



WORTH
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IT



SUNDAY | Youth Group Devotions

CHECK-IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: **A whole lot of stuff happened today** (mention a few details that will remind your group of the busy day they've had). **After all the activity, now we can settle into our rooms and get ready for an incredible week of service.**

ASK: **Now that we're finally here, what's running through your mind about this week?** (Allow time for several responses, giving everyone a chance to express what they're feeling. If your group has more than 20 people, consider forming groups of four or five.)

SAY: **Let's take a moment to give those thoughts and feelings to God.** (Ask someone to pray. If you formed small groups, ask one person to pray within each group, then gather back your entire crew.)

SAY: **The theme for this year's mission trip is WORTH IT. We'll explore God's love for his children through Jesus' story about the Prodigal Son. Through that parable, we'll talk about what God means when something, anything...anyone is WORTH IT. Jesus makes a big deal out of the fact that God sees us as beloved children and is willing to go to great lengths to express love and care for us.**

OUR FOCUS: WORTH IT

Let's look at some Bible verses that talk about being God's children:

(Ask someone to read these verses aloud.)

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! 1 John 3:1a, NLT

This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant. ... God's spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!

Romans 8:15-17, The Message

SAY: Let's form groups of four to discuss these questions.

ASK:

- What does it mean to you, personally, that you are God's child?**
- What are some aspects of the "unbelievable inheritance" that's coming to God's children?**
- How will you know this week was WORTH IT for you?**

(Allow enough time for each person to respond before calling everyone back together.)

SAY: God will do some amazing things in each of our lives this week. And we'll see how God loves and values us through Jesus' story of two sons who test their father's love. Before we cover some announcements, let's pray and give everything about this week to God. As I prompt you, pray silently about each item I mention.

3 SUNDAY | YOUTH GROUP DEVOTIONS

SAY: Let's pray: Thanks, God, for a safe trip to camp and for opportunities to serve people and share what you're all about. Hear us as we each pray for...

- the people on our crew
- the people we'll begin serving tomorrow
- our youth group as we experience this week together
- ourselves as we open our hearts to you.

Thanks for loving us so generously and for showing us that we're WORTH IT to you. Help us reveal your love to all the people we meet each day. In Jesus' name, Amen.





WORTH

MONDAY | Youth Group Devotions

CHECK-IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: This has been a busy—and awesome—day here in [location]! I’m sure you have a lot to talk about. Who has a story from today you want to share? (Allow for a few stories, then thank those who shared.)

Let’s pray, giving thanks for the amazing experiences we had today and asking God to meet us in surprising ways amid the challenges we face.

(Open the group time in prayer.)

OUR FOCUS: WORTH!

SAY: Today’s theme is “Worth,” which is an important part of how we see ourselves and our world. The worth or value we assign to our possessions, experiences, work, other people, and even ourselves guides our decisions and shapes our lives.

SAY: Quickly form groups of four and appoint one person in each group to take notes about your conversation. (Allow time.) Now let’s jump into the topic by brainstorming seven signs that someone at your school has worth; for example, being a varsity captain or wearing certain shoes. Include anything that people use to assign worth. You have three

5 MONDAY | YOUTH GROUP DEVOTIONS

minutes to make your list...starting now! (Watch the time and call for attention after three minutes.)

SAY: **Time's up! Let's hear what you came up with.** (Allow time for some—or all—groups to share, depending on the number of groups.)

SAY: **I have another question for your group of four. You may have had many reasons for participating in this mission trip. Somewhere in that mix is the fact that you think it's WORTH IT to spend a week serving, even though some friends and people back home might not get it.**

ASK: **What makes this week WORTH IT for you?** (Allow about five minutes for discussion and then call for attention.)

SAY: **This week can be just another event to add to your list of experiences, or it can be a life-transforming involvement in service. Your challenge is to discover the worth you give to your involvement this week—and the worth you'll receive from being here.**

SAY: **Let's finish our devotion time with prayer in a big circle.** (pause) **Please close your eyes while I read a Bible passage that describes the value God places on each of us.**

**What, then, shall we say in response to these things?
If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did
not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how
will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all
things?** Romans 8:31-32

Pray, thanking God for placing the highest value on us—and for not just *telling* us we're WORTH IT but for actually *showing* us our true worth.



TUES | Youth Group Devotions

CHECK-IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

ASK: Let's unpack our experiences from today. What stood out to you—either good or bad?

SAY: Let's pray now, inviting Jesus into our highs and lows.
(Say a brief prayer.)

OUR FOCUS: LOST!

SAY: Today's theme is "Lost." In tonight's program, we explored Jesus' story about the Prodigal Son and discovered that both sons are lost in different ways. One grabs what he can and runs away; the other grabs what he can and stays home. One realizes he's lost and comes home; the other just stays lost in isolation from his father and brother.

Makes groups of 3 and discuss the following questions:

ASK:

- When life gets tough, which brother are you more like, and why?

7 TUES | YOUTH GROUP DEVOTIONS

- **Do you physically remove yourself from what makes you uncomfortable, or do you stay in the room but check out?**
- **What triggers you to “get lost” in those kinds of situations?**

(Allow time.)

SAY: A person can be lost in many ways—physically, emotionally, spiritually.

ASK: What causes a person to realize they’re lost?

ASK: Think of a time you were lost in one way or another. How did you realize you were “out there”?

SAY: We’re all lost when we don’t understand our relationship with the Father. We lose ourselves amid distractions and forget how we are connected to God. We’d be in bad shape if God just let us slip away, but that’s not what happens.

Ask someone to read aloud this Bible passage:

Jesus sent his twelve harvest hands out with this charge: “Don’t begin by traveling to some far-off place to convert unbelievers. And don’t try to be dramatic by tackling some public enemy. Go to the lost, confused people right here in the neighborhood. Tell them that the kingdom is here. Bring health to the sick. Raise the dead. Touch the untouchables.” Matthew 10:5-8a, The Message

ASK: When you realize you’re lost, what difference does it make for you to know that someone is actively looking for you?

Pray, expressing gratitude to God for knowing that we’re lost and continuing to look for us.



FOUND

WED | Youth Group Devotions

OUR FOCUS: FOUND!

SAY: In tonight's devotions there are various stations representing different areas in which we often try to find our worth. At each station is a card with the instructions of what you will think and pray about.

- One station is titled "Appearance". At this station you will write the area you struggle with the most regarding your appearance or image on a piece of mirrored paper. The paper isn't a real mirror, just as our thoughts about ourselves aren't a true reflection of how God sees us.
- The next station is "Identity". God created you to fit perfectly into his overall idea of who you are. Here you will write your name on a puzzle piece. Then think and talk with God about how you try to fit in and what you do to be accepted by others.
- Another station is titled "Performance". How have you felt pressure to find your worth in your accomplishments? At this station you will pick up a stick. As you hold it, think of one area of your life where you feel pressure to perform.
- Then there is the "Relationship" station. What are the four most important relationships in your life right now? Here you will take five paper clips—one representing you and one for each relationship you're thinking about. Connect

9 WED | YOUTH GROUP DEVOTIONS

each of the four paper clips to yours, thinking about how you're connected.

At each station is an activity for you to interact with, plus some Scripture verses and questions to reflect on. Spend some time with Jesus tonight, talking about your life, and listening to what God might want to say to you about your true worth. At each station, start by taking a card. Please return the card when you are done.

After everyone is done with the stations, break into groups of four. After everyone's settled, allow about 10 minutes for discussion.

SAY: **Let's talk about what happened at the stations. Remember that people's experiences can vary, so respect those that differ from yours. Let's give each other the gift of listening.**

In each group, starting with the person sitting closest to me, talk through the questions that follow and continue until everyone has shared. When your group is finished, please pray for each person, then sit silently while other groups continue to talk. I'll get everyone back together when you're finished.

The stations:

- Appearance
- Identity
- Performance
- Relationships

Unpacking the experience: (each person responds to each question)

- **Describe your understanding of what it means to be found by Jesus.**
- **Which of the four stations was most impactful to you? Why?**
- **How did (or didn't) the experience strengthen your sense of being found by Jesus?**

Call everyone back together and close the time in prayer.



LOVED

THUR | Youth Group Devotions

CHECK-IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

Open the devotion time with prayer.

SAY: **Can you believe only one more day is left here? Raise your hand if your crew has finished its project.**

SAY: **That's amazing!** (hopefully someone raised their hand)

ASK: **Does anyone have any stories from today?**

OUR FOCUS: LOVED!

SAY: **In the program tonight, we considered how God shows love to us in a personal way. We wrote our thoughts on a card. Does everyone have theirs? In a few minutes, I (or one of our other adults) will call you over so we can talk together about God's love for you. I/we will meet with every person in our group. While you wait, read the parable of the Prodigal Son again and listen for Jesus' expression of love for you. Please respect others and remain quiet as you read and reflect on the story, located in your handbook on page 77.**

Instructions for youth group participants:

While you're waiting to pray with your youth leader, read through the following translation of Jesus' Prodigal Son parable. Read through it slowly and discover where you see yourself in it.

- **What do the youngest son's actions reveal about his character?**
- **What do the oldest son's actions reveal about his character?**
- **What are all the ways the father's actions reveal his character?**

The Story of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32, The Message)

Then he said, "There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, 'Father, I want right now what's coming to me.'

"So the father divided the property between them. It wasn't long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money, there was a bad famine all through that country and he began to hurt. He signed on with a citizen there who assigned him to his fields to slop the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corncobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

"That brought him to his senses. He said, 'All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I'm going back to my father. I'll say to him, Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.' He got right up and went home to his father.

"When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: 'Father, I've sinned against God, I've sinned before you; I don't deserve to be called your son ever again.'

"But the father wasn't listening. He was calling to the servants, 'Quick. Bring a clean set of clothes and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We're going

to feast! We're going to have a wonderful time! My son is here—given up for dead and now alive! Given up for lost and now found!' And they began to have a wonderful time.

"All this time his older son was out in the field. When the day's work was done he came in. As he approached the house, he heard the music and dancing. Calling over one of the houseboys, he asked what was going on. He told him, 'Your brother came home. Your father has ordered a feast—barbecued beef!—because he has him home safe and sound.'

"The older brother stalked off in an angry sulk and refused to join in. His father came out and tried to talk to him, but he wouldn't listen. The son said, 'Look how many years I've stayed here serving you, never giving you one moment of grief, but have you ever thrown a party for me and my friends? Then this son of yours who has thrown away your money on whores shows up and you go all out with a feast!'

"His father said, 'Son, you don't understand. You're with me all the time, and everything that is mine is yours—but this is a wonderful time, and we had to celebrate. This brother of yours was dead, and he's alive! He was lost, and he's found!"'

When you've prayed with each participant, close in prayer, expressing deep gratitude for Jesus' love.



CELEBRATE

FRIDAY | Youth Group Devotions

OUR FOCUS: CELEBRATE!

SAY: In tonight's program, we heard that celebration is about gratitude. When we're thankful for something, we naturally want to remember what happened and how it changed us for the better. Pair up with someone quickly. (pause) Does everyone have a partner? Okay.... Now you each have 30 seconds to list experiences from this week that have made you thankful. The person sitting closest to me will go first. I have my eye on the clock—ready, go!

(After 30 seconds, have the other person talk for 30 more seconds. Have fun with this and keep it moving!)

SAY: Stop! I'm curious: What are some things that made you thankful this week? Tell us about them and why you're thankful. (Allow up to five minutes.)

SAY: Our celebration and gratitude can keep going when we return home. We can hold on to Jesus' love for us and continue experiencing it everywhere we go.

SAY: If all we did this week was serve people, the good feeling of serving would stay with us for a while. But that's not the complete story of what happened this week. While we were serving others, God was transforming us. We heard about and experienced God's love. God told us we're WORTH IT. For this week to have all the impact God intends, we'll return home with a deeper faith and lingering gratitude.

SAY: Quickly find another partner (pause) and discuss these questions:

ASK:

- What's the most important lesson you learned this week about your faith in Jesus?
- What's one part of your life that has changed through your experience of God's love?

SAY: Stay with your partner and find another pair. In that group of four, read these Bible verses together and then talk through the questions that follow.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

Colossians 3:10-15, 17, NLT

ASK:

- What does it mean to clothe yourself with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience?
- How might that new clothing transform your relationships?
- How does love bind people together? How might love transform your youth group?

- Why is constant thankfulness linked with living in peace?

SAY: Tonight we can celebrate so many good things that happened to us and through us this week. We know this week was WORTH IT. And we know that we're WORTH IT to God. Let's pray, thanking God for this week and for the bright future God has in store for us. (Ask people to express their thanks to God. Then close with a final prayer.)

