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FUGE 2009

PARENT DEVOTIONS



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Dear Parent,

This week of devotional material has been designed to allow you to experience a little of what your student is experiencing at camp this week. We know that you will be praying diligently for your teenager, and our desire is to give you an overview of each day so you can pray more specifically. We have been working hard all year to provide a quality program and staff so your student can encounter God in a new way this week, and we want you to be a part of their spiritual journey.

While your teenager is away, take whatever opportunities you can to rest and focus on your own walk with the Lord. You will be using the same daily themes and Scriptures as your student, so this will give you the opportunity to talk with him or her about the things learned at camp. Most of all, we hope you will be encouraged as you spend time with the Lord this week.

In general, these are the things students will be doing each hour of the day while they are at camp. If you have an alarm on your watch, consider setting it to go off at various intervals throughout the day, so you will be reminded to pray for your student at these times:

8:00 a.m.	The AM Show
9:15 a.m.	Recreation/Quiet Time/Bible Study
1:10–3:20 p.m.	Track Times/Ministry Sites
3:20 p.m.	Free Time
6:30 p.m.	Worship
8:00 p.m.	Church Group Devotion
10:00 p.m.	Night Life

Suggestions to help your student get the most out of camp:

- Pray for him in the days leading up to camp and while he is at camp.
- Give her a care package to take with her to camp (favorite snacks, note, verses).
- Encourage him to give sacrificially to the missions offering collected at camp.
- Leave a message on her cell phone and tell her how much you love her.

Since you potentially have more time this week to catch up on your reading, check out these parenting resources available through LifeWay Christian Resources.

- *Living with Teenagers* is a monthly magazine that helps parents develop growing relationships with their teens and offers answers to real-life questions.
- *30 Days: Turning the Hearts of Parents & Teenagers Toward Each Other* is an interactive devotional guide designed for one parent to spend 10 minutes a day with one child in the personal setting of their home.
- *The Five Love Languages of Teenagers* (Parent Study Guide and DVD Pak for Parents) is a six-week study to help parents improve relationships with their teen(s) as they learn their child's love languages.

- *Parenting with Kingdom Purpose* is a book that looks at Bible teaching and the recent National Study of Youth and Religion to shape a fresh approach to raising children that cuts through the chaos of modern life and brings families closest to each other and the Lord.

Visit www.lifeway.com or call 1.800.458.2772 to order or learn more about the above resources.

DAY ONE

“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).

Today’s Camp Activities: Today is opening day of camp. Students will hear about the different track times or ministry tracks they can participate in this week, and they will be placed in a Bible study with students from other churches. They will be introduced to the theme for the week, “Move,” which focuses on the life of Moses. They will meet their Fuge staffers, as well as students from other churches.

So now that your child is off to camp, how do you feel? Are you excited for them? Apprehensive? Relieved? Are you anticipating all that your child might learn about himself while he is at camp? Are you anticipating all that you may be able to get done this week with your teenager out of the house? No matter how you are feeling, would you right now commit to pray every single day for your son or daughter? Please fill in the blank below with your child’s name:

This week, I will pray each day for _____ while he or she is at Fuge.

Why do people often describe their relationship with God as a “walk”? With the theme for the week being “Move,” you would think there would be more exciting methods of movement than walking. Why not our “flight” with God? Or our “cruise” with God? Or, maybe even our “roller-coaster thrill ride” with God! “Walk” just sounds so . . . slow.

In Isaiah 40:31, there are three modes of movement listed. Underline each one. Now, take a minute to reflect on which one most reflects your Christian life right now. Are you soaring these days? Running? Or are you walking?

Right now, my relationship with God is most like . . .

Because . . .

Every believer, no matter how far along in a relationship with Christ, has days of soaring, running, and walking all mixed together. Certainly parents move back and forth between these three, don't we? Think about days as a parent when you were soaring, such as around the time your child was born, at an award ceremony at her school, or during your son's unbelievable play on the football field. Then there are days when you are running with your teen during those two or three years before he or she gets a driver's license. Their activities increase, but they can't drive themselves anywhere yet. Anyone wondering where the "not grow weary" part kicks in?

For a different perspective, has there ever been a day when you and your child just took a walk together without an agenda or any particular destination? Have you ever just enjoyed one another's company? What did you and your child learn about each other during times like this?

Now do you understand better why it is often described as a "walk" with God? This week at camp, pray that your child will have a chance to think about his or her walk with God. But don't let it stop there. Use this week to consider your own walk.

My prayer for my child:

My prayer for myself:

DAY TWO

FAITH TO LET GO Exodus 3:1–4:17

Today's Camp Activities: M-Fuge and XFUGE on Mission students will have their first day on ministry sites as they visit nursing homes, day care centers, and neighborhoods all over the city. Centrifuge and XFUGE participants will go to their first day of track times.

Bible Study: Your teen will study Exodus 3:1–4:17. This is the story of Moses' first encounter with God in the burning bush. They will be challenged to learn how faith requires trust and willingness on our part. When God calls, we must respond with action.

Memory Verse: "Now go! I will help you speak and I will teach you what to say" (Ex. 4:12).

Exodus 3 and 4 is the story of a man (Moses) who felt hopelessly unprepared for what God wanted him to do. From wondering about his qualifications (3:11); to doubting the God who was commanding him (3:13); to wondering whether or not people would believe him (4:1); to worrying about his speech impediment (4:10); and finally just begging God to send someone else (4:13), you get the picture of a guy who really, really felt overwhelmed by the task at hand.

Have you ever felt that way? What about when you brought your first child home from the hospital? Clearly, being this child's parent was something you were called to do (No turning back now—he's here!), but you just had so many questions. You felt unprepared and overwhelmed.

But you got pretty good at it, didn't you? You learned. You made some mistakes along the way, (and you will make a few more before it's all said and done), but that initial feeling of terror you had your first night home from the hospital or the adoption agency went away, didn't it? What God said to Moses in Exodus 4:12, He also says to you as a parent every single day. **Go ahead and underline or highlight this verse in your Bible and on this page.**

The title of today's lesson is "Faith to Let Go." What do you think Moses had to let go of in this story?

For you to respond to God's call on your life, what do you have to let go of? (Not just your call to parent a teenager, but in your call to serve God in every area of your life?)

Look back over the Exodus 3–4 story. Make a list of the assurances God gave Moses:

For every doubt Moses expressed, God gave him a reassurance. And they all boiled down to the first thing God told Moses in the first part of Exodus 3:12. Write that below:

Pray that your child today will receive this same assurance from the Lord. And as you go through your day, let God remind you of the exact same promise.

“He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it” (1 Thess. 5:24).

DAY THREE

FAITH TO TAKE A STAND

Exodus 7–12

Today’s Camp Activities: M-Fuge XFUGE on Mission students will continue their work on ministry sites. Centrifuge and XFUGE participants will continue in track times, and many of them will sign up for track times for the second half of the week.

Bible Study: Your teen will study major sections of Exodus 7-12, focusing on the plagues the Lord brought down on disobedient Egypt. Students will learn how faith requires perseverance and courage, and they will be challenged to learn what it means to take a stand for Christ even when it is uncomfortable or unpopular.

Memory 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 Me” (Ex. 7:16).

If you happen to know where one of your high-school yearbooks is, get it out and take five minutes to find all the pictures of yourself in it. Look at the hairstyles and the clothes. Read the things your friends said about you on your autograph pages. Even if you can’t find it, reflect back on those years when you were a teenager. What were the five most important things on your mind at that time? Make a list.

If you are anything like me, “fitting in” was pretty high on the list, after “girls” and before “driving.” That’s why the theme for today at camp is going to be so challenging for students. It calls them to go against the flow.

During Bible study, your student is getting an overview of the 10 plagues God sent against Pharaoh, as detailed in Exodus 7–12. If you need a refresher course on what they are, check out the subject headings in your Bible or watch *The Prince of Egypt*. As you do, take the time to read about three of the plagues in depth: The plague of

water becoming blood in the Nile (Exodus 7:14-24); the plague of locusts (Exodus 10:1-20); and the plague on the firstborn (Exodus 11:1-10). As you read, consider the following questions for each of them:

What made the stand Moses took so difficult?

What was Pharaoh's reaction?

What was the result?

Perhaps you have had to be the bearer of bad news to someone. Maybe you have had to face your children with news about a move, a job change, or a change to your family dynamics. Maybe you have had to confront someone you care about regarding a destructive behavior. **As you ponder this, what incident comes to mind?**

As you think about how difficult it is to take a stand even when it is unpopular, or to confront someone with a truth even when it is something they don't want to hear, I want you to notice something in Exodus 7:22; 10:1-2; and 11:9-10. **What is the common element you see in all three of these verses?**

God is in control. No matter how difficult the stand He is asking you to take, God is in control. And whether or not it is clear to you immediately, His plans are unfolding exactly as they should.

Today, think through all the situations your son or daughter is facing in which they will need to take a stand. Pray that God will give them courage and perseverance. Pray the same prayer for yourself.

DAY FOUR

FAITH TO GO INTO THE UNKNOWN

Exodus 13:17–14:28

Today's Camp Activities: M-Fuge and XFUGE on Mission students will continue their work on ministry sites. Many Centrifuge and XFUGE students will begin new track times.

Bible Study: Your teen will study major sections of Exodus 13–14, focusing on the story of Moses and the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea. Students will learn how faith sometimes requires going into the unknown. We are to take a risk for Christ and allow Him to work through us so His power will be displayed and He will get the credit.

Memory 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).

So here is the scene: Moses is standing on the edge of a vast sea, with more than half a million Israelites behind him, and they’re all looking to him for leadership. Close at their heels is the full military might of the Egyptian army, who would like nothing better than to stop them at the seashore and drag them, bound hand and foot, back into captivity. In your own life, the unknown lies ahead, but the promise of freedom is also there with it. Behind you is what is known and understood, but there is also the guarantee of bondage.

If you were standing on that seashore with Moses, and you were given the choice to follow him into the unknown or go back to Egypt, which would you choose? Why?

Perhaps you might have chosen surrender to the Egyptians. If you did, you can maybe relate to what some of the Israelites were feeling in Exodus 14:10–12. Read that passage now. **Are you surprised that they lost heart so quickly? Why or why not?**

It’s human nature to fear the unknown. No one embraces change easily. Even when it is a change for the better, it takes time to adjust to it. Someone told me once, “The only person who doesn’t resist change is a wet baby!”

But I wonder if part of the reason the Lord continued to harden Pharaoh’s heart time after time in yesterday’s lesson, sending plague after plague down on the Egyptians heads, was so the Israelites could see that the Lord could be trusted to do what He said He would do.

Describe a time in your past when God proved Himself faithful to you:

Are there any major transitions you are about to face as an adult? Maybe your son or daughter is getting ready to go to college. It's scary for them and for you, too, right? Maybe you are on the verge of having to make decisions about your own aging parents. Maybe this is a season in which you are uncertain about your job.

Take time to read Psalm 77, focusing especially on verses 8-11. Record any insights you get from this Psalm below. What might it say to someone facing the unknown?

As you close today, pray that God will comfort you as you face the unknown and that He will use you to be a comfort to someone else.

DAY FIVE

FAITH TO WAIT Exodus 16:1-26

Today's Camp Activities: This is the last full day of camp. M-Fuge and XFUGE on Mission students will finish their work on ministry sites. Centrifuge and XFUGE students will finish up with track times. All camps will compete in Mega Relay.

Bible Study: Bible study will focus on Exodus 16, the story of how God provided manna for the Israelites as they were waiting to enter the promised land. Students will learn how faith sometimes requires waiting. During this time, we are not to complain but depend on God to deliver.

Memory 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).

You might be familiar with the Dr. Seuss book, "Oh the Places You'll Go!" Chances are, you have given it to someone as a graduation gift. The urban legend is that the book actually is the text of a commencement address Dr. Seuss gave. The book gives a great description of what Seuss calls "The Waiting Place":

"The Waiting Place . . . for people just waiting. Waiting for a train to go or a bus to come, or a plane to go or the mail to come, or the rain to go or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow or waiting around for a Yes or No or waiting for their hair to grow. Everyone is just waiting.

“Waiting for the fish to bite or waiting for the wind to fly a kite or waiting around for Friday night or waiting, perhaps, for their Uncle Jake or a pot to boil, or a Better Break or a string of pearls, or a pair of pants or a wig with curls, or Another Chance. Everyone is just waiting.”

Can you relate? Have you ever been in The Waiting Place? What do you feel like you are waiting for right now?

Waiting isn't one of those things that automatically gets easier with age, is it? Our wants and desires change with time, but our impatience doesn't. In fact, in our culture of microwave popcorn, pay-at-the-pump gas, and blazing Internet connection speeds, I wonder if we are less patient than we were a generation ago.

Read Exodus 16:1-4. What do you think the Israelites' attitude was while they were waiting?

It is easy for our attitudes to get out of whack while we are waiting for the next thing. Have you experienced that in your life? But I think that's why God inspired the writer of Exodus to spend so much of chapter 16 detailing how God provided for the Israelites while they were waiting.

For thirty-one of the chapter's thirty-five verses, the story is of God's provision of the manna—what it looked like, what it tasted like, how it was gathered, even how God provided twice as much on Friday so they wouldn't have to gather on the Sabbath. Clearly, the Lord wanted the emphasis to be on His provision, not on the Israelites' season of waiting.

Think back to a major season of waiting in your life. Reflecting back on that time, how did the Lord provide for you during your wait?

Read Exodus 16:33. What was the purpose of saving two quarts of manna?

If you are in a season of waiting right now, it might be good for you to get out your own little two-quart jar of manna. Be reminded of how God has provided for you in the past, and express your faith to Him that He will meet your needs right now . . . and into the future. **Close this time today by expressing in writing your trust in God's provision.**

DAY SIX

FAITH TO THE FULLEST

Exodus 19:3–20:17

Today's Camp Activities: Your student is heading home! In most camp schedules, Bible study groups had one more time together this morning, followed by a closing celebration to end camp on a high note. Then comes the long bus ride, fast-food on the way, and then home to see you soon!

Bible Study: Bible study will focus on Exodus 19:3-6 where God prepared the Israelites to receive the Law through Moses, and Exodus 20:1-17, which details the Ten Commandments.

Memory Verse: "Now if you will listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be My own possession out of all the peoples, although all the earth is Mine" (Ex. 19:5).

As you think about your son or daughter coming home from camp today, ask yourself, "Am I ready for them to get here?" Is your house ready? Maybe you are thinking about what's in the refrigerator. (If you have a teenage son, then no matter what you have, it's not enough!) Do you have enough laundry detergent for the mountain of clothes she will bring back? Do you know what you are going to have for supper tonight? Are there clean sheets on his bed, because chances are he is going to come home tonight and crash.

What about your heart? Is your heart ready for your child to come home? Are you prepared to hear the camp stories, see the pictures, and watch the videos? Are you ready to ask your child what the Lord taught him or her while they were at camp? Are you expecting real change? Or are you a little bit cynical, believing from past experience that whatever spiritual high your kids are on, it will wear off in a few weeks?

Exodus 19 is all about the Israelites making preparations to receive the word the Lord had for them. **Read Exodus 19:10-15. What are some of the specific preparations the people made?**

It might seem strange to you that this devotion is coming at the end of your child's week at camp, rather than at the beginning. After all, this seems to be about getting ready to hear a word from God. Take a wider look at this:

Based on what you know about the Exodus story, where had the Israelites been up to this point? (Hint: Exodus 20:2)

And where were they going? (Hint: Exodus 20:12)

That's right. They were coming home. So while it's true that in the short term Exodus 19 is about making preparations to receive the word of the Lord, in the long view it's about making preparations to come home and live in a new way.

So the question comes back to you. Beyond stocking the refrigerator, planning supper, and changing the linens, what preparations are you making for your son or daughter to come home? Are you prepared to be more involved in the spiritual life of your son or daughter? The truth is, if your child is coming back from camp on a spiritual mountaintop, then the need for you to be invested in his or her spiritual growth has never been higher. Your youth leaders will need you to reinforce the decisions your student made at camp.

Close out this devotion by praying that God will make you the parent you need to be so that you will be better equipped to help others be the Christ followers they need to be.

Then, get ready. They're on their way!