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**2009 CHURCH  
GROUP DEVOTIONS**



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## **Dear Group Leader,**

At Fuge, we believe one of the most important parts of your day at camp is when you reconnect with the students you brought to camp. They have been scattered all day, in different Bible studies, ministry sites, and track times. So the church group devotion time will probably be the first time since breakfast that your students will be together in the same room at the same time. Here's how it looks at camp: Immediately following worship each evening, your church group will have a designated time and place to be together. They can share stories from Bible study, recreation, ministry sites and/or track times, as well as reflect on what they experienced during the worship services. This element of camp is designed to promote group unity and allow your students to see ways God is moving within each other's lives.

This guide follows the daily themes and Scriptures. You may choose to use this information as is, or you can adapt the material and structure the time to fit your group's personality. We suggest that you prepare for church group devotions before camp.

Also, at the end of each worship service, the pastor will provide a set of "Moving On" questions, which will be on the screen as you dismiss after invitation. These are questions connected specifically to his message that night. Copy these questions down, and you may use them as discussion starters for your group time.

At Fuge, we recognize that not all decisions for Jesus will be made during the worship service. Many will choose to do this during the church group time. We rejoice in this with you! Please let us know on your group leader evaluation how many students made decisions during your church group time.

### **Consider doing these things before arriving at camp:**

- Hold a pre-camp, in-depth Bible study on the book of Exodus, focusing on the character development of Moses.
- Hold a parent/student meeting prior to leaving for camp. Give parents a copy of the Parent Devotions and encourage them to study these daily while their teens are at camp.
- Line up parents and church members at home to pray specifically for your group during church group devotion time each night. Ask them to commit to one hour of prayer and provide them a copy of this material for reference.
- Divide the responsibilities of leading church group devotions among your adult leaders or your strongest students. This will take some of the burden off your shoulders, and it allows them to sharpen their leadership and ministry skills.
- Assign each adult sponsor a number of students to shepherd. These groups will be called "family groups." Provide a time before camp for each group to meet together and get to know each other. During the week at camp, encourage family groups to take care of each other and to spend time praying and sharing with one another.
- Hold a meeting for adult sponsors and discuss their responsibilities before and during camp.

# OPENING NIGHT

**“But those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint” (Isa. 40:31).**

## **Materials Needed:**

- Index cards
- Pencils or pens

On your first night of camp, you will have a member of the Fuge staff escort you to your church group devotion room. Give time for the staff member to introduce himself to your group. He will serve as your “church host” for the week, so make sure your students get to know him. The staffer will help you cast a vision for church group devotion time and pray for you and your students. Explain to your students that this will be a vital part of their camp experience and that they will have the opportunity to share stories, pray together, and celebrate what God is doing over the course of the week. Encourage students to bring Bibles, notebooks, and pens with them each night.

## **Opening Activity:**

Begin tonight’s challenge by starting the following discussion and introducing this week’s theme. Say: **“Think about how we got here today. How long did it take us? What were some of the experiences we had along the way? If you could have chosen absolutely any mode of transportation to get here, what would you have chosen?”** Allow for responses. It is OK for this part to get a little silly. You might hear “limo,” “airplane,” “horseback,” “cruise liner,” “time travel,” or any number of other options.

Say: **“Let’s pretend we are going to take a two-thousand-mile journey. Each of the four corners of this room represents one mode of transportation. I want you to stand in the corner that would be your preferred method of moving from point A to point B. Be prepared, because I am going to ask you to explain your answer.”**

- **Corner One: Airplane**
- **Corner Two: Tour Bus (a really nice one with big-screen television, etc.)**
- **Corner Three: Train**
- **Corner Four: Luxury Cruise Liner**

Ask students in each corner to explain why they chose that particular mode of moving. Be prepared to hear things such as, “I want to get there as fast as possible”; “I want to be pampered along the way”; “I want to see things I would be able to see only if we were driving or flying”; and so forth. Some students might want to argue with you and say that it depends on the destination. So, if it were a place they were really excited about, they would want to get there as soon as possible. But sometimes it’s the journey itself that is the fun part—like a cruise. Actually, these are the responses you

are looking for. So if they don't get to this point themselves, then ask them: **"So, how does the purpose of the journey make a difference in the preferred mode of transportation?"**

Ask students to think about the journey they are on with God and if it has anything in common with any of these modes of transportation. Use the comments students gave during the last activity to fuel the discussion. For example: **"Do you wish Christianity was more like an airplane ride—so you could just get where you were supposed to be without all the bumps in the road? Do you sometimes feel like your Christian life isn't any one of these things, but more like an old car trying to run on a flat tire? When you became a Christian, did you expect Christianity to be like a luxury tour bus, with every possible convenience? Has it been?"** (These are yes or no questions, so you'll need to follow them up with deeper questions for discussion.)

Say: **"When most people talk about their relationships with God, they often talk about it in terms of one specific mode of transportation. What is it?"** If you don't get any response, ask: **"Do you hear people talking about their 'flight' with God? Their 'limo ride' with God? Their 'cruise' with God? No. What do you hear them talk about?"** If you still aren't getting any responses, say: **"The answer I'm looking for is a 'walk' with God."** Ask: **"What makes walking different from any other mode of transportation?"** (*Examples: It takes longer; you have more time to pay attention to your surroundings; if you are walking with someone else, you can get to know them better; anyone can walk, but not everyone can drive a car, or fly an airplane, or buy a ticket on a cruise ship.*) Say: **"How do these answers help explain why someone might talk about their relationship with Christ as a 'walk'?"**

Encourage someone to read aloud Isaiah 40:31. Ask students to think about how this verse might apply to the theme "Move." Explain that this week at camp, the Bible study is going to focus on a group of people's walk with God, out of Egypt and into the promised land. Let them know that there were some very difficult obstacles during the journey. There were times when the children of Israel lost their focus, rebelled against the one who was leading them, and even turned their backs on God. Explain to your students that it took them 40 years to cover the distance from Egypt to Israel, a journey of less than 250 miles. Today, that would take only about 30 minutes by airplane. Ask: **"Why do you think it took so long to get there, and what do you think God's purpose might have been to make it such a long ordeal?"**

### **Prayer Time:**

Distribute an index card to each student. You can choose to do this exercise in smaller family groups for sharing with others, or this can be an individual activity between each student and the Lord.

Say: **"Think about something with which you could compare your 'walk' with Christ. Is it a roller-coaster ride that is so thrilling? Is it like a car that doesn't have any gas? Is it like a train that has just barely left the station and hasn't picked up any speed? Or is it really like a walk with your closest friend? On your card, write two things: First, what is your journey like right now? Second, what do you wish**

it was like?” Give them some time, and then, say: **“We’re going to have a time of silent prayer. While you are praying, look at the two things you wrote. Ask: “Are you willing to let God do whatever it takes this week to “move” you from the first to the second response? If not, what is holding you back?”** Explain that they should put today’s date on their cards and put them in their Bibles. Assure them that you will look at these again at the end of the week to see what has changed. Ask someone to close in prayer and then give students any camp information they need to be ready for the next day.

# DAY ONE: FAITH TO LET GO

## Exodus 3:1–4:17

**Key Verse:** “Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say” (Ex. 4:12).

### Materials Needed:

- A bag of M&M’s® or some other small prize
- Photos of one of the first planes and a modern-day plane. Search the internet, print and tape one on opposite walls of the room

As students get settled in, ask for volunteers to share stories from today that fall into each of the following categories:

- Something funny that happened
- Something cool they learned on ministry sites (M-Fuge) or during recreation (Centrifuge)
- A story about someone they met from another church

Using the “Moving on” questions from tonight’s sermon, lead students to reflect on what they learned in the worship service.

### Opening Activity:

Explain that since our theme this week is “Move,” the following discussion will revolve around one of the most popular modes of moving people from one place to another—airplanes. Point out the pictures of planes on opposite sides of the room. Allow your group to get up and study both pictures, and then direct them to stand by the one that would require more faith for them to get on board. Question several members of each group about their selection and allow time for discussion. Wrap up the discussion with the following points:

- The first flight by the Wright brothers, on December 17, 1903, went only 120 feet, at about 7 mph, at an altitude of 10 ft. The Boeing 777 has a range of almost 10,000 miles, flies at 560 mph at an altitude of 35,000 feet. **“Which flight takes more faith?”**
- Orville Wright was the pilot of the Wright Flyer. That means he was completely in charge. On a Boeing 777, you are one of up to 368 passengers being flown by two people you have never met who stay behind a locked door. **“Which flight takes more faith?”**

Say: **“Whether you decided it would take more faith to make the first flight ever made, or more faith to climb on board a modern airliner, in both cases you have to be willing to let go of something.”** Ask: **“What do you need to let go of right now?”** (*The ground, control, fear, etc.*)

Offer a prize to the person who can say today's Key Verse from memory. Ask: **"To whom did God say this?"** (*Moses*) Say: **"Today's lesson title is 'Faith to Let Go.' What did Moses have to let go of in order to do what God was asking him to do?"**

### **Prayer Time:**

Before you get started with prayer time, share announcements and give any instructions for this evening's Night Life activities. Divide the group into smaller family groups (make sure there is an adult leader in each group). Lead a prayer and then encourage the family groups to discuss this question with each other: **"What do you need to let go of in order to do what God wants you to do?"** Instruct them to close their family times in prayer and to be courteous of other groups as they leave the room.

# DAY TWO: FAITH TO TAKE A STAND

**Exodus 7:14-24; 10:1-20; 11:1-10**

**Key Verse:** “Tell him: The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to tell you: Let My people go, so that they may worship” (Ex.7:16).

## **Materials Needed:**

Print off the following scenarios, or write them on index cards and put them in a bag, hat, or box:

- You are the principal of a high school. You must explain to a group of students that they will have only 15 minutes for lunch instead of 30 minutes.
- You are the president of the United States. You must explain to the press that gasoline is now \$8.00 a gallon.
- You are a high-school student. You must tell your parents that you accidentally backed into the mailbox while driving your mom’s minivan.
- You are a middle-school girl. You must explain to your older sister that you ruined the sweater she let you borrow.
- You are a high-school student. You must explain to your social studies teacher why your paper is late.
- You are the manager of a fast-food restaurant. You must explain to a good employee that you can’t afford to keep him on the payroll.
- You are a high-school boy. You must explain to your girlfriend why you are breaking up with her.

**Option:** Consider printing the line from the Cadet’s Prayer (see Prayer Time) on index cards for students to put in their Bibles.

Once students are settled into the room, ask for volunteers to share stories from the day. Keep your categories from last night in mind—a couple of funny stories, but also stories about how they are seeing God move in camp this week. Using the “Moving On” questions from tonight’s sermon, lead students to reflect on what they learned in the worship service.

## **Opening Activity:**

For the following activity, decide how your group will benefit the most from acting out scenarios. You can choose to create small groups where each one will act for the other groups; you can enlist several pairs of extroverted students to do the acting; or

you can enlist your adults to be the actors. Explain that each scenario will involve sharing tough news with tough people. Allow actors/groups to blindly pick a scenario, and give them five minutes to figure out how they will act out their scene. Then, it's show time!

*Alternative Idea:* If acting these scenarios out would not work for your group, then give each scenario to a small group and instruct them to write down advice they would give to the person who is sharing the tough news.

Debrief the activity by asking students to reflect on what the person delivering the tough news did well or did poorly in that scenario. Or, if you chose the "give advice" option, direct students to evaluate the advice that was given.

Say: **"You have probably heard the saying, 'I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but . . . ' Why do people hate to give bad news? Think about a time when you had to deliver bad news to someone else and tell us about the experience."**

Ask students to reflect on what they learned in Bible study today about the news Moses had to give Pharaoh. Ask: **"What factors made it easier for Moses to share this news?"** (*He knew it was God's plan, and he knew how much the children of Israel had been suffering.*) **"What made it difficult?"** (*Pharaoh was powerful and Moses probably wondered if God would really do what He said He would do.*)

Ask: **"What was the take-home concept of today's Bible study?"** (*Faith requires perseverance and courage. We are to take a stand for Christ, even when uncomfortable or unpopular.*)

Guide students to reflect on anything going on in your community, at your schools, or in their personal lives that might require them to take a stand, even if it is uncomfortable. As students share, remind them that having a unified youth group means that you are there to support one another, to hold one another accountable for decisions that are made at camp, and to give one another strength to face difficult circumstances. As group members share current examples, call on other members of the group to pray for them aloud as each situation is shared.

### **Prayer Time:**

Explain that at the elite United States Military Academy at West Point, every cadet learns this prayer (this is just a small portion of a longer prayer): **"Make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong, and never to be content with a half truth when the whole can be won."**

If you chose to print this on a card for each student, pass out those cards now. Invite any students who may be struggling with the choice between the harder right and the easier wrong to talk with you or any of the other adult sponsors before camp is over. Pray over your group. Share announcements and give any instructions for Night Life, and then dismiss them.

# DAY THREE: FAITH TO GO INTO THE UNKNOWN

## Exodus 13–14

**Key Verse:** “But Moses said to the people, ‘Don’t be afraid. Stand firm and see the LORD’s salvation He will provide for you today’” (Ex. 14:13a).

### Materials Needed:

- 3-4 brown paper lunch bags, each with something inside that can be identified by touch, such as sand, cold spaghetti, an apple, and so forth
- A blindfold
- A set of keys

*Special Instructions:* Tonight would be a good time to affirm your graduating seniors. Consider pre-enlisting one or more younger students to give vocal encouragement to each senior during the closing. Keep in mind that you will collect the missions offering tonight. Make sure you have any materials and needed instructions from your camp director. Also, enlist your adult leaders beforehand to silently pray over the students during the Prayer Time. Tell them that you will give them a cue when it’s time to do this.

When students are settled, give them time to share experiences from the day and things they learned in Bible study, track times, ministry sites, and so forth. Ask for specific things they learned from the worship service or sermon. Use this time to ask any of the “Moving On” questions from the pastor. As much as possible, attempt to direct questions toward those who might not have shared anything so far this week.

### Opening Activity:

Bring out the paper bags with objects you prepared ahead of time. Ask for volunteers to put their hands in the bags and try to identify what is inside by touch alone. Repeat this with each bag you have prepared. Then, ask the following questions: **“How many of you were nervous about what I might have put in the bag? How did you know there wasn’t a mousetrap, or a poisonous snake, or a bunch of broken glass? What gave you confidence to put your hand into the bag?”**

The point you need to make is that your students were willing to put their hands into the bags because you as their leader have proven yourself faithful to them in the past. They didn’t know exactly what to expect, but they knew there wouldn’t be anything in there to harm them. (Note: If these are not the answers you get, you may need to do some ministry evaluation!)

Ask students to reflect on how Moses must have felt at the edge of the Red Sea in the passages you studied today. Ask: **“What are some of the unknowns you are facing when we get back home? What about next school year?”** Say: **“You are not alone in these situations. As a group, we are going to encourage you with whatever you are**

**facing. Take another step in your faith journey by allowing us to pray over you and your situation right now.”**

If you are taking tonight to encourage your graduating seniors, call on each one and recognize them in a specific way. Here are some ideas:

- Invite the younger students you have pre-enlisted to talk about what each of the graduating seniors has meant to them.
- Encourage the adults who are with you, particularly any who have been Sunday School teachers for the students, to give them a blessing or a challenge.
- Direct each senior to sit in a chair in the center of the circle (one at a time) and instruct the rest of the group to gather around and lay their hands on them. (If you have a lot of seniors, they could all go at the same time.) Encourage volunteers to pray for each of them.

Invite one more volunteer (perhaps a student who was the most vulnerable in the previous sharing time) to assist you in the following illustration. Position him to stand in front of you. Take out the set of keys and say: “[Name], **I am making you a promise. These keys will always be in front of you.**” Hold the keys in front of his face and say, “**Where are the keys?**” (*Answer: In front of me.*) “**How do you know?**” (*Because I can see them.*)

Next, blindfold the student and jingle the keys in front of him. Say: “**Where are the keys?**” (*In front of me.*) “**How do you know?**” (*Because I can hear them.*) Now, stop jingling the keys, but keep them in front of the student’s face. Say: “**Where are the keys?**” (*In front of me.*) “**How do you know?**” (*Because you told me they would be there.*)

Remind students that once they get home, it might not be as easy to see God at work or to hear His voice as it is at camp. They can rest in God’s promise that He will never leave them or forsake them. Recite today’s Key Verse: “**But Moses said to the people, ‘Don’t be afraid. Stand firm and see the LORD’s salvation He will provide for you today’**” (Ex. 14:13a).

### **Prayer Time:**

Direct students to close their eyes for a moment of silent prayer. Encourage them to use this time to praise God for His promises and to thank Him for being near. Summon your enlisted leaders to move around the room and to pray silently over the students.

Close the entire group in prayer. As students open their eyes they will notice the adult leaders standing near them. Say: “**Be encouraged that even when you don’t have someone physically beside you, you can always trust that God is near and that there are others who are praying for you.**”

Share announcements and give any instructions for Night Life (if applicable) before you dismiss the group.

# DAY FOUR: FAITH TO WAIT

**Exodus 16:1-5,13-15,21-26**

**Key Verse:** “I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them: At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God” (Ex. 16:12).

## **Materials Needed:**

- Several Sharpie® markers (Ask your church group host beforehand if you need help finding some of these.)
- Index cards
- Pens

*Special Instructions:* It is the last night of camp, so keep this time open to the Spirit’s leading. If there were a lot of decisions made in the worship service tonight, give students time to process and talk about those decisions. If time permits, allow each member of the group to share one story. Be flexible, as you might not have time for any planned activities.

Also, depending on your location’s schedule, you might be participating in Mega Relay after church group time tonight. If so, make sure you are clear on where to take your group, as well as any guidelines for face painting, curfew adjustments, and so forth.

As students get settled, give them time to share experiences from the day and things they learned in Bible study, track times, ministry sites, and so forth. Ask for people to share one thing they learned from the worship service or sermon. Use this time to ask any of the “Moving On” questions from the pastor.

## **Opening Activity:**

Arrange chairs in a circle. Explain that you are going to play a game called “I Can’t Wait.” Explain that in this game, you will make a series of statements, and after each one, students must move according to their answers. If they agree that they can’t wait for that thing, they must move one seat to the right. If they disagree, or decide they aren’t really excited about that statement, then they should move one seat to the left. And if the statement read is something that has already happened to them, they should stay where they are.

- **I can’t wait to sleep in my own bed**
- **I can’t wait to start high school**
- **I can’t wait to drive**
- **I can’t wait for school to start**
- **I can’t wait to get braces**
- **I can’t wait to get married**
- **I can’t wait to graduate**

- I can't wait for all these people to get off my lap
- I can't wait to get home
- I can't wait to see my little brother or sister again
- I can't wait to see my boyfriend or girlfriend again

Allow time for students to get settled into their original seats, and then ask them to recap details of Bible study today. To guide this discussion, ask: **“For what were the Israelites waiting? Why did they have to wait so long? What did God teach them while they were waiting?”**

**“Future in His Hands Activity” (Option)** Ask group members to think about one thing they are excited to experience in the future. Encourage this to be a little more serious than the items from the previous game. (Examples: marriage, job, a friend or family member coming to know Christ, college, etc.) Direct them to write a one-word description of that thing on the palms of their hands with a Sharpie marker. Now, ask for a volunteer to read aloud Jeremiah 29:11. Ask: **“Who holds our future in His hands? According to this verse, what can we know about that future? Based on what you have seen this week, what do you know about the God who made that promise? How has He proven Himself faithful to you this week?”** Allow for responses.

### **Prayer Time:**

Give each student an index card and a pen and instruct them to write down lessons the Lord taught them this week and prayer needs or fears they will face once they get home from camp. After a few minutes, students should pass their cards to the person on their right. Give everyone some time to pray silently for those requests. Invite an older student to close this time by praying aloud. Take up these cards (make sure their names are on them) to use as part of your follow-up plan after camp.

### **After-Camp Leadership:**

Develop a plan for follow-up with students after camp. Here are some ideas:

- Encourage adult sponsors to write notes to their family group members within a week of returning from camp.
- Plan an in-home visit with each visiting guest you had come to camp with your group, so you can get to know the student's family and vice-versa.
- Plan a special service where students can share their stories with the rest of the church.
- Pray over specific concerns students shared throughout the week, as well as the prayer cards from tonight's devotion. Contact each student the week after camp via phone or e-mail and tell them you are praying for them. Ask them how they are doing.

- Lead students in the After-Camp Bible Study available online at [www.fuge.com](http://www.fuge.com). This can be used as a Sunday School or discipleship resource.
- Follow up with students who made decisions during the week of camp, especially those who made salvation decisions. Make sure those students get the proper amount of discipleship training and direction. Consider purchasing a new Christian guide such as the *Survival Kit for Youth—Revised Edition* through [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com).
- Remind students that the same God who worked in their lives at camp is at work back home. He desires to move in powerful ways, just as they experienced this week.