

Teen Devotion

Year A – Proper 10

Define Christian



One truth shared: Let your light shine! Even when you can't see any results, God promises his Word will always do its work.

*As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55:10-11

The Word Works

Grace was very passionate about her faith. She loved Jesus so much. She was so thankful for everything he had done. She loved going to church and teen Bible studies. She had so much joy and she wanted nothing more than for others to have that joy too.

At work, Grace would drop little comments about what a great service she attended last week and would often invite other teens she worked with to their teen group outings. Everyone knew Grace was a Christian on her club VB team, too. She wore a cross necklace and always put a black sharpie cross on the athletic tape on her wrists. Grace's social media profile had a cross icon and her confirmation verse. At school it was much the same. Grace tried to let her light shine in the hallways and classrooms, and she especially loved witnessing to her new international student friend—Kat from Vietnam.

Grace went on like this, shining as a bright beacon of Jesus light, for some two years in high school. But then one day at work something happened. One of her coworkers, Kyle, whom she had worked with for over a year, finally said, "Grace, enough already. Enough with all the Jesus stuff. Can't we just work? I'm not ever going to come to church with you, okay?"

Ouch. That hurt. Later that night, Grace was lying in bed and reflecting on the incident. That led to more thinking about all of her witnessing. She started to realize that no one from work had ever agreed with anything she said about Jesus. No one from her VB team had ever come to church with her. Then she started to think about the people who occasionally laughed behind her back at school when she would talk about her faith. And Kat, well, Grace wasn't sure if Kat even understood what she was saying about Jesus.

It can be hard and frustrating to live and share your faith in this world, especially as a teen. You're a teen—will any adults take you seriously? You're a teen—will your peers still like you? You're a teen—does anything you say matter, and will anyone even listen?

Grace was pondering these thoughts and whether it was all worth it, when suddenly her phone dinged. Someone had DMed her. She opened the message, and it was from Brandon, another teen boy she worked with. “Oh great. More rejection,” she thought. But to her surprise the message said:

Hey Grace. How r u? Just wanted to say thanks for what you do at work. You know. The Jesus stuff. I overheard how Kyle kinda dissed you today. But I wanna let u know that I always hear you. It’s been bad 4 me recently, and I appreciate u. Would u mind if I came to church with u sometime? I think I kinda need it.

The biggest tears streamed down her cheeks as the biggest smile also beamed across her face. Grace had forgotten the famous words from God in Isaiah 55. Just like the rain and snow fall from heaven and always accomplish God’s purposes on this earth, so with his Word. It always accomplishes his purposes and never returns to him empty.

God spoke and the world came to be. Jesus spoke and calmed a storm and healed the sick and raised the dead. Jesus spoke, “It is finished,” and it was. God’s Word has always been powerful. So also when we speak and share it. We may not know how or when or why, but God *promises* that his Word will always be powerful and effective in the ways that he knows best.

Sure enough, Grace’s last two years of high school taught her that all the more. Kyle never did come to church, but Grace found out that her witnessing really caused him to think about faith for a long time and wrestle with his sinful lifestyle. Brandon? Well, he did come to church that week with Grace and ended up joining a year later. And almost exactly two years after that tearful night, Grace had another memorable moment—Kat was baptized at her Vietnam church and became a Christian.

Don’t sweat the how or the when or the why. God knows that. God takes care of that. Let your light shine. Share your faith. Spread the Word. Then trust that God’s Word will work, because it *always* does.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me to be a witness who boldly shares your Word and confidently trusts that it will work powerfully in people’s hearts. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

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The Word Works

Starting the Discussion: This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.

What are some ways that Christians like you can witness about Jesus or let their lights shine without even opening their mouths and talking?

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- Can you think of some times that you could've let your light shine in words or in actions, but you were afraid of the reaction? Or, it seemed like it failed and didn't work?
- What is it that makes you afraid sometimes to share your faith with others?

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Explain in your own words the parallel God makes between the rain and snow falling and how his Word works in our lives.
- Can you think of times in the Bible when people preached the Word of God but it didn't seem to work—as in, people *didn't* listen or rejected it?
- How can we say that God's Word was still working in those situations?
- Can you think of times in the Bible when people preached the Word of God and it worked in miraculous ways in people's hearts?
- Explain this statement: God's Word works on its own and that takes all the pressure of us and our witnessing.

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

Each person in the group, share a way this week that you will hope to let your light shine or share your faith.

(To close, have a final prayer including prayer requests for people in your lives that you hope will hear the Word and come to faith in Christ.)