**Devoted to Devotions:** [**www.AvaPennington.com**](http://www.AvaPennington.com)

1. **Thursday, 1:30 – 3:45 – Session 1: Strategy**

Passion, 3 Qs, Theme, Types, Structure, Style, Benefits

1. **Friday, 9:15 – 11:15 - Session 2: Style, Content, Tools, & Tips**

Beginning, Tools, Components, Dos & Don’ts, Bonus Tips

1. **Saturday, 9:15 – 11:15 - Session 3: Self-editing**

Writing tight, Weasel words, Clichés, Christianese

1. **Sunday, 9:15 – 11:15 - Session 4: Submitting & Selling**

Critiques, Queries, and Proposals

**SESSION 1: Strategy**

**Passion, 3 Qs, audience, theme, types, structure, style, benefits,**

**Passion** 🡪

“The only book that should ever be written is one that flows up from the heart, forced out by the inward pressure.” (A.W. Tozer)

*Are you feeling that kind of pressure to write?*

**Three Questions Every Author Must Answer**

Suzanne Kuhn, CEO, Brookstone Creative Group [www.BrookstoneCreativeGroup.com](http://www.BrookstoneCreativeGroup.com)

1. **So What?**
2. **Who Cares?**

**Audience**

1. **Why You?**

**THEME:**

1. **Identify a felt need**
2. **If a devotional, identify a title that encapsulates your theme**

**TYPES of devotions:**

**STRUCTURE:**

**WRITING STYLE:**

“We approach the topic we’re writing about as fellow travelers, instead of judges ordering readers around.” ~ Joyce K. Ellis

**Didactic vs. Inductive**

Didactic 🡪

Inductive 🡪

Examples:

**Show vs. Tell**

**The Power of Story**

**Why write devos?**

* **Benefits to readers**
* **Benefits to the writer**

**Devotions ARE:**

* Encouraging -
* Fresh -
* Relevant -
* Broad appeal -
* Focused -
* Gentle -

**Session 2 –** **Beginning, Tools, Components, Dos & Don’t’s**

**How to begin:**

* **Personal Preparation: Cultivate intimacy** with the Lord

Recognize you’re on the **same spiritual journey** as your readers.

We are walking **with** them, not preaching **at** them!

* **Collect ideas**:
* **Tools:**
  + Bible translations
  + Concordance
  + Bible dictionary AND English dictionary
  + Christian Writers Manual of Style
  + Christian Writers Market Guide
  + Writers’ guidelines
  + Sample publications
* Critique Group
* Pray before you start writing!

**Components (various combinations of the following)**

1. Limited **word count** 🡪

* Tip:

1. **Title** 🡪

* Tip:

1. **Bible passage** 🡪

* Tip:

1. **Key verse** 🡪

* Tip: Use the translation specified in the writer’s guidelines.

1. **Body**
2. **Beginning** 🡪

* **HOOK**
* Tip:

1. **Middle** 🡪

* **BOOK & LOOK**

***We filter our experiences through Scripture.  
We don’t filter Scripture through our experiences!***

* Tip:

1. **End** 🡪

* **TOOK**
* Tip:

1. Importance of transitions:
2. **Summary statement** 🡪

* Tip:

1. **Application/Challenge** 🡪

* Tip:

1. **Prayer** 🡪

* Tip:

**Organization** 🡪

**SAT test:**

Scripture

Anecdote

Takeaway

**Dos and Don’ts**

**Don’t’s**

1. Don’t Preach 🡪

* Marti Pieper: “Approach the subject as someone who partners with the reader in pursuit of the Father.”

1. Don’t restate the entire Bible passage in the body
2. Don’t be superficial
3. Don’t use Christianese or clichés
4. Don’t criticize
5. Don’t make it about you
6. Don’t overuse writing techniques
7. Don’t mishandle Scripture 🡪 keep it in context
8. Don’t be controversial:

**Dos**

1. *Read* devotions if you are *writing* devotions
2. Know your audience
3. Follow the writer’s guidelines
4. Maintain continuity in formatting
5. Include a story/illustration
6. Permeate devotion with excellent writing
7. Edit, edit, edit!
8. Verify accuracy
9. Ensure every component relates back to your main point

10. Be true to yourself

**Bonus #1 – from Crystal Bowman**

* Language
* Tense
* Second person

**Bonus #2 – from Cecil Murphey**

* Reasons for rejections:

**Session 3 – Self-Editing**

“Any good book is the result of inspiration,

followed by hours of grueling work.” ~ Dave Fessenden

Examples from Kathy Ide’s book, ***Proofreading Secrets of Best-selling Authors****:*

* Revise multiple-word phrases to single words.
* Eliminate unnecessary words.
* Eliminate weak words
* Eliminate redundant modifiers.
* Don’t use two words that mean the same thing.
* Reduce adverbs
* Ferret out the **weasels**
* Get **active**!

Kick out **cliches**.

**What are they?**

**Why do we use them?**

**How to avoid them:**

**Exercise:**

1. avoid him like the plague
2. dead as a doornail
3. faster than a speeding bullet
4. fight like cats and dogs
5. flat as a pancake
6. good as gold
7. happy as a lark
8. hard as nails
9. like a bull in a china shop
10. pretty as a picture
11. quiet as a mouse
12. stuck out like a sore thumb

**Christianese = Christian Clichés**

Kick out **Christianese**

Christian clichés 🡪

Have you encouraged readers to watch and pray, staying in the Word while walking the straight and narrow so the world will not tarnish their trophy of grace? Is it your fervent prayer to carry your cross, live an abundant life, and let go and let God in the midst of your wilderness experiences? 

How many Christianese phrases and clichés did you find in the above paragraph? Whether you’re writing for believers or unbelievers, learn how to kick out clichés and Christianese for more effective writing.

1. abundant life
2. ask Jesus into heart
3. backsliding
4. born-again
5. bound by sin
6. burden on my heart
7. enemy territory
8. fellowship
9. get into the Word
10. God laid you on my heart
11. God revealed to me…
12. going down a slippery slope
13. grounded / rooted in the faith
14. head vs. heart knowledge
15. I need time in the Word
16. I’m wrestling
17. in the world not of it
18. it blessed me
19. lift it up to the Lord
20. my witness
21. prayer warrior
22. put on my heart
23. quiet time
24. sanctified
25. saved
26. schemes of the devil
27. Spirit-filled life
28. traveling mercies
29. unspoken needs/prayers
30. victory in Jesus
31. walk with God
32. washed in the blood

**Session 4 – Submissions: Query and Proposal**

1. **Selling Individual Devotions**

* Market resource 🡪 Christian Writer’s Market Guide
* Markets:
  + CBN.com
  + ChristianDevos.us,
  + church Take-home papers
  + church bulletins
  + The Quiet Hour
  + The Upper Room
  + The Secret Place
  + Keys for Kids
  + Unlocked (teens)
* Writer’s guidelines
* Submission processes:
  + Website submission
  + Query
  + Proposal
* Rights: be aware of the rights you are selling. For example:
  + All rights
  + First rights
  + Reprint rights

1. **Approaching traditional publishers and agents for a devotional**

**Query**

**Research** the publishing house

**Goal** =

**Format**

* + One page, single space, standard fonts and margins
  + Business Letter format
  + Be professional
  + Name, address, phone, email at the top
  + Address agent or editor by NAME
  + Proofread!
  + Greeting

**Components**:

P.1 - Hook

P. 2 – Synopsis:

P. 3 - Your qualifications

P. 4 – Word count, completion date or completed

P. 5 – Close:

**What NOT to do:**

\* \* \*

“The proposal process helps you nail down the book…. When it comes time to sit down and write the book, your proposal is your blueprint.”  
~ Wendy Lawton, Books & Such Literary Agency

**PROPOSAL**

**Cover letter**

**Title page**

**Header**

**Text**

**Sell sheet**

* Hook
* Theme and Purpose
* Short book summary
* Special features
* Audience
* Length, availability

**Overview/synopsis**

**Author bio**

**Comparative analysis**

**Marketing plan**

**Promotion:**

**Speaking/Building a Platform:**

**Internet Marketing:**

**Networking:**

**Chapter outline/summary**

**Sample of your manuscript**

=============================.===========================

**Recommended Resources**

**Books:**

* *Christian Writers Market Guide*
* *Christian Writer’s Manual of Style*, Robert Hudson
* *Writing the Christian Non-Fiction Book: From Concept to Contract*, Dave Fessenden
* *Chicago Manual of Style*
* *Proofreading Secrets of Best-Selling Authors*, Kathy Ide

**Websites:**

* Books & Such Literary Management: <http://www.booksandsuch.com/blog/>
* The Steve Laube Agency: <http://www.stevelaube.com/blog/>
* The Write Conversation: <http://thewriteconversation.blogspot.com/>
* Word Weavers International: <https://word-weavers.com/>