

Bible drill, speaker competitions help participants learn lasting lessons62804

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SAN ANTONIO-National Bible drill and speaker competitions ingrain biblical lessons in the lives of young people and strengthen future leaders, according to organizers of and participants in the contests.

Participants spend many hours memorizing biblical passages and speeches based on Scripture for the competitions, but more importantly they internalize the messages, said Dickie Dunn, director of discipleship for the Baptist General Convention of Texas Bible Study/Discipleship Center.

Youth take the biblical principles they learn and apply them to their lives, Dunn continued. They become stronger Christians.

"It focuses kids on the right thing," he said. "When you read, study and memorize Scripture, your whole perspective changes."

Those biblical ideas will make youth better at whatever profession they

choose, Dunn added. The Bible gives them solid moral and ethical principles that guide their actions.

Kimberly Hayes, a 15-year-old member of Little Brasstown Baptist Church in Murphy, N.C., who competed in the speaker contest, said her participation was a step forward in strengthening her leadership skills. It also gives her strength to resist temptation.

Emily Burkhead, a member of First Baptist Church in Cleveland who won the speaker competition, said the other lectures were uplifting. Hearing about the strong faith of others encouraged her to continue her Christian journey.

Linnea Ison of Parkway Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla., whose son Adam participated in the Bible Drill competition, said the memorization and study give youth answers to doctrinal and life questions. The work provides a biblical foundation for the lives of youth.

The principles seem to be making a difference. Most of the participants congratulated all the winners with a handshake or hug. Daniel Hill of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Eldorado, Ark., had the winners sign his Bible.

Hill won first place in the Bible drill competition. Katie Mitchell of Sardis Baptist Church in Lumber City, Ga., took second. Burkhead placed first in the speaker contest. Jordan Helms of Harp's Crossing Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., was second.

Representatives from 10 states participated in the events. Dunn praised the hard work of each participant. He said the impact will go beyond an award.

"It's not about winning or losing," Dunn said. "Winning's OK, but it's about building character."

in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.