

Writing Devotions Session

InkSlings – June 18, 2011 – Emily M. Akin

How to write a devotion:

1. Choose a format. Each publication has its own requirements for content, style, length.
2. Make a template to fit your chosen style.
3. Select a scripture. Use translation preferred by target pub. Type it into template.
4. Journal on chosen scripture by hand or on the computer.
5. Read the scripture in context---one or more chapters before and after.
6. Consult Bible commentaries and/or dictionaries for background. Add details to your journal notes. Don't quote the commentary. Just use it to get the big picture.
7. Write. Lead sentence needs to draw the reader in. Don't be concerned about word count for first draft.
8. Second draft. I'll quote E. B. White: "Omit needless words." You must adhere to the word count if submitting for publication.
9. Print a hard copy and let it rest overnight (if possible). Then, proofread and make corrections. I always like to ask someone else to check it before I submit.
10. Double-check submission guidelines and submit according to every detail of the guidelines.

Online Devotionals:

- Christian Devotions Guidelines: <http://www.christiandevotions.us/pdfs/Submission-Guidelines.pdf>. And their conference handout: <http://www.christiandevotions.us/pdfs/Writing-devotions-our-way.pdf>
- Presbyterian Church in Canada daily devotion: <http://daily.presbycan.ca/email/guidelines.html>
- Bible Study Tools (Crosswalk) devotionals: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/devotionals/>
- Wesleyan's Light from the Word: <http://www.wesleyan.org/doc/devotions>

Print Publications Accepting Freelance Submissions:

- The Upper Room (meditations published in the print version are published online, too): http://www.upperroom.org/Devotional/how_to_write.asp
- The Secret Place: http://www.judsonpress.com/catalog_secretplace.cfm
- Your denominational publication. (Baptist, *Journey* and *Stand Firm*).

Online How-to Articles:

- Cecil Murphey article on devotional writing: <http://thedabblingmum.com/writing/writerniche/devotionwriter.htm>
- Lawrence Wilson's article: <http://www.lawrencewilson.com/2008/07/how-to-write-devotionals.html>
- John Vonhof's devotional page: <http://www.writersconferenceguidelines.com/writing-devotionals.html>
- Sharon Dalton Williams article: <http://www.writetoinspire.com/article1010.html>

Online Bible Reference:

- <http://www.biblegateway.com/>
- John Wesley's Explanatory Notes on the Bible: <http://www.christnotes.org/commentary.php?com=wes>
- Crosswalk's Bible Study Tools has several translations including New Revised Standard Version: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/>. On Bible Study page, see *Browse Our Library* tab for reference works. Commentaries here: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/>.

Other Resources:

Read some of my devotionals on my blog: <http://devojournal.wordpress.com/>. Writer helps on my Blog4Writers: <http://emilyakin.com/blog>