



FORGED

Sunday Youth group Devotions

Forged

CHECK-IN STORIES FROM THE DAY

SAY: It's been a long day, but we're here! You've had a chance to meet your crews, and you've learned where, who, and how you'll be serving this week. Now that you have a moment to stop and reflect on the day... What has been your favorite part of the day? (Allow time for sharing.)

Now that we have settled in and met our work crews, let's look ahead at our week of serving.

ASK: What is going through your mind about tomorrow? What are you excited about? What are you worried about? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: Who would like to open us in prayer? (Take time to pray together.)

FOCUS

The theme for today is HOPE. When have you been the most hopeful? Who can share a quick story about a hopeful time in their life? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: At the program, we talked about the difference between the "cross your fingers" kind of hope and the hope of God. Which kind of hope are you feeling right now? Are you crossing your fingers and hoping for certain things to happen this week? Or are you placing your trust in what God has in store for you this week? Or both? Or neither? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: Whatever hope you're feeling ... or not feeling ... is perfectly normal and okay. We don't know what is coming in the days ahead. But know this: God will be with you through it all.

SAY: At the adult meeting today, leaders received this Devo Kit. (Show the group the bag filled with Devo supplies.) We will be using the items in the kit throughout the week at evening devotions.

WASHERS

SAY: There are metal washers and pieces of yarn inside the bag for each of us. (Hand those out.) Attach your washer to your yarn and knot the ends so you can wear it around your neck. We will be using the washers as part of our evening devotions all week, so make sure you wear them around your neck every day.

SAY: Just as a metalworker forges a piece of steel, God is constantly forging us in faith. We are like raw material, and God is always working on us to make us into the people he created us to be. Put your name or initials on your washer. Write your name using Sharpie, or later you might scratch your name into the metal using a nail. However you do it, make it your own. And remember that God knows you by name. You matter to God, and everything that happens in your life matters to God.

That is a source of hope. Let's pray.

PRAY: Lord, we are so grateful that you know us and care about what happens in our lives. We are filled with so many feelings as we prepare to head out and serve tomorrow. Help us to remember that we have hope in you. Amen.

SAY: Here is some important information you need to know for tomorrow: Grab your Mission Handbook and turn to page 23, to the section titled "Your Emotional Safety Matters." Will someone please read that section aloud while we follow along? (Pause for reading.)

SAY: We want everyone to have a great week, and that can happen only if we understand and live out those words. If anything or anyone makes you uncomfortable this week, please talk to an adult right away.

SAY: Everyone needs to know about these four important camp locations:

1. The cafeteria
2. The tool room
3. The main entrance and check-in table area

4. The emergency meeting place (usually out front or in the largest parking lot)

If your group hasn't yet become familiar with these locations, go on a brief group tour of the facility right after devotions tonight.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Make sure everyone knows how to get their tools, supplies, and lunches in the morning.
- Lights out tonight is at 11 p.m. Tomorrow is a big day!
- In your rooms tonight, an adult should point out the fire exits.
- Share announcements related specifically to your group

Have a good night!



My Circular Journey

from Hope to Hope, Part 1

Think about a time when you felt hopeful. Things were going well. Nothing particular was stressing you out. You were looking forward with positivity. Maybe you were even excited about something coming up. Spend two minutes writing about that time and how you felt.

Monday Youth Group Devotions

Hope to Suffering

CHECK-IN STORIES FROM THE DAY

SAY: Before we start our conversation, take your washer from around your neck and put it inside your shoe (under your foot). We'll get back to it in a while. Just put it there until further notice.

SAY: We made it through our first day at our work sites. I'm sure you have stories to share. Let's hear about your day (Allow time for sharing.)

Let's pray, giving thanks for today and asking God to give us open hearts and minds as we face the challenges this week. (Ask for a volunteer to open with a brief prayer.)

FOCUS

SAY: Suffering is a fact of life. Nobody escapes it completely. This morning, we all wrote the first part of a story about a time in our lives when we suffered.

ASK: How did it feel to write something so personal? (Allow time for sharing.) Did your idea about what to write come to you right away, or did you have to think about it longer? (Allow time for sharing.) We all sat together during the morning program, and every person wrote about personal suffering. How could that be a source of comfort to you? (Allow time for sharing.)

ASK: Suffering can be physical or emotional—or both. In your experience, which is more difficult? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: The fact is, no suffering is more important or more worthy of compassion in the eyes of God. When you're going through suffering, it hurts. God knows you are hurting and cares about your pain.

SAY: God does more than that. When you go through a season of suffering, that time can soften and shape you. It's like the early stages of

the FORGING process, when steel is heated so it can be softened and shaped. Something happens when metal is heated. It changes at a fundamental level so that when it cools, it is stronger and more durable. The same is true about us when God walks us through a time of suffering. We change. One amazing transformation is that we become more compassionate for others who also suffer. See how God works in our world? Through us. By increasing our compassion, God uses us to provide love and compassion to his hurting children.

Galatians 6:2 says this: *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

WASHERS

SAY: Your washer has been in your shoe for several minutes. Does it bother you? Would you consider it a source of suffering? Or would you call it something else—a nuisance, an inconvenience? What if you had to keep your washer inside your shoe all week? Or all summer? Or longer? Nobody would be able to see the washer in your shoe, but it would be something you felt every step of every day. That's how our suffering works too. Often we seem okay on the outside but we carry around pain. God knows our pain even though it's invisible to other people.

SAY: Remove your washer from your shoe. Having it rub against your foot was probably uncomfortable. But notice also how it is warm. You can think about suffering that way. When we go through difficult times, it creates friction in our lives. And that friction creates heat that can soften and shape us. Keep your washer warm in your hands as we go around the circle and each say ONE WORD that relates to some suffering in our life.

Nobody else needs to understand the significance of the word. God knows. After each person has offered a word, we'll close in prayer.

UNISON PRAYER: God, thank you for being with us in the difficult times of life. When we are in the middle of our pain, we sometimes lose our way. Sometimes, it is so hard to make sense out of suffering when we are hurting. We have so many questions. Help us remember that you are

with us when we are struggling. We need patience and understanding as we journey back to your hope. Thank you for seeing our invisible pain and caring about us. Help us to care for each other in the same way. Amen.

Put your washer back around your neck.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Variety show audition forms must be signed by an adult in your group who has seen and approved the act. Forms are available in the camp office and are due back there by 5 p.m. tomorrow. Auditions are tomorrow night.
- Continue adding to the camp's community gift.
- Add any announcements specific to your group.
- Lights out is at 11 p.m.

SAY: Have a great night!



Tuesday Youth Group Devotions

Suffering Produces Perseverance

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

We have another day of work behind us. How did things go at your work site today? Let's share our joys and struggles. What were your best and toughest moments of the day? (Go around the circle and share.)

FOCUS

Our theme today is SUFFERING PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE. How do you define PERSEVERANCE? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: Perseverance is the ability to focus and complete a goal despite hardships and setbacks. What happened today that required you to persevere? How did you get through the challenges you faced? (allow time to share.)

SAY: A significant factor in overcoming adversity is the help of others. Like in the drama about the four friends, working together made the task more manageable. It's a cliché, but we often hear "Teamwork makes the dream work." In a way, God created us for teamwork. God created us to be in community.

ASK: If you have experience being part of a team—sports, theater, debate, robotics—whatever it may be, what do you value about teamwork? (Allow time to share.)

WASHERS

SAY: Everybody take off your washers. Inside the Devo Kit you will find pieces of sandpaper. Pass those out now.

I'm going to set a timer for 2 minutes. Use sandpaper and scuff the blank side of your washer. Don't stop scuffing until time is up. As you rub your washer with sandpaper, watch how the washer changes, and pray for

the strength to persevere in every challenge you face this week and beyond.

Let God know where you need physical, mental, and emotional strength.

Ready? Go! After 2 minutes,

SAY: Let's pray.

PRAY: God, sometimes we get tired and want to quit. We feel overwhelmed and don't know where to begin. Remind us, God, that when we are feeling roughed up we can trust that you'll bring us to a smoother place. We thank you for the people with compassionate hearts who love us and support us. When we see others who are hurting, help us to show others love and care. Thank you, God, for always being there when we are suffering, and remind us that love helps us to heal and makes us stronger. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Review tomorrow's free-time plans. Remember, you'll need to be back for the program at 7:30 p.m. It starts with the Variety Show. If someone in your group is in the Variety Show, make sure you're back by 7 p.m. or earlier.
- Keep writing Care Cards! The Care Card rack will come down at midnight on Friday night.
- Share announcements related specifically to your group.



Wednesday Youth Group Devotions

Perseverance Produces Character

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

ASK: How's everybody doing tonight? It was great having a half-day to do something together. Do you feel energized for tomorrow? How is your motivation doing?

FOCUS

Today's theme is "PERSEVERANCE PRODUCES CHARACTER." What is character? (Allow time for answers.)

SAY: Good character is the result of consistently choosing to do the right thing, the Christlike thing. That means choosing truth over lies, serving others over serving yourself, acceptance over exclusion, forgiving over holding a grudge. What do you think it means to have good character? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: Tonight in the program, we talked about misjudging people's character based on one rough moment. Have you ever been misjudged or had people jump to conclusions about your character? Who is willing to share? (Allow time for sharing.)

Character is the essence of who you are. How do you think God is at work as you build character? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: Don't lose sight of the fact that God provides the wisdom that comes from experience. Whenever you go through suffering and have the strength to persevere, take the time to THANK GOD.

ASK: How can we balance our gratitude to God with feeling positive about what we've done? Is it wrong to celebrate our victories? (Allow time for sharing.)

WASHERS

SAY: Look at your washer and see how it has changed since you first received it. Much like you, your washer shows signs of wear from our time here. It is still the same raw material, but it continues to be transformed.

Tonight, add something to your washer. Tie something to it. Attach something. Use your imagination. Maybe you'll add a rubber band, a sticker, a paperclip, or a piece of string. You can use an item from our Devo Kit [Devo kits should contain small items that can be attached to washers...a variety of little things] or find something after we're all finished tonight.

Use this as an opportunity to express who you are. Get creative and help each other if some of you are struggling to find something to attach to your washer.

PRAY: Let's pray. God, we pray for wisdom to make choices that build good character. We know that you created us to reflect your goodness and that you have a plan for each of us. You say we are your children and that you are for us. Thank you for always working on us, and for loving us despite all our messy imperfections. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- You have only two more days to write Care Cards!
- In tonight's program, we heard from the summer staff crew that runs this camp. If you're interested in being a summer staffer for Group Mission Trips, attend tonight's informal Q&A session. (The time and place should have been announced at the program.) To apply for the summer of 2024, you must be at least one year out of high school. In other words, you'll need to have graduated this past spring.
- If any adult wants more information about serving at a Workcamp or Week of Hope as a volunteer, worship leader, director, or MC, stop by the camp office any time this week for more information.

Share any announcements related to your group.



Thursday Youth Group Devotions

Go Serve with Gratitude

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: You all know the routine by now. Let's share some stories from our day. We want to hear about your joys...and support you in your struggles. Who wants to go first? (Allow time for sharing, celebration, and support.)

FOCUS

SAY: Today's theme is CHARACTER PRODUCES HOPE.

On Sunday, we started this journey from hope to hope. It made sense because hope is looking forward with positivity. It is trusting that God has good things for you.

In the drama tonight, we saw the sisters, Mary and Martha, going through a mix of emotions as they told the story about waiting for Jesus to come heal their brother. Disappointment. Confusion. Despair. Grief.

It's easy to imagine feeling those things as they watched their brother suffer and die.

But the story of Mary and Martha is one of hope. The sisters believe in Jesus and his goodness and his power to heal. So even when they feel hopeless, they remain hopeful. How?

ASK: Is it possible to be both hopeless and hopeful at the same time? (Allow time for sharing.) As you have reflected in your journal about your own experience with suffering, have you been able to recognize how God has used it to make you stronger? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: There is a stage in the forging process called REFINING, when impure metal is made pure.

As God forges us in faith we are softened and shaped. And then we are refined. God smooths out our rough spots and brings out our beauty. We

are left with a reservoir of hope that we can draw from when we find ourselves back in a season of suffering.

That seems to be what happened with Mary and Martha. Their faith was so strong it carried them through with their hope intact. But what if you're not as faithful and hope-filled as Mary and Martha?

How do you get back to hope?

ASK: What can you do when you feel hopeless? Let's brainstorm specific actions we can take to help us connect with God and God's hope for us. I'll write down all the ideas so we have a record of what we talk about tonight. Who knows? There might be a time in our future as a group when we need to revisit this list. (Allow time for sharing, and record the ideas your group comes up with for how you can connect with the hope of God when things seem hopeless.)

THE CIRCLE

SAY: You have been sharing your circular journey from hope to hope. Know that your life will include several journeys around that circle. You will experience suffering, and perseverance, and times of building character; however, you will always return to hope. There is hope in knowing that suffering isn't where the journey ends. It's a guaranteed part of life...but it's not where God wants us to stay.

God gives us the gift of hope. Whenever you face difficult times, remember that when you persevere, you will learn and grow stronger. God promises us that.

WASHERS

Tonight we all took our washers up to the cross and left them there.

ASK: What did it feel like to leave your washer there? What were you thinking? (Allow time to respond.) Why did we leave our washers at the cross? What does it mean to you? (Allow time to share.)



PRAY: Who would like to close us in prayer? (Allow time for a volunteer to pray.)

SAY: Have a wonderful night, and get some sleep!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Because tomorrow is the last day at our work sites, remember to return any borrowed tools to the tool room or to the person who loaned them to you.
- Quartermasters need to return ladders to the tool room, or talk to your site coach about picking them up from your site.
- Remember to pick up your group's ladders from the tool room tomorrow night.
- Organizers must turn in your first-aid kit tomorrow when you return from working.
- Tonight is your last chance to stop by and check out the GO SERVE WALL. Remember, if you take a card, stop by the camp office to officially volunteer and to get more information. All GO SERVE projects need to be completed by Friday at 5 p.m.
- Share announcements about packing up tomorrow night. Get a plan in place, because tomorrow night things will be a little crazy!
- Don't forget to turn in your Home Repair Guide.
- Make sure you write Care Cards for your residents.

Friday Youth Group Devotions

Forged Ahead

CHECK-IN STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: Today we finished our projects (or got as close as we could get to completion) and said goodbye to our crews and our residents. What's next? There is A LOT to do! Many of us are still writing our Care Cards. We want to hang out with the new friends we met here at camp. Plus, it's a great idea to pack some things in the vehicles tonight, like our tools. Before we get wrapped up in the wrapping up, let's unpack what happened here this week.

FOCUS

This week's theme was FORGED. Like the metalworking process, God forges us, shapes us, and transforms us through life's journey. Most of our life we are comfortably in a season of hope. But then we all go through suffering. All of us. We don't get to choose when it happens, but it is guaranteed to be part of life.

SAY: But this week hasn't been about suffering. It's about hope. There is hope in knowing that when we go through suffering, it is part of a journey we walk with God. There is hope in knowing that God will use the heat of our suffering to soften us, shape us, and make us into more compassionate people.

ASK: How have you been transformed this week? (Allow time to share.)

WASHERS

SAY: Tonight you received a shiny new washer from the cross. God always provides a new start when we go through difficult times. Hold your washer in the palm of your hand. Close your eyes and use the index finger on your other hand to trace the circle shape of the washer over and over as I pray:



PRAY: God, thank you for walking with us through every journey around the circle. You are with us when we suffer. You are with us as we persevere. You build good character in us and help us become stronger and more compassionate.

Your constant love gives us hope and reminds us that we do not need to remain stuck in a season of suffering. There is always more to come. And all journeys lead us back to hope. For that, we thank you, God. Amen.

ASK: Where will you keep your new washer? (Allow time to share ideas.) If somebody back home asks you what the washer means or symbolizes, what will you say?

SAY: Let's go through our announcements about tonight and tomorrow. We have lots to discuss!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Make sure everybody knows the procedure for loading and checking out tomorrow. If you haven't notified the camp office about your checkout time, be sure to do so before going to bed. In the morning, a staff member must check you out before you hit the road.
- The Group Mission Trips team is dedicated to bringing you the best mission trip experience possible. If you'd like to provide feedback about this week, you can fill out a camp survey at this link [https://form.jotform.com/groupmissiontrips/ feedback-survey](https://form.jotform.com/groupmissiontrips/feedback-survey). We want to hear about everyone's experience, youth and adults!
- Share announcements related to your group.
- Thank everyone for an amazing week!



