

SOAP: Journaling Guidelines

S.O.A.P. Journal Instructions

The Life Journal is a powerful tool for growing disciples. Through the process of journaling, you can discover the power of Scripture, discernment, and prayer. Journaling is an excellent way to both record and process what God has spoken to us. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time, to reflect on and review some of the 'gems' that you have received. Without writing them down, you may forget those blessings and some very important lessons! And while journaling is a very personal time with the Lord, you may want to share some of your daily journaling with your small group or mentors. Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insight and even encourage others.

Step-By-Step Instructions

You'll need two items besides this journal: a Bible and a pen or pencil. Next, set aside a certain time in your schedule each day and find a quiet place where you're not likely to be distracted. Many find peaceful meditation sites in nature, by the beach, in the back yard, or in a favorite lawn chair. It's not important when you do your devotions, but that you make it a very important part of your day. Be encouraged to give God the best part of your day, whatever time that is. For morning people, it's a great way to start your day. For others, it's 20-minute lunchtime appointments with Jesus. For the night owls, it's the final act of the day, the time to quiet their hearts and hear God's voice. One way to do your devotions is to follow the simple acronym,

S.O.A.P. which stands for Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer.

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S for Scripture Open your Bible to the reading found under today's date of your Bible reading chart. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. Highlight, underline or place a mark in the margin of your Bible, next to the scriptures that stand out. When you are done, reread the verses you marked, look for one or two that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

O for Observation What do you think God is saying to you in this scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you. Paraphrase and write this scripture down in your own words, in your journal.

A for Application Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today.

P for Prayer This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out. If this seems a little overwhelming, take it slow and keep it simple. No matter how you do your devotions, the important thing is to show up for your daily appointment, because God is always waiting for you!