



Children's Devotions

1. Power to Save

BASED ON...

In the movie, Paul slowly moves closer to the jailer. He looks into his eyes and speaks: "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

If you want a better pair of shoes than your parents are willing to buy you, you know you need to earn the money to pay for the difference. When you break a friend's phone, you ask how you can fix it. The teacher won't just give you an A+, you have to earn it.

So, I don't blame you if, when you hear the question, "What must I do to be saved?" you think you have to do something to earn God's love. Most of life works like that, but that's not how God works.

You can't buy God's love or fix your mistakes or earn his approval—you can't do anything to be saved—just the same way that dead people can't choose to come alive.

That's why God sent Jesus to do the impossible for you. When Jesus came to earth, he lived for you and then he died for you. But, because he's God, he did come back to life!

By doing all of that, Jesus earned God's love for you, paid for all of your mistakes, and you now have an A+ with God. "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

Your salvation is a gift. You know what else is a gift? God's love. As a believer in Jesus, it might be tempting to think that when you sin God loves you less because he's disappointed in you. Or maybe you think that if you follow all the rules, he loves you more. Actually, God already loves you fully and completely because when he looks at you, he sees Jesus and what he has done, not what you've done (either good or bad).

So, what must you do to be saved? "Believe in Jesus and you will be saved," (Acts 16:31).

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for using your power to save me. I couldn't have done it without you! Thank you for leaving heaven, coming to earth, living for me, paying for my sins, and defeating Satan by rising from the dead. Thank you, Holy Spirit for working inside of me so that I can believe that all these blessings are gifts from my heavenly Father. Amen.

2. Power Clothes

BASED ON... Baptism

In the movie, Paul says to Lydia: "Those who are baptized into Jesus are clothed with his perfect obedience. We are radiant and without sin in God's eyes."

In Christ Jesus, we are all children of God through faith, for all of us who were baptized into Christ have clothed ourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-28).

Everybody loves dress-up days for Spirit Week. After all, crazy hair day and pajama day are the best. But you can see just how proud people are on Team Day. Some wear their school colors, others wear a shirt from their favorite college, and others wear a jersey from their favorite professional player.

When you were baptized, Jesus forgave your sins and gave you a personalized heavenly jersey—with his name on the back. "In Christ Jesus, we are all children of God through faith, for all of us who were baptized into Christ have clothed ourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:26-27).

Maybe you can't see these power clothes, but God can. He sees your Jesus jersey and sees that Jesus' holiness covers you completely. When God looks at you, he says proudly and happily, "That's my kid!"

Now that you're part of his family, you get to walk around knowing that—no matter what happens here—he will never stop loving you. And, when you die, you get to live a perfect life in a new heaven and a new earth where there is no more sickness, sadness, crying, hurt feelings, bad days, pain, or death.

By the way, God isn't the only one who can see your jersey. Other people see it too. You let them know you're on his team by the attitude you have, by the way you talk to and about other people, by the way you treat everyone. They really know you're on his team when you talk to them about the Brother who loved them so much that he was willing to die for them too.

Every week is Spirit Week when you're on Jesus' team.

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for giving me your jersey and putting me on your team. But your team still needs more people. Help me invite people to join you, letting them know that there is still room for more! Amen.

Questions:

Have you seen a baptism? What do you remember about it?

If you were baptized as a baby, ask your parents to tell you about it.

3. Power to Tell Others

BASED ON... Jesus sends us all.

I have appeared to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the nations. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. For I am commanding that you bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Acts 9:8).

When you open up an envelope and see “You’re invited,” you get excited, don’t you?

After all, you love birthday parties and sleepovers. Really, though, the reason an invitation makes you feel special is because it means somebody likes you enough to want to hang out with you. They want to spend their happiest days with you.

On the other hand, let’s be honest, it’s really hard to hear people talk about the party that you weren’t invited to, isn’t it? No one wants to feel excluded, so being left out just leaves you feeling lonely.

When you were baptized or when you first heard about Jesus, that was your invitation to Jesus’ victory party over sin and death, which is the best party ever. As part of his family, you will never be excluded from God again. The cool part? His party lasts forever too! The Bible talks about heaven, which is where believers go when they die, as a place where there is an awesome feast!

Still, we can’t walk around just talking about how great the party is. You see, there are some people who need to know that the party is going on; they need you to give them an invitation. The Bible tells us, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? (Romans 10:13-14).

Telling others about Jesus isn’t only a job for adults. He loves it when kids are so excited about being part of his family that they invite others to come and hear about him. He loves giving you the power to reach out and invite your friends and neighbors to the party.

Dear Father,

I know that life with you is awesome here, but life in heaven will be even better. Give me your power so that I’m not nervous, but excited to invite all the people I know so they can know the good news too. Amen.

Questions:

What invitations have you received?

Which people in your life need to hear about Jesus?

What are some ways you can tell them?

4. Power When You're Scared

BASED ON... *God is our refuge no matter what we're facing.*

Psalm 61:1-3

Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe.

Sometimes adults just don't get how much you worry, right? You might be one of the kids who gets sick to your stomach because there is a test. Other kids don't want to be the one to serve game point in volleyball—because they haven't made a serve in the past two weeks. Some dread going to school because there has been a lot of drama lately. Maybe you're worried about your parents fighting, your classmate who has cancer, or your dad just deployed.

King David knows what it's like to worry. Israel—the country he was leading—was at war and unfortunately, his children were out of control too. So things were rough at work and at home. He talked to his advisors, which are like really smart friends, yet he also talked to the One who was always ready to listen. “Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe” (Psalm 61:1-3).

When you're worried, talking to your friends, teachers, or parents can help you feel better. And talking to your God is even better. He's the God of the whole entire world and he wants you to talk to him too! He is your refuge—your safe place to go whenever you're scared, hurting, and worried. He gives you power to face those fears and troubles.

Dear God,

Thank you for listening to me when I cry, for hearing every one of my prayers. When I'm afraid, remind me that I can come to you at any time because you are my safe place. Thank you for sending Jesus to defeat death for me, which gives me the power to know that whatever things scare me on earth, you will work them all for my good. Amen.

Questions:

What things have you talked to God about?

What are some ways you can pray? (*This is a good place for a facilitator to talk about how to pray, when kids can pray, asking other people to pray, etc.*)

5. Power to Live our Faith

BASED ON... Caring for each other, living our faith

In the movie, Paul speaks to the new Christians at Philippi, selections from his letter to the Philippians: "My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, you whom I love, my joy and crown, stand firm in your faith and do not be frightened by those who oppose you. Continue to learn God's Word. Pray together. Care for each other. Rejoice in the Lord always!"

Do your parents give you a list of chores?

Depending on how old you are, you might have to set the table or do your own laundry or put your Legos away. Some kids have to vacuum and dust, while others have to make their beds and do the dishes.

God gives you a list of things to do, too, but these aren't to earn points and get an allowance from God. This list is simply ways you pitch in because you are happy to be part of the family. "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:13-14).

Because you're part of God's family, he's given you the Holy Spirit, who lives inside of you. He gives you the power to care about, serve, and love the people around you by putting them first. He gives you the courage to stand up for people who are getting picked on, he helps you sit with the kid who is sitting alone, he opens your eyes to see which people need help. He also helps you keep your mouth shut when people are telling stories that hurt people's reputations.

By the way, as you do this, remember that Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of my brothers or sisters, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

All along you think you've been doing these things for other people. Actually, you've been doing them for Jesus.

Dear God,

Thank you for making me part of your family. Help me look for the ways I can serve other people and love them. Sometimes I don't want to, or I get tired. Forgive me and give me more of your power. Remind me that when I love other people, I'm really showing you how much I love you. Amen

Talk with each other:

What are some ways you can stand up for other kids?

What people can you talk to if you're being bullied?

What are some ways that you can serve other people?

How can we serve each other?