

Winter Contest for works published in 2018

Devotional - This piece may target the mainstream or 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.

Criteria score out of 100	<u>Devotional:</u> Published in 2018 Scripture must be included.
/5	<u>Format:</u> Double-spaced; 1 inch margins; Times New Roman Font; 12
/10	<u>Hook:</u> Title and opening pulls reader into the devotional.
/10	<u>Voice/Style:</u> The voice engages the reader and holds their attention. The voice is appropriate for the topic addressed. The reader feels like he is being “talked to”, rather than being “talked down to”. 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><u>Main Idea:</u> 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. If there is an anecdote, it must relate to 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><u>Authority</u> <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><u>Relevance:</u> The author raises a real-life, relevant topic. The devotional discusses a universal need.</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><u>Word Choice:</u> 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.</p>
/10	<p><u>Sentences:</u> 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 smoothly.</p> <p>Sentences are created in such a way that they highlight main points and encourage the ideas to connect.</p>
/10	<p><u>Literacy:</u> 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>Application: 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>
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Adult Fiction – 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.

Score out of 95	Adult Fiction Short Story or Short Drama Script Published in 2018
_/5	Format: Double-spaced; 1 inch margins; Times New Roman; 12
_/10	Hook: 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	Voice: 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.

<p>_/10</p>	<p><u>Point of View:</u></p> <p>The point of view (POV) is consistent and clear throughout, without a lot of head hopping.</p> <p>If the POV changes, it is intentional. It takes the story forward.</p> <p>POV stays true to the character viewpoint and only includes sights, sounds, and so on that this POV character can know.</p> <p>POV is deep enough and close enough when appropriate.</p>
<p>_/10</p>	<p><u>Setting & Description:</u> Setting and physical details contribute to the mood and theme. They engage the reader and move the story forward.</p> <p>There is a reason for the setting. Why is the sky dark and gloomy? Does it relate to the story?</p> <p>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>
<p>_/10</p>	<p><u>Conflict/Tension:</u> 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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>
<p>_/10</p>	<p><u>Character Arc:</u> 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 <u>grow or change</u> in some way. <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> 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><u>Dialogue:</u> Dialogue reveals character, and advances the story.</p> <p>Characters do not reveal a lot of information that they already know, but their dialogue is natural, and distinctive to their personality.</p> <p>Dialogue does not use too much dialect or accent, which jars the reader from the story.</p>
_ /10	<p><u>Literacy:</u> 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><u>Conclusion/Resolution:</u> 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 – Free Verse, Rhymed, or Song Lyrics.
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	Poem published in 2018
_ /10	Universality and Purpose – Why is the poem written? Does it speak to a wide ranging audience?

_/10	Thought - Does the poem have a worthwhile idea, in wit, wisdom, or humour?
_/10	Emotional Loading – Are the poet’s feelings clear and abundant? Are the writer’s moods passed on to you?
_/10	Unity and Coherence – Is the poem on one topic? Does one thought follow another logically?
_/10	Originality – Is the poem creative, original and unique? Is it concrete? Is it personal?
_/10	Readability – What is your overall impression? Does the poem move/grab you? Is it a significant poem?
_/10	Form – Is the visual effect pleasing? Is it concise in its statement?
_/10	Vocabulary and Imagery – Is word choice good? Are images clear and effective (similes, metaphors, personification, etc.)? Are words connotative?
_/10	Sound Effects – Is reading it aloud pleasing? Are rhythm and rhyme effective? Are there any special sound effects (alliteration, repetition, onomatopoeia, etc.)?
_/10	The Mechanics – Are poetic conventions followed? Are punctuation, spelling, and grammar correct or at least consistent?

Nonfiction 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	<u>Nonfiction Published in 2018</u>
/5	<u>Format</u> : Double-spaced, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman, 12
/10	<u>Hook</u> : Title and opening pulls reader into the article.

/10	<p><u>Voice/Style:</u> The voice in this piece is balanced – whether the piece is serious or lighthearted, it engages the reader. The voice 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.</p> <p>Whatever style, it must attract a reader, gain their trust, and hold their attention.</p>
/15	<p><u>Main Idea:</u> The writer states his main idea or opinion near the beginning of the piece and carries it through to the end. The piece is <i>focused</i> and consistent throughout. The main idea is woven through all the details, stories, anecdotes, and so on.</p> <p>The main idea is relevant; it is a real issue or idea that people can relate to.</p> <p>There are no rabbit trails.</p> <p>The piece is so clear that the reader can summarize the main idea – that thread that pulls all the details together – into ONE sentence.</p> <p>After reading the piece, the reader will remember the main idea.</p>
/10	<p><u>Support:</u> After stating his main idea or opinion, the author will attempt to <i>support</i> this idea. The author will give <i>reasons and evidence</i> to support his opinion. 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, <i>whether the piece is serious or lighthearted</i>.</p>
/10	<p><u>Structure:</u> The piece 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</p>

	<p>progression is clear to the reader.</p> <p>Transitions can be predictable, like a list, or subtle and creative, as long as they make sense.</p> <p>The details do not feel randomly placed, but like they belong instead. They do not leave the reader feeling confused.</p>
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/10	<p><u>Word Choice:</u> 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>
/10	<p><u>Sentences:</u> 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 piece is read out loud, it flows.</p> <p>Sentences are created in such a way that they highlight main points and encourage the ideas to connect.</p>
/10	<p><u>Literacy:</u> 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>

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Conclusion: The reader reacts at the end of this piece. Did the author achieve their purpose? Did the reader make the change he wanted them to by the end of the piece? If the author set out to make the reader laugh at the end, did they? If the author's purpose was to inform the reader so they could make a decision for or against an issue, did they? If the author's purpose was to encourage, did the reader feel encouraged? In other words, did the reader react at the end the way the author wanted them to?

Usually the *main point is reinforced* in some manner at the end. 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 some way, the piece ties back to the main idea.