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Matthew 5: 14-16 (NIV)

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Internet Safety & Netiquette are just two elements of what is becoming known as Digital Citizenship. Digital Citizenship is a term that covers acceptable and respectable behaviors when using the internet and its resources. As people use the internet more & more in all areas of their lives, it is helpful to have a standard of behavior so that we are respecting everyone we may come in contact with while using the internet. *Netiquette* as a set of social conventions that facilitate interaction over networks, ranging from Usenet and mailing lists to blogs and forums. – So, essentially, netiquette is etiquette for the internet.

Why is it important to think through your actions before you send someone a photo.?

When a Girl Guard recites the Aim, there is one part where she states that she will 'grow spiritually by being respectful, friendly...these are promises she is making because she knows that in order to grow as a Christian and be a witness for God she must do these things. It could be easy when you are online to think that you don't have to be respectful or friendly. But our Christian witness should be evident in every aspect of our life. Everything we say and post online is a reflection of us and we are to be a reflection of God. Do the things we share online glorify God or diminish Him? Do the things we post encourage others or tear them down? God shared with us in the books of Matthew & Hebrews that we are glorify Him before others and encourage them.

There has been a saying going around on the internet for a while now that it is important for us to stop & THINK before sharing some things online. Ask yourself these five questions before you hit send...

- Is what I am sharing **true**?
- Is what I am sharing **Helpful**?
- Is what I am sharing **Inspiring**?
- Is what I am sharing **Necessary**?
- Is what I am sharing **Kind**?

(proverbialthought.com)

If you answered no to even one of these questions, then don't share it. No matter what you decide, just remember you are witnessing.

Close in Prayer with a Friend

*Submitted by:
T.J. Anguiano/ Caryle Wheelock
Wisconsin Upper Michigan Division
USA Central Territory*

Scripture: Psalm 34: 7-14 (NIV)

*"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.
Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.
Fear the Lord, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.
The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.
Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days,
keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.
Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it."*

Many times, new things cause us to feel afraid and want to only stick to what is comfortable and familiar. There are times when it is right for us to be cautious and have our guard up. But usually, we can tell the difference between what can really harm us, and what is just new and strange. During your badge time, you may have tried some new and strange things. While they are new to us, they are completely familiar to people who live in the countries they came from. What really speaks volumes about our character is not that we note when something is different, but how we react to things that scare us.

King David, the author of our scripture today, offers us advice on how to love and appreciate God. God created many things on this earth. When we eat fruit that is delicious to us, we can easily remark at God's greatness. But we seldom praise God when we eat something that does not sit well with us. But to fear the Lord is to recognize His mighty power regardless of the situation. In good times or bad, when we feel secure and when we feel exposed. When we fear the Lord, we recognize His power over all of our circumstances, and can know that we do not need to be afraid. Whether you are meeting someone new, or experiencing something new, remember that it is OK to notice what is different, just react in a way that glorifies the Lord.

This poem is special because when it was written in Hebrew, each verse began with a different letter of the alphabet; much like an acrostic poem. To close, let's give God the glory for one of these treats by creating an acrostic poem about it.

Closing Prayer

Lord, that you for creating each one of us differently and allowing us to learn about the world around us. Please teach us how to love your people and care about your creation that way that you do. Amen.

*Submitted by:
Eliza Seymour
Southern New England
Eastern Territory*

Scripture: Joshua 1:9 (NIV)

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Around 1804 President Thomas Jefferson ordered a mission, which would later be known as *The Luis and Clark Expedition*. Captain Meriwether Lewis lead the group of U.S Army volunteers, along with his good friend Second Lieutenant William Clark. This journey would last a little over two years. The purpose of this expedition was to explore and map out the land in the newly acquired territory, develop a route that would span from the East to the West, and establish an American presence in the areas before European powers tried to claim ownership. The group had the help of a local Shoshone Indian woman named Sacagawea. Along the way she acted as their diplomatic advisor to other tribes, as well as bringing a sense of peace and reassurance. Sacagawea is credited with contributing to the success of The Lewis and Clark Expedition.

I am sure that there were some pretty terrifying moments during the expedition. No doubt, Lewis and Clark probably felt discouraged and afraid. However, they remained faithful to their journey. They braved climate conditions, varying terrain, and cultural differences.

God wants us to be brave. He doesn't want us to be consumed with fear. Even though the scripture was a command to Joshua, it is still relevant for us today. Go out into the world and conquer whatever task is in front of you. Know that you are loved. You have no reason to live in fear because you have been redeemed!

List a few things that hold you back. What hinders you from being a conqueror? What fears grip your heart? Take a few minutes and pray that God would give you peace over these things.

Write Out Your Prayer

*Submitted by:
Captain Haryette O'Brien, Divisional Youth Secretary
Southwest Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Psalms 62:1 (NIV)

"Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from Him"

We can sometimes get over stressed by school, friends, and family. But God tells us we can rest in him. Another word for rest is relax.

When was the last time you truly relaxed?

What prevents you from completely relaxing?

When we relax and don't stress it is an action of trusting God; knowing he will keep everything together as we take a moment to stop and breath. When we trust God we worship Him. Worshiping God our creator is what we have been called to do (Romans 14:11).

God is our greatest example of seeing what rest looks like. He took 6 days to create the heavens and earth, day and night, water and sky, ocean and land, animals and plants, moon and sun, stars and us (Genesis 1)! But on the seventh day of creation he rested (Genesis 2:2-3). He knew he created good things and he was satisfied. In other words, he gave it all he had and then relaxed.

Worship God this week by resting and trusting him knowing you gave it all you had for God and allow Him to handle the rest.

Close in a Silent Prayer. Then Recite the Following Prayer.

Lord, I thank you that I can find rest in you. Teach me how to rest in you more and not to be so stressed and worried. Help me to trust in you more and be an example to others around me. Amen.

Submitted by:
Blige Thunstrom
Outreach Coordinator
Hawaiian and Pacific Islands
Western Territory

Scripture: Romans 1:19-21 (NIV)

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”

Draw 10 things that represent Creation for you:

God passionately loves each one of us. It is His desire that all people know Him personally. For those of us who have been taught in Sunday School and Holiness Meetings (church) about God’s love we are truly blessed! We have been given the Words of Life! But many people, even our friends and family, may not know about God’s love and free gift of salvation. God uses us, as believers to share His Truth. He also uses His creation to reveal His glory.

Now, take a second look at the drawings above and think of how those aspects of creation can be a tool to share about the Greatness of God. Listing 5 below, describe how you would connect it back to His greatness in one sentence.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Closing Prayer

Lord, may I be bold enough to share with others of your creation story and all of the greatness that comes with it. Thank you for all the beauty we get see around us. Amen.

*Submitted by:
Captain Amanda Jung
Washington Corps
Western Pennsylvania Division
USA Eastern Territory*

Scripture: Joshua 1:9 (NLT)

"This is my command – be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

We are so lucky to live in a world where almost no place is off limits. Have a dream to travel to Timbuktu? There's a flight for that. Want to explore the beautiful and historical cities of Europe? Jump on a train and you're well on your way. In this day and age, no place is too far, no city too remote and no destination out of your reach. Our big, big world may not feel so big anymore. Instead, travel today has made it possible for our world to be as small as a couple of hours in flight.

When we read the Bible, at times it can almost read like a travel guide for ancient times. We are introduced to Abraham, who lived a nomadic life and traveled from place to place pitching his tents until it was time to move on. Fast forward a few years and we see the whole Israelite population travel from Egypt towards...well, they didn't know where. All they knew was that they were traveling to a land that God had promised them. And in the New Testament we read letters from Paul to the churches that they had helped start, all gentile cities where he traveled to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

One thing that they all had in common was that no matter where they traveled, God was always with them. Abraham regularly communicated with God, and was even visited by angels who traveled to see him. The Israelites had some mishaps on the way, but as they traveled they truly began to embrace their identity as God's chosen people. And Paul was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, snake-bitten and more on his travels, and yet he continued on so that all would know Jesus. None of their travel was easy, but they knew that they didn't go by themselves. They trusted that God would be with them wherever they go.

Think about your own travels, where do you want to go? It can be as close as a few streets over and as far as the other end of the world. But the destination itself doesn't really matter. Who you bring along matters the most. And the ultimate travel companion is Jesus Christ. He wants to protect and guide you, and often take you on travels that follow His purpose and will for your life. Remember, there is no place on earth that God cannot go – He will always be with you. Happy Travels!

Close in Prayer with a Friend

*Submitted by:
Jackie Raihl, Youth Program Specialist
Southern California Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Matthew 7:13-14 (NIV)

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Pathfinding is all about charting a course and following the correct path. By following the correct path, you are sure to find your desired destination. In our lives with Christ, we need to follow the correct path and we can do so by knowing who Jesus is as a person, savior and friend.

What are three choices you make on a daily basis?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We have a choice to make- which will take us on the path will we follow. Common sense right? Now let's be literal about this. Say you're walking down a trail and you see it break off into two paths. There's a narrow path and a wide path. As we read the verse above again, we see that the narrow gate leads to life, while the wide gate leads to destruction. Often, what we do or say can affect our decision in this and instead leads us away from Him. God wants us to choose the narrow path which will allow us to have eternal life. This world will try and entice us to follow the wrong path. With God on our side and through our obedience, love and consistency, we can make the right choices and remain on the correct path.

How will you make the right choice to follow the correct path today?

Closing Prayer

Lord, thank you for guiding us on the right path and constantly pursuing us to keep on it. At times we choose to not follow you- and yet you still love us and accept us back. We are undeserving but we thank you for it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Submitted by:

*Krystina Macias, Christian Education Director for Outreach
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12: 12-14 (NIV)

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by^[a] one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.”

When preparing for a bike trip, it is very important to check your bicycle over to make sure everything is working properly. Imagine how uncomfortable you would be if your seat falls off or the chain slips and you end up having to walk several miles. All the parts need to be in place and working together or you will end up having a very bad trip.

The same is true of people who make up the church. God has blessed every individual with unique gifts and talents to build up the kingdom. Some people are like tires that carry the load. Others are like handlebars that keep us headed in the right direction. Some may even be like the horn or bell that sounds a warning when there is a dangerous situation ahead. Imagine if you tried to use a chain to replace a tire or a reflector in the place of a chain guard. It would make for an uncomfortable ride!

Use this space to draw a bike & label why every piece of it is important to the whole.

Paul said the church is one unit, made of many parts. Each part is equally important and dependent on all the other parts. Just as all parts on a bike need to be in place and working properly in order to have a good and safe ride, so it is with the church. We have to work together to make the church an enjoyable place to worship. If even one person decides to sit back and let someone else do their job, the church body will not work as well. Your gift and talent will be missed! Discover where you fit and take your place.

Write Out Your Prayer

*Jerrie Miller, Youth Development Specialist
Territorial Youth Department
USA Central Territory*

Scripture: Philippians 1:6 (NASB)

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

In recent years, Demi Lovato has used her celebrity status to speak out on taboo issues she struggles with such as; mental illness and eating disorders. Even though the entertainment industry is all about money, Demi had the confidence to cause a racket! She chose to take a possible hit in the industry in order to speak to hard and unpopular issues. She took hits and she swung back. In the summer of 2016 her single "Confident" dropped.

*What's wrong with being, what's wrong with being
What's wrong with being confident?
It's time to get the chains out
Is your tongue tied up?
'Cause this is my ground
And I'm dangerous
And you can get off
But it's all about me tonight
So you say I'm complicated
That I must be outta my mind
But you've had me underrated
Rated, rated*

Why do we shy away from causing a racket? Why do we fear taking hits? Why do we feel like our words do not matter and we have nothing to contribute? Imagine if we had this type of confidence in the love God has for us? What would my life look like if I did not feel underrated? How would my relationships with others look if I was not consumed with what they thought about me?

We have the answer to the world's problems in Jesus Christ. You are not underrated. You have things to say. God is calling you to make a racket and swing when it counts. Will you trust Him to give you the confidence?

Closing Prayer

Lord, may I not be afraid of how other see me. May I not make choices based on how I may be perceived. Please help me learn to be confident in my relationship with you. Help me have the courage to cause a racket for you. The kind of racket that lets others know they are loved and that you took all the hits on the cross.

*Submitted by:
Jessica Zielinski, Youth Program Specialist
Del Oro Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 9:26 (MSG)

"I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No SLOPPY living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself"

Whenever we participate in a sport there is always the temptation to not give it your all, especially in practice. When I was in middle school I ran track for one season. I wasn't that good of a runner, but a few of my friends went out for it, so I decided to go out too. During practice, I remember my coach always talking to us about speed and technique. One of the main things he would always stress was to finishing strong. He wanted us to run as fast as we could to the finish line, especially in practice. For me, this was really hard. By the time practice was almost over, running harder and faster was the farthest thing from my mind. I just wanted to go slower, give up, or take a break. Needless to say, I never got a gold medal for my track skills.

Today's Bible verse talks about finishing strong. In life, it takes character to finish strong. You may want to give up when things get hard, but today's verse challenges us to do the opposite. Instead of quitting when things get tough, we are challenged to keep running hard. This is difficult to do when you're tired, frustrated, and just want to give up. However, true character is pushing past what seems difficult. It's when you push past what is comfortable that you really see great results. When we depend on the Lord and trust in Him he will give us the strength to get through whatever we are dealing with. If you feel like giving up, know you can count on God to be there and will help you finish strong.

Write Out Your Prayer

Submitted by:
Major Roy Wild
Territorial Youth Secretary
USA Western Territory

Scripture: Psalms 37:7 (NKJV)

*“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.”*

Let's start off this devotion with a challenge!

- If you are currently working on this badge at the corps- turn off your phone and focus on what God has prepared to teach you.
- If you are reading this at home- turn your phone off for an hour and take some time to meditate on this devotion alone.

As you meditate during your time of camping, without being “plugged in”, take on this challenge so it may give you the opportunity to enjoy the simple things, and to enjoy the outdoors.

How are you doing without your electronics?

How do you feel about not being consumed by technology?

Sometimes the busyness of the city, and the “on the go” lifestyle can be overwhelming and exhausting. The excess use of technology, and the need to always be plugged in to our Ipods, Ipads, phones, gaming equipment, or laptops can be wearing. The need for social media like Facebook, and twitter is overpowering. We can all get consumed by the need to be somewhere, and do something at all times.

Taking time to go on a camping trip and to get out of the craziness of the city is a great way to slow down and unplug. An environment full of trees and nature is a great place to unwind and reflect on the creativity of God and the beauty of his creations, because sometimes those things get overlooked. Stopping and looking at the surroundings and taking in the astonishing things that God has prepared for us are good.

Write Out Your Closing Prayer

*Submitted by:
Mackenzie Haughin
Del Oro Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19 (NIV)

"11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy^[a] met him. They stood at a distance 13 and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. 15 One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16 He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. 17 Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18 Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Jesus was a great healer. He not only was able to heal physical issues like we've learned to do these last few weeks, but he was able to truly heal people from the inside out. Take a moment to reread and meditate on the passage above.

Until recently, when you had leprosy you became an outcast, or a social pariah, until you suffered from a slow and painful death. No one wanted to associate with lepers, kind of like when we play tag, you ran away from the person that was "it". Even though lepers were considered unclean, Jesus went to a group of ten of them and healed them. And yes, they were physically healed, but the tenth leper; he was healed not only on the outside. Something changed within him. He wasn't the same as before. He came back and fell face down at the feet of Christ in pure and unbridle praise and thankfulness!

To make things even more amazing, that tenth leper was a Samaritan! Someone who was basically born as an enemy to Jesus, yet he was so changed that he fell to His feet. These last few weeks we've been learning about ways to heal people, and what to do in case of emergencies, but no matter how gifted we are in First Aid or CPR, we will never be able to match the awesome power of Christ. Just by saying, "Go show yourselves to the priest" He was able to change and influence a life so greatly! That's amazing! Awe inspiring! And that is the God we serve!

Closing Prayer

Lord, we recognize that you are the Doctor of Doctors and a healer of both our body and heart. We praise you for working within us- always willing to care for us and make us whole. May we be willing to come to your feet and surrender our imperfections and sickness. We pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

*Submitted by:
Sharon Jackson
Newport, KY Corps
SWONEKY Division
USA Eastern Territory*

Scripture: Acts 2:19 (NIV)

"I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke."

So, now you know all the facts of The Salvation Army. What about the stories behind them? How did you end up at The Salvation Army? Was it a family member, a friend, a corps officer or youth leader? Maybe it was some other person? Whoever it was, your first point of contact was a person. That is one of the unique characteristics of The Salvation Army. The Salvation Army does not have church "members," but "soldiers." The name conveys an expectation of action. Soldiers do not simply observe, they are expected to do something. The Salvation Army is referred to as a "movement." This word gives us a great picture of what The Salvation Army was created to do – move. You see, The Salvation Army, like its soldiers, is about movement.

Acts 2 tells the story of when the Holy Spirit came on the disciples. To get us all on the same page, let's review what happened. Jesus had risen from the dead, witnessed to His disciples about His conquering death and then He returned to Heaven. Jesus had always been with them physically until this point. He even directed them in exactly what they should do. When they were scared, He was there to comfort them. Things were about to change, but Jesus promised them someone who would take His place.

This brings us to Acts 2. At the beginning of the book, the disciples are waiting for the Holy Spirit Jesus promised. When the Spirit falls on them, it is more than they could have imagined. Those who had been afraid were not, and those who had tripped over their words before suddenly spoke clearly. In fact, Peter gets up and preaches a sermon to the nearby crowd. In it, Peter explains to the crowd that this is God's working in them. He shares the truth about Christ raising from the dead, and then challenges all who listen to accept Him as King.

This chapter is a great description about what The Salvation Army was meant to be. It is a movement, led by the Holy Spirit, and equipped to share with those they come into contact with.

Challenge

Are you a soldier? Whether you are or are not, are you involved in the movement?

Close in Prayer with a Friend

*Submitted by:
Captain Ashley Koebel, Divisional Youth Secretary
Sierra del Mar Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17 (NIV)

The Ten Commandments

I did not write out The Ten Commandments on our devotional but I encourage you to read them for yourself. Just like we have The Ten Commandments to guide us through our lives as the laws that God has given us to follow, scientists have laws that will never be changed and must be followed while working on anything related to them. The laws of science have to go through rigorous testing and follow certain criteria to become a law. God's laws on the other hand came straight from him, told to Moses who then told them to the people. His laws are not questioned and they are to be followed every day of our lives.

What do you think about the Ten Commandments? Are they laws that you think you can follow every day? Write three commandments for yourself that you can use to help keep God in your heart.

1.

2.

3.

There will be many times when you are not sure what you should do or how to react, but always know that God is there with you. Use that nifty cell phone to look up a bible verse that can put your heart at ease. Use a computer to do research about what you should do. In the end, the best technology that God gave us is prayer. Pray about anything and everything and in His time, God will give you His answer.

Write Out Your Prayer

Submitted by:
Jessica Wolski

Scripture: Philippians 2:14-16 (NIV) & Daniel 12:3 (NIV)

“Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.”

“Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”

All of us, at some time wish we were special enough to be a star. We all want to be known by others, be loved and appreciated. Here's a secret you should know. In God's eyes we are all Stars, and we can shine brightly in this world just as the stars in the sky do. As a “star” in God's family we have to be an example, we have a responsibility to represent God and this is how we shine.

The Scripture verses from Philippians tell us a few ways we can shine.

First, we shouldn't grumble or argue. We can't be good examples and show God to others if we are always complaining and arguing. It shows people we are ungrateful and unloving.

Second, the verse says we can be blameless in a crooked generation. We can only do that by being obedient children of God. In these times, there is a lot of crookedness, selfishness and crime in our world. To shine we must act like children of God, not like people of the world.

Third, it tells us that we will shine when we hold firmly to the word of life. What is that? It is God's Word. It is instruction for our lives; it is what we use as an example to live by. We need to study it, read it, and ask God to help us live by it. We should look to God and His Word when we have a decision to make, when we are tempted to sin and to help us each day. What are some ways you can shine as a bright star for God this week?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for making us special and that we can become stars for you. Thank you for giving us your Word to show us how we can shine as bright examples in this evil world and bring glory to you. We pray today that you would help each of us to put into practice things this week that will help us to be examples for you. Help us not to complain or argue. Helps us to continually be in your Word and in prayer. Lord, allow us to be lights to others. Remove things from our lives that would hinder us from being bright stars. Thank you for loving us and always being there for us. Amen.

Submitted by:

*Captain Nancy Halverson, Associate Divisional Youth Secretary
Del Oro Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Mark 4:35-41 (NIV)

"That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!""

Teenagers have the chore of always facing new challenges all the time. Whether it's a new teacher, new classes, what friends to hang out with this week, school work or all the temptations that come with teenage life, every day you wake up can be a challenge. There is a lot of stress and problems that can cause an overwhelming feeling or make us feel like we are on a ship in the middle of a storm being tossed around.

What types of storms do you face in your life currently?

The good news is that with Christ, he will calm the storms in our life just as he calmed the winds and waves for the disciples. He says in verse 40-41 "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?' He is able to calm these storms we just need to have faith that He not only can but will!

List some examples of situations where Jesus proved to be loyal and consistent.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Close by Praying in Scripture

"Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you." Jer. 29:12

Submitted by:

*Krystina Macias, Christian Education Director for Outreach
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Psalm 8:3-4 (ESV)

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”

Ever stop and admire the stars and constellations? There's Orion the Hunter, Andromeda, Ursa Major, Ursa Minor, Eridanus, and so forth. How can you admire all this and NOT think of how amazing God is?

The Bible says that the heavens declare God's glory. They give testimony of God's power and handiwork. Can you imagine it? The same God that has the power to light up and place stars in their place is the God that works in our lives daily. He is the one who can take anything in our lives and place it right where it should be for His purposes.

When we explore how vast Space and creation is, how amazing it that God is much greater than all of it?!?!?

Take a moment to put things in God's hands. Whatever it may be; school, family, friends etc. God has the power to set it in its proper place. And if He is greater than Space itself and stars and planets, He is far greater than anything we can imagine.

Closing Prayer

God, when I look up at the stars I'm amazed by your creation. You have made amazing things. Let me shine like the stars in the skies and be a testimony of your work! And as you've placed ever constellation, every star and every planet in its place; place everything in my life in its place, for you are far greater than anything I may face. Amen.

*Submitted by:
Erick Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Psalm 139:13-15a (NIV)

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth."

Is there something about yourself that you might hide or change if you could? Perhaps something big? Perhaps something small? If you're like me, you might have a small list of issues. There are two things to keep in mind: no one is perfect, but every person is special.

David, the writer of most of the Psalms, wasn't perfect by any means – and some of the mistakes he made? Huge! Not only were they the kind of mistakes other people could see, he even wrote songs about them! Check out Psalm 51:4-5. David had sinned in a huge way, someone called him out on it, and he repented, which is what the 51st Psalm is about. But let's face it; we all have issues, physically, emotionally and spiritually, that we don't like and we can take a lesson from David. If it is a spiritual issue, God can take it, make our heart new, and give us a right spiritual mind (Psalm 51:10).

What about emotional issues? David struggled here as well and showed signs of both depression and anxiety? And how did he handle? You may have guessed – he wrote songs about these, too. Here are some of David's thoughts on how he feels when he struggles emotionally:

God is close to those with broken hearts and spirits (Psalm 34:18).

God is with us, even in the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4).

God is our hiding place and will fill our hearts with deliverance (Psalm 32:7).

The bottom line? When you are in need of emotional care? God hasn't left you!

Finally, what about physical needs? Let's look at another person in the Bible – the apostle Paul. He had a physical issue that caused him real discomfort, so much so that he wrote about it in a letter. He prayed several times for God to remove it, but it didn't happen. 2 Corinthians 3:8, in the New Living Version, says that he actually "begged" God to take it away. Ultimately, God didn't, but he assured Paul that, though this physical issue was there, He would be right there with him all his life.

What does all this mean? God knows we aren't perfect and we struggle at times. Whether that struggle is spiritual, physical, or emotional, we are not alone. He is with us, and he took great care when he made us. God made you! You are his creation! You are special to him!

Closing Prayer

Take a few moments to talk to God about any of these areas that cause you concern. As you, say amen, remember that all your needs are special to Him.

*Submitted by:
Captain Patrick Lyons, Corps officer
Salinas Corps
Golden State Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Luke 4:1-14 (NIV)

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.”

Like Jesus in this story, we, too, are faced with temptation. It is always Satan, our enemy, that brings temptation to us. God will never tempt anyone. How do we handle temptation? What do we do? Often we can give in to how we feel; even thinking it's not that bad. Sometimes temptation to do what's wrong comes disguised as something that seems alright. Looking at it on the surface often doesn't look too bad. And after all, 'everybody's doing it'. But don't be fooled. Satan has a way of disguising it. We need to follow Jesus' example. How did He respond to Satan's attacks? Each time Jesus answered Satan, He answered with scripture – 'It is written...'. We need to know what the word of God says. The other thing to remember is that Satan also knows scripture, too – but often it is used in the wrong way.

Is there anything you find you get tempted with? Maybe you feel tempted to lie so you don't get in trouble, or take something you want that is not yours, or say mean things to someone because they may have said mean things to you. There are so many things Satan tempts us to do that we shouldn't do. When you feel tempted, the best thing to do is to pray to Jesus to help you. He knows how you feel because He was tempted too.

Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak! - Matthew 26: 41 (NLT)

Closing Prayer

Father God Please have us turn from the evil of this world. We pray you give us the strength to say NO if we are presented with harmful substances and keep us strong in all circumstances. Please put the right people in our path always and especially when we need it the most. Helps us make wise decisions and keep Jesus first always.
In Jesus Holy Name, Amen!

*Submitted by:
Captain Jan Pemberton, Associate Divisional Youth Secretary
Intermountain Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Psalm 78:4 (NLT)

"We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and His mighty wonders."

Babysitting. We've all been there, am I right? Some of us have been called to take care of younger siblings while others have been loaned out to parents in need of a night off. And no matter how much we may love them, whether they are family or not, sometimes the children we watch over tend to drive us a little crazy. Sometimes you may even be upset about having to give up your time to watch them. It's definitely not an easy task...but did you know that the Bible speaks about this?

Paul writes in the book of Titus of older women in the church helping to train the younger women in how to live right. But this isn't just exclusive to the ladies! Men were also called to lead boys in learning what it means to live a Godly life. Paul teaches us that we are to be examples to the younger generation, telling them about the love of God and how to live a Godly life.

Think of women (or men!) in your life who have influenced you and taught you how to live right. Write their names down here.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We can't just leave it up to the "older women" to teach the young children in the corps about the love of God. It's up to us! And it can begin as easily as telling a Bible story while babysitting. God knows that you are all incredible young women who are going to change the world through him...maybe one child at a time. Or maybe, just maybe, God is going to use this experience to grow your own faith and purpose in what He has in store for you.

Close in Prayer with a Friend

*Submitted by:
Jackie Raihl, Youth Program Specialist
Southern California Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Isaiah 43:2 (ESV)

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you”

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you were trying to do the right thing but it feels like everyone around you is against you? Sometimes in life, we find ourselves trying to focus on our relationship with God but it feels like other people are trying to pull us away. In Isaiah, the people of Israel were in exile but hopeful that God would one day safely bring them to their homeland. God speaks to the people of Israel through Isaiah to let them know that He will be with them and protect them from their enemies on their journey home. Just as God was with the people of Israel, he is also with us, even when we feel like others are against us. In situations where we feel overwhelmed by our enemies, God is with us and will protect us.

Can you think of a time when you were trying to do the right thing but it felt like everyone around you was against you? What did it feel like?

Did you feel like God was with you in that situation? If so, how did you know that He was with you?

Next time you find yourself doing the right thing but feeling overwhelmed by those who are against you, take some time to pray and commit your situation to God. 1 Peter 5:6-7 tells us, “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you”. God is with you through difficult times, even when it feels like everyone else is against you. He wants to be with you, to protect you, and help you through those difficult situations.

Closing Prayer

Lord we thank you that you are with us in every situation, both difficult and good. We give those situations over to you and pray that you will protect us and be with us. We thank you that you love us and want to be with us through every situation. Amen.

Submitted by:

*Megan Villalpando, Teen & Young Adult Missions Director
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:27 (NIV)

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

The past few weeks you have learned a number of skills from different sports, how to warm-up, why sports are important, and how to work together as a team. It's pretty hard to win the game if we aren't working together as a team, isn't it? Would you be able to win a softball game if you were the only person on the team? What about if everyone only wanted to be the pitcher and nobody wanted to hit? How would you do then?

Every player on a team is important. We need a pitcher, a catcher, and people in the outfield. Each player has a position that the coach has chosen for them to play, and they are all necessary. Did you know that we can think about God as our coach? Did you also know that He has chosen a position for YOU to play as a Christian? The Bible tells us that each of us is important in our own way and we all play a key role in the body of Christ. God made you to be you and nobody else! Just like a sports coach chooses people to play certain positions, God has chosen you to do certain things for Him. Maybe He has chosen you to be a witness and to tell one of your friends at school about Jesus. Maybe He has chosen you to speak up and do the right thing when your friends are about to do something bad. Whatever it is, it is essential that you do it! Your personality and the way that God made you are unique and important and your team needs you to do it. Listen to what the Bible has to say about being a part of God's team, the body of Christ:

"An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot, "You're fired; your job has been phased out"? You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything" (1 Corinthians 12: 21-22, 27, MSG).

Our job is to be a part of God's team! When you play your part in the body of Christ, hopefully others will be encouraged to play their part as well. We want to work together as Christians so that the world will see us and want to be a part of God's team as well. Now every time you play a team sport, allow that to be a reminder of what it means to be a part of God's team.

Close in Prayer with a Family Member

Submitted by:
Lieutenant Gretchen Granados
Norfolk Corps
National Capital Virginia Division
USA Southern Territory

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:3 (NIV)

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."

The word everlasting is one of those words which perplexes us. Even in the original language it is hard to define. Everlasting means more than duration, means more than merely eternal; it has in it an element of mystery. Think about the past over all the years of history, and you come to a place where finally you just cannot think any further. You know that even beyond this point there has been existence and time. This is what everlasting means.

That is the mystery of this word, everlasting. It is a word which means, beyond dimension, greater than we can think. This is what Paul is expressing in Ephesians: *...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, (Ephesians 3:18-19a RSV).*

Look, it may hurt now, but it won't damage you. This very hurt you are going through is what will produce in you the character that both you and I want. It is this which will mellow you, refine you, soften you, open you up, make you a human being. Instead of a hard, callous, resistant, self-centered person, you'll become open and responsive and selfless. That is what God is saying. That is the mysterious quality of this love which draws us on. I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. In other words, I have not let you miss out on anything which I have planned for you, as a result of the exercise of the flesh in your life. That sounds strange to us, does it not? We want to escape the consequences. Instead, God leads us through them.

Are we learning to see God's Father love in his disciplines? Are we awed by the vastness of his incomprehensibly eternal love for us?

Closing Prayer

Lord God, thank you for giving your only Son as sacrifice so we could live eternally with you. Thank you for your unselfish sacrifice for me so long ago. You followed the will of our Father God and we seek to be like you. Please forgive us for our short comings and lift us up when we fall. In Jesus' name Amen.

*Submitted by:
Captain Jan Pemberton, Divisional Youth Secretary
Intermountain Division
USA Western Territory*

Scripture: Philippians 4:19 (KJV)

“But my God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

How hard was it to figure out what your mixed-up animal creation would need to survive? Every animal is so unique in their features; God supplies their needs by placing them in just the right habitat so they can get what they need.

Imagine an anteater's head on a giraffe's body. With those long legs, how could it ever get low enough to root out ants? It's a good thing anteaters have short little legs! And think about a wolf's head chasing its little bunny tail around in a circle...what would happen if he were to catch it? It's sort of funny to picture that, but a hopping wolf would never be able to chase down prey.

It's pretty amazing to think about how much care God gave to supplying and equipping animals to survive. God gave that kind of thought and planning to making you, too. Philippians 4:13 says, *“But my God shall supply all your needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

What are some ways God equipped you so you can get food?

- 1.
- 2.

How are you like other animals? How are you different?

The biggest difference between other mammals and humans is that God gives us a need to know and be connected with Him. Sometimes people try to satisfy that need with things or fun or friends. That is no more possible than an anteater surviving with giraffe legs. We can only be fully happy and complete when we are totally connected to God. God in His love makes that connection possible through his son, Christ Jesus.

Close with a Prayer of only Gratitude

*Submitted by:
Jerrie Miller, Youth Development Specialists
Territorial Youth Department
USA Central Territory*

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

The other day a carpenter friend of mine found an amazing treasure. He found some great pieces of air-dried walnut wood in a neighbor's yard. To me and the neighbor they just looked like old logs. What do you do with old dried up logs? I would honestly just use them for camp fires. But my friend had something different in mind. He took the logs home, scraped off the bark, sanded them and worked the wood until he transformed them into these beautiful side tables worth hundreds of dollars!

Like my friend who saw the wood and saw something valuable, God looks on each of us and sees the real value behind the rough bark and bumps.

Others may not see the real value in us, but God the Father is willing to work patiently and reveal the priceless treasure hiding below the surface. He is in the business of sanding off our rough edges and turning us into saints. Did you know that Jesus' occupation was a carpenter? He knows what he's doing! In 2 Corinthians 3:18 the apostle Paul says, “As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.”

Do you ever feel like a log lying around with not much value? Like no one much cares or sees your true potential? God is there looking at you and waiting to transform you into a valuable masterpiece. Then, like the surface of a piece of highly polished masterpiece, you too will reflect the image of his perfect Son.

Closing Prayer

God, just as a carpenter sands and refines the wood he will work with to make something beautiful, sand and refine me. Reveal the true potential, purpose and value in my life. Amen.

*Submitted by:
Erick Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant
Territorial Youth Department
USA Western Territory*

