





# ONEXTEAR DEVOIDONS FOR A STATE

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The One Year Devotions for Active Boys

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# **NOT OF THIS WORLD**

You're an alien. Not a spaceship-flying, green-goo-spewing, mind-meld-controlling alien with cat eyes and glowing fingers that you might see in movies and on TV. But if you follow Jesus Christ, Earth is not your home. That means you're an alien.

You may live in this world now, but as a Christian, your forever home is heaven. In 1 Peter 2:11 (NIV84), the apostle Peter calls you "aliens and strangers in the world" and encourages you as one of Christ's followers to stay away from sinful desires. That's not easy. You may be an alien, but you're also a human. And as a human, you naturally want to sin.

What tempts you most? Is it saying mean things, talking back to your parents, watching movies with your friends that your parents wouldn't approve of, or looking at inappropriate websites? Whatever it is, God can help you overcome that temptation because of two facts:

Fact one: You're a Christian, so the Holy Spirit lives inside you.

**Fact two:** "The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world." (1 John 4:4)

With God in your life, you have the power to resist temptation and be a good alien.

## **EXPERIMENT: GO UFO!**

Aliens need transportation. Make a UFO and see how far it can fly.

### Stuff You Need

- Paper or Styrofoam plate
- Pencil
- □ Balloon
- Clear tape
- Scissors (optional)

## Try It

- 1. Poke a hole through the middle of the plate.
- 2. Gently push one end of the balloon through the hole.
- 3. Wrap tape around this end of the balloon, so it won't fall through the hole.
- 4. Blow up the balloon.
- 5. Hold your UFO over your head, and let go of the balloon. Watch it zoom around the room. Experiment by trying different sizes of balloons and plates, putting the balloon at different spots on the plate, creating wings, or cutting and folding flaps.

#### **⊕ PRAY**

Ask God to help you avoid temptations that come your way.

#### Life's Guidebook Says

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 1 PETER 2:11, NIV84

# GOD'S CHOSEN ARMY

A STRIKE FORCE is a special team of well-trained warriors. In the Old Testament, God chose a special strike force to help the Israelites defeat some bullies. And God put Gideon in command.

Gideon had gathered a large army of 32,000 men. God said, "That's too many! Israel will boast that it won the battle through its own strength. Send home anyone who trembles with fear." *Whoosh*—22,000 men ran home. That left 10,000 fighting men.

God spoke again. "Take them to the water to drink. Keep only those who lapped the water like a dog. I will save you from the enemy with these 300 men."

*Gulp!* Gideon was nervous, but he trusted God. The enemy had more men and camels than you could count—probably over 130,000 warriors. Yet God knew the 300 men he had chosen could win, because he was on their side. God had mighty plans for his strike force. He has mighty plans for you, too, and can help you overcome any foe.

## **PUZZLE IT OUT: FINDING GOD'S CHOICES**

Answer each of the questions about Gideon by circling the correct choice. Place each letter in order in the spaces below to find the answer to the question. (Hint: You can find all the answers by reading Judges 6–8.)

1.	Gideon was from the	family <b>.</b>	
	R. smartest	<b>S.</b> weakest	T. silliest
2.	What animals did the Midia	nites have?	
	<b>Z.</b> horses	A. camels	<b>B.</b> dogs
3.	What did the enemy's army look like?		
	I. a swarm of locusts	J. a swarm of bees	<b>K.</b> a school of fish
4.	What men did God choose?		
	C. men who shook with fear	<b>D.</b> men who drank like dogs	F. men who kneeled
5.	How could so few men win	the battle?	
	<b>X.</b> They had better weapons.	Y. God was with them.	<b>Z.</b> They knew more tricks.
6.	How many men did God choose in total?		
	<b>C.</b> 200	<b>D.</b> 300	<b>E.</b> 301
7.	Gideon was a		
	<b>Q.</b> king	R. prophet	<b>S.</b> judge
What n	nade Gideon special?		
He		·	

#### **⊕ PRAY**

Ask God to help you overcome an obstacle that is facing you today.

## Life's Guidebook Says

When Gideon took his warriors down to the water, the Lord told him, "Divide the men into two groups. In one group put all those who cup water in their hands and lap it up with their tongues like dogs. In the other group put all those who kneel down and drink with their mouths in the stream." JUDGES 7:5

# **GOD CHOSE THE SMALLEST SON**

WHEN TEAMS GET PICKED for a game, who gets picked first? You might say it's normally the biggest or most popular kids who go first. But if you want to make the best team, you may want to choose differently. You can't always judge by looks.

God doesn't judge by physical appearance. When he sent Samuel to find a new king for Israel, he told the prophet not to choose based on the man's looks. Samuel went where God sent him, to a man named Jesse and his eight sons. God didn't choose the oldest, strongest, or best-looking son. Instead he had Samuel wait until Jesse's youngest son returned from watching the sheep. That son played his harp, wrote songs, and helped the family as a shepherd. Not much in the way of hero material. God told Samuel to choose the shepherd boy, named David. And David became a mighty warrior and the king of Israel.

## **EXPERIMENT: OPTICAL ILLUSIONS**

God knows that our eyes can trick us and keep us from knowing the truth. Try some optical illusions as reminders that your eyes can be fooled.

# 1. Pencil-in-Water Trick

Place a pencil in a glass that is half filled with water. Look at it from the side. The pencil looks broken.

#### 2. Invisible Sticker

Place a sticker under an empty glass. You can see it from the side. Fill the glass with water and watch the sticker disappear.

# **₽ PRAY**

Ask God to help you see below the surface of people and find the truth.

## Life's Guidebook Says

The LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1 SAMUEL 16:7

# **QUIET HERO**

NO ONE EVEN LOOKED at the man as he sat by the gate. The man listened. He paced back and forth. He wrote letters. No sword, no shouting, no horseback riding. Doesn't sound like a hero, but God used this man, whose name was Mordecai, to help save thousands of people.

Mordecai overheard a plot to kill the king and sent a letter to his cousin, Queen Esther. Mordecai's tip saved the king's life. But the king forgot Mordecai because he was such a quiet man. One night the king reviewed his journal and remembered Mordecai—*Oops!* He decided to honor him. The king told Haman, a man who hated Mordecai, to parade Mordecai through the streets and cheer for him. That made Haman so angry that he plotted to kill Mordecai and all his people, the Jews.

Mordecai sent another letter to the queen asking for her help. She felt afraid, but Mordecai showed his great faith by saying that it was possible that God had allowed her to become queen so she could save her people. His faith inspired Esther to action, and together they saved their people.

Listening is a great skill that everyone, especially a leader, needs.

# QUIZ: DID YOU LISTEN?

Test yourself to see if you have really listened lately. Answer yes or no in the blanks below.

Do you know the last thing your mom asked you to do, and did you do it?
Do you know if your best friend sounded happy, sad, bored, or excited today?
Do you remember the lesson from Sunday school or what your pastor said
at church this past Sunday?
Do you remember the lessons you learned in school today?
Did you hear God through the Bible or an answered prayer today?
Did you hear someone say something good to you today ("Thanks," "I love you,"
"Good job")?
Did you hear your own voice today? Did you say good things or complain?
Did you hear any inappropriate language from your mouth today?

#### **⊕ PRAY**

Ask God to help you listen well and follow only the best advice for your life.

# Life's Guidebook Says

[Mordecai said,] "If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?" ESTHER 4:14

# **GOD SENT JESUS**

GO OUTSIDE AND LISTEN. What do you hear? Maybe birds, cars, thunder, or airplanes. At the baptism of Jesus, people heard God's voice coming from heaven. *Amazing!* The voice said, "You are my Son. . . . I am very pleased with you" (Mark 1:11, NIrV). God wanted people to know that Jesus is special. He is the only Son of God.

People also saw God's Spirit, in the form of a dove, flap its wings and fly down to rest on Jesus. This was a rare time when people actually heard and saw God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together.

Amazingly, in Isaiah 42:1 God told the people that he would put his Spirit on his Son and be very pleased with him. God had this plan centuries before it happened!

God sent Jesus, but the Jews were expecting a different kind of hero. They wanted an earthly king who would rule the world. They wanted a mighty warrior. Jesus preached love, peace, and obedience to God's commands. He didn't care about earthly power and wealth. He had created everything, so he already owned it. God sent a hero who can give us real joy and freedom in heaven forever.

#### **WEIRD FACTS: WHAT'S THAT SOUND?**

- A whip cracks because the tip moves so fast that it breaks the sound barrier. It's actually a sonic boom.
- If it's too noisy to hear someone talk, then it is too loud for your ears and could cause hearing loss.
- God spoke in a gentle whisper to Elijah (1 Kings 19:12-13).
- Sound travels through water three times faster than it travels through air.
- Nehemiah said God put a plan in his heart (Nehemiah 2:12) and that he put an idea in his mind (Nehemiah 7:5). God can speak in different ways.
- Radio waves travel faster than sound, so a broadcast on radio can be heard sooner 10,000 miles away than it is heard in the back of the room where it is said.

Jesus told people that his followers know his voice (John 10:27). Listen carefully to know when he is talking to you.

#### **⊕ PRAY**

Thank God for sending Jesus and speaking to you in the Bible.

#### Life's Guidebook Says

A voice spoke to [Jesus] from heaven. It said, "You are my Son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you." MARK 1:11, NIV

# **WORK FOR GOD**

"MY PLEASURE."

If you've eaten at a Chick-fil-A, you've heard those words. When you say, "Thank you," workers at this restaurant chain don't say, "You're welcome," "No problem," or "No, thank you." They say, "My pleasure." Chick-fil-A restaurants are run differently. They're closed on Sundays, so the workers can go to church if they want to.

When you go to church and hear the pastor, he's working for God. But you don't have to be a pastor to do God's work. Dan Cathy, the president of Chick-fil-A, also teaches Sunday school and tells people about Jesus. And he's not the only businessman who follows God.

One day when Jesus walked along the shore, he saw Simon Peter with his brother Andrew and called, "Come, follow me." They left their nets to become Jesus' disciples. But at times they returned to their boats and fished. Fishing was their business.

The apostle Paul made tents, and Luke was a doctor. They worked to pay their bills, but the most important thing in these men's lives was doing what Jesus wanted them to do.

Right now you're a student learning skills and gaining knowledge. But what do you want to do when you grow up? No matter what it is, you can use your skills and talents to serve God.

#### PUZZLE IT OUT: DIAL UP A SECRET MESSAGE

Look at a phone to decode this message. The first digit in each number tells you what number to find on the phone. The second number tells you what position to count to in order to find the letter in the code. So *94* equals *Z*.

What did Jesus tell the men he chose?

43 91 43 53 53 61 21 52 32 93 63 82 33 43 74 42 32 73 74 63 33 61 32 62

#### **PRAY**

Ask God to help you choose to follow him.

## Life's Guidebook Says

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" MARK 1:16-17

Answer: I will make you fishers of men.

# **GOD ZAPPED SAUL**

SAUL WAS A BULLY! He hated Christians and hurt them whenever he could find them. He had them thrown into jail and even killed. He convinced his religious leaders to let him get rid of followers of Jesus Christ. Saul believed he was helping God, because he thought Christians were a bunch of liars who wanted to destroy his faith.

*Zap!* A light from heaven struck Saul on his way to hunt down more Christians. Saul had authority, a letter from the Jewish high priest putting him in charge of wiping out Christians. The bright light zapped his eyesight and left him blind.

He heard a voice from heaven that asked, "Why are you opposing me?"

Saul had no clue what the voice meant, so he asked, "Who are you, Lord?"

The voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are opposing."

*Whoa!* Hold on! What did this mean? Jesus really existed and had really risen! Hurting any of his followers hurt Jesus. For three days Saul sat without eating or drinking. The zapping and voice from heaven gave him a lot to think about. He had really messed up trying to do things his own way. God would make sure he'd be a useless wimp! Served him right.

Then a man came, anointed Saul, and restored his sight. God changed Saul's name to Paul, and from that day on, Paul worked for Jesus with all his heart and never tried to hurt anyone again, even his enemies.

#### **PLEXER**

Word puzzles called plexers are groups of letters arranged to give a coded meaning. For example, the one below means "I understand."



See if you can solve this plexer to find out where God first spoke to Saul.



#### PRAY

Ask God to show you what he wants you to do today.

## Life's Guidebook Says

As [Saul] was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" ACTS 9:3-4

Answer: On the highway