



CHURCH GROUP DEVOTION

DAY 1: A PURE HEART

BACKGROUND DETAILS

In Bible Study today, campers were introduced to their Bible Study leaders and team members through a variety of games and activities. Campers studied Matthew 5:8 to see that a pure heart is fully devoted to God. By unpacking the Key Verse from 1 Samuel 16:7b, it was clear that God sees and cares about our hearts!

DIVE IN

Say: **“Have you seen or experienced something today that was not what you first expected?”**

Share a brief example of something you saw or experienced that was different than you first expected. Then, give campers the opportunity to share their experiences.

Say: **“Sometimes we look first at the outside of something and make a choice just based on what we see. For example, what do you see on the outside of this book?”** Hold up your Bible so that the campers can see the cover. Allow the campers to share their observations of the outside of the book. Say, **“Even if I open this book and you see the words on the page, you are still just seeing the surface. However, if you read the words and allow them to affect your heart and change the way you live—it’s much more than a book! Listen to what this says in Hebrews 4:12.”** Open your Bible to Hebrews 4:12 and read it aloud.

“For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Say: **“This is not just a book with words on pages! It’s an opportunity to know God and understand how to live with Him. It can even show us what’s in our own hearts. What’s beyond the surface is more than we first expect!”**

DIG DEEPER

Say: **“I’m so glad you are already looking beyond the surface. We will have lots of opportunities to get to know God better this week. You may have questions about God already. Or maybe you have questions about what is happening this week. If you have a question about God or about camp, wave your hand high in the air!”** If you have a large group, this would be a good time to divide into smaller groups with at least one adult leader in each group. Allow campers to voice their questions and answer the ones you have time to discuss. If there are questions about God that you would like to revisit later, make a note about who asked and what question they have. Make a point to connect with those campers throughout the week about their questions.

ZOOM OUT

Gather the group in a circle for a prayer time. Say: **“Let’s ask God to help us as we go beyond the surface this week.”** Lead the campers to place their hands over their hearts. Remind them that God sees and cares about each heart in this circle. Pray for each camper by name, asking God to guide their hearts to see Him.

DAY 2: A HUMBLE HEART

NOW WHAT? What are some things you need to change in order to stop being “fake” with God?

BACKGROUND DETAILS

In Bible Study today, campers discovered that a humble heart recognizes its need for God by re-enacting Nicodemus’ nighttime visit with Jesus. The message Jesus shared with Nicodemus about eternal life is the same message He has for us. Campers explored several “Gospel Stations” to see how amazing God is and how much we need Him.

DIVE IN

Say: **“A humble heart admits that God is great. What is something great you have learned about God today?”**

Share an example of something you have learned about God today or a way you have seen God work today that was great. Then, give campers an opportunity to share their examples of God’s greatness.

DIG DEEPER

Say, **“Another great thing about God is that He gives grace to the humble. Listen to these verses from James to see what else you can hear about a humble heart.”**

Read or ask a volunteer to read James 4:6-10.

“But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says: God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.”

Say: **“It is great to know that when we humbly come to God, He comes near to us. Let’s come near to God through a special prayer time right now. This passage says to “cleanse your hands” and “purify your hearts.”** Lead the campers to hold their hands out in front of them. Say, **“We have a humble heart when we admit that we do things that are wrong or hurt others, and we need God to forgive us. Think about something you have said or done today that you want to tell God you are sorry about.”** Pause to give campers time to think and pray quietly.

Guide the campers to put their hands over their hearts. Say, **“Another way to be humble is to admit that the thoughts and feelings in our hearts do not always please God and to allow God to make our hearts pure. Think about what thoughts or feelings you are holding onto that God needs to make pure. You can ask Him to help you right now.”** Pause to give campers time to think and pray quietly.

ZOOM OUT

Say: **“Often, people show honor to a King by bowing before them. That’s a way to show you are humble and the King is great. Let’s do that together to share about God’s greatness!”** Guide the campers to kneel. Lead them to take turns naming things that are great about God.

DAY 3: A TRUSTING HEART

NOW WHAT? What step do you need to take tonight to trust God more completely?

BACKGROUND DETAILS

In Bible Study today, campers discovered that a trusting heart believes God will take care of us by playing the part of the Israelites receiving manna to eat in the wilderness. They practiced giving their worries to God through prayer and reminding each other of what God says.

DIVE IN

Say: **“Today we have seen that we can trust God because He will take care of us. When we start to worry or feel anxious, it helps to remember all that God has done for us. Let’s share things we are thankful that God has done today.”** Start by sharing something you are thankful for. Then allow the campers to share their gratitude to God.

DIG DEEPER

Say: **“The people Jesus was teaching were often worried about things too. Listen to what Jesus said to them.”** Read or ask a volunteer to read Matthew 6:25-34.

“Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith? So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Say: **“The key to letting go of our worry is to seek first the kingdom of God. What does that mean? Let’s listen to a real life story of what it means to seek God first.”** Invite your CentriKid church group host or another staffer to share what it looks like in their own life to “seek first the kingdom of God” and how that helps them not worry. If a staffer is not available, ask one of your adult leaders to share a brief testimony. After the testimony, allow the campers to ask the staffer questions if they have any.

Ask: **“What did you hear about the way seeking God helped this person with worry?”** Encourage campers to verbalize what they heard about God in the testimony.

ZOOM OUT

Say: **“God’s Word tells us to come to God in prayer when we are anxious. Did you know that you may be the answer to someone else’s prayer? Someone might be praying right now for food or clothes, and God could use what you have to help them.”** Remind the campers that one way God takes care of us is through other people’s obedience to him. The missions offering is a great way to meet the needs of people around the world. This is a good time to collect the offering since you will be giving the offering the next night in worship. Take time to pray together for the ways God will take care of others through the gifts you give.

DAY 4: A MERCIFUL HEART

NOW WHAT? What has God taught you this week about your heart “beyond the surface?” What steps will you take when you go home to continue growing in faith?

BACKGROUND DETAILS

In Bible Study today, campers journeyed through the life of Joseph by creating scenes from his life with surprise props. Identifying with Joseph’s experience, campers examined how a merciful heart wants God’s best for others. Through games and present day scenarios, campers could see that mercy goes deep and reaches in to heal, love and forgive in surprising ways.

DIVE IN

Guide the campers to look at their daily schedule on their nametags. Say: **“Take a minute to mentally walk through each part of your day and think about where you saw people who needed mercy. Maybe they needed help with something or maybe they needed healing or maybe they needed forgiveness. Now try to remember if anyone showed mercy to those people.”** Share an example you saw today of someone showing mercy to someone else. Call on a few volunteers to share their examples.

DIG DEEPER

Say: **“I’m so glad that God shows us His mercy every day. Listen to this Psalm that tells us about His mercy.”** Read or ask a volunteer to read Psalm 103:8-11.

“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love. He will not always accuse us or be angry forever. He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his faithful love toward those who fear him.” Encourage campers to stand and follow you through this guided prayer for mercy.

Say: **“Let’s take some steps of mercy. First, think of a reason you need God’s mercy and take a step backwards.”** Allow campers a moment to step back and consider. Then say, **“I am going to pray the first part of the prayer and when I pause, you all say “mercy.” Ready? God, we need your...”** Campers finish with **“mercy.”**

Continue: **“Next, think of a time God showed you mercy and take a step to the side.”** Allow campers a moment to step sideways and consider. Then say, **“I am going to pray the first part of the prayer and when I pause, you all say “mercy.” Ready? God, thank you for your...”** Campers finish with **“mercy.”**

Finish: **“Lastly, think of someone who you could show mercy to and step forward.”** Allow campers a moment to step forward and consider. Then say, **“I am going to pray the first part of the prayer and when I pause, you all say “mercy.” Ready? God, help us show...”** Campers finish with **“mercy.”**

ZOOM OUT

Say, **“Our hearts matter to God. He loves each one of us and has mercy on us! That is worth celebrating!”** Take some time as a group to celebrate and affirm the good things that have happened in your lives at CentriKid. If any of your campers have made significant decisions, allow them to share with the group. If you have 6th graders who are ending their final year of CentriKid, you could recognize them and their growth. Consider other ways to encourage and cheer on each camper in your group.

Say, **“You have started a discipline, a practice, a habit of having Time Alone with God each day of camp. Tonight, we want to give you a challenge to continue your practice of having Time Alone with God when you get home from camp.”** (Hand out *Camping in God’s Truth: 4 Weeks of Time Alone with God*). As leaders, come up with a fun way to celebrate campers if they complete their devotion.