



28

J E S U S
C E N T E R E D

Y O U T H
G R O U P
D E V O T I O N S

PROVEN IMPACT WITH 100,000+ TEENAGERS

Group





28

JESUS
CENTERED

YOUTH
GROUP
DEVOTIONS

PROVEN IMPACT WITH 100,000+ TEENAGERS



28 Jesus-Centered Youth Group Devotions

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without prior written permission from the publisher, except where noted in the text and in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, email inforights@group.com, or go to group.com/permissions.

group.com
simplyyouthministry.com

Credits

Executive Developer: Tim Gilmour
Executive Editor: Rick Lawrence
Chief Creative Officer: Joani Schultz
Editor: Stephanie Martin
Art Director and Cover Art: Veronica Preston
Production: Veronica Preston
Project Manager: Justin Boling

Any website addresses included in this book are offered only as a resource and/or reference for the reader. The inclusion of these websites is not intended, in any way, to be interpreted as an endorsement of these sites or their content on the part of Group Publishing or the author. In addition, the author and Group Publishing do not vouch for the content of these websites for the life of this book.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-4707-4288-1
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 21 20 19 18 17 16

Printed in the United States of America.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
SECTION 1: WHO IS JESUS?	3
1. Describing Jesus	4
2. Picturing Jesus	5
3. Looking at Jesus	7
4. Naming Jesus	8
5. Receiving Jesus	9
 SECTION 2: WHAT IS JESUS LIKE?	11
6. Jesus Sees Us	12
7. Jesus Loves Us	14
8. Jesus Repairs Us	15
9. Jesus Leads Us	17
10. Jesus Feeds Us	19
11. Jesus Gives Us Life	20
 SECTION 3: HOW DOES JESUS HELP US?	21
12. Jesus Helps Us Overcome Fear	22
13. Jesus Helps Us Overcome Doubt	23
14. Jesus Heals Us	25
15. Jesus Understands Us	26
16. Jesus Forgives Us	28
 SECTION 4: HOW IS JESUS RELEVANT TO OUR DAILY LIVES?	31
17. Jesus Strengthens Us	32
18. Jesus Restores Our Relationships	34
19. Jesus Relates to Our Emotions	36
20. Jesus Nurtures Our Faith	38
21. Jesus Holds Our Future	40
22. Jesus Makes Everything New	42
 SECTION 5: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW JESUS?	45
23. Jesus Transforms Us	46
24. Jesus Embraces Us	48
25. Jesus Produces Fruit In Us	50
26. Jesus Opens Our Eyes	52
27. Jesus Sets Us Free	53
28. Jesus Makes Us Change Agents	55

28

JESUS
CENTERED

YOUTH
GROUP
DEVOTIONS

PROVEN IMPACT WITH 100,000+ TEENAGERS



INTRODUCTION

If we choose the *right* habit to change in our life, we can end up changing *all* of our habits...for the better. In Charles Duhigg's book *The Power of Habit*, he calls that one *right* habit the "keystone habit." He says: "The habits that matter most are the ones that, when they start to shift, dislodge and remake other patterns." So, what's your "keystone habit" related to helping teenagers grow spiritually? I mean, what are your underlying assumptions when you're trying to help kids mature in their faith? Fill in the blanks here: "Because I _____, I expect my students to _____."

Whatever words fill those blanks, they represent your youth ministry *orthopraxy*—the way you *practice* what you believe about spiritual growth. These 28 youth group devotions are designed to help you *practice* a profound and transformative habit in your ministry... It's called The Progression, and it goes like this:

"Get to know Jesus well, because the more you know him, the more you'll love him, and the more you love him, the more you'll want to follow him, and the more you follow him, the more you'll become like him, and the more you become like him, the more you become yourself."

When we help students "get to know Jesus well," they develop a deep love for him that compels them to follow him, and they slowly become like him as a result. And somewhere along the way, their "true self"—the "fearfully and wonderfully made" self—emerges into the light. Use these devotions to create or fuel a Jesus-centered habit in your ministry, and that "keystone habit" may just change everything else in your ministry. When your teenagers sense a deep agreement with Paul's declaration from 1 Corinthians 2—"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified"—something deep changes in them.

The normal Christian life can feel like an epic everyday adventure when you've been ruined by Jesus and ruined for Jesus.

—Rick Lawrence, Executive Editor

28

JESUS
CENTERED

YOUTH
GROUP
DEVOTIONS

PROVEN IMPACT WITH 100,000+ TEENAGERS



SECTION 1:

WHO IS JESUS?

1. DESCRIBING JESUS

Supplies: Bibles, paper, pens or pencils

SAY Think of three words to describe yourself. (Allow time.) Now think of three words to describe Jesus. (Allow time.)

ASK Which was more difficult: describing yourself in three words or describing Jesus in three words? Explain.

Have students share some words that describe Jesus.

ASK Of all the words you've heard that describe Jesus, which was the most interesting? the most surprising? Over time, how have your thoughts about Jesus changed? What's different between then and now? Do you think Jesus' view of you has changed over time? How so?

Have students take turns reading aloud Philippians 2:5-8.

ASK What words does this Bible passage use to describe Jesus? Did any of you have those words on your list? Why or why not?

SAY Getting close to Jesus is an incredible experience, but it may not always be what you expect. Even if you've known Jesus your whole life, you may be missing out on some aspects of who he really is. The more time you spend with Jesus and in his Word, the more opportunities he'll have to show you who he really is, what he really thinks of you, and what his plans are for your life.

SAY Let's close in prayer. Turn to a person near you and take one minute each to pray for the other person. Pray that Jesus will make himself real to your partner and will continue speaking words of love to them. You'll have about two minutes.

Allow time for prayer.

2. PICTURING JESUS

Supplies: Bibles

SAY As followers of Jesus, we have the opportunity to see him in a new way—and also to learn some new things about ourselves. By reframing the way we see Jesus, we can also see ourselves in a new light. Let's experience what that can look like for us.

SAY Close your eyes. While I tell you a brief story, imagine you're in a room with a picture of Jesus hanging on the wall.

At a Christian middle school, one person taught sixth grade and the other taught seventh. In the seventh-grade classroom, a copy of an old and very famous portrait of Jesus hung in an ornate frame. The teacher didn't like the picture. She thought it wasn't an accurate depiction of who Jesus really was. So one night she took the picture down, snuck into the sixth-grade classroom, and hung it there. The next morning, the sixth-grade teacher was shocked to find this old picture of Jesus hanging in his room. He didn't think it was an accurate picture either. And he knew where it had come from. So, after everyone had gone home that day, he returned the picture. This started a yearlong battle. Each week or so, one teacher and then the other would find creative places to put that picture in the other teacher's room until one of them finally tucked it away in a closet, never to be seen again.

SAY Open your eyes, turn to a partner, and describe the picture you saw in your mind as I told this story. Give details. What did Jesus look like? What did the frame look like? (Allow time.) Now share with your partner the picture of Jesus that hangs in your mind. What does he look like? How does he behave? What words describe him? (Allow time.)

SAY With your partner, share the way you've pictured Jesus in the past and how that picture of him has changed over time. Tell about something in your life—a person or an experience—that helped you see Jesus differently, more as he really is. Then share how you see Jesus today. (Allow time.)

Have someone read aloud John 14:8-10.

SAY Jesus is truly God. He tells us that when we see him, we see the Father—we see God. That means if we pay much better attention to Jesus—what he really said and did—then we’ll come to understand God’s heart more deeply. Let’s invite Jesus to reframe how we see him, the world, and ourselves.

Close in prayer.

3. LOOKING AT JESUS

Supplies: Bibles

SAY Take a moment to think about all the different things you like to look at. (Pause.) Imagine that today—right now—is the last chance you’ll have to look at certain people, places, sights, events, beautiful things, or something else. Think of all the things your eyes have seen, could see, might ever see. What would be your last sight to look at and why?

Allow time for sharing.

SAY What we look at—and how we look at it—says a lot about us. The same goes for Jesus. We all can be looking at him, but what we see depends on how we look.

Have someone read aloud John 19:13-15.

ASK How did the people in this Bible passage look at Jesus? Why did they see him that way?

Have someone read aloud John 20:26-28.

ASK In this passage, how did Thomas and the rest of the disciples look at Jesus? Why did they see him that way?

SAY Jesus was the same in both passages, but people’s perspectives were completely different. One group looked and saw a criminal who should be put to death. Another looked and saw the Lord, their God.

ASK When you look at Jesus, what are some things you see? How does looking at Jesus affect your outlook in other areas? For example, how does your view of Jesus change your view about yourself?

SAY Let’s close in prayer. Dear Jesus, thank you for never changing. Please help us dig into your Word so we can discover who you really are—and what that means for us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

4. NAMING JESUS

Supplies: Bibles, paper, pens or pencils

SAY Names are fascinating, and many of them have special meanings.

ASK How do you feel about your name? Have you ever wanted to go by a different name? If so, explain.

SAY Let's take a few minutes to suggest new names—or nicknames—for one another. Turn to a partner and brainstorm some suggestions related to something good or unique about that person. Ready? Go!

Allow time. Then ask a few students to share their ideas with everyone.

SAY Some people answer to more than just one name. In the Bible, Jesus is called many names in both the Old and New Testaments. Turn to Isaiah 9:6.

Have someone read that verse aloud.

ASK What names for Jesus are listed in this verse? What other names for Jesus can you think of? Which name for Jesus is your favorite, and why? What does it mean to you—and to your faith?

SAY Whether it's "Prince of Peace," "Good Shepherd," "Savior," or another name, what we call Jesus is one way to get to know him better.

SAY Let's get in a circle and close with an open time of prayer, focusing on who Jesus is to each of us. To do that, begin your prayer with these words, "Jesus, you are..." and then finish the sentence. It's okay to pray something very brief, or to not pray at all. We just want to talk to God about who his Son is to us. Anyone can start, and I'll close. Let's pray.

5. RECEIVING JESUS

Supplies: Bibles

Have students take turns reading aloud Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, from Luke 15:11-32.

ASK How do you feel about the father's response to the prodigal son at his homecoming?

SAY Jesus shared this parable so we can know that God the Father wants to respond to us the same way and extend the same undeserved forgiveness—if we'll simply receive it. But we can't do that if our fists are clenched tight.

Have students tighten their fists.

ASK How does it make you feel to clench like this? Using just one word, what are some things you're hanging on to that might prevent you from receiving Jesus and his forgiveness?

Ask if anyone is willing to share their word with the whole group.

ASK How would you describe who Jesus is to you? What has he done—or what could he do—inside your heart? Do you feel as if you deserve anything from Jesus? Why or why not? What, if anything, is keeping you from fully accepting Jesus' love and gifts?

SAY Because of our sins, no one deserves anything from Jesus—except eternal punishment. Thankfully, Jesus came to earth to die for us, making us righteous in God the Father's eyes. Now we can grow in our relationship with Jesus, knowing that he offers us all the forgiveness, love, and grace we'll ever need.

ASK Now that you've received this undeserved good news, how can you respond? How can you live for Jesus? And how can you share his good news with other people?

SAY Let's close in a time of open prayer, with our eyes closed. If you have a new—or renewed—perspective on your relationship with Jesus, offer a simple prayer that begins with, “Jesus, I receive you...” and then fill in the rest of that sentence however you'd like. Details are okay but not necessary. After a little while, I'll close. Let's bow our heads and pray.

Allow plenty of time for this to develop. Don't be afraid of silence.

**What would happen if your students *knew* Jesus,
not just knew *about* him?**

The Youth Ministry Team at Group—the same team that created the bestsellers *Jesus-Centered Bible* and *Jesus-Centered Youth Ministry*—has created 28 life-changing devotions that are simple to lead and packed with highly engaging activities that will help answer these five essential questions...

- Who is Jesus?
- What is Jesus like?
- How does Jesus help us?
- How is Jesus relevant to our daily lives?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus?

EACH DEVOTION INCLUDES:

- Experiential elements that fuel rich interactions
- Open-ended questions guaranteed to spark lively discussion
- Key Scripture passages that anchor the devotion and linger long after it
- A leader script you can follow or adapt

With *28 Jesus-Centered Youth Group Devotions*, your students' hearts will be transformed as they get to know the real Jesus, and ultimately center their lives around him.



simply youth ministry
helping youth workers with what matters most

Printed in the U.S.A.

Group
Real. Bold. Love.

ISBN 978-1-4707-4288-1

USD \$14.99



9 781470 742881

Religion / Christian Ministry / Youth



THIS IS A SAMPLE

The number of pages is limited.

Purchase the item for the complete version.

