

## Fall Contest 2018

**Devotional - Maximum 300 words.** This piece may target the mainstream or the Christian Market. Truth may be presented subtly or openly as long as there is no contradiction of Scripture. The take-away of the piece must affirm the Apostle's Creed.

The Devotional is judged *primarily* on the basis of its writing strength. However, Scripture must be included somewhere in the devotional, and it will be included in the word count. The devotional must support that Scripture.

This contest does not adhere to any specific publisher; all types are welcome.

Criteria score out of 100	<b><u>Devotional:</u></b> Maximum 300 words Scripture must be included and it must be supported by the devotional.
/5	<b><u>Format:</u></b> Double-spaced; 1 inch margins; Times New Roman Font; 12
/10	<b><u>Hook:</u></b> Title and opening pulls reader into the devotional.
/10	<b><u>Voice/Style:</u></b> The voice has a friendly and transparent feel that engages the reader and holds their attention, and yet the voice is appropriate for the topic addressed.  The reader feels like he is being “talked to”, rather than being “talked down to”. Words such as “we” and “our” are more acceptable than “you” and “your”.  The reader feels like this topic has come to life; it does not feel like something copied out of a textbook, but has a personal feel.

/15	<p><b>Main Idea:</b> The writer shares his main idea or opinion near the beginning of the devotional and carries it all the way through. The devotional is <u>focused on one idea</u>.</p> <p>All supporting details the author uses after he states his main idea, such as stories, personal life experiences, news, events, quotes, and so on, <u>are all there to explain and expand the main idea. In a devotional there may be room for only one anecdote, but in any case, it must support and explain the main idea.</u></p> <p>The reader can <u>summarize the main idea into ONE sentence</u>, and can easily take away the main idea.</p>
/10	<p><b>Authority</b> <i>Scripture must be included somewhere in the devotional.</i> Does the devotional support the scripture, or does the devotional have little or nothing to do with the scripture presented? Is the author’s challenge to the reader scriptural? Do his ideas and opinions affirm the truth of scripture?</p> <p>In addition, authority may be established through personal experience stories, events or situations from around the world, researched quotes, anecdotes, common fact, and so on. The reader feels that the author knows what he is talking about, and he trusts the author. The author proves his authority by his proper handling of scripture and his supporting details.</p> <p>The message should clearly name God, whether as God the Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit, rather than just talking about good, moral principles.</p>
/10	<p><b>Relevance:</b> The author raises a real-life, relevant topic. The devotional discusses a universal need.</p> <p>The author uses examples of flawed people solving real-life problems that the reader can relate to.</p> <p>The author may use either a serious or lighthearted approach, but either way the reader should be left feeling that this is a significant and current issue for his life today.</p>

/10	<p><b><u>Word Choice:</u></b> Devotionals are short so each word counts. Whether powerful or ordinary, they are used in a fresh, creative way that brings the writing to life. The vocabulary is not too flowery, too technical, or clichéd. Words evoke emotion and pictures in the reader’s mind, and yet they are accurate and appropriate.</p> <p>If idioms, slang, or fragments are used, it is on purpose and is effective.</p> <p>A variety of words are used, rather than the same words being used over and over again, unless as a deliberate form of repetition.</p> <p>Figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, repetition, extended metaphor, and so on are not used merely as fancy ornaments. They shed light on the meaning, not distract from it. They delight while also informing.</p>
/10	<p><b><u>Sentences:</u></b> Devotionals are short but the sentences should still be well crafted, varied in length and structure to add interest and a <i>sense of rhythm</i>. The sentences sound natural and they flow easily from one into the next. When this devotional is read out loud, it flows and sounds almost musical.</p> <p>Sentences are created in such a way that they highlight main points and encourage the ideas to connect.</p>
/10	<p><b><u>Literacy:</u></b> Author has strong control of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure.</p> <p>The reader is not distracted by improper grammar.</p> <p>Occasionally this writer may play with grammatical rules but in such a way as to add to the style and effect of the piece.</p> <p>Even difficult words are correctly spelled.</p> <p>Little or no editing is needed to correct errors.</p>

/10	<p><b>Application:</b> The purpose of the devotional is to help the reader grow deeper in knowledge and/or in their relationship with the Lord. Therefore, the reader should be nudged in some way to apply the lesson learned. Maybe the author wants the reader to think about or discuss this topic, or to stop momentarily and praise the Lord about something, or to make a decision to change their lives in some way, or to take a stand for or against an issue.</p> <p>Some authors may word this as an outright invitation to grow deeper, while other authors may be more subtle in their nudge, such as in the use of personal life experiences or little anecdotal stories. Either way, the reader should be able to make the leap from the written words to their own hearts.</p> <p>Whether the author is bold or subtle, the challenge to apply the lesson is clear.</p>
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**Adult Fiction – Any genre – Maximum 1250 words. This piece may target the mainstream or the Christian Market. Truth may be presented subtly or openly as long as there is no contradiction of Scripture. The take-away of the piece must affirm the Apostle’s Creed.**

Score out of 95	Adult Fiction Short Story – Any genre
_/5	<b>Format:</b> Double-spaced; 1 inch margins; Times New Roman; 12
_/10	<b>Hook:</b> Title and opening pulls reader into the story. There is a strong hook. The story starts in the right place, not too late, not too soon.
_/10	<b>Voice:</b> The writing is compelling, clear, and consistent all the way through. There is a good balance between showing and telling. Figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, open up the story and make it more interesting and clear, rather than pulling the reader away. Writer does not slow down the action with too many passive verbs and adverbs.

_ /10	<p><b><u>Point of View:</u></b>  The point of view (POV) is consistent and clear throughout, without a lot of head hopping.  If the POV changes, it is intentional. It takes the story forward.  POV stays true to the character viewpoint and only includes sights, sounds, and so on that this POV character can know.  POV is deep enough and close enough when appropriate.</p>
_ /10	<p><b><u>Setting &amp; Description:</u></b> Setting and physical details contribute to the mood and theme and move the story forward. There is a reason for the setting (for example in a murder mystery the sky could be dark and gloomy).  There is a reason for the description of every detail; if there is a gun above the mantel, why? If it is never used in the story, then why did you describe it? All details must have a reason to belong.</p>
_ /10	<p><b><u>Conflict/Tension:</u></b> Main character must want something, or want to get away from something, and it must be a desperate or critical situation in which they are stuck! At least, to the main character, it is significant.  This character engages the reader with their emotional intensity. If they cannot get what they need, there will be some kind of loss for the character. The stakes are high.  Because there are obstacles in the way, there is tension. This tension keeps the reader turning the page to see if the main character gets what he wants.</p>
_ /10	<p><b><u>Character Arc:</u></b> The main character is flawed in some way and needs to change. He may not sense that need at the beginning, but as this character engages in the conflict to get what he wants, he will <b><u>grow or change</u></b> in some major way. <b><u>At the end of the story he may not get what he wanted (external want), but rather what he needed (internal need), and will be satisfied because he will have changed or transformed in a meaningful way.</u></b> In a short story there may not be room for another character to be fully developed but they too will have their own flaws, goals, conflict, and character growth, even if only shown in a minor way.</p>
_ /10	<p><b><u>Dialogue:</u></b> Dialogue reveals character, and advances the story.  Characters do not reveal a lot of information that they already know, but their dialogue is natural, and distinctive to their personality.  Dialogue does not use too much dialect or accent which jars the reader from the story.</p>

_ /10	<p><b>Literacy:</b> Author has a strong command of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and spelling. The command of English is excellent.</p> <p>Sometimes the author may break the rules of grammar, but it is done effectively and not so often that it causes confusion.</p>
_ /10	<p><b>Conclusion/Resolution:</b> The reader enjoys at the very least a satisfying conclusion or at best a powerful emotional experience. Any problems that were introduced at the beginning are now resolved; not that each character has solved all their problems, but they have either gained what they were striving for, or they have changed in such a way that they are equipped to deal with the problem.</p> <p>There are no story lines dropped, waiting to be finished. There may be interest for more, but the main problems are resolved.</p>

Poetry – Any Style, Maximum 40 lines. This poem may target the mainstream or the Christian Market. Truth may be presented subtly or openly as long as there is no contradiction of Scripture. The take-away of the piece must affirm the Apostle’s Creed.

Score out of 100	<u>Unpublished Poem</u>
_ /10	<b>Universality and Purpose</b> – Why is the poem written? Does it speak to a wide ranging audience?
_ /10	<b>Thought</b> - Does the poem have a worthwhile idea, in wit, wisdom, or humour?
_ /10	<b>Emotional Loading</b> – Are the poet’s feelings clear and abundant? Are the writer’s moods passed on to you?
_ /10	<b>Unity and Coherence</b> – Is the poem on one topic? Does one thought follow another logically?
_ /10	<b>Originality</b> – Is the poem creative, original and unique? Is it concrete? Is it personal?
_ /10	<b>Readability</b> – What is your overall impression? Does the poem move/grab you? Is it a significant poem?

_/10	<b>Form</b> – Is the visual effect pleasing? Is it concise in its statement?
_/10	<b>Vocabulary and Imagery</b> – Is word choice good? Are images clear and effective (similes, metaphors, personification, etc.)? Are words connotative?
_/10	<b>Sound Effects</b> – Is reading it aloud pleasing? Are rhythm and rhyme effective? Are there any special sound effects (alliteration, repetition, onomatopoeia, etc.)?
_/10	<b>The Mechanics</b> – Are poetic conventions followed? Are punctuation, spelling, and grammar correct or at least consistent?

**Songwriting** – Any genre. This piece may target the mainstream or the Christian Market. Truth may be presented subtly or openly as long as there is no contradiction of Scripture. The take-away of the piece must affirm the Apostle’s Creed. The song may be co-written as long as the person entering and paying for the contest is an InScribe member.

MP3 Recording and 1-2 pages of lyrics.

Note– *production quality and vocal ability are not part of judged criteria.*

Your submission should be no longer than two pages and should be in chord chart format (see example below the rubric), entirely single-spaced, with chord symbols placed appropriately above lyrics. Your verse lyrics should be left justified, with chorus and bridge lyrics indented.

Total Score out of 35	Songwriting – MP3 Recording and 1-2 pages lyrics with Chord Symbols Production Quality and Vocal ability are not part of judged criteria.
/5	Overall Impression - Song displays creativity; originality; has a strong title and opening line; effectively stirs emotion in the listener; and is crafted with care and thought.
/10	Lyrics - Song has a clear theme; uses active (not passive) verbs; lyrics are meaningful/authentic; lyrics are conversational and natural (not forced); song has a strong lyrical hook; engages multiple senses; clever use of phrases; avoids clichés and redundancies; consistent point of view/tone/tense; and paints word pictures effectively.



**Nonfiction to Conference Theme: “The Art of Words”**  
**Any Style – Maximum 1500 words.** This piece may target the mainstream or the Christian Market. Truth may be presented subtly or openly as long as there is no contradiction of Scripture. The take-away of the piece must affirm the Apostle’s Creed.

Criteria score out of 100	<b><u>Nonfiction piece to theme “The Art of Words”</u></b> <b><u>Maximum 1500 words</u></b>
/5	<b><u>Format:</u></b> Double-spaced, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman, 12
/10	<b><u>Hook:</u></b> Title and opening pulls reader into the article.
/10	<b><u>Voice/Style:</u></b> The voice in this piece is balanced; it has a friendly, engaging feel, yet it is appropriate for the topic and opinion the author has presented. The reader feels like this topic has come to life; it does not feel like something copied out of a textbook, but has a transparent and personal feel. Each author will have their own voice or style and it might be lively, honest, convicting, exciting, humorous, and so on. Any style that attracts a reader, gains their trust, and holds their attention is highly valued.
/15	<b><u>Main Idea:</u></b> The writer states his main idea or opinion near the beginning of the essay and carries it through to the end. The essay is <i>focused</i> and consistent throughout. The main idea is woven through all the details, stories, anecdotes, and so on.  The main idea is relevant; it is a real issue or idea that people can relate to.  There are no rabbit trails.  The essay is so clear that the reader can summarize the main idea – that thread that pulls all the details together – into ONE sentence. After reading the essay, the reader easily takes away the main idea.
/10	<b><u>Support:</u></b> After stating his main idea or opinion, the author will attempt to <i>support</i> this idea. This would be the body of the essay. The author will give <i>reasons and evidence</i> to support his opinion.

	<p>He may use personal experiences, anecdotes, real stories, events from around the world, researched quotes, common fact, and so on. All of this support must be <i>relevant</i> to the main idea. In other words, any and all stories/details must relate to the main idea; they must explain and support the main idea, or they distract the reader.</p> <p>The support should also be <i>thorough and accurate to provide more insight and understanding</i> to the author's main idea.</p> <p>The supporting details help the reader <i>trust</i> the author. They see that the author knows what he is talking about. The author appears <i>credible</i> and somebody who has some <i>authority</i> on this topic, whether the tone is serious or lighthearted.</p>
/10	<p><b>Structure:</b> The essay is well organized. There is a clear beginning, middle, and ending. The organization helps the reader <i>move easily</i> through the text.</p> <p>The points made flow logically from one sentence to another and from one paragraph to another. They transition smoothly and the progression is clear to the reader.</p> <p>Transitions can be predictable, like a list, or subtle and creative, as long as they are clear and logical.</p> <p>The details do not feel randomly placed, but like they belong instead. They do not leave the reader feeling confused.</p>

/10	<p><b>Word Choice:</b> Whether powerful or ordinary, the words are used in a way that brings the writing to life. The vocabulary is not too flowery, too technical, or clichéd.</p> <p>If idioms, slang, or fragments are used, it is on purpose and is effective.</p> <p>A variety of words are used, rather than the same words being used over and over again, unless as a deliberate form of repetition. Words evoke emotion and pictures in the reader's mind.</p> <p>Figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, repetition, extended metaphor, and so on are not used merely as fancy ornaments. They shed light on the meaning, not distract from it. They delight while also informing.</p>
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/10	<p><b><u>Sentences:</u></b> The sentences sound natural and they flow easily from one into the next. They are often varied in length and structure to add interest and a <i>sense of rhythm</i>. When this essay is read out loud, it flows, and sounds almost musical.</p> <p>Sentences are created in such a way that they highlight main points and encourage the ideas to connect.</p>
/10	<p><b><u>Literacy:</u></b> Author has strong control of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and all types of sentence structures. The reader is not distracted by improper grammar. Even difficult words are correctly spelled.</p> <p>Occasionally this writer may play with grammatical rules but in such a way as to add to the style and effect of the piece.</p> <p>Little or no editing is needed to correct errors.</p>
/10	<p><b><u>Conclusion:</u></b> The reader comes away with a strong, satisfying sense of closure or resolution, and is encouraged in some way to make a decision or a change.</p> <p>The <i>main point should be reinforced</i> in some manner. Some authors choose to repeat the main point, or give a summary of the issues explored; others use a creative reminder such as an echo or resonance with the beginning of the piece. In any case, the reader should feel nudged to <i>a point of decision for or against that clearly defined main point</i>.</p> <p><i>The decision that the reader will be encouraged to make could be to give further thought or discussion to the main point, or could be as simple as a decision to laugh or empathize over the issue raised at the beginning, or a major life transformation to put into effect.</i></p>