***Planning Devotions for the Year***

—Jonas Sauder

1. Purposes for devotions
   1. Devote / dedicate the day to God. Acknowledge His Lordship.
   2. Set tone of collective activity for the day.
   3. Inspiration / instruction for the students.
   4. *Not* a class for music, reading, comprehension, memory, etc.
2. Routine elements of devotions
   1. scripture reading
   2. prayer: by teacher, by student(s), silent, recited, read…
   3. singing
3. Occasional elements
   1. Testimonies, prayer requests, events from students’ lives or current/community events
   2. Stories—especially Bible stories
   3. Poems
   4. Picture or object lesson
   5. Devotional books
   6. Teacher’s personal sharing
      1. Tidbits from your private devotional reading or Bible study
      2. Lessons from current experiences in your life
      3. Special scripture verses that are meaningful to you
   7. Give time for personal Bible reading; then each share a tidbit with the class
4. Procedural suggestions
   1. Keep it brief, to the point
   2. Follow a comfortable routine, allowing for spontaneity
   3. Involve students: spontaneous or planned
      1. choose songs, stories, poems, scriptures
      2. have individual or small groups plan and direct devotions
   4. Consider a pattern:
      1. M-scripture lesson; T-theme; W-story; Th-theme; F-singing
      2. Theme for the month or quarter
5. Theme Suggestions
   1. Bible character(s)
   2. Bible book
   3. Words: reverence, fear, thankfulness, kind, bless
   4. Proverb / maxim of the day or week (perhaps write on board)
   5. Sermon on the mount
   6. Parables
   7. Metaphors & analogies (use of concrete to teach abstract)

“Who is my mother?” “Wolves in sheep’s clothing)

* 1. Questions Jesus asked
  2. New Testament commands
  3. Bible promises
  4. Qualities of God (for each letter of alphabet?)
  5. Memorable sayings/verses (1 per book?)

“Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” “My thoughts are not your thoughts.”

* 1. Songs of the Bible—Psalms
  2. Hymn stories (consider using one for the “singing” day)
  3. List typical questions and look at scriptures that speak to them

How overcome fear? What if I feel inferior? How deal with doubts?

* 1. Stories in Bible that involve an animal; see context and how animal was involved
  2. Trace the stories embedded in a Bible book

(Acts: Paul’s conversion, Philippian jailer, Macedonian call, Mars hill…)

* 1. Trace a term or command through the Bible
     1. “Blessed” (is the poor in spirit/ he who remembers the poor/ is the man whose sin is covered…)
     2. “Be” (content, courteous…)
     3. “Be not” (deceived, slothful…)
  2. Share tidbits from Sunday services on Monday morning

1. Outside Speakers
   1. Consider having a theme to follow
   2. Give them a sheet of guidelines: time, procedures, expectations
2. Miscellaneous Suggestions
   1. Study the text of a song—learn definitions of unfamiliar words/terms (cleft, plea); note metaphors.
   2. Don’t expect every devotional to be “special”
   3. Sometimes refer to the devotional theme throughout the day
   4. Find a style that fits you, your students and community, and honors God