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WALKING TO WISDOM

LITERATURE GUIDE SERIES

The Screwtape Letters

C.S. Lewis



by Kelly Warner



Inklings Collection



Walking to Wisdom Literature Guide: The Screwtape Letters

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WALKING TO WISDOM LITERATURE GUIDE: *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS*

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INTRODUCTION TO STUDENTS

Dear Students,

We are excited that you have the privilege of reading *The Screwtape Letters* alongside a mentor (the writer of this guide) who will lead you “further up and further in” (C.S. Lewis’s words in *The Last Battle*). We aim to give you a delightful experience with this book and, in the process, to share practices that we have learned that will help you become a good reader:

- reading carefully
- taking time to absorb a book
- paying attention to details as well as to great ideas over the whole book
- learning to mark up a book
- taking a few notes while reading
- learning to ask and answer good questions
- synthesizing those questions together in a piece of writing or an engaging project

If you spend a year doing all of the Inklings courses, you will not only collect some of the most important books and thoughts, but you will also have increased your abilities and pleasures as a reader.

C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Dorothy Sayers (three members of the Inklings whose work you will study in the Walking to Wisdom Literature Guides: The Inklings Collection) wrote nonfiction as well as fiction, and we begin your reading of fiction with a few select nonfiction essays they wrote on topics that overlap with the topics in the book you are reading. Part of their remarkable legacy is that they wrote about many of the same great ideas in stories, plays, poems, and nonfiction essays. This means that reading the ideas without the stories in these nonfiction works, or “context essays,” will be a significant help to you in understanding them and in fully exploring the characters, plot, and imagery. American writer Flannery O’Connor said, “Our response to life is different if we have been taught only a definition of faith than if we have trembled with Abraham as he held a knife over Isaac.” This is what stories do—they give us an experience of certain knowledge, which is why how we feel about the book is part of what the book is teaching us. We have kept these things in heart and mind while making this guide for you.

We have suggested two reading schedules—one that gives eleven days to study the book and the other that gives twenty-one days. Feel free to double that or add extra time for writing and enrichment activities (found at the end of the book). Your teacher will know what is best for your schedule. We have provided you with some space for answering questions, but we recommend that you also keep your thoughts, notes, and musings in a three-ring binder (or on the computer). For the Life Questions, you may want to keep a separate journal for meditative contemplation. We would like you to have as much room as you need, because you will find that the Inklings writers require a lot of space! It is highly recommended that you look up unfamiliar words found in C.S. Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters*, and keep a journal of these new vocabulary words and definitions as you work through the book and the guide.

You have the option of studying one guide or a few, or taking a year to study them all to fulfill your British literature requirement for high school English. Enjoy the study!

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE FOR THE WALKING TO WISDOM LITERATURE GUIDES: THE INKLINGS COLLECTION

C.S. Lewis

Context Essays (selections from these are read at the beginning of each guide): excerpts from *Mere Christianity*,¹ *The Weight of Glory*,² *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature*,³ and “Theology in Stories” by Gilbert Meilaender⁴

- *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*⁵
- *The Last Battle*⁶
- *The Screwtape Letters*⁷
- *Till We Have Faces*⁸

Dorothy Sayers

Context Essays: excerpts from *Letters to a Diminished Church*⁹

The Man Born to Be King (twelve-play cycle integrating the four gospels)¹⁰

J.R.R. Tolkien

- *The Fellowship of the Ring*¹¹
- *The Two Towers*¹²
- *The Return of the King*¹³

-
1. The Walking to Wisdom Literature Guides: The Inklings Collection is keyed to the following editions listed in these footnotes: C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).
 2. C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).
 3. C.S. Lewis, *On Stories: And Other Essays on Literature* (San Diego: Harcourt Books, 1966).
 4. Gilbert Meilaender, “Theology in Stories: C.S. Lewis and the Narrative Quality of Experience,” *Word and World* 1/3 (1981): 222, <http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/1-3_Experience/1-3_Meilaender.pdf>.
 5. C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).
 6. Lewis, *Chronicles*.
 7. C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).
 8. C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1980).
 9. Dorothy Sayers, *Letters to a Diminished Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004).
 10. Dorothy Sayers, *The Man Born to Be King: A Play-Cycle on the Life of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Written for Broadcasting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1943). Reprinted with permission by Classical Academic Press, 2014.
 11. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2005).
 12. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Two Towers* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2005).
 13. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2005).

THE INKLINGS

The Inklings was an informal literary discussion group associated with the University of Oxford, England, for nearly two decades between the early 1930s and late 1949.¹ The Inklings were writers, including C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Dorothy Sayers, and Charles Williams, who shared a love of similar stories and a remarkable commitment to ideas they shared. Their literary philosophies tended to depart from the period in which they were writing (modernist, 1900–1950) as did their cultural values. They liked to walk together and meet regularly to read their work aloud to one another.

“Properly speaking,” wrote Warren Lewis (brother of C.S.), “the Inklings was neither a club nor a literary society, though it partook of the nature of both. There were no rules, officers, agendas, or formal elections.”² While Dorothy Sayers did not attend the meetings herself, partly because she didn’t live in the same town or teach at Oxford, she is often claimed as an Inklings, as a friend of Lewis and Charles Williams. Her correspondence with both was avid and their work concerned with many of the same subjects, characters, and plots. They were a great encouragement to one other. Lewis even read Sayers’s play cycle, *The Man Born to Be King* (which is included in our literature guide series), each year during the Lenten period.

Readings and discussions of the members’ unfinished works were the principal purposes of meetings. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, Lewis’s *Out of the Silent Planet*, and Williams’s *All Hallows’ Eve* were among the first novels the Inklings read to one another. Tolkien’s fictional Notion Club (see *Sauron Defeated*) was based on the Inklings. Meetings were not all serious; the Inklings amused themselves by having competitions to see who could read notoriously bad prose for the longest without laughing.³

Until late 1949, Inklings readings and discussions usually occurred during Thursday evenings in C.S. Lewis’s college rooms at Magdalen College. The Inklings and friends were also known to gather informally on Tuesdays at midday at a local public house, The Eagle and Child.

We hope that you will keep the spirit of the Inklings alive in your own study of this guide by working out your own responses to their work in community and conversation as well as laboring over your writing and sharing it with fellow travelers seeking to walk a similar path. Consider studying this course online at Scholé Academy (classicalacademicpress.com/online-courses/).

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1. Clyde S. Kilby and Marjorie Lamp Mead, eds., *Brothers and Friends: The Diaries of Major Warren Hamilton Lewis* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 230.
 2. Bruce L. Edwards, *Apologist, Philosopher, and Theologian*, vol. 3 of *C.S. Lewis: Life, Works, and Legacy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), 279.
 3. “War of Words over World’s Worst Writer,” *Culture Northern Ireland*, May 9, 2008, <<http://www.culturenorthernireland.org/article/1739/war-of-words-over-world-s-worst-writer?search=inklings&rpg=1>>.

DAILY READING OUTLINES FOR C.S. LEWIS'S *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS*

Schedule 1

This schedule allows you to finish the book quickly. However, you will need significant time each day to devote to this heavier workload. This schedule also allows you to spend more time on final theme essays and enrichment activities when you finish the book.

Day 1: Context essay excerpts from *Mere Christianity*: “Charity” (Book III, chapter 9); “The Great Sin” (Book III, chapter 8); “Faith” (Book III, chapter 11).

Day 2: Context essay excerpts from *Mere Christianity*: “The Invasion” (Book II, chapter 2); “Time and Beyond Time” (Book IV, chapter 3)

Day 3: Preface; Chapters 1–3

Day 4: Chapters 4–7

Day 5: Chapters 8–11

Day 6: Chapters 12–16

Day 7: Chapters 17–20

Day 8: Chapters 21–25

Day 9: Chapters 26–27

Day 10: Chapters 28–31

Day 11: *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*

Schedule 2

This schedule allows you more time to engage with the book as you read. You can spend more time on developing short answers to discussion questions, journal responses to life questions, or entries in a vocabulary journal. This schedule also allows more flexibility in time devoted daily to this assignment. Your teacher may give you still more time by adding a day or two to each segment.

Days 1–2: Context essay excerpts from *Mere Christianity*: “Charity” (Book III, chapter 9); “The Great Sin” (Book III, chapter 8); “Faith” (Book III, chapter 11)

Days 3–4: Context essay excerpts from *Mere Christianity*: “The Invasion” (Book II, chapter 2); “Time and Beyond Time” (Book IV, chapter 3)

Days 5–6: Preface; Chapters 1–3

Days 7–8: Chapters 4–7

Days 9–10: Chapters 8–11

Days 11–12: Chapters 12–16

Days 13–14: Chapters 17–20

Days 15–16: Chapters 21–25

Days 17–18: Chapters 26–27

Days 19–20: Chapters 28–31

Day 21: *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*

ELEMENTS IN THE LITERATURE GUIDE

Make Notes: Possess the Book

Becoming a reader is all about learning to pay attention and gather the details to relish and realize the significance and unity of what you are reading. Try using the following symbols or making up your own system that covers the same basics. Underline interesting passages. Write in the margins so that you can go back to reference what you wrote to make your Great Ideas Quotes pages, answer questions, hold discussions, and support points you make in your writing assignments. Here is a simple marking system that we have found effective:

- * This is important or delightful.
- ? I have a question.
- ?? I'm confused.
- ! This is surprising or exciting to me.
- T This could relate to one of the themes or motifs of the book.
- ✓ This relates to something else I have read.
- X This is part of the conflict or the problem of the story.
- C This is significant in defining this character.

Tracing the Great Ideas

As you read, choose quotes related to the following great ideas topics (or themes) so that you can trace them all the way through the book. (Please remember that you are welcome to find your own great ideas themes in addition to ours.) Then be on the lookout for how they are worked out in each particular context. Some chapters may contain quotes relating to only one great ideas topic or to several topics. Write the quotes on the Great Ideas Quotes pages. (See page 8 for an example of how to record the quotations.) At the end of the guide you will reflect upon the themes of the course and choose one from which you will develop an argumentative essay. You may use our great idea definition for your essay's thesis or create a thesis of your own.

Great Ideas

Real pleasure: As God's invention, real pleasure serves God's purpose to replace lies with the truth of God's love for us as individuals and bring us into relationship with Him; pleasure brings us self-knowledge and humility, two conditions for coming into relationship with God.

Evil/Twisting of the good: Satan succeeds in seducing our souls only when he can deceive us to accept a lesser substitute of what God has already graciously given.

Relationships: Screwtape understands the important role relationships play in the patient's life and works to undermine the patient's faith through relationships.

Time: Lewis illustrates his theory about God's perspective on time through the metaphor of a writer and his book.

Gradual road to hell: C.S. Lewis argues that the most common and dangerous way for a person to wind up in hell is through small steps of disobedience, which she commits without any serious consideration of the consequences.

Emotion and faith: Lewis argues that the changing nature and power of emotions can become a stumbling block for Christians, or can teach us to persevere through the peaks and troughs of our feelings.

Individual soul: Lewis presents God as chiefly concerned with individual people, over and against nations, and committed to individuals becoming the fullest version of themselves.

More background

The two truths that undergird C.S. Lewis’s perspective on life are that individuals were created to be in relationship with God, and that the human soul exists for eternity. Lewis portrays Screwtape’s equal awareness of these truths and characterizes him as desperate to destroy any person’s relationship with God to ruin her eternal existence and union with God.

Tell It Back

The method of narrating the chapters orally, or “telling it back,” is a wonderful way to sum up the content of each chapter—with or without partners. You can even act out a chapter. This is a basic element of learning to read which never loses its delight and capacity to delight others. It also helps to develop a strong mental outlining ability. After each day’s reading do an oral summary on a recording device or to another human being. If you are in a classroom setting, this is nicely done in groups where students coordinate what material they will share, in what sequence and in what amount of time. It should be a summary, hence shorter than it took to read it.

Reading Questions

Reading questions encourage close reading of the text by asking comprehension questions. All answers are found in the text.

Discussion Questions

Discussion questions require you to synthesize the main ideas of the text that may be either explicitly or implicitly stated. Your answers to these should explain Lewis’s perspective, not your own. Depending on your level, learning needs, or preference, the in-depth discussion questions may be written as short answers (one to two paragraphs), discussed with the teacher/fellow students, or simply read to inspire critical thinking.

Life Questions—Journaling Assignment

It’s difficult to read any of C.S. Lewis’s writing without thinking about applying his ideas to your own life. *The Screwtape Letters* is no exception. After each reading section, several “life questions” help you reflect on your own personal experiences and examine your own life in light of ideas from *The Screwtape Letters*. You may write informal responses to the life questions in a separate journal.

Write Your Own Discussion Questions

At the end of each section, create two discussion questions that you think would make for good discussion among classmates, friends, and family. These should not chiefly be questions that have a sentence-long answer, but rather questions that would stimulate a longer exchange of ideas. Use our discussion questions and life questions as guides for writing yours.

Chapter Summaries (Optional)

(This is optional, because you have already done this in oral or illustration form for the Tell It Back section. Whether or not you do it will depend on your teacher.) After reading each assigned chapter, summarize the main thematic arguments and significant plot details in two to five sentences (ours average one hundred words). A well-written summary concisely retells the most important ideas and events of the chapter. Avoid directly quoting or simply rephrasing sentences in your summaries. This exercise will strengthen your ability to consistently identify essential information from a text and retell this information without plagiarizing. Check the chapter summaries provided in the teacher’s edition after you have attempted your own so that you can be sure you have covered the subject adequately. Summaries are also collected as an appendix in the teacher’s edition (TE).

INTRODUCTION TO *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS*

In his book *The Art of Loving*, Erich Fromm articulates the human dread of isolation, of separateness, and describes how people handle the dread differently—some absorb weaker wills into their own, and some attach themselves to a stronger will in a symbiotic union, making themselves part of another person who directs them, guides them, and is their life. According to Fromm, love is the only way of knowledge—in the act of giving myself I find myself, I discover myself, I discover the beloved, I discover humankind. Self-transcendence—that is rising above the limited perspective and needs of one individual—has been a quest from the beginning of philosophy and of time. Different views of God, humans, and nature offer different answers about how we achieve this.

Lewis makes this issue of self-absorption versus self-giving or love the center of his Christian understanding; in any given moment we are either living by devouring another for our own benefit or out of our own ruling passions, or we are taking something that could have been ours and giving it to another for the benefit of another. The nearly unbelievable paradox of the Christian scriptures and life and the template that Christ laid down for us is that this giving is actually a receiving. This takes the “it is better to give than to receive” idea one step further—“to give is to receive.”

Lewis demonstrates this radical idea of love and union with each other and with God in the negative in *The Screwtape Letters*. He shows the devouring nature of the fallen angels, or demonic creatures: even when they use terms of affection or endearment, the tempters are truly out for themselves only and always (even as an uncle or mentor). As the book goes on, the voice (Screwtape) becomes more menacing and more interested in absorbing the other will (Wormwood). Hell is noisy, devouring, competitive, and self-seeking, a place of separateness. (Or as Sartre says it: “Hell is the other.”) Hell is also bureaucratic and grimy, the twisting of all that is good. It lacks creativity (as evil can only twist or imitate but cannot create); it is hungry and never full. Pride, which the Church has always considered the chief vice, and which leads to or undergirds all other vices, is central to this hellish approach to others and to oneself, as well as to God (“the complete anti-God state of mind,” as Lewis calls it in *Mere Christianity*).

Lewis was absolutely insistent that nothing is automatic in life—that our will is totally involved in our direction and our eternal destiny; we participate with evil wills or with God’s will, but we always have a choice. *The Screwtape Letters* provides unique insight into the battle to influence a person’s choice. Screwtape’s advice to the younger tempter reveals how to capitalize on different circumstances to persuade someone to join his will with hell’s instead of submitting to God’s will. This submission ties in to Lewis’s discussion of the law of undulation with its troughs and peaks, as well as the matter of time. In chapter 6, Screwtape explains, “What the Enemy means by this [submitting] is primarily that he should accept with patience the tribulation which has actually been dealt out to him—the present anxiety and suspense. It is about *this* that he is to say ‘Thy will be done,’ and for the daily task of bearing *this* that the daily bread will be provided” (25). Further, in chapter 8, he explains that this daily surrendering happens under changing circumstances. Because we humans are both spirit and bodies, our experience is never completely steady but undulating. The law of undulation describes “the repeated return to a level from which they repeatedly fall back, a series of troughs and peaks . . . in every department of . . . life” (37). Screwtape explains that part of the Enemy’s (God’s) love for us is to give us perfect freedom, but this naturally involves us having to choose—to learn to believe and act even when our own animal and spiritual lives are sorely tempting us to forsake our faith (through exhaustion or loneliness). Screwtape notices:

[God even] withdraws, if not in fact, at least from their conscious experience, all those supports and incentives. He leaves the creature to stand up on its own legs—to carry out from the will alone duties which have lost all relish. It is during such trough periods, much more than during the peak periods, that it is growing into the sort of creature He wants it to be. Hence the prayers offered in the state of dryness are those which please Him best. . . . He wants them to learn to walk and must therefore take away His hand. . . . He is pleased even with their stumbles. (40)

In a book told from the twisted and darkened point of view of the hellish tempter, the power of choice and active obedience to God still shines through. Screwtape worries, “Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy’s will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys” (40).

Another surprising aspect of Lewis’s argument in this book is the emphasis on pleasure and pain as “unmistakably real, and therefore . . . a touchstone of reality” (64). Wormwood is severely chastised for allowing the patient to go on a walk and read a book he enjoys. Screwtape argues that pleasure and honest delight allows the patient to recover himself, to “come home” or to fully be himself. It remains Screwtape’s desire to detach the patient from himself—the core of his unique and image-bearing selfhood—and thus detach him from God. True to the paradoxical skill of Lewis, the demon also explains that while the Enemy wants to detach humans from “the clamor of self-will” (65), the deepest likings and impulses of any person are the raw material, the starting point, the distinctness out of which a relationship to God grows and blossoms and yields fruit.

Because of this, Screwtape bemoans, “The man who truly and disinterestedly enjoys any one thing in the world, for its own sake, and without caring two-pence what other people say about it, is by that very fact forearmed against some of our subtlest modes of attack” (66). He goes on to say that cricket, stamp collecting, cocoa, and even tripe and onions have a power to ward off social temptation and has a sort of humility and self-forgetfulness to it that has a spiritual relevance. Augustine (Bishop of Hippo), who influenced Lewis, also discusses the fact that we are what we love, and that formation of our loves is essential to our personhood and our faith. Faith is not a stepping out of our particular selves, but moving more deeply into it toward our Maker. Yet Screwtape is still hopeful that the patient will recover from the moment of pleasure. His best advice for salvaging the patient once he has come closer to himself is to be sure he doesn’t take any action that corresponds to this revelation.

All human action takes place in a linear stream of time. Through *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis redefines our conception of time: Screwtape often advises Wormwood to take advantage of the patient’s limited understanding of it. Because He destined people for eternity, God intends us to be concerned with two things: eternity itself and the present. Since the present best reflects the freedom and actuality of eternity, Screwtape encourages Wormwood to have the patient focus on the past, or especially the future—which is pure conjecture and therefore completely unreal. Lewis thus clarifies our experience of time, but also moves toward explaining God’s perspective. God’s actions (and answers to prayer) are not chained by adherence to a linear progression of time. Moreover, His experience of time protects the integrity of human will and action: “the Enemy does not *foresee* the humans making their free contributions in a future, but sees them doing so in His unbounded Now. And obviously to watch a man doing something is not to make him do it” (150).

C.S. Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters* parades us through the unfamiliar and the both laughable and sickening mind of a demon dedicated to human destruction. The jarring reversal of values and hellishly bureaucratic diction forces us to abandon our typical perspective and interpretive lens for religious literature. And on this voyage through dark spirits, Lewis not only entertains us (or frightens us) with hell’s perspective, but also awakens our hearts to heaven’s reality. *The Screwtape Letters* pushes its readers to confront our often confused and limited perception of reality and, from this new awareness, challenges us to choose to act upon what is true.

For Further Biographical Study

Please see the following resource: <http://www.cslewis.org/resource/chronocsl/>. This website—created by the C.S. Lewis Foundation—suggests and links to a number of other excellent sources.

TRACING THE GREAT IDEAS

You may record your Great Ideas Quotes on the pages that follow or you may want to consider placing copies of the Great Ideas Quotes pages in a three-ring notebook at the beginning of your guide work to keep a “map” of your reading.

You should feel free to shorthand quotes by listing the quote’s beginning and end, then its page number, on the proper Great Ideas Quotes page.

Examples:

Great Ideas Quotes throughout the book for the theme *Relationships*

“When he gets to his pew and looks round him he sees just that selection of his neighbours whom he has hitherto avoided. You want to lean pretty heavily on those neighbours. Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like ‘the body of Christ’ and the actual faces in the next pew.” (Chapter 2, pg. 6)

shorthand version:

“when he gets to his . . . next pew.” (6)

“Make sure that they [his prayers for his mother] are always very ‘spiritual,’ that he is always concerned with the state of her soul and never wither her rheumatism.” (Chapter 3, pg. 12)

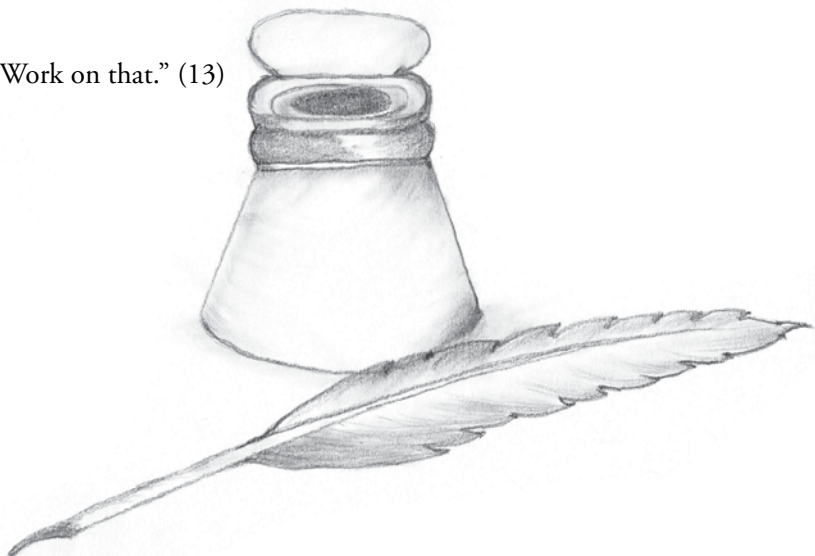
shorthand version:

“make sure that . . . her rheumatism.” (12)

“When two humans have lived together for many years it usually happens that each has tones of voice and expressions of face which are almost unendurably irritating to the other. Work on that.” (Chapter 3, pg. 13)

shorthand version:

“when two humans have lived together. . . . Work on that.” (13)



SUMMARIZE THE CONTEXT ESSAYS: *MERE CHRISTIANITY EXCERPTS*

Before you start *The Screwtape Letters*, you will read and summarize the excerpts from *Mere Christianity* we have selected. Then cross-check your summaries with ours (in the teacher's edition) to make sure you have covered the topic adequately. Our summaries range from 50–125 words, but your teacher will assign a word count for yours. These “context essays” will help you to understand and gain insight into many of the ideas that arise in *The Screwtape Letters*. An important part of becoming a good reader involves being able to summarize your reading in such a way that someone else can understand what you have read.

“Charity” Summary (from *Mere Christianity*, Book III, Chapter 9)

“The Great Sin” Summary (from *Mere Christianity*, Book III, Chapter 8)

“Faith” Summary (from *Mere Christianity*, Book III, Chapter 11)

“The Invasion” Summary (from *Mere Christianity*, Book II, Chapter 2)

“Time and Beyond Time” Summary (from *Mere Christianity*, Book IV, Chapter 3)

UNIT 1: PREFACE; CHAPTERS 1–3



Make Notes in Your Book*

Don't forget to make notes in your book!



Tracing the Great Ideas*

Find quotes in these chapters that relate to the great ideas, or themes. Write down the quote with its page number on the corresponding Great Ideas Quotes pages provided (at the beginning of this guide). Keeping track of quotes will help you write the final theme essays!

Example quotes and their themes

Great Ideas Quotes throughout the book for the theme *Relationships*

“I do not mean the Church . . . tempters uneasy” (5).

“When he gets to his . . . next pew” (6).

Great Ideas Quotes throughout the book for the theme *Gradual road to hell*

“Even if a particular train of thought . . . the stream” (2).

“Keep pressing home . . . of things” (4).

Great Ideas Quotes throughout the book for the theme *Individual soul*

“The history of the European War . . . to Screwtape” (x).



Tell It Back*

Do an oral summary of your reading on a recording device or to another human being. Narrate the most important events in order while sharing the elements of the characters' development that are important.

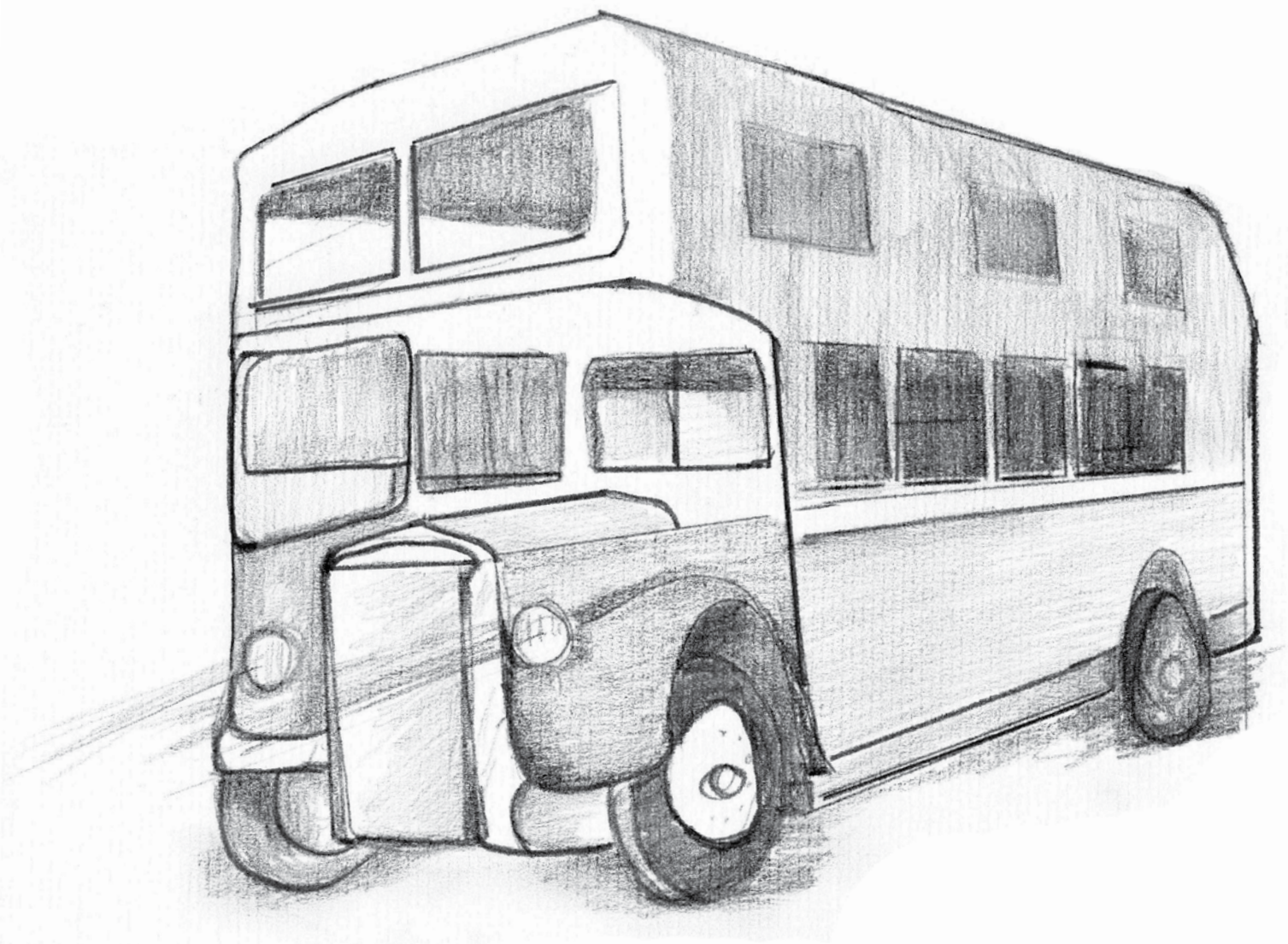
Reading Questions

1. In the first letter, Screwtape says that people no longer think about doctrines as true or false, but use other adjectives. What are some of these adjectives?

*You'll see these icons at the beginning of each unit as reminders to make notes, trace great ideas, and tell back what you've read.

2. On page 5, Screwtape describes two different meanings of the word “church.” What are these two meanings?

3. Who does the patient live with?



Discussion Questions

1. In the preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis explains two errors people make when considering the issue of devils. Identify each view. Then, from your own knowledge and the excerpt “The Invasion” from *Mere Christianity*, explain why Lewis believes Christians should avoid both these views.

2. According to these chapters, how do reason and emotion affect spiritual development?

3. Screwtape reveals prayer can be stripped of its power. How?

Life Questions—Journaling Assignment

Feel free to respond to the life questions here or to keep them in a separate journal used for meditative contemplation.

1. Screwtape encourages Wormwood to focus the patient on other people's faults (such as other people at church and his own mother) without recognizing his own sinful situation or habits that annoy other people. Examine your own life. Are there areas of life in which you are quick to point out the flaws of others? Does this habit help or hurt your enjoyment of life and relationships?

2. Examine your own prayer habits. What satisfies you about your prayer life and what do you feel is lacking? Have you ever found yourself falling into the unhelpful habits that Screwtape encourages?

Write Your Own Discussion Questions

1.

2.

Chapter Summaries

Write your own chapter summaries here or in your binder and then cross-check them with the summaries in the teacher's edition.

Preface:



Chapter 1: _____

Chapter 2: _____

Chapter 3: _____

UNIT 2: CHAPTERS 4–7



Make Notes in Your Book



Tracing the Great Ideas



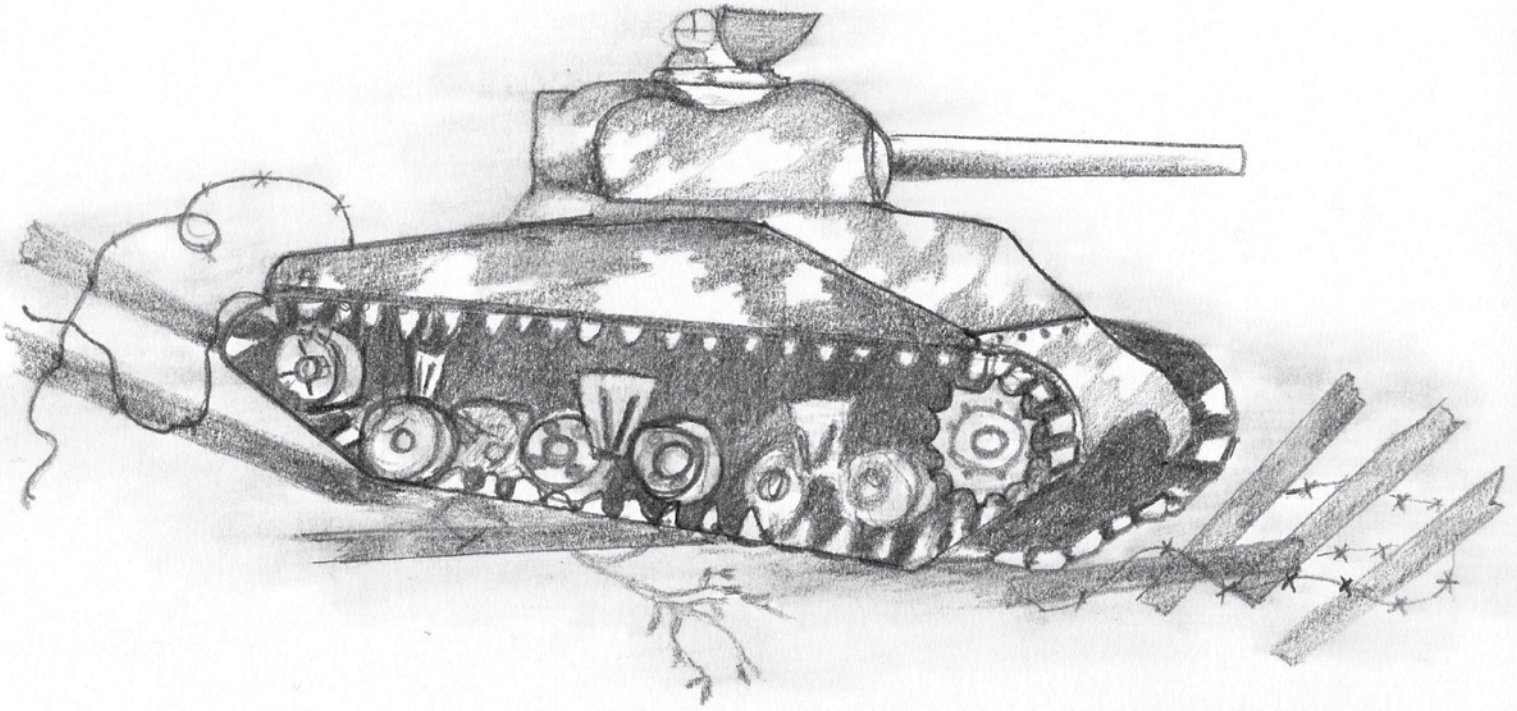
Tell It Back

Reading Questions

1. What is the definition of a materialist magician?

2. How does prayer “practiced by those who are very far advanced in the Enemy’s service” seem similar to the prayer of new “clever and lazy patients” (16)?

3. Does Screwtape wish more people would die in nursing homes or that more people would die during a war?



Discussion Questions

1. According to these chapters, how can prayer be turned into idolatry?

2. Are major world events really important? Compare and contrast Wormwood's and Screwtape's perspectives on the World War II.

3. Why does Screwtape hope to produce a materialist magician? Use the definition from reading question 1 to help you answer this question.

4. Why does Screwtape consider including patriotism or pacifism as part of his religion detrimental to the patient's faith?

Life Questions—Journaling Assignment

Feel free to respond to the life questions here or to keep them in a separate journal used for meditative contemplation.

5. In letter 6, ST urges the junior demon to encourage the patient to hate the people with whom he comes into contact daily and to redirect any good and kind thoughts his patient might have toward people far away from his everyday life—those people the patient may not even know. Who are the closest people in your life, and how do you treat them? Have you been treating those close to you badly while imagining you are doing good to people you don't know? How do your actions toward those closest to you measure up to how you believe you should live?

6. Screwtape demonstrates in letter 7 how adding other ideas to Christianity (in the patient's case, pacifism or patriotism) can cause these other ideas to become more important than the core message of Christianity. In the Christian world today and in your own life, what ideas do you see commonly added to Christianity? In your own experience, how do these experiences affect one's personal faith and the Church as a whole?

Write Your Own Discussion Questions

1. _____

2. _____



Chapter Summaries

Write your own chapter summaries here or in your binder and then cross-check them with the summaries in the teacher's edition.

Chapter 4: _____

Chapter 5: _____

Chapter 6: _____

UNIT 3: CHAPTERS 8–11



Make Notes in Your Book



Tracing the Great Ideas



Tell It Back

Reading Questions

1. In the essay “Faith” (the excerpt from *Mere Christianity* you read before you began *The Screwtape Letters*), Lewis provides three real-life examples of emotion affecting a person’s faith in something ordinary. What is one of the examples?

2. Screwtape describes humans as amphibians on page 37. What does he mean?

3. The patient meets a middle-aged married couple at his office. What information does Screwtape give about their character?

Discussion Questions

1. Explain the law of undulation. How does this relate to a Christian's spiritual development?

2. Why are friendships important to spiritual development? (Consider the temptation to create parallel lives and the role of pride.)

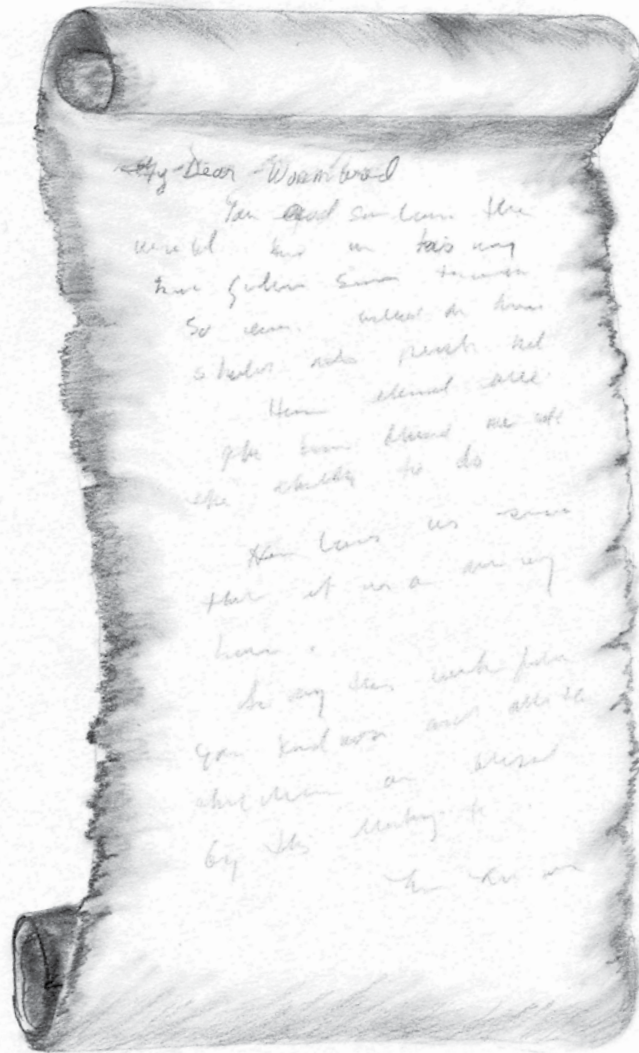
3. Describe the four different types of laughter, and provide examples of each from your own life. Which types does Screwtape consider dangerous or beneficial to his own cause? Has this been the case in your observation?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____



Life Questions—Journaling Assignment

Feel free to respond to the life questions here or to keep them in a separate journal used for meditative contemplation.

1. In what ways have you noticed the law of undulation in your own life? Does recognizing the natural ups and downs of spiritual life encourage you or discourage you? Why?

2. Screwtape notes that friendships can greatly influence the patient's life. Consider your own friends. How have your friends influenced your beliefs and actions? Do your friends have a positive or negative impact on your spiritual development?



Write Your Own Discussion Questions

1.

2.

Chapter Summaries

Write your own chapter summaries here or in your binder and then cross-check them with the summaries in the teacher's edition.

Chapter 8:

Chapter 9: _____

Chapter 10: _____

Chapter 11: _____
