
'Are You In? Run To Win...Let The Stories Begin!'

Many of our favorite stories begin with, "Once upon a time..." In our own faith tradition, the Holy Bible starts with, "In the beginning..." These are important phrases because they allow for the listener or reader to be invited into the story. It introduces us to the period of time, setting, and characters that we will engage in the story. In other words, it gives us a context that allows us to understand the story. Listening and reading comprehension are where learning occurs, where we understand the lessons from the stories and apply them to our own lives.

I invite you to become a part of the Providence Youth Universe story and to create your own story for this upcoming school year. Here we are, "In the beginning," the beginning of a great journey, the story of your life. Will you write your autobiography or do you want others to shape your identity and purpose? Teachers throughout our history have taught the importance of writing our own story; we must define ourselves for ourselves. Let us embrace our children, youth, teens, parents, grandparents, teachers, educators, and administrators this school year, let the stories begin!

A brief English lesson: the suffix, "ation" means action or process in the English language. We must choose to go through the process to be the person God is calling us to be. The process is as follows: 1) *An invitation, a request for someone's presence or participation* 2) *an education, development of innate or God-given abilities through instruction* 3) *Application, the act of putting instruction to special use or purpose* 4) *Evaluation, to examine, test, and judge carefully* 5) *Graduation, to advance in new levels of skill and achievement* 6) *Elevation, to raise to a higher moral, cultural, spiritual, and intellectual level; Celebration, to observe accomplishments with ceremony* 7) *Maturation, to bring to full development* 8) *and Revelation, to make known by divine means, or grow in wisdom and stature in our relationship with God through Jesus the Messiah.* **Invitation, Participation, Education, Application, Evaluation, Graduation, Elevation, Celebration, Maturation, and Revelation.** By accepting the invitation to have a relationship with God, we begin this process in our own lives—our spiritual education, spiritual application, and spiritual maturation. **Are you in? RUN to WIN!**