

State Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament winners named

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DALLAS—Students from churches in Dallas, Allen and Breckenridge took top honors at Texas Baptists' Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament state finals at Dallas Baptist University.

James Hardin from First Baptist Church in Dallas won the Speakers' Tournament. In Bible Drill, Josh Britton from First Baptist Church in Allen won first place in the high school division, and Joseph Stalcup from First Baptist Church in Breckenridge placed first in the youth division.

The students will represent Texas at the National Invitational Tournament in June at Mountain Park First Baptist Church in Stone Mountain, Ga.

Bible Drill drew 27 youth and 22 high school participants, 20 additional high school students participated in Speakers' Tournament. In all, they represented 26 churches.

After months of preparation, middle and high school students put their knowledge to the test during the Bible Drill portion of the competition. They memorized about 30 verses and extended Bible passages, as well as specific themes found throughout Scripture.



James Hardin from First Baptist Church in Dallas, a recent graduate of Mansfield High School, won the Texas Baptist Speakers' Tournament. (Photo / Efrain Carbajal)

For Speakers' Tournament, high school students presented a four-minute to six-minute speech they developed over various biblical topics.

Hardin, a recent graduate of Mansfield High School, presented a speech titled "Truth for Tough Times."

"My speech was about how Christians must realize that the gospel is the truth, and we need to learn it, live it and share it," he said. "I picked this topic because I wanted to talk about something that can apply to my life, and as a young Christian it is very hard to stay strong in faith, especially with all the temptations in high school and college."

Britton, an 11th grade student, has participated in Bible Drill since 2nd grade, and he cited Scripture memorization as his favorite aspect of Bible

Drill.

“It’s great when a situation comes up and I think back to a verse I know,” he said. “Bible Drill has helped me in my everyday life and in my walk with the Lord.

“Representing High School Bible Drill for the state of Texas is a great opportunity, and I’ve always hoped to go to nationals. But honestly, what means the most to me is showing that I know what God’s word says.”

Diane Lane, childhood discipleship specialist with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, emphasized the goal of the Scripture memorization and speech preparation is to help students “internalize the magnitude of God’s love for each one of us.”

“When they have doubts or problems, they are able to turn to the Scriptures they have learned,” Lane said. “The drills and speeches are not the end product. Changed lives are the end product.”