



# POST CAMP

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

THEY'RE BACK. NEARLY A WEEK AGO, YOU SENT YOUR PRECIOUS TEENAGER OFF TO CHURCH CAMP WITH NEATLY PACKED LUGGAGE, A NEW BATHING SUIT, EXTRA SNACKS AND A SMILE. TODAY THE BUS DOORS OPEN AND THEY LOOK . . . WELL . . . ROUGH. THEIR HAIR ISN'T COMBED. THEIR CLOTHES ARE DIRTY. THEY LOOK EXHAUSTED AND THEY LEAVE BEHIND THE DISTINCT SCENT OF BODY ODOR AND DORITOS®. IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WONDER, "WHAT HAPPENED THERE?!" THE BEST ANSWER IS . . . A LOT. THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT YOUR STUDENT HAD A LOT OF FUN THIS WEEK. THAT THEY STAYED UP LATE, HAD GREAT CONVERSATIONS, DID SOMETHING THAT MADE THEM NERVOUS, MADE SOME MAJOR LIFE DECISIONS AND LOGGED SOME LIFE-LONG MEMORIES—AND THAT WAS JUST THE FIRST DAY. SO WHERE DO YOU START? WHAT DO YOU ASK? AND HOW DO YOU TALK ABOUT THIS OH-SO-PACKED WEEK WITH THEM IN A WAY THAT THEY DON'T JUST STARE AT YOU BLANKLY AND FALL ASLEEP?

### WHAT TO SAY NOW

The truth is, your student may not be ready to talk a lot the first day home from camp. Maybe they'll want to tell you all about their week, but for most students the first day home is about one thing—sleep. If you'd love a recap before they pass out, do your best to keep it simple.

- What was one fun thing you did?
- What was the best part of your week?
- Who is one person you got to know better?

### WHAT TO SAY LATER

When your student has slept for a day or two, they may feel a little more ready to chat, but there's also a good chance they may have trouble finding the right words for what they experienced. They're still processing. They're still figuring out how to bring what they learned at camp into their normal, everyday life. So instead of asking broad questions like, "What did you learn at camp?" help them find the right words by asking something more specific. For example, you can ask questions like:

- What is one word or phrase that sticks out in your mind from this week?
- What is one thing about the week that surprised you?
- What is one thing you learned about God, yourself or others this week?
- Is there anything you've decided to do differently because of what you experienced at camp?
- Is there anyone you've decided to spend more/less time around after camp?

### WHAT NOT TO SAY

Camp is one of the few places that feels sacred to a student. It can be because they felt closer to God or made major life decisions. Or, it can be because they simply became closer to friends and felt more accepted than they do at school. Either way, your student will be far less likely to talk about that experience if they feel you don't understand or don't approve. So when you ask questions, do your best to keep the tone positive (even if it seems like all they did was drink Mountain Dew® and arm wrestle). Avoid phrases like:

- Did you learn *anything* this week?
- It sounds like all you guys did was goof off.
- It doesn't sound like much fun to me.
- You're sure not acting like you learned anything.