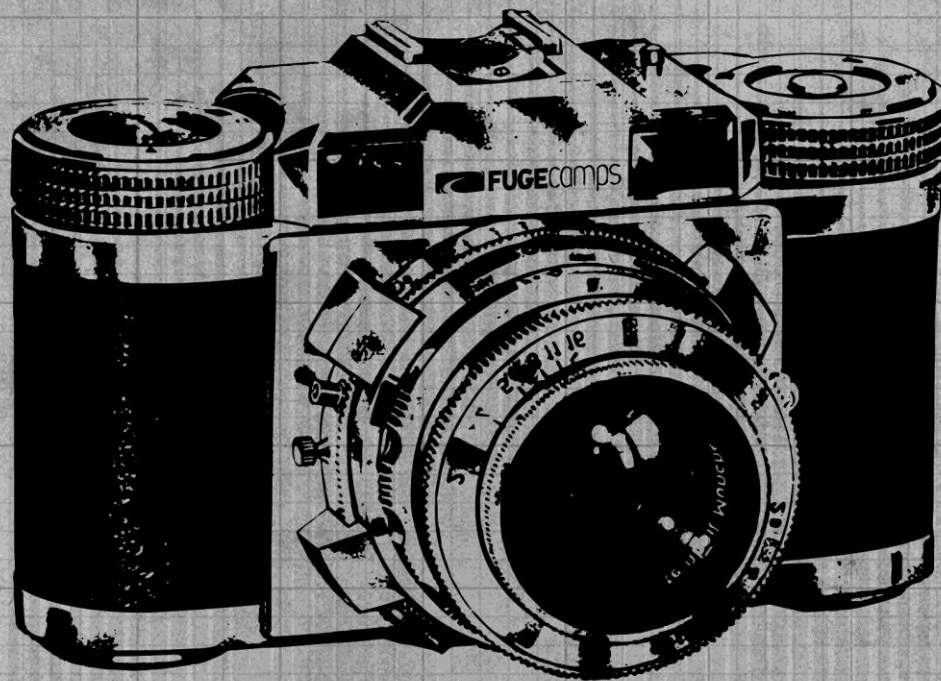


THE **BIG** PICTURE



FUGE CAMPS 2013

# PARENT DEVOTIONS 2013

 **FUGECamps**<sup>®</sup>

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# INTRODUCTION



Hey, parents! A week without your child being home-maybe you are experiencing mixed emotions about that reality. This week has potential to be super impactful in the life of your teenager and in your life. Whether you have one child or multiple children, your house will surely be quieter this week and, we hope you are able to not only check a few things off your to-do list but also take this opportunity to truly spend some quality time with God.

Thanks for allowing your student to attend camp this week! We have worked diligently throughout the year to ensure a quality program, well-trained staff and an environment where God can do His work.

These devotions will be a resource to allow the Lord to speak to you through the same Scriptures that He is using to speak to your student. This material will help you better understand what your child is studying and experiencing this week. Use it to ask questions when you talk with him on the phone and/or when she returns home.

To become familiar with information applicable to camp, check out our website, [www.fuge.com](http://www.fuge.com) for a Parent Pack where you will discover specifics about camp including a daily schedule, Bible study overview, and location details as well as many other important tidbits. Click on the 'Group Leader Information' icon. Then click on the camp program (Centrifuge, M-Fuge, etc), the location and the week your child is attending. This document includes a link to the parent information. Click on the link to get valuable information.

Also, check out [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com) and click on the 'Students' icon under the caption 'Other LifeWay Ministries' at the left for student and parenting resources.

We pray this will be a life-changing experience for your student and for you!

The Fuge Office

## DAY ONE

### *The Big Picture*

**Teaching Aim:** To set the stage for students' journey through the big picture of Scripture.

**Theme Verse:** Revelation 21:3



Camp is finally here!

Today is a big day. The buses and church vans have pulled out of the parking lot and your teenager is headed to camp! As a parent you have probably looked forward to this week with great anticipation, thinking about all the experiences that await your student. You may also be feeling a little anxious right now because they are away from home. How would you describe your teenager's feelings as he/she left for camp? Was there excitement about new friends and experiences or did you notice any nervousness? Students often look forward to arrival at camp, but feel anxious about who will sit next to them on the bus or who will be assigned to their room. Pause right now and pray that your child will connect with those around them, be open to meeting new people, and willing to experience new things.

Pace, deadline, expectations, unpredictable internal variables, and stress sound like adult problems—and they are. But our students face all these same issues as they attempt to own their faith while managing school demands, home life, extracurricular activities, work, and relationships. They have even more trouble than we do seeing beyond the immediate crisis. The secular world offers a myriad of options for coping with the ups and downs they experience, and those messages battle for their attention on a daily basis. For countless reasons we often think or even verbalize this reality, “They just don’t see the big picture.”

This summer, FUGE offers an opportunity for them to do just that—see the big picture. By demonstrating Himself to people throughout Scripture, God gives us the framework into which everything else fits—God’s completed work of love in Jesus Christ. We were created to be part of God’s unfolding story. God’s redemptive relationship with humanity began at creation and continues today. The cross and resurrection are the central theme of the entire narrative and were on the horizon even in the Garden of Eden. Those who lived by faith in God before the cross eagerly looked forward to His finished work. Today we gratefully look back on it, even as we look ahead to heaven. The theme of camp this year is designed to help your student grasp this bigger picture and begin to see his or her own role in God’s story.

Read the theme verse for camp this year: Revelation 21:3.

“God’s dwelling is with humanity, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

In this section of Revelation, John, the writer of this letter is pointing to the end of days. Sin and death are taken care of once and for all. The context for this harmony between God and man is heaven. It’s as if John is saying, “Finally God’s relationship with people will be what sin has kept it from being all this time.” Jesus’ finished work makes “He will be their God” a reality in ways we can only imagine.

God is not bound by a timeline. This mind-blowing victory over sin and death has already been won today, though we must wait to experience the full glory of our new life in the presence of God. Our rest in heaven will be in complete fellowship and unity with God and each other. This has been the plan of God since the beginning of time.

This week students will discover Jesus’ presence and role at creation, in the years before His arrival as a baby, and during/after His crucifixion and resurrection. Bible study, recreation, ministry opportunities, worship and small groups will all offer opportunities for students to encounter the gospel in ways they may never have before.

How does knowing God wants to be in relationship with you, not out of obligation, but out of love, make you feel? How do you see this idea of "God with us" demonstrated throughout Scripture? How do you see this demonstrated in your own life?

This week will be a Sabbath of sorts for students. Sabbath was mandated by God during creation and modeled by Jesus. He means it to be a time to come away from the normal routine to focus on Him, and therefore gain a little of His perspective.

Just as students are experiencing a Sabbath from their normal routine, we as parents can pull back, reflect, and pray in new ways for our kids. At home we can fall into the same verbal patterns each day—asking the same questions, noticing the same things, missing the same things, and pushing through the same required tasks. This week, ask God to reveal gifts and strengths exhibited in your student's life you may not have noticed before. Pray for wisdom in relating to him or her. Ask God to show you ways you can demonstrate interest and create new opportunities for conversation.

Set aside some time as a "drawing away" to pray for your student. What time could you plan this week specifically for prayer?

### **Praying Today**

Pray for students to connect with peers early in their camp experience.

Pray for FUGE leaders as they prepare for the arrival of your group.

Pray for God to soften the hearts of students on the way to camp.

Pray for God to speak clearly through Bible study leaders, program staff, speakers, and musicians.

Pray your child will engage mentally, physically, and spiritually at camp.

Pray for a deep sense of peace and joy within your church group.

Pray for wisdom in parenting your student.

One idea for this week that could enhance your relationship with your student: write a note each day after this devotional time letting your son or daughter know some of the ways you have prayed for them. Put a date on the note and stash them in places where they will find them once they return home.

## DAY TWO

### *God With Us from the Beginning* The Big Picture: Creation



**Teaching Aim:** God has been with us from the beginning, not just the Father, but God the Son and God the Spirit. God is creator. He is a big God. From the beginning God desired a relationship with mankind.

**Study Passages:** Genesis 1:1-2,26-28, John 1:1-5, Colossians 1:15-20

One of the most amazing aspects of Scripture is the way it interprets itself. Passages and truths are brought to light and confirmed by other passages. Though written in different times, cultures, and circumstances, all of Scripture is brought together by the Holy Spirit. This same Holy Spirit, through the living miracle of Scripture, invites us to chew on spiritual meat rather than settling for mere milk. Studying the same theme in different passages is one way to feast on the Word.

Many students believe God created the world. They have likely heard the Christmas story many times and know Jesus came to be “God with us.” But what does the concept “God with us” have to do with creation? How is creation related to Jesus, and what does it reveal about Him?

Read Genesis 1:1-2,26-28. God, completely Himself and fully present, watched and waited, hovering attentively until the time was right. By His power, He called all matter into being out of nothing. The creative genius of these events is unfathomable. From the very beginning we glimpse God’s triune nature. What parts of these verses indicate the Creator as three in one?

In *The Magician’s Nephew*, C.S. Lewis illustrated creation beautifully. Aslan, the Christ figure, begins to sing in the dark void. Gradually, like a building symphonic masterpiece, the song unfolds as light, earth, water, countless plants and creatures appear and join in harmony to honor their creator.

Even in God’s masterpiece of creation, He exhibited the harmony of “with.” He worked in precise intentionality and each element of creation depended beautifully on the others. Creation’s majesty draws hearts from every time and location to awareness of God and desire for relationship. God breathed His very breath and essence into people, creating them for relationship with Him and with each other.

Read John 1:1-5. What do you see in these verses that points to the concept of the Trinity? These verses begin a deeply significant passage in which John presented Jesus clearly as having been present and active during creation. What do these verses specifically indicate about God’s intended relationship with creation and with humanity?

John wanted his readers to understand the Jesus they knew as Teacher, Miracle Worker, and Resurrected Savior was the same God they called Father. This connection is crucial to seeing the big picture. God has always been devoted to the idea of relating to and dwelling with His people and He made it clear from the beginning. What do you take away from John 1:1-5 about Jesus that gives you reassurance for yourself and for your student?

Now read Colossians 1:15-20. In the margins, jot down a list of things Paul declares about Jesus in these verses. The church at Colossae had adopted incorrect and insufficient views about the supremacy and divinity of Jesus Christ. These false beliefs undermined the message of the gospel and confused believers. Paul wrote this section of the letter to give the Colossian Christians a more correct perception of Jesus. We see the same assertion from Paul as we did from John—right identification of Jesus as God from the beginning is crucial to the big picture. We best understand the meaning of His death and resurrection when we understand who He is, and who He has always been.

Look back over the list of Paul's declarations about Jesus. Circle the ones to which you would like to give more thought. Draw a box around the most meaningful characteristic to you during this season of your life. Underline the ones you are not totally comfortable with. Think about what you might ask Jesus in light of what you are learning about Him.

Are there aspects of Jesus on this list you would ask God to show your student about Himself this week? If your student grasped more about Jesus' divinity and preeminence, how different do you think his/her faith would be? How can knowing and believing these truths about Jesus give you confidence in the way you relate to your student?

When we recognize that everything was created through Jesus and for Him, we can know He always acts with purpose. When we begin to understand the larger perspective of God's activity through time and His eternal mindset, we can grasp the incredible honor of being invited to join His eternal story. Test grades, volleyball tournaments, and questions about college seem small in comparison to God's unfolding story of redemption. We were created for so much more than a series of choices and circumstances. We have been invited to participate in the redemption of humanity through Jesus.

Think about the normal dialogue between you and your student. How can understanding God's consistent emphasis on relationship influence the subject and tone of your interactions with him or her? Relating to our kids as teenagers feels completely different than it used to when they were younger, but that doesn't negate the importance of cultivating the relationship.

### **Praying Today**

Pray that God will help you rest in the knowledge that He loves you and has loved you from the beginning of time.

Pray for your student to grasp the vastness of Jesus' role and authority.

Pray for your student's heart to be soft and responsive to biblical teaching during camp.

Pray for God to give you a teachable heart as you study His Word this week.

Ask God to spark your student's fascination with Scripture and the ways it reveals God's character.

Ask God to reveal to you ways you can affirm His work in your student's life. Write affirming notes for your student to find when he or she returns.

By the end of today students are feeling settled in at camp. Pray that their hearts will be awakened to God's love for them through recreation, ministry, Bible study, worship, and biblical community.

## DAY THREE

### *God with Us on Earth* The Big Picture: Jesus



**Teaching Aim:** Jesus came and dwelt among us as Immanuel (God with us). Jesus became a man not just to be with us, but to be the perfect solution to our sin problem. We are forgiven and redeemed through Christ.

**Study Passages:** Genesis 3:1-24; Exodus 40:34-38; John 1:14; Colossians 1:21-23

We were endlessly untangling Christmas lights while our fascinated two year old daughter scuffled through the house investigating the decorations strewn about. After a few moments of quiet, a loud crash reverberated from the next room. Already frustrated with the lights, we rushed in to find our curly red-headed little girl sitting in the middle of a mess. She took one look at our impatient faces, and at the overwhelming brokenness around her and began to cry, sobbing, “I want Grace! I want Grace!” She was calling for her older sister, Grace—always a great source of help. As she repeated over and over, “I want Grace,” all of a sudden the image took on a whole new meaning. What she needed from us was real grace. She was totally helpless to fix the problem she had unwittingly caused. The catastrophic results of her curiosity lay about her in pieces. She needed help, forgiveness, reassurance, and love—in a word, grace.

We can all relate to the sudden realization that we can’t fix what we’ve broken. We stare at the damage paralyzed by our inability to make it right. Adam and Eve had the ultimate moment of terrible clarity when God came to look for them in the garden.

Read Genesis 1:1-24. What do you see in Adam and Eve that you recognize in yourself? How do you see the tempter using the same tactics today in the lives of people? Underline all the consequences to humanity for Adam and Eve’s sin.

Verse 20 indicates the first evidence of a devastating truth. Sin brings about death. Something had to die to offer garments of skin to cover the shame of Adam and Eve. The commission of sin ushered in death, and ever since then death has reigned on earth for all of its inhabitants. Apart from God all people live under its curse and consequence. In our daily lives as well, death always follows closely on the heels of sin—death of innocence, death of dreams, death of vision, death of passion for God, physical death, and ultimately eternal death. We are all like my two-year-old on that precarious day—helpless against the magnitude of the mess and desperately in need of rescue.

Look back at Genesis 1:15 and catch the foretelling of Jesus’ victory over sin and death. We can rest assured knowing God’s intentional saving grace was already in motion, it keeps unfolding today, and it will cause us incredible joy in eternity.

Read Exodus 40:34-38. How would you describe God’s relationship with the people at this point?

All the people living around Israel worshipped uncaring objects. The idea of a God who literally lived in the middle of town was, and is, astounding! God not only came near, He allowed all of Israel to see His glory, and even invited them to follow.

Turn to John 1:14, read and underline it in your Bible. The HCSB translates this familiar verse, “The Word became flesh and took up residence among us...” He moved in with us. The heart of God was fully demonstrated in the arrival of Jesus. Throughout the generations since Adam and Eve, God had remained with and revealed Himself to His people in dramatic ways. But God’s plan all along was Immanuel, which is translated “God with us”. The very same glory present in the cloud and fire resides in Jesus Christ.

In Colossians 1, after the heart-pounding, fist-pumping exclamations about Christ's identity and character in verses 15-20, Paul shifts to a more personal tone. It's as if he said, "Because Jesus is all these things I've just listed, look what He is able to do for you! In your utter helplessness to relate to God or clean up the mess you sit in the middle of, He made it right."

Read Colossians 1:21-23, noticing the polar opposite terms used to describe the unbeliever and the Christ-follower. Because Christ is who He is, He alone can reconcile the outcast and bring belonging and security.

Why is it important for us to realize our own helplessness apart from Christ?

How can we as parents create an environment that encourages our family members to "remain grounded and steadfast in the faith"?

What do you think Paul meant by calling himself a "servant" of the gospel?

How do you think being a servant of the gospel looks in the life of a student, other than staying away from destructive behaviors and attending church?

Think back over the Scripture passages encountered today. How would you describe the ways God related to His people? What characteristics of God, or ways of God, could we imitate as parents relating to our students?

### **Praying Today**

Pray for students to have moments of clarity regarding their need for Jesus as Savior.

Pray for students to develop an understanding of deeper purpose beyond their activities and current daily life.

Pray for openness in parents to the activity of God in their students' lives.

Pray for endurance and health for FUGE staff, leaders from your church, and students.

Pray for harmony within your student group and that distractions would be minimized.

Pray for students to glimpse the bigger picture of Jesus' divinity and identity as Savior.

Pray for surrender in your student's heart.

## DAY FOUR

*God with Us at All Times*  
The Big Picture: Holy Spirit



**Teaching Aim:** When Jesus returned to heaven, He sent another Counselor, the Holy Spirit who guides us out of sin and into new life through Jesus Christ. Gospel living comes as the Holy Spirit works in us. Those in Christ have been changed by the gospel, so we are able to live differently.

**Study Passages:** Exodus 13:17-22; John 14:15-18; John 16:5-15; Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-8

Think about a time when you've sat around a fire and stared into the glowing embers. The ever-changing flicker, warmth, and bright flames are hypnotic. We find ourselves relaxing, drawn into deep thought and a sense of closeness with others nearby. The wonder of a controlled fire creates a sense of safety and intimacy. As we contemplate the crackling fire, worries fade from our focus.

Read Exodus 13:17-22. It's fascinating that God chose to use fire as the evidence of His presence. Why do you think He did?

Think about the reality of looking eagerly into the evening sky, waiting for the moment when the towering cloud that constantly hovered would burst into flame. Each night the fire erupted from within as a bright, writhing reminder of God's presence reaching upward into the darkness. God had delivered His people from bondage in Egypt and made sure they knew unequivocally that He was with them every moment, with every step.

In a way, this is a picture of our time here on earth. If we are Christians, having surrendered our lives to Jesus in faith, God has freed us from our bondage to sin. During the rest of our journey here in the "wilderness" He leads, protects, and instructs us while we journey toward the promised land. We learn to trust Him more as we rely on Him. As our students learn to journey with God and trust His plan, we must equip and free them to go where He leads. Though we as parents are to lead our kids through these formative years, we must not obstruct their view as they learn to look to God.

Read John 14:15-18. Can you find evidence of the Trinity in this passage? How would you describe the role of the Holy Spirit based on these verses? In what ways does this passage remind you of God's visible presence in the Exodus passage?

Now read John 16:5-15. Underline the things Jesus did and (in a different color) things the Holy Spirit, or Counselor, does.

Jesus explained to His followers that He, in the flesh, would be going away. They must have felt panicked at this news. He took care to explain in great detail how God would still be with them every day. Jesus affirmed the Holy Spirit as fully God and fully capable to help, protect, and guide. As believers we can know, even if we don't feel it every moment, that God IS with us.

As parents we can trust completely that if our kids know Christ, they have God's presence with them to guide, protect, and comfort them. They need Him and His guidance even more than they need ours.

How can we best teach our children to deeply trust that God is with them at all times?

Read Acts 1:4-8, noticing references to all three persons of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

One aspect of submitting to God involves waiting for Him to act. In the time of the Exodus, when God's presence remained with His people in a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, they moved when He moved.

When He led, they followed. They learned that remaining with Him was worth more than the freedom to strike out with their own plan. Jesus told His followers to wait for the Holy Spirit's arrival among them in Jerusalem. Though God's presence certainly can be visible, as in the pillars of cloud and fire, and in the person of Jesus Christ, followers of Christ are still required to live by faith. We are to watch and wait for direction from Him, and move when He moves.

How does knowing the eternal, triune God is with you impact the day to day reality of your family? How easy is it to remember that He is with each believer in your family just as fully as He is with you?

Read Acts 2:1-8. Again, we see fire as God's chosen image through which to reveal His presence. These verses describe the astounding arrival of the Holy Spirit—not only could those present see the visible tongues of flame, they were even more amazed by the result in the lives of the recipients. The change made by the Spirit's indwelling was noticeable, both in the ability of the apostles and in their courage.

The Holy Spirit is no less real today than He was when Jesus promised His arrival to the early Christians. Believers are changed people, no longer heart-dead. The ever-present Spirit coaches, guides, and instructs. The evidence of His presence in our lives is noticeable when we yield to His work.

### **Praying Today**

Pray for courage to trust the Holy Spirit to guide, protect, and instruct your children.

Ask God to give you eyes to see His Spirit at work in the life of your student.

Pray for students to feel the steady theme and rhythm of God's truth and respond in worship.

Pray for your teenager's thoughts to be drawn to God countless times during the day through creation, Bible study, and interaction with people.

Pray that students will have courage to trust and surrender their lives to God through Jesus Christ.

Ask God for wisdom as you think about sharing your responses to these Scriptures with your student in the days ahead, not to pressure them to share, but simply to involve them in the conversation about what God is teaching you.

## DAY FIVE

*God with Us to Lead Us*  
The Big Picture: We Follow



**Teaching Aim:** Throughout the entire Bible, God has been at work, furthering His kingdom and His reign. One of Jesus' last commands on earth was a call for believers to go and make disciples of all nations. The Great Commission is a daunting task but Jesus promises to be with us and to work through us as we go.

**Study Passages:** Joshua 1:3-9; Matthew 28:16-20; Colossians 3:12-17

“Go with me, Daddy!” When going out in the dark to feed the dogs, running out to the barn, or heading down to the basement, knowing Daddy is near makes all the difference to a child. The same concept of community is true in military operations where the brotherhood of the team makes moving forward through deadly terrain more bearable.

As you begin today's devotion, here is some context for the first passage you will read. We pick up after Moses has died and God has chosen Joshua to take his place in leading the people of Israel. Their forty-year wilderness experience had come to an end and they were ready to go into the land promised by God. Battle awaited them. Israel would need to charge forward, trusting God more than they trusted their own eyes, ears, or emotions.

Before Joshua could prepare the people, God needed to prepare him. Joshua had seen the pillar of cloud and fire daily for decades. He had witnessed many miracles of provision and protection, yet needed assurance that God would never leave him before he took up Moses' mantle of leadership.

Read Joshua 1:3-9. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous not once, but three times in this conversation. The people would look to him and he needed to have unwavering faith that God would do what He said He would do—their lives and future depended on it! God reminded Joshua to learn from Scripture all he could about God and the way He had worked in the people.

God was not sending Joshua out into the darkness alone. The other repeated phrase in this passage is one we hear echo from the heart of God throughout Scripture: “I will not leave you. I will be with you wherever you go.”

What is the relationship between God's two emphases to Joshua: “Be strong and courageous” and “I will be with you.”

Wouldn't it be easier for God to just accomplish the big things by Himself? Why do you think He involves and invites people into His plans?

Read Matthew 28:16-20. What consistencies in God's heart do you see in both this passage and Joshua 1:3-9? What specific things did Jesus charge His followers to do after He ascended into heaven?

God is with us for many reasons, but one of the clearest is to strengthen us to courageously go in His name. It's very possible that God has spoken to our students this week about something they need to do or somewhere they need to go in His name. Feelings which accompany a new awareness of something God wants us to do can run very deep. We may feel a resistance to change, fear, excitement, and freedom all at the same time. Students can feel anxious when they think of talking to parents about what they sense God leading them to do.

Try to be prepared to listen without comment, pray with, and support God's movement in your student's life, even if it feels awkward at first. Just like He said to Joshua and to the early disciples, God still says, "Be strong and courageous—I am with you." He may have said this to your student this week. He or she will need the Holy Spirit's strength to surrender control of life to God, go across the hall to their sibling's room, across the school cafeteria, or across the ocean on a mission journey to give God glory.

How could you make God and His ways a natural topic at home?

Read Colossians 3:12-17. Underline parts of this passage you would like to be descriptive of your home and family.

Wow! What if our families were characterized by this kind of life? How attractive would that be to our neighbors and friends? All our relationships, family and otherwise, can begin to look more like the ideal described in the verses if we consistently yield to the leading of the Holy Spirit individually.

Read and discuss these verses with someone else in your family today. Ask them what part of the passage the Holy Spirit impressed on them the most.

Students, and parents as well, can easily lose focus and forget or never get around to seeking God in Scripture, praying for wisdom, or thinking on the truths of God. The most important legacy we can leave our children, a spiritual one, is also the easiest one to neglect.

### **Praying Today**

Pray for your student to be able to trust God more than he trusts his/her own eyes, ears, and feelings.

Pray for students to have a clear understanding of steps God is asking them to take, and the courage to take them.

Ask God to bring Scripture to life for the students in your church group this week.

Pray for God to give your family opportunities to be strong and courageous in making Jesus known (family mission experiences, witnessing to neighbors, etc.).

Pray for endurance and health for leaders, FUGE staff, and students.

Ask God to draw students to Himself in saving faith. Pray for students to forge strong friendships which will encourage their faith in the months and years ahead.

As you wrap up today, go ahead and pencil in a couple of options on your calendar for when you could take your student out for coffee or ice cream when they get home.

## DAY SIX

### Reentry



Have you ever plunged into an ice-cold river or lake? Suddenly everything you felt or were thinking before you jumped in has vanished from your mind. Ever had the surreal experience of stepping off a bus, train, or airplane into a completely different culture? Transitioning quickly into vastly different situations can be overwhelming. If your student experienced biblical truth in new ways at camp, he may view his whole life and all his relationships through a whole new lens. Everything will look a little different. When he steps off the bus into the home world, he may feel a little overwhelmed. The sudden absence of his friends as he heads home may leave him feeling disconnected. The group may even want to get back together as soon as possible.

If we as parents receive our students with sensitivity and encouragement, we can enhance the application of their experience with God into everyday life. Likewise, if we are not interested or even ridicule our kids as they return home, we can be a real hindrance to the potential impact of camp.

Today our students will likely arrive home tired and maybe hungry, but refreshed spiritually. Five to six days away from the routine, distractions, constant sensory assault of technology, and expectations have offered opportunity for renewal. Even more influential, students have worshipped together, studied the Bible, played hard, prayed for one another, and heard others' stories of faith. It's possible your student has experienced a complete paradigm shift during camp. The framework on which she has built her belief system has been altered by the love of God. Everything in her life is now viewed against the backdrop of the gospel. Things she never noticed before have become crystal clear. Things that were of central importance now fade in her focus.

If our sons and daughters want to talk, nothing else we might be doing is as important as listening for as long as it takes them to process their experiences out loud. If our kids are too tired to share, they may need to rest first. It may take several days for the story to come out. But even if your student never shares with you about what they experienced at camp, remember, the Word of God is never wasted. The Holy Spirit is still speaking truth to your student.

Look back over the devotional studies you've done this week. We've covered some very rich passages of Scripture. Think about the ramifications of you and your student viewing life with these truths as the bedrock on which you build your days.

To know that Jesus has been there from the beginning, a participant in creation, underscores His deity. The world tells students that Jesus was a prophet—one among many. Knowing biblical truth about Jesus confirmed by God across time and generations will help students have confidence in Him.

Beginning to grasp "God with us" as reality transforms us, especially in light of our hopeless sinful condition. Why would God want to be near when we are not much like Him at all? God's pursuit of relationship with people and provision for us states our worth and value in His eyes. What if your student and other family members were peacefully and totally secure in the fact that God loves them completely? The opinions of others could then take their rightful place in the back, rather than being a motivating force.

From walking in the garden with Adam and Eve, to leading Israel with His presence, to speaking through the prophets, to sending His own Son as a perfect payment for our sin-debt, to giving us the Holy Spirit, we have seen that God *is* with us at all times. How could knowing this truth help your student understand commitment? Many students today seek a role model who is truly consistent in love—What better example than God Himself?

God is with us, not just for the beauty of companionship, but to lead, equip, and empower us to live with eternal significance. How could this truth about God help your student develop a real sense of purpose in everything he or she does?

When your student arrives home, hug and affirm the wonderful qualities in them that God has reminded you of. Make yourself available if they want to talk. If you've written letters to them this week while they were gone, simply give the letters to your child or leave them where you know they will be found.

### **Praying Today**

Thank God for the work He has done in your child this week. Give thanks also for the work God has done in your life.

Give thanks for the opportunity and role you have been blessed with as a parent.

Pray for your student to have a receptive and attentive heart to the Holy Spirit.

Pray for opportunities to continue the conversation regarding truths you and your student have encountered this week.

Pray for salvation and real spiritual maturity in your student's closest peer group.

Pray for wisdom as you listen and for patience as you trust the work of the Holy Spirit to transform your student's words and actions.

Pray for wisdom in prioritizing and strengthening your family relationships.

Give thanks to God that He is Immanuel. Pray for depth of understanding as you meditate on the reality that God is with us.