

Parent Support Meeting

- Theme:** Getting Parent Support
- Scripture:** Proverbs 22: 5-6
- Objective:** To provide an opportunity for parents to discover the benefits of your short term mission trip and the role it plays in their child's spiritual growth
- Time:** 45 minutes
- Materials:** Bible
 Enough plain, white copy paper so that each person can have at least two pieces
 One prize (candy bar, gift certificate, parent/youth resource, etc.)
 White board or large paper pad, easel, and markers for recording the groups' discussion comments

Opening Activity (15 minutes): "Getting to the destination"

Once everyone has arrived, give each person a few pieces of copy paper.

Say: **To get things started today, we're going to have an old fashioned paper airplane competition. I'm going to give you about five minutes to make your best paper airplane. And while you're at it, I need you to make two paper airplanes. One for the competition, and then another one for something we'll do a little later.**

Allow time for people to make their paper airplanes. Offer help as needed. When everyone has finished, have people line up on one side of the room. Then, one at a time, launch the airplanes to see whose goes the farthest. If your room is small, the winner could be the airplane that hits the highest point on the back wall. After the winner is determined, give out the prize.

Have people retrieve their airplanes and find a partner to discuss:

1. How did I feel during this activity?
2. How could I have been more successful in this competition?

After a few minutes, refocus the group's attention, and say: **OK. Before we move on, I'd like the winner to return to the back of the room. I'd like the rest of you to take your second airplane and line up along the sides of the room. This time, we're all going to fire our airplanes at our winner as he/she goes for round two!**

Explain that everyone can fire their airplanes at any point after the winner releases their plane. When everyone is ready, say **"Go!"** and let the games begin!

After the fun settles down, have the original pairs get together with another pair to make a foursome. Ask the new groups to discuss the following questions. (You may want to print these questions on paper or project them on a screen.)

Small Group Questions (15 minutes):

1. How was this last exercise like raising a teenager?
2. How do you feel watching your teenager go through times like this?
3. How do you think your teen feels while they are going through those times?
4. What are some of the real-life "airplanes" that are flying at your kids?

Ask for teams to share some of what they've discussed and note it on the flip chart or whiteboard. Ask for details or clarification as needed.

Scripture Study (15 minutes)

Read: Proverbs 22:5-6

Say: **These verses tell us in a direct way what we've just experienced. And I think we could all agree that we want to raise our kids so that they won't get distracted or influenced by all the "airplanes" that are flying at them. How would you like your kids to turn out after they've been trained up in the way they should go? Actually, I'd like us to be still and think about that for a minute. Let's close our eyes and quiet ourselves for one minute (allow time for people to get into a reflective state). During this time, I would like you to picture your child as an "all-grown-up" Christian. I'm not talking about their hair and clothes...I'm talking about who they have become. Their character, their habits, and their nature. Go ahead and take one minute to think about that.**

(After the minute of silence say): **Now, I'd like each of you to take 30 seconds and share your child's future description with your group. (Allow time for sharing.) Let's call out some words or phrases that you shared. What do we want our kids to look like when they are grown up?**

Record answers on a whiteboard.

Say: **Wow. That's an impressive list. Accomplishing these things isn't easy. It's way harder than winning a paper airplane contest, and it probably won't happen by accident. To best help our kids grow spiritually while they navigate through a hard time in life, we need to provide the best possible environment for that growth to happen. What habits, activities, or other things do you think should be part of this environment?**

Allow time for group sharing. Record answers. If the idea of "serving others," "putting others first," or "putting your faith into action" doesn't surface, add those things in to the list at the end.

Say: **You as parents play the key role in creating a spiritual growth environment for your kids. And I know it's hard. Our upcoming mission trip is designed to come along side you and help you in your goal of raising up your children in God's ways. Here's just a few of the ways your kids will have an opportunity to grow:**

- They'll have a regular time for personal interaction with God.
- They'll put someone else first who really needs their help.
- They'll discover their own unique gifts and abilities and learn they can each serve God and have fun at the same time.
- They'll see God at work.
- They'll build deep Christian relationships.
- They'll put their faith in action.
- And as a bonus, they won't be sitting around saying "I'm bored!"

**If you're doing a Group Workcamps Foundation mission experience, this section is explained in more detail at the end of this meeting script.*

Say: **Does anyone have any thoughts or reactions to what your kids will experience through our mission trip?**

Allow a few minutes for sharing.

Say: **I know it takes a lot to support your kids in a trip like this. It takes money, and time, and keeping on your kids to live up to their commitments. But I can assure you that this experience will be one of the most memorable weeks of Christian growth in their lifetime. Thanks so much for your support. After we close in prayer, I'll be available to answer any of your questions about the trip.**

Closing Prayer

**Use the following information to answer questions or supplement your parents meeting if you're attending a Group Workcamps Foundation mission experience.*

GROWING SPIRITUALLY AT A GROUP WORCKAMP FOUNDATION MISSION EXPERIENCE

They'll have a regular time for personal interaction with God.

Spiritual growth is at the center of everything we do. Each year has a specific theme and scriptural focus which participants experience through morning programs, at-work devotions, evening programs, and youth group devotions. Every devotional time is experiential and applicable, and challenges people to grow both in their relationship with Jesus and their service to others.

They'll put someone else first who really needs their help.

There's no better way to overcome the "Me-Monster" than to focus on someone else for an extended period of time. During their week of service, participants aren't just doing work... they are working for people. Real people with real needs who they will get to know personally. Local agencies carefully screen applicants for true need, so you can know that your week of service really makes a difference.

They'll discover their own unique gifts and abilities and learn they can each serve God and have fun at the same time.

Each person has a specific role at camp – one which they choose at the beginning of the week. Through these roles, participants discover what they can do to personally and practically serve God and people. Now that's exciting! At the service project site, they'll also learn new skills from each other and from Group staff. Often, the people we serve teach us surprising things as well. Plus, kids have a ton of fun just because they are together and away on a trip.

They'll see God at work.

Every day, we share God Sightings – ways that we've seen God at work. That can be on the service project site, back at the lodging facility, during devotions, or anytime. Participants quickly see how God is at work all the time in many different ways. Additionally, our evening programs give campers a time to allow God to work in their own lives.

They'll build deep Christian relationships.

Through devotions, work time, free time, and youth group time, every participant has an opportunity to build new Christian relationships and deepen existing ones. Your kids will be able to meet people from all over the country – people who are new and different, but who also share the same faith in Jesus Christ. And besides new friends, many churches find that a Group mission experience is the best youth group bonding time of the whole year.

They'll put their faith in action.

Lots of kids hear about faith and have their own faith, and then ask, "So what?" Their week of service with Group answers that question with a both-and opportunity. It's about *both* their own spiritual growth *and* helping people in need. That's what faith is all about – loving God and loving people. Many youth return home with an entirely new perspective what it means to be a Christian and live a Christian life.

They won't be sitting around saying, "I'm bored."

Bored? The Christian life isn't supposed to be boring, and neither is a Group mission experience. The day starts early and ends late. Each day has a busy schedule that is filled with new experiences, yet balanced with free time and adequate sleep. And as a youth group, you'll have one free afternoon or evening (depending on the type of camp you attend) to do something fun with just your group. No – definitely no boredom here!