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**PRAYER GUIDE**



# INTRODUCTION

As you begin the important task of choosing a new leader for your school, your committee is no doubt eager to make progress. It would be easy to begin diligently reviewing resumes and discussing candidate qualifications without ensuring that your efforts are covered in prayer.

We give you this booklet, however, to offer you an opportunity to pause and ensure prayer is part of the search process from beginning to end.

We've compiled these ten devotions that will guide the candidate search and evaluations. You are selecting a leader to be part of your school! This is a weighty matter indeed. God has given you a divine responsibility that will have an impact on several generations.

These devotions may be used during personal quiet times of study, reflection, and prayer. As a group, you may decide to ask one person to open or close your meetings by reading aloud a devotion and its accompanying prayer and then having a few minutes of discussion. Your group may wish to spend a few minutes talking about the printed quote or reading the suggested Scripture aloud. Some meetings may simply call for a time of silent, individual reading and reflection. Ask God to use these devotions as a way of unifying your group's purpose and revealing his good purposes.

As your search progresses, your group may identify a specific characteristic in a leader that your team needs. Revisit a Scripture passage or devotion that targets your areas of concern, and if you need more Scriptural insight, consult the Appendix.

We've compiled a list of helpful Scriptures for study, organized by desired leadership qualities. We pray this guide will be a valuable tool as you implore the Holy Spirit to guide your search. May God richly bless your important work.



**Brian Jensen, Senior Vice President**

# THE TASK AT HAND

Scripture Focus: Jeremiah 29:11, John 5:30

Choosing leaders for Christian schools carries with it an even greater weight than that of other schools. These leaders inherit a heavy responsibility and many difficult decisions.

We'd like to think it's just another action item for the week or another meeting appointment. But it's not. Choosing a new leader to impact the ministry, outreach, and vision of your school is a sacred responsibility.

Your decision will have a lasting impact for years to come. Your decision may influence the lives of hundreds or thousands of people – quite decidedly changing lives.

However, the great thing about making these tough decisions is that faith-driven leaders can be assured that God has a purpose, and his purpose is ultimately for our good and his glory.

As you begin this journey of deliberation, evaluation, and decision-making, consider the serious charge before you. Devote this process to prayer and adopt an attitude of receiving the Holy Spirit's lead and then obeying it. Thank God for his sovereign reign over this process. Trust in him for all outcomes.

## SCRIPTURE

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

John 5:30

## ENCOURAGEMENT

The “you” in Jeremiah 29:11 is plural. God's plans are for ALL that are separated and want to come home will be returned to him. Your decisions as a leader either contribute to God's restoration process or distract others from it.

Brian Jensen  
Senior Vice President  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We do not take lightly the task before us. We trust and rely on your sovereignty in this process. We pray for your leading us to the right candidates and making the wisest decisions. We pray that you would strengthen our trust and help us to obey. We pray that we will hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. We give this decision to you and ask that you lead us each step of the way.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# THE WELL OF WISDOM

Scripture Focus: 2 Chronicles 1; Psalm 111

When you think of wisdom, what comes to mind? A Yoda-type character who is old and spouts inspirational sayings? Maybe you think about smart investors or world leaders who changed the course of human history. Perhaps, you consider Mother Teresa, Mr. Rogers, or Erma Bombeck among the wisest.

Wisdom is that intangible quality of intellect, discernment, humility, and understanding. A wise person is more than smart. He or she is not just a good problem-solver or compassionate. A truly wise person encompasses all of these traits.

Our culture and leadership training materials teach us that wisdom can be learned – that it can be practiced and honed as a skill to be mastered.

The Bible, however, tells us differently. Wisdom, first and foremost, originates with our Creator. God himself grants wisdom, which begins with loving and following him.

When God told King Solomon to ask for anything as he set out to reign and lead Israel, Solomon didn't ask for riches or power. Solomon asked for wisdom. And God granted it to him.

What is your priority request during this search process? Have you asked God for wisdom? Are you seeking him and seeking to follow his will?

And what type of leader are you seeking? One who is seeking God and his wisdom above all else?

## SCRIPTURE

Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people ...

2 Chronicles 1:10

## ENCOURAGEMENT

The Bible says that wisdom begins with loving and following God. For the wise spiritual leader, the light of Christ shining from within is far greater than any light that may shine on him or her.

Andy Westmoreland, EdD.  
Senior Vice President, Higher Education  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We pray for wisdom. God, help us to seek you above all. Grant us wisdom as we seek a new leader. Help us to choose the man or woman who seeks you, loves you, and will be a wise leader for us.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# NOW IS THE TIME

Scripture Focus: Esther 4:1-17; Acts 17:24-28

Esther found herself in a unique position. A Jew, she had access to the Persian King as his Queen. When she discovered one of the King's high officials was plotting to murder her people, she realized she must confront the King and expose the truth.

However, Esther hesitated. Approaching the king was forbidden and doing so meant likely death.

Her cousin, Mordecai, however, insisted that she use her unique position to fight for her people. He persuaded her that her unique position afforded her the opportunity to protect her people. She had been placed where she was for a specific reason.

Belief in God's sovereignty means that his hand is guiding each step of the decision-making process. He orchestrates timing to ultimately achieve his good purposes. If you find yourself in an unusual situation that seems to defy logic or reason, you may have been placed there for "such a time as this." Ask God what the meaning of the timing is, why you're there, and what outcome he desires.

Likewise, as you sift through candidate profiles and consider possible leaders for your school, ask yourselves if any individuals stand out as being an "Esther." Is there someone who may bring a needed different perspective to the job? Has someone come to you in an unconventional way?

What "time" is it for your school, and what can a new leader do for it? Has God chosen anyone to lead during "such a time as this"?

## SCRIPTURE

And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?

Esther 4:14b

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Sometimes the best answers to our toughest questions are disguised in unexpected circumstances. Don't miss the hand of God just because His ordering of events looks different than you thought they would.

Jaqueline Gustafson  
Vice President  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We acknowledge your sovereign control of time, space, and history. We know that you are bringing us a future leader who will be an ideal match for our school and who can answer an as-yet-unnoticed need. Help us to identify the candidate for whom you've chosen who is perfect for us at "such a time as this."

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

Scripture Focus: 1 Samuel 16, Psalm 51

What qualifications does the “perfect candidate” have? It may be easy to rattle off a series of adjectives that any school would desire for its leader: vision, courage, perseverance, and so on.

You're not just searching for a visionary leader, an administrative expert, or someone who is going to use their leadership skills to guide your school to a bright future. You may need some of those qualifications, certainly, but as a Christian school, your group is charged with a task that goes beyond a candidate's resume.

In 1 Samuel 16, Samuel is sent by God to anoint the next king of Israel. Samuel knows that God has chosen one of Jesse's sons to be the next king. Jesse's son, Eliab, must have been impressive in appearance in some manner. Perhaps he was tall, handsome, and strong. Whatever his physical attributes, they were enough to prompt Samuel to think that Eliab must be God's chosen one.

But the Lord quickly corrects Samuel and tells him not to consider his appearance or his height. The Lord isn't impressed by the same things that impress us. He's not making decisions based on our good looks, our polite manners, or our impressive reputations. Instead, the Lord says he's concerned chiefly with one's heart.

God has chosen David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, to be the next king of Israel. Knowing on this side of the story what we know about David – how he goes on to be an adulterer and murderer, for example – we may wonder exactly what it was that God saw in his heart. Yet the Lord himself calls David a man after God's own heart.

A sinner? Yes. But as we read through the Psalms that David wrote, we also get a glimpse into his heart for God. We see a broken, repentant, and contrite man who humbles himself before God.

David was and is considered one of Israel's greatest kings. No doubt, he was gifted with leadership and administrative skills, but most importantly, he was a man after God's own heart.

## SCRIPTURE

The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7b

## ENCOURAGEMENT

A candidate may look good on paper, but without an active commitment to Christ, he or she will not be good fit in a faith-based, Christ-centered school. Search for those women and men who actively pursue the heart of God.

Kimberley Wiedefeld  
Vice President  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We pray for your guidance as our search continues. We pray for the leader of your choosing—for someone who is capable and competent who will help lead our school faithfully. We pray for a leader who is unapologetically devoted to you and who chases after the heart of God. Reveal to us your choice for the position.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# THE RIGHT PERSON

Scripture Focus: Acts 6:1-7

Have you ever been working in a job you hated? Have you ever had to work on a task you were horrible at doing? Part of the reason we spend 13+ years in school is to figure out what we enjoy, what we do well, and how we can somehow marry the two to find a vocation that will allow us to support ourselves and our families.

Unfortunately, many of us have missed out on really discovering how God wants us to live. To thrive as fully devoted disciples of Christ, we are called to faithfully explore how God has gifted us to specifically work for His glory.

You know when you're working in your gifts and strengths. You know when tasks and assignments seem to come almost effortlessly and give you a deep peace and joy. Doing what God created you to do is liberating and enhances the entire environment.

A need arose in the early church: to see that widows received their fair share of the daily distribution of food. This was a task that involved both administrative and ministerial skills. It required leaders who were both wise and Spirit-filled.

One of the chosen men, Stephen, is described as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." Once he and the others are placed into their leadership positions, the church numbers exploded. The scripture says that the number of disciples increased rapidly, and many people were being converted.

Their ministry thrived, as God blessed the work of the faithful, Spirit-filled men working with their gifts in the right jobs.

## SCRIPTURE

... They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. ..."

Acts 6:5b

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Focus on getting the right people into the right roles, and your school will be free to thrive at its highest level.

Laura Weaver  
Vice President  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

Help us choose the right person for the right position. Give us wisdom as we seek to help this new leader work within his or her strengths, and give our new hire wisdom to identify their gifts. We pray for a quality match that will allow our school to thrive for your glory.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# A SERVANT LEADER

Scripture Focus: Philippians 2:1-13

Think of the leaders of some of the most prestigious organizations. No one would argue that these men and women are indeed smart and talented. How many of them, do you think, would agree with the picture of “leadership” we read about in Philippians 2?

Our business culture is one where selfish ambition thrives. Too often, we’re concerned with our own interests because there may be no one else to look out for us.

Following Christ turns all the conventional theories about how to get ahead on its head. A truly effective leader is one who is humble, loving, kind, and compassionate. He or she considers others first and puts himself or herself last. Even in the church world, true servant-leaders are a special breed.

Once again, Jesus provides us with the perfect example. Because he himself was brought lowest and he humbled himself unto death, he gave those who would trust in him the ability to do the same. It’s God’s good purpose that we should have the mindset of Christ and it is God’s great power that equips us to do so (Philippians 2:13).

## SCRIPTURE

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:3-4

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Humility and forgiveness are antidotes to selfishness, resentment, and self-righteousness. These are traits that every mature and gifted leader needs if they want to make it through the job with their soul intact.

Diane McGrath  
Vice President  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We pray for humble spirits as we do your work. We pray for the next leader to join our school - that you would raise up a man or woman who has a Christ-like, humble spirit. We pray this person would be full of humility, oriented towards others ahead of themselves. Protect this person from the temptation to self-promote and self-preserve.

In Christ’s name,  
Amen

# GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

Scripture Focus: Exodus 17; Luke 8:22-25

For years, the medical community has known how harmful stress can be to our bodies and minds. It can contribute to heart disease, high blood pressure, depression, and insomnia to name only a few.

Stress can also shine a revealing light on our spiritual health. What happens when you're pressed from every side and pulled in every direction? How does your faith fare when you lose a loved one, get bad news, or are facing a threat?

For leaders, the pressures seem greater. That's probably because they are responsible for leading dozens, if not hundreds or thousands of people.

Can you feel Moses' frustration with the grumbling Israelites as he appeals to God in Exodus 17? These men, women, and children had just witnessed the great miracle of walking on dry land through the parted Red Sea. Yet it doesn't take long for that experience to fade into discontentment with their leader.

Jesus is woken from a deep sleep on a boat in the middle of a violent storm at sea. His followers are scared and indignant that their leader could rest during such a time.

In both Scriptures, the power of God's calm is revealed. Through Moses; the Lord miraculously provides water for the people and continues to lead them into the Promised Land. Jesus wakes, reassures the disciples, and calms the storm.

God is not chaotic, confused, fretful, or fearful. God's leaders, when faced with those emotions among God's people, turn to him, trusting he will offer a peaceful response.

## SCRIPTURE

But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, 'Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?' Then Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.'

Exodus 17:3-4

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Chaos has a way of revealing a leader's strengths. Leaders remain calm when staring at a mountain of problems and learn to become comfortable even in stretching situations.

Ed Fry  
President/CEO  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We pray for all the stressful situations ahead and for a leader who does not shrink under the weight of uncertainty. We pray for a leader who knows a deep, abiding peace in all circumstances because of the indwelling Holy Spirit and an unshakable faith in your great sovereignty. Give us insight into how the candidates handle difficult situations so that we may make an informed hiring decision for our school.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# HEAR, TRUST, & OBEY

Scripture Focus: Genesis 12; Isaiah 55:8-9

In Genesis, Abram was living with his family in Haran when the Lord gave him some surprising news and a command.

Abram discovers he's going to be made into a great nation—that his descendants will be a great blessing to all the families on the earth.

Considering the fact that Abram's wife was not able to have children and the Lord was uprooting Abram from all his relatives and homeland, Abram must have been surprised at this news.

If you were in Abram's situation, how would you react? The Scripture does not say anything about Abram's emotions, but certainly doubt, confusion, and fear would be reasonable reactions.

Despite that, Abram obeys the Lord. He goes out—from his family and home and follows his calling.

Godly leaders are men and women who listen for God's guiding call – trusting in him and obeying his commands. They look beyond what the world considers “right” conclusions and seek God's will instead. They know in their souls that God's ways and God's thoughts cannot always be described in human terms.

Your school needs leaders like Abram—one who hears God, trusts him, and obeys without delay.

## SCRIPTURE

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him. ...

Genesis 12:4

## ENCOURAGEMENT

We may sometimes wonder how God is working in our schools and in the lives of our candidates when situations do not make sense to us. What a delight to know that we serve an all-knowing God Who works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. By faith, we can believe as Abram did.

Laura Weaver  
Vice President  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We thank you for the life of Abram and how you used him in your larger story. We are grateful that we today are part of that “blessing” you promised to him. Send to us the man or woman that you call out to journey to our school. Send us that person who hears, trusts, and always obeys your voice.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# SET APART FOR GOD

Scripture Focus: Daniel 1; Romans 12:1-2

Our culture can play such a powerful role in how we conduct our lives. Media moguls spend lots of money on marketing messages to get us to consume more stuff. Online images dictate how we dress, how we regard our own bodies, and what we call beautiful. Reality television stars become role models, while professional athletes, rock musicians, and wealthy business people demand our attention. Despite all the biblical instructions to not be of this world, we Christians so often blend in far too much with our culture.

When Daniel and his friends were taken into Babylonian captivity and placed into King Nebuchadnezzar's inner circle, their first concern was maintaining their distinct identity. They knew they were set apart in God's family and they refused to assimilate into Babylonia culture.

Daniel knew the temptation to fall into their way of life was great. However, by denying the king's food, Daniel was reminded of his true identity at every meal.

What happens when you nibble at the King's fare? It tastes good! With each bite at each meal, you become a bit more desensitized to your surroundings. Your guard is down when your belly is full.

Your school needs a leader who will embrace their calling in Christ. Set apart for God's good works, this leader needs to turn away from the King's table.

God will bless those who pursue purity in him.

## SCRIPTURE

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel. ...

Daniel 1:8-9

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Effective leaders come from many backgrounds and can be equipped with a variety of skills. However, one quality is always evident within truly effective leader—a steadfast focus on mission.

Brian Jensen  
Senior Vice President  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

Protect the leader whom you have chosen to lead our school. Give them discernment to recognize the King's fare that's in today's culture. Help them courageously choose purity over defilement. We pray your blessings on our leader as they make important decisions.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# THE RACE BEFORE US

Scripture Focus: Hebrews 11-12

Living the Christian life is often challenging.

We know that thousands of people have struggled and sacrificed for the cause of Christ. We know that fighting temptation, taking a stand, and doing the right thing in the face of adversity can be difficult.

The Bible outlines the great heroes of our faith in Hebrews 11. These men and women walked by faith even though the Scripture tells us they did not receive what was promised. God provided something better – the finished work of Christ (verses 39-40).

How are we then to live? We are to live a persevering life full of hope. Challenges and struggles will not defeat us because we belong to Christ. We are to run the race to which we have been appointed. We are to have Jesus—and only Jesus—in our gaze because our faith is not just in him, it is built upon him.

Your faith has brought you to the starting line.

You have “trained” for this moment – through hours of prayer, reflection, examination, and discussion. Trust Jesus, take action, and move forward in your hiring decision.

It's time to run.

## SCRIPTURE

... Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Hebrews 12:1b-2a

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Inspired leadership takes more than talent. Christian schools need leaders of the highest caliber; leaders who are anchored by experience, driven by spiritual values, and focused on impact.

Andy Westmoreland, EdD  
Senior Vice President, Higher Education  
FaithSearch Partners

## PRAYER

Dear God,

We rejoice that you have brought us to this place in the process. We thank you for being with us each step of the way. We thank you for the Holy Spirit's guidance in our decision. Please grant us the confidence we need as we run the race you have marked for our school. Keep our eyes always fixed on Jesus.

In Christ's name,  
Amen

# APPENDIX

Read, Study, and Pray as you seek a leader who is ....

## 01 TEACHER

Matthew 28:20  
1 Timothy 3:2  
1 Timothy 4:1  
1 Timothy 6:2  
2 Timothy 2:25

## 02 CHOSEN

Isaiah 6:8  
John 15:16  
Acts 9:15  
1 Corinthians  
1:27-29

## 03 HUMBLE

Proverbs 16:19  
Proverbs 22:4  
Proverbs 29:23  
Isaiah 57:15  
Micah 6:8  
Matthew 18:4  
Luke 14:10  
Luke 22:26  
Romans 12:3  
James 4:10

## 04 SHEPHERD

Jeremiah 3:15  
Jeremiah 23:4  
Ezekiel 34:23  
John 21:17  
Acts 20:28  
1 Peter 5:2

## 05 COURAGEOUS

Deuteronomy 31:6  
Psalm 118:6  
Proverbs 3:24  
Proverbs 29:25  
Isaiah 12:2

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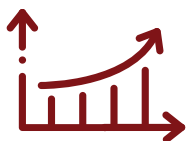
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