

High School Summer

Screwtape Letters

Each student will be required to read *Screwtape Letters* over the summer.

- Ninth and Tenth Grade students will need to do a journal entry on each chapter.
- Eleventh and Twelfth Grade students will need to answer the essay questions on the book as a whole.

The end project will be due to the student's English teacher the first week of school.

Ninth and Tenth Grade Assignment

Journal Assignment:

Each journal entry must be labeled with the Chapter number and must answer the following questions about that chapter.

1. Strategy: Specific to this chapter, summarize the strategy or plan of attack that Screwtape recommends to Wormwood.
2. Human Flaw or Failing: Which human flaw or failing will this strategy prey upon or rely upon? Explain.
3. Desired Effect: From Screwtape's view, what would be the desired effect or outcome of this attack? Explain.
4. Inference/Actual Outcome: C.S. Lewis gives only one side of the correspondence between the two demons: the letters from Screwtape to Wormwood. Inferring what you can by reading the next letter in the series, what must Wormwood have written to Screwtape about the actual outcome of the attack? What actually happened?

Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Assignment

Essay Questions:

Each essay question must be labeled and answered in full paragraph format.

1. Much of the appeal of *The Screwtape Letters* derives from Lewis' startlingly original reversal: telling a story about Christian faith not from a Christian point-of-view but from the perspective of a devil trying to secure the damnation of one man's soul. Why is this strategy so effective? What does it allow Lewis to accomplish that would have been impossible in a more straightforward approach?
2. In describing the differences in how God and the Devil view men, Screwtape says: "We want cattle that can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons" (pg. 30). What is it about God's relationship to man that Screwtape finds so unfathomable?
3. Why is Screwtape so pleased when the patient becomes friends with a group of people who are "rich, smart, superficially intellectual, and brightly skeptical about everything in the world"? (pg. 37). What influence does Screwtape hope they will

- have on him? Why should their “flippancy” build up an “armor-plating” against God?
4. The sub-plot of *The Screwtape Letters* turns on Screwtape's relationship with his nephew Wormwood, the apprentice tempter. How do Screwtape and Wormwood regard each other? How does their relationship change over the course of the book? In what ways does their relationship offer an inverted reflection of God's relationship to man? What is Lewis suggesting by having the story end with Screwtape preparing to devour a member of his own family?
 5. Screwtape asserts that "just as we pick out and exaggerate the pleasure of eating to produce gluttony, so we pick out this natural pleasantness of change and twist it into a demand for absolute novelty" (p. 98). Why is the demand for novelty necessarily destructive? What natural balance does such a demand disrupt? In what areas do you find this insistence on change, or overvaluation of the new, operating today?
 6. Describing the human idea of love and marriage, Screwtape tells Wormwood: "They regard the intention of loyalty to a partnership for mutual help, for the preservation of chastity, and for the transmission of life as something lower than a storm of emotion" (p. 72). Screwtape is also confounded by God's love for man, which he grants as real but irrational. What is Lewis saying, in the book as a whole, about human and divine love?
 7. What do you think was Lewis' overall message? Do you think he got that across? Does the storytelling format help or hinder that message?
 8. What value, if any, did you find in the book? Is it an instructive moral guide? Do you consider it to be too religious?
 9. Lewis says, “readers are advised to remember that the devil is a liar” (pg. ix) How important is this for understanding the devil? Why?