



# 14601

## Writer's Guidelines

Thank you for your interest in LWML. The Christian Resources Editors Committee is always searching for original material to be offered in the *Program Helps* section of the LWML catalog. These resources are divided into the following categories: 1) Devotions, 2) Programs, 3) Sketches, 4) Bible Studies, 5) Litanies and 6) Retreats. We hope you will find the following information helpful when preparing and submitting your work.

### Topics Needed

Resources for all occasions and various topics are desired. Seasonal, holiday and special events within the church are always needed, as well as areas of specialized ministries. Keep in mind that materials should have a timely message.

### Word Usage Guideline

For consistency please follow these recommendations for current terminology:

| <u>Preferred</u>             | <u>Rather Than</u>  |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| women                        | ladies, gals, girls |
| (faith) community, group     | society             |
| organization                 | league              |
| woman, participant, attendee | leaguer, LWMLer     |
| sketch                       | skit                |

### Format Guidelines

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Style:     | Present ideas in a clear and logical progression of thought.<br>Use correct punctuation, spelling and grammar.<br>Follow LWML Style Sheet (enclosed)                                      |
| Scripture: | Correctly identify all passages<br>Write out Bible references where possible (i.e. Corinthians, not Cor.)<br>Quote each verse word for word.<br>Identify all translations other than NIV. |
| Music:     | Identify source if hymns or songs are quoted.   |

Note: Sample program helps are also available on-line at [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org).

## **Evaluation Questions**

Please consider these questions to evaluate your resource material before submission:

- ❖ Is Jesus Christ and His love for us clearly proclaimed? Is it faithful to Scripture and are passages contextual?
- ❖ Will those who hear/see this program leave with the feeling their time was well spent?
- ❖ What is the initial impact? Does it inspire to action? Does it teach, stimulate or entertain? Is the purpose timely? Is it something we need to hear?
- ❖ Does it appeal to a wider audience or is it limited to certain groups? Is it in good taste?
- ❖ Is it adaptable to various group sizes? Is it conversational and easy to present? Are visuals readily available or simple to construct?

## **Review Process for Acceptance**

All submissions received will go through a review process by the Christian Resources Editors Committee, an LWML Pastoral Counselor, and LCMS Doctrinal Review. Suggestions or clarification of materials may be forwarded to the authors. All resources must be consistent with the theological teachings of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## **Submissions**

Prepare a clear, clean copy of your material and mail it with a cover letter to:

Christian Resources Editors Committee      - or -      e-mail: [depcl@lwml.org](mailto:depcl@lwml.org)  
c/o Vice President of Christian Life  
P.O. Box 411993  
St. Louis, MO 63141-1993

For more help on writing devotional material please refer to the ***General Guidelines for All Devotional Writers***. This handout is given to all writers who attend the Concordia Publishing House writing workshops and is included here with their permission.

Thank you again for your interest in the work and mission of LWML. May God bless you as you serve Him by sharing your talents with others through this organization.

**Christian Resources Editors Committee**  
**April 2006**

**General Guidelines for All Devotional Writers**  
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## **I. Principles of Devotional Writing**

Devotional literature is a part of worship. It is directed toward the individual Christian who recognizes in thought, feeling, and action that God alone is worthy of our praise and adoration.

This understanding comes only after God has revealed Himself to us.

- God acts in redemption through Christ—we react.
- God provides the impetus in the new life of Christ—we respond.
- God initiates through regeneration by the Spirit—we live out God’s purpose.
- God acts in His saving grace through the Gospel—we can respond only by faith.

Therefore the purpose of devotional writings is to awaken a response from the believer. This is done through the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Devotional writing does not call for a “sermonette” but rather “coaches” a response to the action of God.

Various words may be used to describe a person’s response to the Gospel.

- Adoration – To adore God for what He is, to be moved to praise and awe for what He does in the abundance of His grace.
- Confession - We stand in need of forgiveness from God, the Creator and Redeemer.
- Renewal - This follows the outpouring of forgiveness through the Gospel. The renewed person says, “I am new, I am forgiven in Christ.”
- Resolution - God’s new life in Christ acts to produce a new being who recognizes God in all areas of life.
- Thanksgiving – The joyful recognition of God’s abundant grace and mercy.

Although addressed to the individual, devotional literature implies a corporate worship and unity with the body of Christ. It is the diet of the worshipping Christian, not of the unbeliever.

## **II. Characteristics of Devotional Literature**

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the basis for all devotional literature. The literature must reflect this in every way that the worshiper may be replenished daily with the fullness of God’s redeeming and forgiving love. The Gospel of God making people one with Himself gives the power to worship God.

1. Devotional literature is an expression of Christian piety, but it is not pietistic.
2. Devotional literature is personal, but also expressive of the total life of the church.
3. Devotional literature is subjective, but it is built on the objective acts of God. Avoid the pitfall of making subjective responses the basis for faith or action.
4. Devotional literature is evangelical, but not evangelistic. Social reform is not its purpose.
5. Devotional literature feeds on dogma, but is not dogmatic. The main function is not to teach doctrinal issues, but takes what has been taught and brings it into daily life.

6. Devotional literature stands under the law of God, but does not “preach” the Law.
7. Devotional literature stands under the Gospel of Christ, but does not “preach” it. It is the expression of the reality of the incarnation of Christ, the cross, and the empty tomb.
8. Devotional literature stands under the call for surrender to the Christ, but does not “preach” it.

### **III. The Method and Mechanics of Devotional Writing**

#### *The Author*

Devotional writing is the written expression of personal intercession in the presence of God. It requires time for unhurried and free expression before God. Time for such meditation will make the devotion real, and help the writer avoid artificial imitation.

- Begin with meditation and prayer. Seek and submit to God’s will as a writer.
- Identify the purpose of the writing project. Who are the readers? What problems do they face? What does God have to say to them? What is the desired response or awakening?
- Meditate on a quality of God in the Gospel. Scripture is used to understand the message from God to deliver on the written page.
- Identify themes for the writing and complete an outline.
- Use material from experience, reading and observation to complete the project.
- Evaluate the manuscript by reading it as a devotional message for one’s own life.

#### *The Language*

Language in devotional writing is never just casual talk. It always has a higher purpose. It is the language of wonder, acknowledgment, and confident trust. It is the language of complete personal involvement in the life of God.

- Meditations use the language of prayer. Praise, adoration, and thanksgiving are woven together with confession, supplication, and intercession.
- Devotional writing may use anecdotes and illustrations, as Jesus did in His parables. (Use care so that the illustration points to Christ and does not become the focal point itself.)
- The language of prayer and meditation refrains from “informing” God, or explaining to God. Instead, it reminds ourselves, as well as God, of His promises in the Gospel.
- Directly or indirectly, the language of devotion is addressed toward God.
- “We” is preferred to “you” in personal references. The language includes all Christians.

Devotional literature expresses the writer’s purpose of catching and lifting the heart of the reader to come with the author into the presence of God. The entire writing indicates whether or not the author lives under the Gospel of forgiveness.