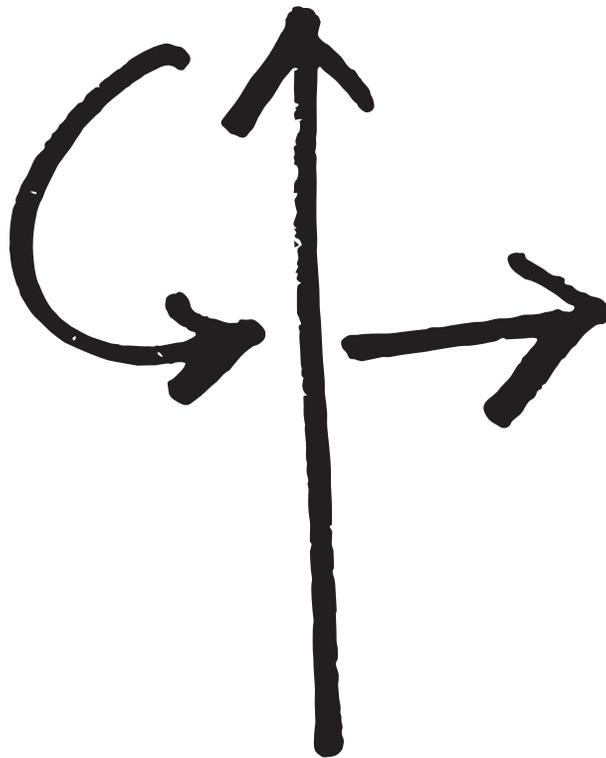




Upward, Inward, Outward



Romans 12: 1-2
2018 Devotions
Leader's Packet

Dear C.E. Mission Weeks Leader,

We are so stoked to have you with us this week. It is our deepest prayer that this small Bible study devotional will encourage you and your youth to grow in a greater understanding of God's love for you and how you can live that out in your day-to-day life.

There are several terms we would encourage you to be prepared to explain to your students in case they do not understand. The following places, names, and traditional phrases are referenced within this study: "Calvary", "Gospel", "Garden of Gethsemane", "Relationship with Jesus", "The Spirit dwelling within us", and "sovereignty" to name a few. We only have so much space in the student booklets, and we want to have as much room available to them for notes and questions as possible.

This year's theme is "Upward, Inward, Outward." We will be diving into the deepening of our relationship with the Lord (looking upward), how we need to be aware of taking critical looks at ourselves and our sin nature to deepen our understanding of the Gospel (looking inward), and how we then take that growing relationship and understanding of Christ's sacrifice to spread the Good News (looking outward). Frequently we can find ourselves becoming complacent in our faith, resulting in going through the motions but not taking ownership of our relationship with Jesus. Throughout the week, we'll be challenging one another to look for God's involvement in our lives, seeking ways to grow our dependence on Christ, and inviting the Holy Spirit to awaken us to opportunities in our lives to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

We laid out this year's devos to be a journey into our relationship with the triune God. Your group's Sunday study is designed to encourage those students who have not yet accepted Christ, or those who have struggled to truly live for Jesus, to be given the opportunity to be led toward salvation. This revisiting of the awesome saving power of Jesus Christ was written with the goal to focus and tune the youth mindset for the coming week. We are seeking to challenge and stoke your student's hearts to a deeper relationship with the Lord. The remainder of the study is exactly the same as your youths' booklets.

We pray for blessings upon you and your youth group as you delve into the Bible, seeking to know God better. Your servitude to grow the Kingdom of God is exactly the thing Jesus taught in having a servant's heart.

Serving Him,

Your C.E. Mission Weeks Staff

Dave Coryell, Josh Good, Paul Markloff, Susan Markloff, Grace Messersmith, Colleen Ossman, Eva Böss

Sunday

Before we begin to dive into study, we want to look at our relationship with Christ and our understanding of the Gospel. The word "gospel" is one that we use often to refer to the Good News, but it can be very easy to downplay the massive nature of Jesus' work on the cross at Calvary. We as believers in Christ know that He died for our sins, and that by doing so has pardoned our sins before God.

Something very big happened in the events leading to the cross, and it is seen most acutely in the Garden of Gethsemane the night Jesus was arrested. As the disciples slept, Jesus wrestled with the weight of what laid ahead of Him. It's easy for us to only see our sins on Jesus' shoulders, forgetting that there were billions of souls on His mind and on His heart as He grappled with the cross. He knew it was necessary to die in order to save us from damnation, but He called out to God, saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (Luke 22:42). In that moment, Jesus was aware of the magnitude of all the sins of the world.

That much sin and darkness was something Jesus saw and knew He would have to hold until death in order to secure our salvation. In this way, Jesus is our greatest superhero. We as believers are granted the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, allowing us a deep, intimate relationship with God where His presence can be felt by us and we can come directly to Him with our joys, sorrows, worries and triumphs. That feeling of God's presence is a joy to have, and Jesus had that since the beginning of time. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." (John 1:1-2)

That is, except for when He died.

Because Jesus held all the sins of the world, God could not look upon His Son. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Matthew 27:46) This is heartbreaking for us to realize – that Jesus died alone. For the first time in His existence, He was alone. God could not be with Him, the Spirit could not be within Him because of our sins. Not only did Jesus die for our sins, but He died alone. Many people's greatest fear is to die alone. And yet Jesus did that *for us*

As you think on the Gospel in this manner, how can you use that focus in the coming week?

Other verses to dive deeper:

Philippians 2:8 | Hebrews 12:2-4 | Isaiah 52:4-6

Monday

Upward

It's easy for us, thanks to our relationship with Jesus and the Spirit dwelling within us, to forget how massive and powerful God is. He is loving beyond measure, but He's also the *creator of the universe*. The verses and questions below are intended to allow you to take in the glory and holiness of the Lord. Let's dive in!

Isaiah 6:1-8

Why do you think Isaiah goes from saying "Woe is me!" to "Here I am!"?

If you were in Isaiah's shoes, how would you respond to God's holiness?

Why do you think the word "holy" is repeated three times in verse three?

1 Chronicles 29:11-13

King David is called a man after God's own heart. Reading this passage, what was it about David that made him a man of God that stands out most to you?

When in your life have you found yourself blown away by God's sovereignty?

What about God's sovereignty gives us assurance?

Matthew 6:9-13

What stands out most to you in the Lord's prayer?

How does this passage showcase aspects of God's character?

Other Verses to Dive Deeper:

Genesis 1:1-2 | Revelation 1:8 | Jeremiah 23:23-24

Tuesday

Inward

Without accepting that Jesus is the only true way to have eternal life in Heaven, we would find ourselves in a very rough situation. The Bible states that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Once we enter into a relationship with Jesus, it's easy to view His sacrifice as a "get out of jail free" card and begin to minimize our own sins. Some ways we do this are by defending and downplaying our sin. As you go through this, remember that every one of us has sinned and will continue to do so until we go to Heaven.

Matthew 18:21-35

What do you notice about how the master approached his debtors versus the servant approaching someone who owed him?

What stands out to you most in this parable?

A rough conversion shows that the master was due \$6 billion from the unforgiving servant, and that the second servant owed \$12,000. Have you ever found yourself in a situation to forgive someone and found yourself angry at having to do so?

Romans 2:1-3

Why do you think we can justify to ourselves the judgement of others?

How do you think God wants us to show love the way Jesus showed love?

In what ways can you and your friends work together to avoid judging others?

Colossians 3:5-11

Why do you think Paul uses phrases like “put to death” and “put on the new self” in this passage?

Using verses 5 and 8, take a few moments to pray over the vices listed and ask God to illuminate areas in your life that you need to “put to death.”

Other Verses to Dive Deeper:
John 8:3-11 | Luke 6:27-31 | Luke 10:30-37

Wednesday

Within

Fellowship is an aspect of the Christian faith. It can be easy for us to believe that we don't need other believers in our lives. While our intimate relationship with Jesus is a crucial part of our lives as Christians, so is our community with others. We need other believers to encourage us, keep us accountable, and grow with us.

Hebrews 10:24–25

How do you think we can help stir up one another to love and good works?

In what ways are you encouraged by your brothers and sisters in Christ?

What do you think is the significance to the author saying, "encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near"?

2 Corinthians 6:14

Why do you think Paul warns us against being "unequally yoked" with unbelievers?

Have you ever seen a friend or family member become influenced by an unbeliever?

This passage does not call for us to never interact with unbelievers – Jesus did all the time. What do you think we can do to keep ourselves involved and loving in unbelievers' lives, but not allow them to influence us to walk away from God?

Romans 12:4–8

In what areas do you think God has gifted you to work within your congregation?

Taking into account that each of us has strengths God has supplied us with, take some time to pray over how your talents and abilities could be used in your church body.

Other Verses to Dive Deeper:
Acts 2:42–47 | 1 John 1:6–7 | Matthew 18:19–20

Thursday

Outward

By participating in this Mission Week, you are already stepping out and putting your faith into action. We are called as holy people to walk by faith with the Spirit so that we may know God's perfect will for our lives. This can be challenging for us when times of trial and unease come our way. When those times come, you must remember that you have the Creator of the Universe at your side and dwelling within you.

Romans 12:9-13

Paul outlines some marks of a true Christian. Which ones stand out most to you?

Hating what is evil and clinging to what is good can be tough, especially as the grey line between the two continues to blur in our society. In what ways can you hold to what is true when times of trouble come your way?

Paul calls for us to "be consistent in prayer". How can you become consistent in prayer in your life?

James 1:2-4

How do seasons of trial build muscle and endurance in your spiritual life?

What do you think “steadfastness” means in this context?

What do you think the phrase “count it all joy” means in regards to seasons of trial?

Colossians 3:5–8

Across these passages, we are told to shed the things of the world. Go through the passage and list them below:

The vices that the author lists can be tough for us to reconcile and put to death. Pray over these things and hone in on the ones that cause you to stumble. Through Jesus’ strength, we can overcome these temptations – not by our own doing, but by God’s.

Other Verses to Dive Deeper:
Ephesians 4:17 | Titus 3:1–11 | James 1:19–27

Friday

Onward

You know the feeling well. You've attended Bible camp or Mission Week and you're on fire for God, ready to go shake up the world and your community for His Kingdom. You get home and on the drive to your house, you tell your parents all about your experience and how much of an impact it had on your life. You were challenged and gained a deeper understanding of your relationship with Christ and can't wait to impact others.

Two hours later, you're screaming at your little brother to get out of your room for the eighteenth time and ready to punt him out the door.

We all struggle with remembering where our focus should be. It's easy to get caught up into our feelings and what's going on in the world around us. It's easy to justify to ourselves that we don't have to spread the Gospel because someone else will.

So the question becomes; where do we go from here? How can we make Christ-honoring, God-centric decisions in our lives?

James 1:5-8

James calls for us to seek God's wisdom in everything we do; at the beginning and throughout the process of our plans. When have you prayed through a choice to make and found that God provided the wisdom to you?

In what ways can we learn to believe without doubt?

Hebrews 5:11-14

By including God in all of our decisions, we can grow and mature in our faith. Looking back at your life, can you see the times when trial pushed you closer to God?

We frequently can wish for the bad things in our lives to have never happened. Pray over the times in your life when things didn't go the way you wished, and ask God to illuminate how those situations were used for His good in your life.

Other Verses to Dive Deeper:

1 Peter 1:3-11 | 1 Corinthians 10:31-33 | Romans 8:26-27

Moving Forward

After you return home,

Thinking specifically of the theme, Upward, Inward, Outward, we would encourage you to write down on this page ways that you can incorporate the aspects of this year's theme into your daily lives.

Thinking Upward, how can you actively work to remember not only the wonderfully intimate relationship we can have with the awesome Creator of the Universe, but also of His vast and mighty majesty?

Thinking Inward, how can you work to continually look at yourself not only as the precious child of the King, but also as a work in progress, still making your way as the image of Christ?

Lastly, thinking Outward, how can you exemplify the life of Jesus in your day-to-day life?

Other C.E. Mission Weeks Info

Summer 2019

Youth Mission Weeks

Natural Disaster & Poverty Relief

New Castle, PA

Fayette County, WV

June 30-July 6

July 7-13

July 14-20

July 21-27

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I endeavor to live for Him boldly
and make it the practice of my life to:
pray and study God's Word daily,
serve others freely,
share my faith openly,
worship God in my church regularly,
and humbly lead His cause
for my generation.

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UP – Confession of Christ
WITH – Fellowship with Christ's people
IN – Loyalty to Christ's church
OUT – Service for Christ

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