

# Class devotions

Make a time to meet with your Christian Studies leader and school pastor or chaplain to discuss school expectations in relation to class or pastoral care devotions.

Devotions can have the following elements

- Invocation: A brief welcome or opening prayer
- Bible reading
- Bible reading reflections
- Prayer
- Song
- Blessing to close the devotion

## Planning a devotion

1. Choose a theme for class or pastoral care devotions. The theme can complement the current Christian Studies unit.
2. Choose a Bible stories or verses that develops your theme as the focus of the devotion. Bible gateway provides a search for Bible verses related to a theme.  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/>  
The LIFE curriculum menus list Bible stories for concepts of the CSCF.  
<http://www.lutheran.edu.au/elibrary/life/>  
To share the story consider:
  - reading different versions or translations of the same story over a week to compare what can be learnt from the different ways the story is told, compare the illustrations, insights
  - retelling the story using figures or pictures
  - dramatising the story with children or students or use reader's theatre
  - viewing the story through the Visual Bible, You tube clips, DVDs
3. Plan your reflection or wondering questions for the Bible story or verses. Let the Bible story or verse speak for itself and do not turn it into a moralistic lesson. It may be appropriate to provide some reflections on the Bible story that have been written by you, the students or provided by a devotion resource.
4. Choose an invocation for your theme: eg <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/search?q=+invocation>
5. Choose or write a prayer for the theme
6. Choose songs
7. Choose a blessing to close the devotion eg, [http://www.faithandworship.com/blessings\\_and\\_benedictions.html](http://www.faithandworship.com/blessings_and_benedictions.html)

## Creating a sacred space

Consider how you can create a special space and time for the class or pastoral care group devotions. Some ECSs and primary schools provide class altars that become the focus for devotions. Some teachers begin each day with class devotions. Sacred space and time can also be created through ritual such as draping a class table with fabric and placing an open Bible on the fabric, the use of candles, sitting together in a circle or special place or using music to create a worshipful atmosphere.

## Student involvement in class devotions

It is important to model for students what is important in class devotions. It is helpful to provide some structure and access to appropriate resources for students to develop meaningful and stimulating worship for each other. You may consider:

- Develop worship orders appropriate for the year level which may be as simple as a song, Bible story and prayer in the early years to a devotion proforma with different parts and elements in the older years. (example attached)

- Make available a range of Bibles, prayer books, song books, devotion books, websites
- Develop a worship box with a range of resources on different themes, pictures, artwork, stories, prayer forms (such as meditative prayer reflection to responsive prayers), different signs and symbols

## Art

Google images, <http://www.artcyclopedia.com/> This site allows you to search by entering a name or key word from a Bible story. Google images also has a wealth of religious or secular artwork or images.)

Conduct an 'I see, I think, I wonder...' Explore the artist's description of the artwork. Students develop movies or slideshows for meditation, deep thinking or wondering about the mystery of God and our relationship with him.

**Picture books** (secular and Christian) to further develop Biblical and Christian concepts such as Old Turtle, Love you forever or to assist students to wonder about God, such as God's names, God in the quiet things.

**Devotion books** Please choose carefully so that the devotions help students to connect Christianity to their lives without reducing it to moralising, eg Christians don't....

**You tube or God tube** clips of songs, stories, church year celebrations

## Multisensory experiences

### Stillness and silence

All students will benefit from the opportunity to be still and silent. Sitting still and being silent are skills that will need to be taught. You will need to establish class guidelines for these times and start with small amounts of time, eg 2 mins and gradually build up the time. In these times you can conduct guided meditations or personal reflection and prayer time. You will need to suggest words or prayers that can be used in these times.

<http://www.cominghome.org.au/> This website provides a range of ideas and resources for teaching children Christian meditation.

<http://www.meditationwithchildren.com/> Another excellent website to teach children Christian meditation.

### Labyrinths

Some schools have prayer labyrinths in the school ground.

<http://www.rejesus.co.uk/site/module/labyrinth/> An online Labyrinth experience for teachers or students

<http://www.labyrinth.org.uk/index.html> Information about Labyrinths and how they have been used.

<http://labyrinthsociety.org/labyrinths-in-places/3257-taking-the-labyrinth-experience-to-school-children> Experiences of ways schools have used Labyrinths.