

◆◆◆ **THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS** ◆◆◆

COURSE PLAN METHODOLOGY: *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis is represented by the abbreviation **SL**. Each weekly assignment is summarized in the first line of the week's daily course plan. The specific daily readings are summarized in the following lines indicated by the **MON, TUE, WED, THU** and **FRI** abbreviations.

Discuss the Setting, Theme, Point of View, and Characters with the student. Each week's introduction includes the chapters that will be read that week, instructions for literary devices and elements of fiction that the student will encounter during the week, and a written assignment. **The chapter study questions, chapter vocabulary and glossary are located in the Junior High Literature Study Question booklets available for purchase from Kolbe Academy.** Discuss the literary devices and elements of fiction with the student **using the worksheets included with these junior high literature course plans.** We suggest reading the weekly written assignment to the student at the beginning of the week. The student should write the assignment down on a note card (to be used as a bookmark) so that he can think about the assignment as he reads. The written assignments are suggested to be completed by the following Monday. As the teacher, be sure to review the final exam **now** to ensure all concepts are covered with your student as he reads the book.

The Screwtape Letters is a satirical work in which C.S. Lewis relays the fictional written correspondence between a wise old devil, Screwtape, and his nephew, a novice devil named Wormwood. Screwtape coaches Wormwood in the process of winning the soul of a young man for "Our Father Below," Satan. Have the student memorize the quote by Thomas More, "The devil...the powde spirite...cannot endure to be mocked."

ELEMENTS OF FICTION

Setting: The story takes place during World War II (1938 to 1945).

Theme: The main theme of *The Screwtape Letters* is that life is a great spiritual struggle, and that there are good and evil forces fighting desperately for human souls. However, Lewis makes it clear that although evil is a terribly prevalent and powerful entity, it is no match for good. Evil can create nothing, and is limited to illusions and lies to fool people.

Point of View: The story is told through a series of letters from the perspective of the demon Screwtape. Thus, it is a first person limited perspective, however, because Screwtape is a demon, he knows many of the characters' thoughts.

Characters:

Screwtape – old, wise demon, the uncle of Wormwood

Wormwood – nephew of Screwtape and novice demon who is being trained by Screwtape to help in causing a young man to lose his soul

"Our Father Below" – Satan

"The Enemy" – God

the patient – the young man who is the object of Wormwood's mission

the old lady – the patient's mother

Glucose – the demon who is assigned to the “old lady”

Slumtrimpet – demon in charge of the patient’s “young woman”

WEEK 1	
SL	<p>Preface and Letters 1-13. Have the student look up all the vocabulary words for the Preface and Letters 1-13 in the glossary prior to reading. Study questions may be completed as the student reads or at the end of the week when reading has been completed.</p> <p>Literary Devices used this week: discuss definitions of allusion, character, irony, foreshadowing, metaphor, and imagery with the student (use literary device worksheet included in the syllabus). Students will encounter questions on these devices in the study question booklet.</p> <p>Elements of Fiction occurring this week: discuss the definitions of setting and tone (use elements of fiction worksheet included in the syllabus). Students will encounter these particular elements in their reading this week.</p> <p>Written Assignment: In Letter 8, Screwtape says, “Now it may surprise you to learn that in His efforts to get permanent possession of a soul, He relies on the troughs even more than on the peaks; some of His special favourites have gone through longer and deeper troughs than anyone else.” Explain this quote and give examples of saints or others who have experienced this.</p>
MON	<p>Read the two quotes before the Preface, the Preface, and Letters 1-3 and do Study Questions.</p> <p>Preface. The human race can fall into two errors about the devil; one is to not believe in their existence and the other is to have an unhealthy interest in them. It is important to remember that the devil is a liar, and one should not believe anything he says. Letter 1. Screwtape tells Wormwood that argument is not the way to win over the young man who is his “patient.” Argument puts the struggle on the “Enemy’s” ground, the Enemy being God. Arguing causes the patient to reason whereas the goal of the devils is to make the patient react to immediate sensory experiences. Letter 2. Screwtape expresses his displeasure that Wormwood’s patient has become a Christian, but he says not to despair, for the reason that there is a tendency for converts to revert to their old ways. They, in realizing the faults and foibles, either real or supposed of the Christians they begin to interact with, find themselves disappointed and come to judge other Christians, and eventually Christianity, as hypocritical. At the same time they never acknowledge their own hypocrisies and instead foster in themselves a false sense of humility. Letter 3. Screwtape is pleased that Wormwood’s patient is having problems with his mother and encourages Wormwood to keep in close contact with her assigned demon, whose name is Glucose. The two demons, says Screwtape, should work together on mother and son to build up mutual annoyances. They should make sure that the son’s prayers for his mother are always very spiritual, concerned only with her soul and neglecting to pray about the ailments of her body. The patient must be focused on her “sins” and those things that annoy him. Wormwood and Glucose are to see to it that the patient and his mother work on forming double standards, each taking his/her own words at face value and judging the other’s on much stricter terms, interpreting each tone of voice or facial expression as insult or annoyance.</p>
TUES	<p>Read Letters 4-6 and do Study Questions. Letter 4. Screwtape scolds Wormwood for trying to blame him for the failure of his advice about the patient’s prayers. Now he tells Wormwood to keep the patient from engaging in serious prayer at all. He should encourage the patient to focus on himself instead of on the Enemy, and to produce good <i>feelings</i> in himself during prayer. Letter 5. Screwtape warns Wormwood, who is excited about the onset of the First World War, that wartime</p>

	often works against demons; it is then that people are more aware of the possibility of their death and have time to prepare for it. Letter 6. Screwtape advises Wormwood to keep up the level of his patient's anxiety by having him focus, not on what he is afraid of, but on fear itself. He should think of the patient as a concentricity of circles, his will being the innermost, the intellect next, and fantasy being the outermost. He should work on moving all virtues to the circle of fantasy.
WED	Read Letters 7-9 and do Study Questions. Letter 7. Screwtape answers Wormwood that it is better not to reveal himself to the patient, getting him to worship "forces" while denying the existence of "spirits." All extremes except extreme devotion to God are to be encouraged. Whether the patient becomes an extreme patriot or an extreme pacifist, he should view his position as a religious cause. The World should become an end and faith a means. The patient should consider meetings, movements and causes to be more important than prayers, sacraments, and charity. Letter 8. Screwtape explains that all humans have periods of dryness, but that these are the times during which our prayers are most pleasing to God. Devils want to absorb the human will; God feeds us and wants us to freely choose to conform our wills to His. Letter 9. Screwtape tells Wormwood that troughs in the patient's spiritual life, or dry periods, provide excellent opportunities for temptation. God provides many pleasures for His creatures, and the demons' job is to encourage men to take these pleasures to extremes, then to tempt the patient either to despair or complacency in the state of his soul. Screwtape advises using a direct attack on his faith by getting him to believe religion is only a phase that he will grow out of.
THUR	Read Letters 10-13 and do Study Questions. Letter 10. The patient has made new friends with a worldly couple. Wormwood is advised to help the patient to think he can be part of both worlds by leading two parallel lives; a spiritual life at church and at all other times, a life in the world. Letter 11. Screwtape writes about the four causes of human laughter: joy, which is of no help to the demons; fun, which is not much better than joy because it sometimes promotes "charity, courage, contentment...;" the joke proper, which can be of great use to the demons because men can use it to disguise their cruelty; and flippancy which is best of all for demons because with it, everything serious can be made to look ridiculous. Letter 12. The patient is slowly heading away from God but doesn't realize it. Wormwood should work at separating him from God even further with small distractions. Small sins can do the job, "...the road to Hell is the gradual one..." Letter 13. Wormwood has lost ground with the patient by allowing him to enjoy the real pleasures of reading a good book and taking a walk in the country. Real pleasure and real pain cause one to put things into perspective, and now the patient is headed back to God. Wormwood must now keep the patient from acting on his feelings.
FRI	Work on Written Assignment.
Notes	