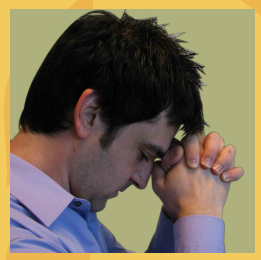
Personal Devotions and Journaling

devotions



prayer

journal

Ablaze! CONNECTION
linking Jesus to life

LCMS WORLD MISSION
The Global Gospel Outreach of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
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Bruce Wall, Project Manager

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Ann Becker, Instructional Designer

Troy Teuscher, LHM, Video Editor and Camera operator

Andrew Fitzgerald, LHM, Content expert, Editor and Co-creator

Subject Matter Experts

Jim Found, Former Missionary to Taiwan and Retired Professor, Concordia, St. Paul

Professor John Pless, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

Professor Henry Rowold, Concordia Seminary St. Louis

Ron Scherch, LCMS World Mission Director, Recruitment services (former Director, CanDo)

Presenters

Sandy Miller, Fox News Anchor, member of Immanuel Lutheran Church Wentzville, MO

Pastor Ron Rall, Senior Pastor, Timothy Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO

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Personal Devotions and Journaling

Each day you'll want to take time for personal reflection, prayer, and journaling. Do this in your own way and at the best time of day for you.

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:6 (NIV)

Why Journal?

The experiences you'll have on your trip are life changing!

Journaling can help you fully understand the transformations you'll feel in your life from this trip. You'll want to process these changes spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Journaling and personal prayer help you take an active role in the changes you are sure to undergo.

When you write down your feelings and thoughts, it provides an opportunity to process your individual experiences and those you had with the team. Journaling helps you understand what these experiences and emotions mean for you today and in the future. You'll see how God will use the new you to His Glory.

Be open to hearing God's call for you!

Journal Format

This journal is set up to guide your daily devotion and journaling.

- Read the Bible study passages.
- Respond to the journal questions. (In the training section, it's not necessary to answer each question.)
- Write about any other thoughts, issues, or reflections you may have.

  As you write, remember that journaling is a way for <u>you</u> to process <u>your</u> feelings. It's your personal diary; it's not meant for anyone else to read. Don't worry about handwriting, spelling, grammar, or punctuation. Record your thoughts in your own way.

TRAINING

Session 1: Role and Identity

Bible Study	Romans 12:3-8, Romans 8:31-39, Colossians 3:23-24 Write what you learned from one or more of these passages.
Journaling Questions	How can I fulfill my role as a servant? Learner? Guest? How did God call me for this mission trip? What has He called me to do? How can I anticipate God using this experience to help me be a missionary when I get home?

Session 2: Safe Travel and Living Abroad

Bible Study	Psalm 34, Proverbs 3:5-8, Matthew 28:19-20 Write what you learned from one or more of these passages.
Journaling Questions	What are my biggest physical concerns about the trip? What concerns me about what might take place at home while I'm gone? What concerns me about the situations or people I may encounter? What promises does God give me as I work in this new setting?

Session 3: Team Roles and Responsibilities

Bible Study	Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Ecclesiastes 4:9-13, Ephesians 4:15 Write what you learned from one or more of these passages.
Journaling Questions	What can I do to become a good team member and servant to those on my team? What is a Godly way I can deal with conflict? How can I think of the forgiveness of others in light of Christ's forgiveness of my sins? How will our life as a team strengthen our Christian witness?

Session 4: Effective Mission Communication

Bible Study	Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 1:4-7, Psalm 25:4, Psalm 143:8-10 Write what you learned from one or more of these passages. How can Ephesians 5 help guide me in terms of mission communication?
Journaling Questions	What pictures or images do I want to capture to share? How do I imagine God will direct my learning and interests while I'm serving? What can I anticipate God teaching me about people while on this trip? (Think of personalities and life stories, not just surface information.)

Session 5: A Multicultural Christian Perspective

Bible Study	Philippians 4:4-7, 1 Corinthians 8:9-13, Romans 14:1-13, Romans 12:9-18 Write what you learned from one or more of these passages. Romans 12 describes Christian behavior. What does this mean in a cross-cultural setting?
Journaling Questions	In what ways do I feel overwhelmed? What has God been showing me and how has He been working in me so far in my preparations? What are some things about me that could cause miscommunication? What weaknesses do I expect to encounter in other Christians? Myself? How will I handle this?

Session 6: Sharing Your Faith and Returning Home

Bible Study	Matthew 6:31-34, Luke 21:14-15, Romans 1:16-17, Isaiah 55:10-11, Luke 12:12 Write what you learned from one or more of these passages. How do these Bible verses encourage me when I have an opportunity to share my faith?
Journaling Questions	What frightens me most about sharing my faith? How has God already helped me share my faith? How am I feeling as the trip nears? How is my family feeling? What can I do <u>now</u> to prepare myself and my family and friends for my return?

Session 7: Welcome Home!

Bible Study	Luke 10:17-20, Luke 11:33-36, Luke 12:22-34, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Galatians 6:6-10, Romans 15:1-13 Write what you learned from one or more of these passages. In Luke 10:17-20 Jesus talks to His disciples on their return from "short-term mission trips." What's His reminder in verse 20?
Journaling Questions	What's the main thing to remember on your return? How was Christian faith expressed in the lives of the people? How is my team going to use our experience to be missionaries in our church and community? How am I going to use what I experienced to enhance my personal Christian witness?

IN THE FIELD

Your First Night

Bible Study	Isaiah 49:1-6 What comfort and strength can you draw from these verses as you begin your journey? What challenge?
Journaling Questions	What is your first impression of this new environment? How do you feel physically and emotionally on this first day?

Another Step on Your Journey

Bible Study	Proverbs 10:19-21, Proverbs 16:19-24, Psalm 139 What teaching do you want to focus on during this trip? In Psalm 139, we learn that God knows our every thought and need and is always with us. How are you feeling in this new place? What has God done to show you He is here with you?
Journaling Questions	What were the day's highs? What were the lows? How are you accommodating after the first day?

Gaining Momentum

Bible Study	Romans 15:5-9 What can you do to help create unity with your team and others to reveal Christ in a more meaningful way? What do you need endurance for and encouragement with today?
Journaling Questions	What new things did you do and learn? Whom did you meet that you would like to know better?

Strength for Witnessing

Bible Study	Ephesians 6:19-20 How can you draw strength from these verses as you look for ways to proclaim the Gospel on this trip?
Journaling Questions	What was a high today? A low? What do you want to thank God for?

Universal Praise

Bible Study	1 Chronicles 16:23-33 What is something you have noticed on this trip for which all nations can praise God?
Journaling Questions	What was your favorite activity of the day? What activity challenged you the most?

Hope Through Trials

Bible Study	Romans 5:3-5 How do these verses speak to your current feelings? How have you seen God build perseverance in you or people you've met during this experience?
Journaling Questions	What's an interesting story from the life of someone you met at the church or a team member? What activities made the day fulfilling?

Jesus on Witnessing Cross-Culturally

Bible Study	John 4:4-10, 34-38 What social and cultural lines is Jesus crossing in this story? What do the last verses tell us about God's desires?
Journaling Questions	What was your biggest cross-cultural challenge? What cross-cultural experience brought you joy?

Serving

Bible Study	Mark 10:43-45 In what ways have you been a servant on this trip? In what ways have you been served?
Journaling Questions	What did you do today that you've never done before? What lifted you up? What was a struggle? How did you serve others today?

Strength in Suffering

Bible Study	1 Peter 5:8-11 What suffering have you witnessed while on this trip that is similar in the life of all Christians?
Journaling Questions	What was a high today? A low? What was the most adventurous thing you did today or on this journey?

Praise and Wonder

Bible Study	Psalm 95:1-7 What amazed you about God's creation today?
Journaling Questions	What's something you learned about someone this week that you wouldn't have known without asking? What are you praising God for today? What strengths do you need?

A Cross-Cultural Picture of Heaven

Bible Study	Revelation 7:9 How is your vision of heaven more complete because of this experience?
Journaling Questions	What is the day's most vivid memory? What situations have you encountered that have had the most significant impact on you so far? How do you feel physically and emotionally at this point of the trip?

Standing Fast as You Prepare to Leave

Bible Study	2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 Who has encouraged you and helped you stay strong? Thank God for them!
Journaling Questions	What do you want to do before you leave? What items, memories, or stories do you want to collect to share when you get home? What was a high today? A low?

Saying Goodbye—the Power of Prayer

Bible Study	John 14:12-14 As Jesus was preparing to leave His disciples, He promised to answer their prayers. As you prepare to leave, what three things do you want to continue to keep in your prayers?
Journaling Questions	What are you going to miss the most when you return home? What are you most looking forward to when you get home?

Departing

Bible Study	John 17:1-8 What is one “thing” you want to leave? What is one “thing” you want to take?
Journaling Questions	What was a high today? A low? What memory from your entire trip is most vivid? What one word sums up your feelings about the trip?

RETURN HOME

Day 1

Bible Study	Jude 20-25 How has God blessed you today?
Journaling Questions	What was a high today? A low? How do you feel physically and emotionally on arriving home?

Day 2

Bible Study	Ephesians 4:1-6 How can you use these verses to help you as you transition home?
Journaling Questions	Write one to three sentences to describe your trip to those who ask. Use your vivid memories, your one-word description, and praises to help you.

Day 3

Bible Study	Philippians 4:5-7 How is God sustaining you in your transition?
Journaling Questions	What is the most stressful part of rejoining life in the United States? What are you most thankful for? How are people responding to you in these first few days? How do you feel about their response?

Day 4

Bible Study	Psalm 95:1-7 What amazed you about God's creation today?
Journaling Questions	What things are the same in the United States as in the country you served? What things would you like to incorporate from the country you visited to your life at home? And from your life at home to the country you visited?

Day 5

Bible Study	1 Corinthians 12:12-26 How can you now use your new perspectives to contribute to your church?
Journaling Questions	What was a high today? A low? What strengths and abilities did you see evident in the church you visited that could possibly be incorporated in your church?

Day 6

Bible Study	2 Corinthians 8:8-15, 2 Corinthians 9:9 Thank God for your willingness to go and give! What is the next step in your generosity to God's people at home and overseas?
Journaling Questions	How has your life changed since returning home? How do you want it to change?

Day 7

Bible Study	1 Chronicles 29:10-18 What can you apply from these verses as you continue your journey?
Journaling Questions	Using the guidelines for writing SMART goals in the manual, write three personal goals. Use all the thoughts and desires you've written in your journal.