



CHURCH GROUP TIME

CHURCH GROUP TIME PREPARATION

This church group devotion guide is intended to provide a resource for the Church Group Times following evening services. Read through the materials before camp to make necessary adaptations to benefit your group. You can use as much or as little of this guide as you like to provide an evening devotion for your group.

For most churches there are three goals for church group time:

- Allow students to process with an adult and other students what the Holy Spirit has been teaching them all day.
- Discuss the practical application of those truths when you return home.
- Allow students to make decisions about their life.

Here is a suggested agenda for the Church Group Time.

- Start with a late night snack
- Recognize students (and adults) who have made decisions for Christ, served all day, or have done something worthy of recognition
- Announcements for the next day
- Interactive opening
- Devotional Teaching
- Group Questions (If your group is large enough divide into small groups, each with an adult or older youth leader to go through questions)
- Quick closing announcements

MONDAY

INTRO:

LEARNING READINESS ACTIVITY: Tell your students you've prepared for them a slideshow of your favorite posts from the internet this year. Then make a slideshow that fits that description or show them the slide show provided in your Digital Camp Kit for this activity. The pics and videos should elicit very different strong responses from your students. Foster and encourage those. Respond right along with them.

If you choose not to show the provided slide show, you could also make and read off a list of items and/or events that elicit strong responses, but visuals usually elicit stronger responses.

APPLICATION: When human beings take in stimuli, we respond. We might laugh, cry, or wince. We might be confused, get angry, or grow uncomfortable. We might even choose to turn away. Lack of response is, in itself, a response.

This week, we're going to take a good, long look at something unlike anything you have ever encountered before or will ever encounter again, and your response will be everything.

LESSON:

READ EXODUS 33:18-23; 34:1-9, 28-29.

This week, we're going to focus on God's glory, something so awesome and overwhelming people can't even look directly at it without dying, not even the most impressive leaders among us, leaders like Moses.

As you learn more about God's glory this week, you will have an opportunity to respond. If you respond appropriately, you will be affected. You will be changed. It's important to note, however, that until you do respond appropriately, you are responding inappropriately, a choice in itself that carries its own consequences and works its own effect, whether you realize it or not (John 3:18).

- If you are new to all this and/or have not yet put your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from the consequences of your sin by surrendering control of your life to Him, our prayer is that you would do so this week and find present purpose and eternal peace with God.
- If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from the consequences of sin by surrendering control of your life to Him, but have lost your resolve to follow Him in obedience and find yourself miserable in your sin— God's children can't be happy in sin (Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 3:6)—our prayer is that you would stand confident in your identity as a child of God, repent of your sin, accept God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9), and move forward in the new life you've been given so you can experience the closeness with God you once felt.
- If you have put your faith in Jesus for salvation from the consequences of your sin by surrendering control of your life to Him and are making a consistent, if imperfect, effort to grow spiritually, our prayer is that you would ask God what He wants for and from you now, in the weeks and months ahead, and in the more distant future and then take whatever steps are necessary to follow Him in obedience.

As you process the information you receive this week, we want you to know we are here to help you take whatever next steps you feel God leading you to take. (Have adult and student leadership stand where they are.)

Take a good look around you. These people are available to help you take those next steps or to answer any questions you may have. If they don't know the answers, they can take you to people who do. Don't hesitate to approach them. They are looking forward to helping you, even if you've never talked to them before. Actually, helping you would make their entire week.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Go around your group and give everyone a chance to share their name, where they are from, what school they go to, and, if they are a guest, whom they came with.
2. What brings you to Purpose Week Youth Camp this week? What are you hoping to get out of camp?
3. Do you have any special prayer requests that you'd like to share?
4. Do you have any questions about camp or what we just talked about in large group?
5. How can we pray for you? [Spend some time praying for the members of your group in whatever way works best for your group.](#)



TUESDAY

INTRO:

LEARNING READINESS ACTIVITY: Select two volunteers to perform a task neither of them have performed before, but one or more people in your group know how to do really well. Tell the audience to offer advice all at once whether or not they know what they are talking about.

Give your volunteers a short amount of time to perform the task. As they perform the task, they will most likely zero in on voices of experience. If they are able to discern those voices, they should do better. If they can't, they should do worse.

APPLICATION: God is all-knowing and wise. He alone is the source of truth. If His voice were the only voice we ever heard, life would be easier, but it's not. The world is full of voices clamoring for our attention. Many claim to be experts. Our job is to single out God's voice and respond appropriately. When we do, God-sized things begin to happen in our lives.

LESSON:

Next to Jesus, Moses is one of the best-known Bible characters. His story spans four books of the Old Testament, he is referenced throughout the Bible, and he is the prophet cited most often in the New Testament. Even so, not everyone knows his story. Here it is in a nutshell:

- Moses was a Hebrew born during the bondage of his people in Egypt. When Moses was a baby, Pharaoh, the Egyptian leader, ordered that all Hebrew baby boys be put to death. Moses' mother put Moses in a basket and floated him in the river to protect him. Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in the palace as her son; his biological mother served as his nurse.
- Moses discovered he was Hebrew. When he was older, he witnessed an Egyptian man beating a fellow Hebrew, lost it, killed the man, and fled into the wilderness in fear.
- While in the wilderness, Moses met and married his wife, Zipporah, and tended sheep. He may have hidden effectively from the Egyptians, but he could not hide from God.
- God called Moses out of the wilderness and charged him with the monumental task of leading the Hebrews out of slavery, giving him his biological brother and sister as helpers. Moses did what God asked of him, but he did not work the miracle of deliverance for the Hebrews. God did, and He did it in a way that left no room for doubt He was both the brains and the brawn behind the operation.
- Moses continued to lead the Hebrews even after they were delivered from slavery. God chose Moses to deliver the Ten Commandments, the law, to His people while they were in the wilderness.
- Although Moses made mistakes and didn't get to lead the Hebrews into the Promised Land, he was a good and godly leader. Because Moses responded correctly to God's glory, he was blessed and continues to experience God's glory for all eternity.

Today, let's take a look at an important scene from Moses' story.

READ EXODUS 3:1-14.

As far as we know, this was Moses' first personal encounter with God. His biological mother was a woman of faith and his father-in-law was the priest of Midian, but we don't know much about Moses' own spiritual life up to this point beyond the fact that he strongly identified with God's people and felt compelled to protect them.

Even in this, his first recorded encounter with God, Moses displays a healthy respect for God's glory and commendable willingness to go deep.

- **MOSES WAS CURIOUS.** Moses could have glanced at the burning bush and walked on past—there's nothing unusual about a burning bush, after all—but he looked long enough to notice the fire wasn't like any other and went in for a closer look.
- **MOSES WAS BRAVE.** When Moses thought he heard God's voice—notice he didn't ask the voice who it was—he didn't wait for someone else to come along and interact with God first. He spoke up and answered God, and the conversation progressed.
- **MOSES DEMONSTRATED HUMILITY.** God told Moses to take off his sandals. We don't read that he didn't, so we can assume he did. If he hadn't, God would have addressed it. In Moses' day, slaves went barefoot. The removal of his sandals was Moses' admission he was less than God.
- **MOSES DISPLAYED HEALTHY FEAR.** When God confirmed His identity, Moses hung his head, not because he thought God cruel, but because He knew God was good—by reputation if not by personal experience—and he knew he was not. In hanging his head, Moses demonstrated awareness of his own sin and God's right and ability to punish him for it.
- **MOSES LISTENED CAREFULLY.** Moses let God talk until He'd said all He had to say. The only objection he had was to God's selection of him as spokesperson, not because he doubted God, but because he doubted himself.
- **MOSES DEMONSTRATED FAITH.** Once God explained that He would be doing all the heavy lifting, so to speak, Moses believed Him.
- **MOSES ASKED GOOD QUESTIONS AND ACCEPTED GOD'S ANSWERS.** Moses didn't waste time wrestling the how's and what if's of God's plan in his own mind where he might never find the right answers. He went to the source of truth and asked. When God answered, he accepted those answers as true and right and moved forward.
- **MOSES ASKED FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTION.** Eager to do the job he'd been assigned and do it well, Moses prepared for the task ahead by asking God for further instruction. Once he'd gathered as much information as God was willing to give him, Moses went into action.

Throughout his life, Moses continued to display these behaviors—even when he would probably have done things differently, even when he couldn't see that anything was being accomplished, and even when he was concerned God's plan might be dangerous—and God came through every time, proving the depth of His knowledge and wisdom as well as His power.

Because Moses responded appropriately to God's glory, God had a chance to show the world Who He was and what He could do and received the praise and recognition He deserves for being holy God. Now it's your turn.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Are you as curious as you should be about God? Are you brave enough to respond when you think He is talking to you? Give examples.
2. Does your response to God demonstrate appropriate humility and a healthy fear? Explain and/or give examples.
3. Do you ask God good questions and listen patiently for His answers? Give examples.
4. Do you believe God when He speaks and trust Him to guide and instruct you?
5. Does your response to God demonstrate faith in His knowledge and wisdom? Does it give Him a chance to prove Himself to the world? Explain.
6. How can we pray for you? **Spend time praying for the members of your group in whatever way works best for your group.**

WEDNESDAY

INTRO:

LEARNING READINESS ACTIVITY: Select two volunteers to complete a task they and the other students likely perform every day or often, one that requires supplies they won't have with them during large group time, but may have in the dorm or may be located in the cabin. Do not provide the supplies.

Have volunteers race to complete the task. Tell them they may not leave the place where they stand, but can call for help and/or supplies from members of the audience. Allow those who are asked for supplies to retrieve and deliver them, even if they are in the dorms.

APPLICATION: When we have a need, we get help from those we believe have the ability to meet our needs. Whether or not you go to God for help on a daily basis says much about what you believe He can and can't do.

LESSON:

Moses wasn't perfect by any stretch of the imagination. Before he surrendered His life to God, he was a murderer and a coward, for goodness' sake. Even so, God was able to use Moses to accomplish great things for His glory, partially because Moses trusted God's knowledge and wisdom to be deeper than his own and partially because Moses relied on God's power and provision to be sufficient even when he had his doubts.

READ EXODUS 3:15-4:17.

Today's passage is a continuation of yesterday's. Moses is still by the burning bush having a conversation with God.

A little overwhelmed by the assignment he's been given in light of his own humanity, Moses continues to ask questions. Because his questions don't reflect a lack of faith in God, but in himself, God is patient until Moses displays reluctance to obey. Then God gets angry. Even so, God goes ahead and provides what Moses needs to get the job done.

Here are just a few things God gave Moses:

- **GOD GAVE MOSES A PURPOSE.** Until God called him, Moses was drifting, doing worthwhile things, yes, but not investing in anything larger than himself. God gave Moses the chance to serve His glory and so invest in perfection unlike anything he could attain on his own. He has given you the same opportunity.
- **GOD GAVE MOSES A PLAN.** God didn't just say, "Go get my people" and leave Moses to figure out how, but told him exactly how to do it. God has done the same for you. He doesn't just say, "Go make a difference somehow," but "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19).
- **GOD GAVE MOSES A MESSAGE.** God didn't just say, "convince the Egyptians to let my people go" and leave the wording up to Moses, but told him exactly what to say. God does the same for you. The Gospel message we've been given to share is very specific, including God's perfection, man's sin, Jesus' sacrifice, and salvation through surrender. All we have to do is share the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, and we've done our job.
- **GOD GAVE MOSES A VOICE.** Moses wasn't much of an orator. He had a stutter, but God provided Aaron to speak for him. Fortunately, we don't have to be great with words either. God has provided His Word, the Bible, for us to quote.

- **GOD GAVE MOSES A TEAM.** The Hebrews didn't have any reason to trust Moses on his own. They might have heard about his killing the Egyptian, but then he'd disappeared. So much for heroics. God gave Moses permission to use His name to make connections and gave Moses a community to belong to made up of people working toward the same God-given purpose. He does the same for you. If you have put your faith in Jesus for salvation, you are a child of God and you have a family made up of everyone else who has done the same. Together, you share a purpose, the advancement of God's Kingdom for His glory. Your shared identity and purpose make you a team.
- **GOD GAVE MOSES AN AUDIENCE.** Moses didn't have to decide whom to approach with what message. Neither do you. As God's children, our audience is "all nations" (Matthew 28:19) to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It's basically everyone.
- **GOD GAVE MOSES POWER AND CREDIBILITY.** Moses didn't need a resume'. God worked miracles through his obedience, proving his credentials as God's messenger. Likewise, if you are a child of God, you don't need to work to prove yourself. All you have to do is cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and He will work powerfully through you, proving your identity as a child of God, God's messenger called to serve His glory.

In the end, Moses put one foot in front of the other and did what God told him to do, relying on nothing but God to accomplish the monumental task he'd been assigned, and God came through every time, proving His power and provision sufficient.

Because Moses responded appropriately to God's glory, God had a chance to show the world Who He was and what He could do and received the praise and recognition He deserves for being holy God. Now it's your turn.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. In what way(s) do you relate to Moses in today's passage? Explain.
2. Have you accepted the purpose, plan, message, voice, team, audience, power, and credibility God provides? Which is the most difficult for you to own? Explain.
3. Share one significant way God has provided for you recently.
4. What do you need most from God today?
5. Does your willingness to ask God for what you need and/or your response to God's provision tell the world His glory is sufficient? Explain. What, if anything, needs to change?
6. How can we pray for you? Spend time praying for the members of your group in whatever way works best for your group.

THURSDAY

INTRO:

LEARNING READINESS ACTIVITY: Preselect a couple or handful of volunteers who are conscientious, kind, and inclusive. Give them a stack of blank awards (certificates, ribbons, trophies, etc.) and tell them to create uplifting awards (example: “happy camper” or “generous joe” or “neat nick”), pass them out to worthy recipients, and lead the whole group to celebrate each award.

APPLICATION: The characteristics we recognize and reward in others says much about what we ourselves value. What/how we recognize and reward those who display those characteristics says much about how deserving we believe them to be.

LESSON:

Like we keep mentioning, Moses wasn't perfect. He was just like the rest of us, flawed and limited and a little wishy-washy in his commitment from time to time, but God still used him to accomplish great things and grew him up in the process.

Moses understood that God's glory was deserving of his obedience and kept moving forward as God led, but he didn't approach every obstacle like a superhero in a movie, all bravery, no wavering. Nope, he felt every bump in the road, hesitated, doubted, complained, and even disobeyed when he let himself get distracted or let circumstances get to him, but he did mature, even if it was a two-steps-forward, one-step-back process.

Here are just a few of the obstacles Moses faced, his reaction to those obstacles, and God's response:

- Moses traveled to Pharaoh as Israel's representative, but his son was not circumcised as Hebrew law required. Moses was either too lazy to get it done or just refused. Either way, he set out to serve God in a willful state of disobedience. God was so angry that he almost killed Moses for his disobedience. **AFTER ALL , YOU CAN'T TELL OTHERS GOD'S GLORY DESERVES OBEDIENCE WHEN YOU REMAIN DISOBEDIENT YOURSELF.** Moses' wife repented and circumcised their son, and God was satisfied that His glory had received the obedience it deserved ([Exodus 4:24-26](#)).
- When Moses first approached Pharaoh, he asked Pharaoh to let the Hebrews leave to hold a festival in the desert in God's honor, just as God had told him to. Pharaoh didn't comply, which was no surprise, as God had told Moses that would happen, but he also made work conditions impossible for the Hebrews. The very people Moses had been sent to rescue resented him. Moses complained and expressed confusion to God. God responded by reminding Moses of Who He was and what He planned to do, changing nothing about Moses' individual assignment. **AFTER ALL , GOD DESERVES TO BE OBEYED, NO MATTER THE CONSEQUENCES (EXODUS 5:1-6:11).**
- Moses returned to Pharaoh with Aaron and told Pharaoh, on God's authority, to release the Hebrews. Pharaoh demanded a miracle to prove Moses and Aaron were from God and that their God was more powerful than the made-up Egyptians gods. God had prepared Moses and Aaron for this, so they performed miracles. Pharaoh's magicians performed similar tricks, and even though the miracles Moses and Aaron performed proved God more powerful, Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go. This time, having experienced God's power firsthand, Moses was content to wait and watch until it was time for the next step of God's plan. God responded by revealing it ([Exodus 7:1-8:2](#)). **AFTER ALL , GOD TRUSTS THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL WITH LITTLE WITH MUCH (LUKE 16:10).**
- Moses continued to obey God until all that God had promised came to pass. After much suffering, Pharaoh finally let the Hebrews go, but he soon changed his mind and gave chase to get them back. Moses and the

Hebrews found themselves trapped between the Red Sea and the Egyptian army. The Hebrews, terrified, accused Moses of taking them into the wilderness to let them die. This time, Moses didn't hesitate, waver, take their complaints to God, or question God; instead, he stood confident and expressed faith in God's power, wisdom, and faithfulness. God told Moses to raise his staff and stretch out his hand over the Red Sea to part it. The Hebrews walked between walls of water to safety, but the Egyptians were drowned in full view of all God's chosen people ([Exodus 14](#)). **YOU CAN ALWAYS TRUST GOD TO WORK EVENTS TOGETHER IN A WAY THAT BRINGS HIM THE MOST GLORY.**

Moses led the Hebrews even after their deliverance from Egypt. Camped in the desert, the Hebrews found themselves without water and complained again to Moses. Moses and Aaron went to the Tent of Meeting and fell face down before God. God's glory appeared to them, and God told them to gather all the Hebrews and speak to a rock. He promised to make enough water flow from the rock for the Hebrews and their livestock to drink. Even though Moses had just experienced God's glory, he disobeyed God. Instead of doing things God's way and giving God credit, he struck the rock with his staff and took credit for the water that flowed. God responded by going ahead and sending water so the Hebrews wouldn't suffer because of Moses' disobedience, but He punished Moses by denying him the opportunity to see the Promised Land ([Numbers 20:1-13](#)). **IF YOU FAIL TO TELL THE WORLD THROUGH YOUR ACTIONS GOD'S GLORY DESERVES OBEDIENCE, GOD WILL TELL THE WORLD HIMSELF THROUGH HIS.**

2 Corinthians 4:7 tells us we have this treasure (God) in jars of clay so the world will know the power working through us is from God, not of ourselves. If this was ever true of anyone, it was true of Moses, and if God can use a cracked pot like Moses to accomplish His will and glorify Himself, He can and will use you if you let Him. Don't be discouraged by past mistakes, but look forward. Today is a new day, and a clean slate is never more than a prayer away (1 John 1:9). The more you cooperate by obeying God as He deserves, the more complete your transformation into the image of Jesus will be. The quicker you learn to cooperate by obeying God as He deserves, the quicker the process will be.

When all was said and done, Moses stayed the course and obeyed even when things weren't going the way he thought they ought to as a result of his obedience, and God came through, proving His perfection deserving of praise, worship, and obedience.

Because Moses responded appropriately to God's glory, God had a chance to show the world Who He was and what He could do and received the praise and recognition He deserves for being holy God. Now it's your turn.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Can you relate to Moses? If so, how? Give examples.
2. Which of Moses' behaviors given above sounds like you most often: trying to lead others from a state of disobedience, doubt when the results of your obedience aren't what you thought they should be, willingness to wait for God's plan to be revealed, confident faith in God's ability to work things together for His glory, or letting emotion interfere with your obedience? Explain.
3. Which of the behaviors do you wish you exhibited more often?
4. What encouragement did you draw from tonight's devotional? What challenge?
5. How can we pray for you? **Spend time praying for the members of your group in whatever way works best for your group.**

FRIDAY

*Can be used as a close out before dismissing for home on Friday morning or the following time your group meets with a recap.

INTRO:

LEARNING READINESS ACTIVITY: Give your students paper and writing utensils. Ask them to write letters of encouragement to the next group who will be staying in your cabin (other groups do attend camp after week 8), including positive aspects of their own camp experience, advice, and what they hope and pray for the reader. Collect them and leave them in the kitchen clearly marked for the next group to find. If the group before you participated in this exercise, pass out their letters or read a few out loud and make the rest available. If they did not, say so to your group.

APPLICATION: Like it or not, those who come behind us will read the stories of our lives, if only from the lips of others. If we spend our lives participating in God's plan by responding properly to His glory, those who come behind will be encouraged and inspired. If we don't, those who come behind will feel alone and discouraged. We aren't big enough to stop the advance of God's Kingdom, of course, but our refusal to participate in its advancement robs God of the glory He deserves from us and could rob those who come behind of the joy we have the power to share.

LESSON:

READ DEUTERONOMY 34:1-8.

Moses' life was God's. Once he surrendered to God, he never looked back. He may not have done everything he was supposed to do when he was supposed to do it or how he was supposed to do it, but he kept moving forward in service to God's glory as a committed citizen of God's Kingdom, repenting, learning, growing, and serving on loop.

In return, God honored Moses by giving him a glimpse of what he would never experience personally here on earth—which seems a little sad until you consider the eternity that awaited him in Heaven—then called him home to his eternal reward.

God does the same for those of us who have put our faith in Jesus for salvation. We know from Jesus' last words to the disciples before His ascension that the Gospel will reach the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), and we know something about what those who come after us will experience as citizens of God's Kingdom because we've experienced it ourselves—we've been given a glimpse—but it's likely many of us won't live long enough to see the ends of the earth reached.

When we pass from this life to the next, God will usher us into our inheritance, our eternal reward in Heaven, where we will not only experience God's glory, but share in it for all eternity.

READ MATTHEW 17:1-3.

Moses' life didn't end when he took his last breath. As a matter of fact, he's been hanging out with all the other citizens of God's Kingdom and God Himself ever since, participating fully in the glory he'd only viewed from a distance before. No doubt he now considers the time and effort he spent serving God during his relatively brief time on earth and all the struggle and hardship he experienced as a result well worth it, even if he had his doubts at the time!

READ DEUTERONOMY 34:9-12; JOSHUA 1:1-3.

The story of Moses wasn't Moses' story at all. It was God's story, and it continued after Moses stepped into eternity. God raised up a new leader for Himself in Joshua and delivered His people to the Promised Land. Even though Moses was gone, he remained a big part of what those who came behind him were able to accomplish. He was never forgotten.

A single scene in an eternal epic tale, Moses' life gave God an opportunity to show the world what He could do through an ordinary human being and to paint the world a picture of the ultimate deliverance He would someday provide through Jesus Christ. Moses' dogged commitment to keep on keeping on even after he failed allowed him to leave a legacy that would inspire generations of his own people and others (us) to respond properly to God's glory and become committed citizens of God's eternal Kingdom.

What will your scene accomplish? What will your legacy be?

OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE COMMITMENTS MADE THIS WEEK FOLLOWED BY GROUP PRAYER OVER THOSE COMMITMENTS

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

1. Reread Deuteronomy 34:1-8 as a group. What details stand out to you in this passage? What do they tell you about God? What do they tell you about God's relationship with Moses?
2. How does your relationship with God resemble Moses'?
3. What does the story of Jesus' transfiguration and Moses' presence there tell you about the reality of life after death? What encouragement did you draw from this passage?
4. Does the way you invest in God's Kingdom display faith in its eternal existence and importance? Explain.
5. What did God teach you this week? How did you respond?
6. How can we pray for you? Spend time praying for the members of your group in whatever way works best for your group.