

PASSPORTkids' Guide to Successful Church Group Devotions!

What is a Church Group Devotion?

A Church Group Devotion is an intentional time at the end of each day for your church group to come together and reflect on the day's activities and lessons. Your group has been doing a variety of activities throughout the day. Children were in different Bible studies, choices, and free-time activities with other church groups. You sat together during worship, but that time was meant to be spent concentrating on God. Your Church Group Devotion focuses solely on your group, its dynamics during the week, and how God works, both individually and corporately.

Church Group Devotion guides have been provided to help you with the process. They contain intentional links to other parts of the PASSPORT day, bringing continuity to your group's PASSPORT experience. However, some of you are camp experts and have the devotion times down pat. As a result, these guides may not be for you. Please feel free to use them as you, the Church Group Devotion leader, see fit. Use any or all of the guides. It is totally up to you. The key is to have a spiritually fun time!

You will be assigned a location for your Church Group Devotion at Camp Registration.

Preparation

We suggest spending time each day preparing for that evening's Church Group Devotion (CGD). Here are some thoughts in no particular order.

1. Use the provided guides however you choose. They have been designed to wrap up the daily PASSPORT theme.
2. Perhaps a snack one or two evenings will keep the "hungries" away.
3. You may invite a PASSPORT Staffer to administer your Church Group Devotion one evening. However, we suggest they stay only for their devotion time and then leave so your group can interact without any "outsiders."
4. Turn back to the morning devotion and see if there are any questions for reflection that can be considered that evening.
5. Feel free to make your meeting space your own, but make sure to return the furniture to its original condition and dispose of all your trash. Your room will most likely be used as a Bible study room or a college classroom the following morning.
6. You may have a Church Group Devotion outside, but some groups may get done before you, and be a distraction for your group. Try to find a quiet, isolated place.
7. Playing a guitar or using a CD player to provide some background/praise music for your devotion is often a good idea. Remember, though, that there may be another group in the room next to yours that will be distracted if your group is too loud.
8. It is a good idea to play any games outside so that your group doesn't disturb others in the rooms next to you.
9. You may burn a candle for your devotion as long as nothing flammable is kept near the flame and it is extinguished at the conclusion of your devotion. Make sure to clean up any spilled wax.
10. Dorm rooms are not appropriate places to have a Church Group Devotion as girls are not allowed in boys' rooms (and *vice versa*), and the rooms are usually too small for the size of your group.

Night One: On your Mark

Starters

- Introduce “church group devotion” (CGD) time to your children by saying something like this: *At the end of each day, our group will have an opportunity to be together as a church group after being scattered throughout the day in Bible study, rotations, and free time. This is a chance for us to share about the day, learn from each other, and hear what God is doing in each of our lives. Starting tomorrow night, I’m going to ask you to share a “highlight” (something that was really great) and a “low light” (something that was not so great or disappointing) from that day. It could be something that happened during morning devotion, Bible study, rotations, free time, worship, or wherever. Listen for something you can share in church group devotion tomorrow night.*
- On a **post-it note**, have campers write their name & one thing they want to accomplish or experience this week at camp (make sure to buy these ahead of time and bring them with you to camp). Collect the Post-it notes and use them as guides to pray for your students during the week. These will also help you see what parts of camp each camper looks forward to most. You might want to divide them among the adult leaders in your church group and challenge them to get to know the students whose cards they have.

Large Group Sharing

1. What is something you are looking forward to this week of camp? (*Hanging out with my Bible Study group, being in the Variety Show, playing games at the Rec Party, going to worship each night*)
2. What scares you the most about this week of camp? (*homesickness; cafeteria food; that I won’t make new friends; won’t be accepted in my Bible study group; that it is too hot*)

Group Leader(s) Share...

Your own expectations for this week. Share openly what you pray this week will be for your group. What will challenge you the most? What have you prayed would be the best part of camp for your group at PASSPORTkids? What fears do you have? (Your children will respond to your passion, even if it’s not visible on their faces.)

Closing

By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. **John 13:35 (CEB)**

Campers have just completed a full day of travel and camp. They have met new people, learned new things about God and themselves, and are contemplating a week ahead filled with opportunities and challenges. Campers are beginning to ask themselves what it means to be On Your Mark and how they can discover their lanes in order to follow Jesus more closely.

Have campers share their Day One Declaration in their passports with the group as a way to hold accountability with one another during the week. Pray together as a group to end CGD.

Housekeeping

Remind the campers that tomorrow night is Night Market and share with them the country [Mexico] they will be learning about and the opportunities they may experience. Talk with campers about the Mission Offering at the end of the week and who the Mission Offering is partnering with. Remind campers that if they are interested in being in the Variety Show on Day 3, screenings will be tomorrow during free time. Go over the following day’s schedule in your passports.

Night 2: Get Set

Starters

- **Ask a few questions** to get campers to review the day. How are your Bible study groups? Who/What did you talk about in Bible study? What did you like about worship? Which rotations did you choose today? Did anyone try out for the Variety show?
- **Pray** that God will guide your group through this devotion time, bringing you all close together in a spirit of openness and sharing so that you will learn from each other and be encouraged.

Large Group Sharing

Ask individuals to share any **highlights** from the day with the group. It could be something that happened in morning devotion, Bible study, during rotations, during free time, or in worship. Let several children have a chance to share. Encourage adults to share as well. Call for individuals to share any **lowlights** from the day. Affirm honesty and openness. Allow children and adults to share encouraging words.

Small Group Sharing/Activity

Divide the group into smaller groups (3-4 persons) with an adult leader in each. Ask them to share answers to a few questions in their small groups. Create your own questions or choose from the following:

1. What is one new thing you learned today?
2. What did Jesus say made someone a wise builder in the text?
3. What makes it hard to put Jesus' words into practice? (**Note: You can prompt responses to this question by suggesting some of Jesus' words.**)
4. What do you need to do in order to prepare for the journey of following Jesus?

Divide campers into four groups: Heart, Ear, Hand, and Mouth. Have each group come up with one way they can use their particular part to prepare for the journey of following Jesus. For example, Heart = Loving others, caring for others, being kind. Ear = Listening to God, reading your Bible, praying. Hand = Serving others. Mouth = Being encouraging, using kind words, telling others about Jesus. Once groups have had the chance to pick theirs, have them share with the larger group.

Closing

Get your outside work done; make preparations in the field; then you can build your house. Proverbs 24:27 (CEB)

SAY: Today we learned that we need to GET SET to follow Jesus. To GET SET means to make sure we are ready for the journey of following Jesus. We GET SET by building strong foundations like the wise builder in Matthew 7. Strong foundations that come from putting into practice what Jesus asks of us, like loving one another, loving God, and treating others the way we want to be treated.

Have campers share their Day Two Declarations in their passports with the group as a way to hold accountability with one another during the week. Pray together as a group to end CGD.

Housekeeping

Make any announcements necessary. Remind children about the Night Market, what they should wear, and what they need to bring. Talk again about the mission offering partnership for this summer, and share with everyone how it will be taken up during worship the following night. Go over the following day's schedule in your passports.

Night Three: GO

Starters

- If your group is a singing group, you may want to start with a favorite song or end with one. Choose one of the songs you have learned in worship this week and sing it together.
- Pray for this time to be meaningful and inspired by the presence of the Holy Spirit among you.

Large Group Sharing

Share **highlights** and **lowlights** from Morning Devotion, Bible study, Rotations, free time, Worship, etc., as you did during night 2.

In Bible Study today, campers learned about Esther and the extraordinary risk she took to help save her people. Esther was responding to the urging of her uncle Mordacai, who told her that God might have placed her in the palace for this very purpose: to help save her people.

Ask campers to share, if they are comfortable, a time when they were willing to do something really good for someone. How did it make them feel? Why did they do it?

Small Group Sharing/Activity

Divide the group into smaller groups (different from yesterday), each with an adult leader. Ask them to share answers to a few questions in their small groups. Create your own questions or choose from the following:

1. What is one new thing you learned today?
2. What is one thing that impressed you about Esther's story from Bible Study today?
3. What is something that your faith in God is leading you to do when you get back home?
4. Can you think of someone back home that you feel called to do something good for?

After they have discussed, have each group share one thing their faith is leading them to do when they return to their neighborhoods, schools, and churches.

Closing

Many people were coming and going, so there was no time to eat. He said to the apostles, "Come by yourselves to a secluded place and rest for a while." **Mark 6:31 (CEB)**

SAY: Today has been the last full day of camp. We have learned that our faith in God calls us to GO out into the world and do good. The world needs us to respond to this call and say, yes, we are willing to GO and do for people in need. Sometimes, we might be the ones in need and wanting someone to respond to their faith and do something good for us.

Have campers share their Day Three Declarations in their passports with the group as a way to hold accountability with one another during the week. Pray together as a group by having the small groups share their small group prayers to end CGD.

Housekeeping

Remind children about check-out procedures and leaving camp tomorrow. Give any packing instructions or any reminders about what the morning will look like tomorrow. Go over tomorrow's schedule in your passports.