

2014 IVY LEAGUE

# *spoken* **WORD**

BIBLE MEMORIZATION  
CHALLENGE

FINALE TO BE HELD AT THE SCHOLASTIC AUDITORIUM, NYC

APRIL 12, 2014, 7:00PM

SPONSORED BY CHRISTIAN UNION

DUE DATE FOR CONTEST ENTRY: FEBRUARY 28, 2014

## THE BIG IDEA

The night before Palm Sunday, guests will be inspired by the power of the memorized Word of God.

Sponsored by Christian Union, this unique event will feature unforgettable presentations by students from seven universities, who will creatively bring God's word to life, making the Word of God even more real to those in attendance.

## THE NEED

No book in history has done more for humankind than the widespread publication, distribution and understanding of the Bible. The book contains the teachings of God Himself to humankind, letting us understand how to know and love Him and how we are to love fellow human beings. The book makes plain the need for the humanity to acknowledge its waywardness and be reconciled to God through the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. Because of the influence of the Bible, countless charities have been launched, including ministries to the poor, education initiatives and every conceivable ministry of compassion. Therefore it is imperative that the contents of this amazing book be widely distributed, understood and even memorized.

Theodore Roosevelt famously remarked that "a thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education." But, sadly, there is an utter lack of knowledge of the Biblical Scriptures in contemporary Western Culture. This is true both of the general population and also of Christians. In order to have hearts and minds set on the value of loving God and loving other people, there must be a deep knowledge of Word of God amongst God's people. Key in this intake is the effort to "hide God's Word in our heart" (Psalm 119:11) via memorization.

## THE RESPONSE

As a result, Christian Union is sponsoring Spoken Word 2014, an Ivy League Bible memorization competition. This event focuses on students from seven Ivy League schools memorizing segments of scripture (25-35 verses) and then presenting their memorized content in a creative and inspiring manner. Students have the opportunity to work as individuals or as a part of a team of up to four people. Multiple passages of scripture can be interwoven for aesthetic/creative purposes. However, the only content to be shared will be direct quotations from the Scriptures. The competitors would be evaluated according to 1) Accuracy of memorized content; 2) Creativity of presentation; 3) Presentation skills and manner; and 4) apparent passion for the Biblical material presented.

## THE PURPOSE

The purpose of Spoken Word 2014 is to encourage Ivy League students to memorize the Scriptures, to motivate others to do the same, and to inspire the participants, audience, and those who will view the presentation online.

## SPOKEN WORD 2014 COMPETITION PARAMETERS:

1. Participating students/teams must be current undergraduate students at one of the following seven schools: Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Princeton University, Yale University, or University of Pennsylvania.
2. Students will compete at a live event in New York City on April 12, 2014.
3. Students may compete as individuals or in teams of up to four people.
4. Seven entries (one per campus with a Christian Union undergraduate ministry) will compete at the final round of competition in New York City.
5. Students will, in the course of their presentation, recite, in person, from memory, between 25-35 verses from the Old and/or New Testaments. Approved translations to be used include the English Standard Version, the New International Version, the King James Version, or the New Living Translation.
6. Maximum time limit for a presentation is 4 minutes.
7. Competitors may choose to recite texts from one particular book, or they may choose to weave a variety of passages together for thematic purposes.
8. The only material to be spoken in the presentation must be a direct quotation of Scripture.
9. Students may not sing their recitation of Scripture; the Scriptures must be presented, from memory, in a spoken word style. However, students may use any other creative means to add to their recitation of the content of their text.
10. Teams should think VERY creatively about the way their individual skills and gifts may further their presentation of the Biblical material. Not every team member needs to recite an equal amount of the Biblical material; however, each team member must recite some amount of the text.
11. Students may make use of pre-recorded audio for their event. Students will be required to bring their pre-recorded audio to the competitions via CD or some other simple technological means (this is TBD by local campus Christian Union leadership). The audio may not contain any of the text to be recited. Additionally, if participants opt to use pre-recorded material of any kind within their presentation, each participant or team must warrant and covenant that their pre-recorded piece is either (a) their own original work; or (b) is used with the expressed written permission of the copyright holder. The participants further warrant that the pre-recorded piece does not infringe upon or otherwise violate any right of any third party, including any copyright, trademark or other intellectual property rights.
12. Preceding each team's 'official' presentation, they must be prepared to present and explain their selection of Biblical text and the desired outcome of their presentation via an on-stage interview with the emcee of Spoken Word 2014. The ability of students to provide personal context to their presentation will be factored into their score. This interview portion will last for 3-4 minutes preceding the presentation of Scripture.
13. Competitors will also be a part of an 8-10 minute pre-event interview with the host of the event during the afternoon of Saturday, April 12, 2014. This interview will not be factored into the scoring for the competition; however, it will be videoed and later edited for online video distribution purposes.

14. Competitors will be scored according to (1) accuracy of Biblical recitation (the memorized content correctly recites the Biblical text), (2) creativity of presentation (the presentation is compelling, interesting, engaging, and creative), (3) presentation skills/manner (the individuals presenting do so in a clear, articulate, comprehensible and lucid manner), and (4) apparent passion for Biblical material presented (it is evident that the presenters are in engaged with and care about the Scriptural text they present).

#### ***Examples of Potential Entries to Spoken Word 2014:***

- An entry that focuses on the passion of Christ by starting with person #1 quoting Isaiah 53:1-12 and person #2 quoting Matthew 27:32-54 all from the New Living Translation (NLT). The total number of verses is (12+23=) 35 so it falls within the length parameter. Also, there are two persons involved so it meets the criterion that no more than four presenters be involved in an entry.
- An entry that focuses on a single book of the Bible. Person #1 quotes Jude from beginning to end in the English Standard Version (ESV). The book is 25 verses long, so it meets the length criterion. It has only one presenter which is acceptable, and it's also in one of the acceptable translations.
- An entry that creates a Scriptural poem with different verses from a variety of different Biblical books. As long as the presentation is (a) from one of the approved translations, (b) contains 25-35 verses of material, (c) has 1-4 team participants, and (d) last less than 4 minutes, the entry is acceptable.

#### ***Goals of Spoken Word 2014:***

1. Encourage and teach Ivy League students to see the value and beauty of memorizing God's Word in such a way that it produces fruit (spiritual, moral, aesthetic, intellectual, etc.) in all areas of our lives.
2. Encourage participants viewing the competition both live and via video by the example of young Ivy League students hiding God's Word in their hearts in transformative ways. In so doing, our hope is that many people would be moved to follow their example and memorize the Scriptures themselves.
3. Showcase one aspect of Christian Union's work on Ivy League campuses to individuals both in New York City and around the world.
4. Create another avenue by which like-minded Ivy League Christian students are able to encourage each other and network for greater Kingdom effectiveness. Additionally, we desire to build inspiration and fellowship among the NYCU community.

## **STUDENTS**

Any current undergraduate at any Ivy League university where Christian Union ministers directly (Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, or Yale) may compete in Spoken Word 2014.

## **PRIZES:**

All participants at the NYC stage of competition will receive a prize determined by their finishing position. These prizes will be gift certificates to Christian Book Distributors for each participating team member. Each team member on the first place team will receive a \$250 gift certificate. Second place team members will receive a \$125 gift certificate, and third place team members a \$75 gift certificate. All other participants will receive \$25 gift certificates.

### DATE, LOCATION, COST:

The Spoken Word 2014 contest will be held on the evening of Saturday, April 12th, 2014 (between Good Friday and Easter), in New York City at the Scholastic Auditorium. The contestants will make their presentations to a panel of judges and an audience of friends of the ministry. Christian Union will provide for the costs of transportation to the event, one night hotel stay in New York City, and meals during the trip.

Christian Union will organize a social event for all participating teams after the Spoken Word 2014 event on the evening of Saturday, April 12, 2014. This event will be a simple social gathering at venue of Christian Union's choosing. Additionally, group transportation will be organized for a Palm Sunday service on Sunday, April 13, 2014 in New York City. A brunch will be provided for all participants and travelers after the church service. Students will return to their respective campuses on the afternoon of Sunday, April 13. Return travel will be arranged by the Christian Union Spoken Word 2014 faculty representative at each participating school.

### LEADERSHIP:

The leader of this contest is Christian Union ministry director at Columbia, Jim Black. He can be reached at [Jim.Black@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:Jim.Black@ChristianUnion.org).

### CONTEST ENTRY:

- Each campus with an undergraduate Christian Union ministry will be eligible to send one representative team to the Spoken Word 2014 event in New York City.
- Each local Christian Union undergraduate ministry will choose their own representative team through the means they deem best.
- Once a representative team is selected, the staff of that respective Christian Union ministry will arrange all transportation for the participating team to New York City. They will also ensure that a digital copy of the scripture to be presented is forwarded to Jim Black, Director of Spoken Word 2014, as well as a brief application containing basic biographical details on the representative team.

### WHO TO CONTACT ON CAMPUS:

**Columbia:** Jim Black, [Jim.Black@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:Jim.Black@ChristianUnion.org) or Rebekah Hannah, [Rebekah.Hannah@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:Rebekah.Hannah@ChristianUnion.org)

**Cornell:** Asha Garretson, [Asha.Garretson@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:Asha.Garretson@ChristianUnion.org)

**Dartmouth:** Kevin Collins, [Kevin.Collins@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:Kevin.Collins@ChristianUnion.org)

**Harvard:** Don Weiss, [Don.Weiss@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:Don.Weiss@ChristianUnion.org)

**Penn:** Justin.Mills@ChristianUnion.org

**Princeton:** James Fields, [James.Fields@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:James.Fields@ChristianUnion.org)

**Yale:** Chris Matthews at [Chris.Matthews@ChristianUnion.org](mailto:Chris.Matthews@ChristianUnion.org)

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

#### How do I register for Spoken Word 2014?

Each interested team must inform their local Christian Union staff leadership of their interest in participation. The staff leadership team will provide a venue and format for the first stage of campus level competition. You (and your team, if you so desire) will present, from memory, in spoken word style, 25-35 verses from the Bible, for a maximum of 4 minutes. The winner of the campus level competition will then be selected for the Spoken Word 2014 competition in New York.

**Can I recite something that I have memorized in the past?**

Yes. But realize that you are also competing on the basis of creativity of presentation, presentation skills/manner, and apparent passion for the text. Reusing something you've memorized in the past may or may not be the best way to meet these criteria.

**What if more than one team from my campus wants to enter?**

Great! However only one team from any single campus may earn the right to compete at Spoken Word 2014 in New York City. Each campus ministry will have its own campus level competition to determine that competitor.

**May I be part of more than one entry?**

No—even if you only have a minor role in one team's entry, you cannot be a member of another entry.

**How will teams be selected to compete at Spoken Word 2014 in New York City?**

All selected teams will be determined by their campus level competition, which will occur either at a Leadership Lecture Series meeting or during a special event for that campus ministry.

**Tell me more about the judges' criteria.**

Your entry will be judged along the following:

- 1) Accuracy of memorized content. Did your team recite the passage word for word according to the translation you chose?
- 2) Creativity of presentation. Was your presentation creative, inspiring, and memorable?
- 3) Presentation skills and manner. Was the Scripture presented in a verbally clear and powerful manner?
- 4) Passion for the selected text. Did your presentation and interview communicate both intellectual and experiential interaction with your material?

**Really? A Free Trip to New York City?**

Yes, if you are one of the six entries determined through the campus-level competition, Christian Union will pay for your transportation to New York City on April 12th, all your meals, your hotel night that night and then your travel back to campus on Sunday, April 13th.

