



CONNECT

# CHURCH GROUP DEVOTIONS

2011

## ABOUT THE WRITERS



### MATT AND AMY LOWE

Between the two of them, Matt and Amy Lowe have seen Fuge from every angle: camper, adult chaperone, staffer, camp director, camp coordinator, youth minister and M-Fuge site contact! Fuge has been a huge part of their lives and their spiritual journey and they are excited to be a part of Fuge again as writers. Matt loves working with students and currently serves as a Student Pastor for Central Baptist Church in Hendersonville, TN. Amy works at LifeWay in Women's Publishing. They live in Hendersonville, TN with their young daughter Claire and their lazy dog Gus.

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# INTRODUCTION

## **DEAR GROUP LEADER,**

Church Group Devotion is a time at camp for your group to get together to debrief the day and to share experiences and “God” moments. Use this time to help the students put feet to the things they have been learning during the day. These real, tangible actions that sprout up in Church Group Devotions have the potential to take root in your student ministry. We hope you will be encouraged to continue bringing up ways to challenge your students to think about not only what they are learning, but to dive into what it means to take these truths and live them out once you get home.

Each group that comes to camp is different—some are large, some are small, some are FUGE veterans, and some are rookies. So, this guide is not a “one size fits all”; instead, it’s meant simply to provide you a template from which to work. Please feel free to tweak and adjust to what may work best for your group. The activities in this guide can be used in a large-group format or they can easily be done in smaller groups if you desire. Please make these elements your own!

Church Group Devotions will immediately follow Worship each evening. Since each camp pastor is different, it is impossible to plan into these devotions what might be said during the service. That being understood, however, worship will be fresh on the students’ minds. If you feel that there needs to be more time devoted to unpacking the sermon from each evening, feel free to do what is best for your students. There is space provided in this guide for you to take notes on the sermon so you can write out how you plan to incorporate the message into your group time.

We pray that your group will leave more connected to each other—that they will truly love each other!

Now, go get rested up and ready for this incredible week!

# NIGHT ONE

*Please Note: Tonight's Church Group Devotion material is shortened in order to provide you time to settle in and cover any logistical and housekeeping things that you might need to discuss with your group.*

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- + A piece of paper and writing utensil for each student
- + Your own "relationship web" example

## NOTES FROM OPENING CELEBRATION

### CAMP QUESTION OF THE DAY

(This can be done as a large group or with partners.)


**"What are you most looking forward to about this week?"**

### GET CONNECTED

#### *ACTIVITY: RELATIONSHIP WEBS*

Hand each student a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Lead students to draw a small circle in the middle of their pages (just large enough to write their names). Explain to your students that they are going to make "webs" of their relationships.

Instruct students to think of all the different areas in their lives where they know and connect with people on a regular basis. For this activity, directing students to think about their normal school schedules might work best. Students should write each of these areas around their names and draw a circle around them. For instance, they might have circles labeled, "classes at school," "choir," "FFA," "youth group," and so forth. Consider making your own "web" and have it ready to share to help students understand the activity. The



goal of this activity is to get students thinking about how many people they actually know and come in contact with on a regular basis.

Once webs are completed, guide them to go through and estimate how many people are in each circle of the web, and then lead students to total all numbers and write it at the top.

Share some of the web circles that you wrote on your sheet and the estimate of how many total people you interact with on a regular basis.

Ask: **“How many different arms of your relationship web did you have? Have you ever thought about the number of people to whom you are connected? How does this change your views about your level of influence over those you know?”**

## DISCUSS

Share with your students that they are going to hear the word “connect” over and over again throughout their week at camp. Everyone is wired with a desire for meaningful and personal relationships, and this week they will study how we are all connected to others through relationships.

Say: **“The theme for the week is ‘CONNECT: Developing Godly Relationships.’ Throughout the week we are going to focus on the relationship between Jesus and Peter and take note of how Jesus teaches Peter to connect to Him and others.”**

Invite a student volunteer to read aloud Matthew 22:37-39. Share with the students that these are the theme verses for the week.

Ask: **“What does it mean to love? Is there a difference between loving the Dallas Cowboys (fill in the blank) and loving your parents? What is the first commandment Jesus gives us? How can obeying the first commandment help us obey the second?”**

## TAKING IT HOME

Say: **“These verses serve as a summary statement on how we are to relate to God and others. Each day in Bible Study and Worship we are going to unpack what it looks like to live out what Jesus is commanding us to do in these familiar verses.”**

Invite students to take a moment and think about their relationships with Christ. Ask: **“Have you been loving the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind recently? If not, what are some ways that you can show Him this week that your relationship with Him is the most important one in your life?”**

## PRAYER TIME

Challenge students to spend some time praying that God will show them this week how they can begin to love Him more.

Now lead students to think about their various relationships with family, friends, and others. Encourage students to consider how they are doing in loving these people as they love themselves. Ask students to take a moment and pray that they would be open this week to learning how to relate to others better as a result of coming to camp.

Be sure to thank God in advance for all that He is going to do in your group this week. Ask God to help your students be open to learning about how to better relate to God and others.

Share pertinent camp information such as camp rules, and walk through the camp schedule for the next day.



## NIGHT TWO

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- + An index card and writing utensil for each student
- + Ask an adult to be prepared to share his or her testimony

### NOTES FROM THE WORSHIP SERVICE

### CAMP QUESTION OF THE DAY

FUGE rookies: **“Is this experience what you expected? What has been different than you thought?”**

FUGE vets: **“How is this year different from previous years? What do you enjoy each year about FUGE?”**

### GET CONNECTED

#### *ACTIVITY: AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE*

Hand out an index card to each student. As they are passing around the cards, say: **“What is an offer you could not refuse? For example, if someone were to say, ‘We are going to Hawaii tomorrow and we have an extra spot. Do you want to come for FREE?’ What would you do? I would say, ‘YES!’ Think of a situation similar to this that would be an offer you could not pass up. Write that offer down in the form of a question on your index card.”**

After they have had a moment to do this, instruct them to walk around and share their offers with others. Lead students to keep track on the back of their cards of how many people would accept their offers.

Invite volunteers to share some of the most tempting offers.

## DISCUSS

See if any students can recall the Key Verse—Matthew 4:19-20—from their Bible Study this morning. Ask a student to read aloud these verses and invite the group to share what they learned about this verse. Talk about how Jesus extended Peter and Andrew an offer they could not refuse. Below are some follow-up questions. Encourage students to share anything that they might have learned in their Bible Study time in answering these questions.

Ask: **“What made Jesus’ offer so irresistible? How would accepting Jesus’ offer affect Peter’s life? How does accepting Christ’s offer of salvation affect our own lives?”**

Encourage someone to give a specific example of how following Christ has personally impacted him or her.

### *ADULT SHARE TIME*

Enlist one of your adult leaders to share a testimony about his or her conversion experience tonight.

## TAKING IT HOME

If applicable, discuss any points or challenges made during the message tonight during Worship.

Discuss with students how today’s Bible Study theme focused on “Relating to the Lost.”

Say: **“As Christians we should relate to the lost, which means that we need to share Christ with others. We saw from the Bible Study this morning that Peter was called to be a fisher of men. As followers of Christ we have the same calling on our lives. One of the ways we can be ‘fishers of men’ is to offer others the message of Jesus Christ.”**

Ask: **“What is meant by the phrase ‘fisher of men’? What does being a fisher of men look like for us? How can we be fishers of men back home? Jesus’ offer to Peter was irresistible. What are some ways that we can make the gospel irresistible to others?”**

Challenge students to think of tangible ways to share their faith once they return home and back to school. Use this time to think of ways that you as a group can be more evangelistic by brainstorming ideas for evangelism events and other ministry opportunities.

It is important to realize that there may be some students in your group who do not have a relationship with Christ. Take this time to make certain your students know that they can receive Christ as their Savior. Consider sharing the gospel with the group and encourage adults to be available to talk to students individually.

## PRAYER TIME

Say: **“If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior, use this time to pray and ask Him to reveal Himself to you this week as you seek Him. If you are a Christian, take this time to pray for those you know who need to accept Jesus as their Savior.”**

Encourage students to write down in their Bibles or on an index card the names of the people they prayed for so they will remember to keep praying for them.

Close by asking one of your adult leaders to pray for the requests being silently offered up by the group about salvation.

Share announcements, discuss the missions offering, and encourage students to be prepared to give money for this the following night.

## NIGHT THREE

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- + Optional: A prize for the winner of the “Real or Fake Laws” activity
- + Ask an adult to be prepared to share about authority figures in his or her life
- + An index card and writing utensil for each student

### NOTES FROM THE WORSHIP SERVICE

### CAMP QUESTION OF THE DAY

**“Which Tracks/Ministry Track(s) are you in this week? What have you done the last two days in your Tracks? What do you like most about your Tracks?”**

### GET CONNECTED

#### *ACTIVITY: REAL OR FAKE LAWS*

Read each silly law and invite students to guess whether they think the law is fake or real. Consider giving a prize to the person who answers the most correctly. <sup>1</sup>

1. Installation of bathtubs with four legs resembling animal paws is prohibited. (Real, Kansas City)
2. Private citizens may personally arrest any person who disturbs a church service. (Real, Mississippi)
3. No blindfolds may be worn in public places. (Fake)
4. It is illegal to paint your house yellow. (Fake)

5. It is considered an offense to throw pickle juice on a trolley. (Real, Rhode Island)
6. Walking on city sidewalks on Sundays is unlawful. (Fake)

Debrief this activity by asking students to discuss these actual laws.

Ask: **“Is it wrong to disobey a law even though you think it is silly? What has been your response when someone in authority over you has asked you to do things that you thought were silly and unnecessary?”**

## DISCUSS

Say: **“Authority figures are a reality of life. Today’s Bible Study topic was ‘Relating to Those in Authority.’”** Ask: **“What was the story you explored today in Bible Study? Who were the main characters? What were the big events that happened?”**

The Key Verse from Bible Study is Matthew 14:29. Ask a student to read aloud this verse.

Ask: **“What is significant about this verse with regard to Peter and his relation to authority? Is what Jesus asked Peter to do ridiculous and unthinkable? How does Peter respond? What can we learn from Peter? What other discussed topics from today’s Bible Study would you like to share at this time?”**

### *ADULT SHARE TIME*

Enlist one of your adults to share with the students about the reality of authority figures always being present in their lives. Encourage this adult to make it personal by sharing stories from his or her own life. Perhaps there is an adult in your group who would be willing to share about a time in life when he or she struggled with authority.

## TAKING IT HOME

If applicable, discuss any points or challenges made during the message tonight during Worship.

Share with students that today they learned from Peter the concept of submitting to those in authority. Relating to authority is a struggle for many students. During this time focus on helping students understand the value of authority figures in their lives, while also challenging students to take a closer look at their relationships with those in authority over them.

Ask: **“What are your initial thoughts regarding the word ‘authority’? Do you believe that authority figures are placed in your life by God for your good? Why or why not?”**

Ask a student to read aloud Romans 13:1-2 and then discuss how these verses, along with other truths they have learned today, remind us that relating to those in authority brings glory to God.

Now guide students to take a moment and think of all of the authority figures in their lives. Ask them to consider which of those authority figures they have most difficulty relating to.

To make it more personal, you can provide index cards for students to write answers to the following questions:

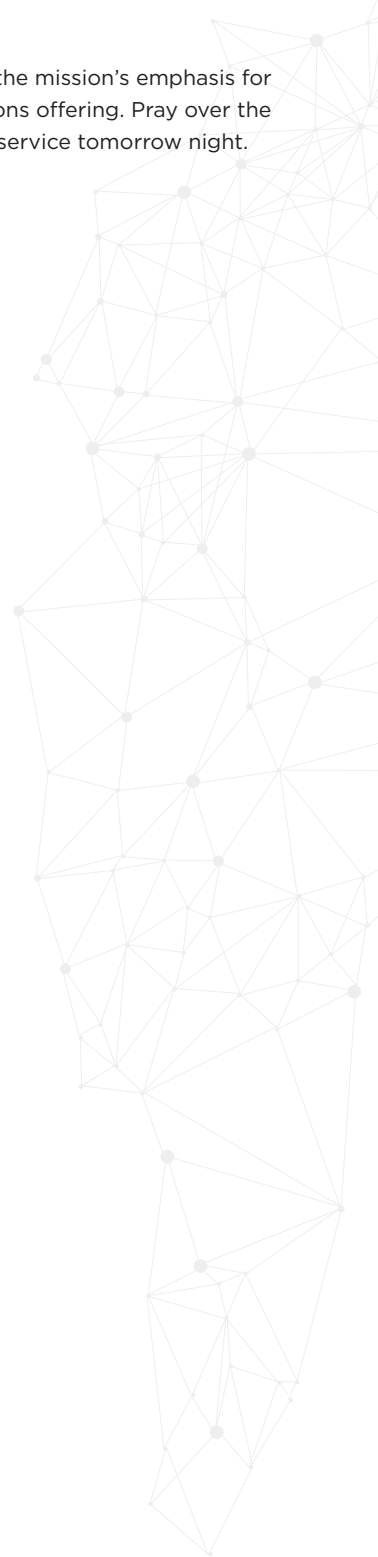
**“Why do you have a difficult time relating to this person in authority? How would you rank yourself on how you relate to this authority figure? How might you begin to improve the way in which you relate to this individual?”**

Encourage students to consider apologizing to this authority figure once they return home if they feel this is a necessary step.

## PRAYER TIME

Spend some time letting the students pray for the authority figures in their lives. Share with students how we should make a regular habit to pray for those in authority over us. As a part of this time, encourage students to pray specifically for those authority figures in their lives with whom they struggle.

Share announcements. Invite student volunteers to share about the mission's emphasis for the week. Challenge students to give. Collect your group's missions offering. Pray over the offering and choose the students who will take it forward in the service tomorrow night.



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<sup>1</sup> [Source: dumblaws.com]



## NIGHT FOUR

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- + Ask two adults or older students who are close friends to be prepared to share as part of the adult testimony time
- + Paper and a writing utensil for each student

### NOTES FROM THE WORSHIP SERVICE

### CAMP QUESTION OF THE DAY

**“What element of your FUGE camp week have you enjoyed the most (excluding Hang Time) and why?”**

### GET CONNECTED

#### *ACTIVITY: THE FAMILY GAME*

This game is a spin-off of the classic game show “The Newlywed Game.” For this activity, choose an adult leader and student who are related, preferably a parent and a child or two students who know each other very well. Invite the parent to step outside while you ask the student the questions listed below. Be sure to have someone designated to record answers.

1. What is your parent’s middle name?
2. Where was your parent born?
3. What is your parent’s favorite food?
4. What was the last movie your parent watched?

5. What thing do you do that bothers your parent the most?

Now bring in the parent and ask the same questions one by one, revealing the student's answers after the parent has answered. Tally up their scores and see how well they did!

Say: **"Today's Bible Study topic was: 'Relating to Friends and Family.' The purpose of this opening game was to get you thinking about your relationships with your family and friends. How would you have done in this activity?"**

## DISCUSS

Transition to discuss today's Bible Study by reminding students that this morning they studied three passages, all of which involved Jesus and Peter. Ask students to name quickly those three stories. (The three stories were: 1. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law; 2. Peter rebukes Jesus; 3. Jesus invites Peter.) Through these three stories we learned what deep love for friends and family looks like.

Direct a student to read aloud the Key Verse for today: Mark 8:34.

Ask: **"What is meant by 'deny yourself'? How can this principle of 'denying yourself' also be applied to how we relate to our friends and family? How will denying ourselves to Christ first help us be able to begin to do so with our other relationships?"**

Ask students if there is anything else they would like to share that they learned in their Bible Studies this morning.

### *ADULT SHARE TIME*

If you have two adults (or older students) in your group who are close friends, ask them to share their story. Encourage them to discuss such things as funny times they have shared as well as more serious stories of times when they have been there for each other or been able to show what love within friendships looks like.

## TAKING IT HOME

If applicable, discuss any points or challenges made during the message tonight during Worship.

Hand out a sheet of paper and a writing utensil to each student. Instruct students to draw three circles—one inside of the other—so they have what looks like a target. Direct them to leave room to write between the circles.

Challenge students to think of all of their friends and family. As they are thinking, instruct them to think about their closest friends or family members. Lead students to write down names of those who would be in their innermost circle. (They should not put down more than four or five names in this space.)

In the circle outside of that, students should write down their next closest friends and family. The people in this circle are still good friends—they're just not in the inner circle. Next, lead students to fill in the outermost circle with names they feel would fit here. Encourage the students not to look at each other's papers.

Ask reflectively: **"Why did you place these four or five names in your inner circle? What are some of the characteristics of the people listed in your inner circle?"**

Enlist a student to read aloud Mark 9:2-12. Discuss with students how Jesus had circles of friends, too. While the disciples were His close friends, and most would fall into His second circle, these three appear to be Jesus' closest friends—those within His inner circle.

Ask: **“Why do you think Jesus chose these three? Is it wrong for you to have some friends that you are closer to than others? Why or why not? Why is it important for you to have good Christian friends and influences in your inner circles?”**

Ask reflectively: **“As you look over the names in your inner circle, is it filled with the types of people that you want to be there? What are some changes you might need to make in the type of people who are in your inner circle? Are you being the type of friend you should be to those within your inner circle?”**

## PRAYER TIME

Discuss with students the importance of having accountability in their lives, especially when it comes to their Christian lives. Encourage students to consider who within their inner circles could be good candidates for being accountability partners with them. Guide students to pray for those people or for whom those people could be. Lastly, lead students to pray individually for the names of those within their inner circles.

Share announcements. Encourage students to go to bed when they get back to their rooms after Night Life so they are not too tired to hear what God wants to say to them in the remaining days of camp.



# NIGHT FIVE

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- + Copies of the brainteasers found on the last page
- + Ask an adult to be prepared to share his or her testimony
- + Paper and writing utensil for each student

## NOTES FROM THE WORSHIP SERVICE

## CAMP QUESTION OF THE DAY

**“What is one thing you have learned this week that has helped you grow in your relationship with Christ? It could be something from Bible Study, Worship, or perhaps something you learned during Track Times or Ministry Tracks.”**

## GET CONNECTED

### *ACTIVITY: BRAINTEASERS*

Divide students into three groups and give each group one of the three brainteasers provided at the end of this lesson. (If you have a very large group you can divide everyone into six groups and give the same puzzle to two groups.) Give them a 10-minute time limit to come up with their answers. After the time limit, you may then pass out the answers. Allow groups to share how they did answering their brainteasers. (See “Brainteaser” handout on page 16.)

Debrief this activity by saying: **“Some things in life are just difficult, like these brainteasers for instance. Today in Bible Study we discussed something that can be difficult for all of us to do at times, and that is to forgive! Forgiveness is tough; it is**

**difficult for us to relate well to those who have hurt us.”**

Ask: **“Why is forgiveness so hard?”**

Encourage students to share of times when it has been difficult for them to forgive.

Peter obviously thought forgiveness was hard as well, judging by the question he asked Jesus in Matthew 18. Invite a student to read aloud Matthew 18: 21-22. Encourage students to remember what they discussed in Bible Study as they answer these questions: **“What is the main point Jesus is making when He answers Peter’s question? Do you think Jesus really expects this from us or is He just exaggerating? How can we possibly always forgive others? Is there anything that someone can do to us that is unforgivable?”**

### *ADULT SHARE TIME*

Invite an adult to share a powerful testimony about how they came to faith and experienced God’s forgiveness in their lives.

## TAKING IT HOME

If applicable, discuss any points or challenges made during the message tonight during Worship.

Today’s lesson provides a good opportunity for your group to grow closer together. There may be some students in your group who need a time of forgiveness with each other. Encourage students to make things right with each other if they feel called to do so.

In addition, take time for students to consider if there is anyone back home that they need to forgive. If so, challenge students to make it a priority to do so. Encourage students to practice the act of accountability by sharing with someone here who it is they need to forgive and why. Challenge students to ask these people to make sure they follow through with their acts of forgiveness.

## PRAYER TIME

During this time there may be some students who need to ask God for forgiveness. This might mean accepting Him as Savior for the first time, or perhaps they need to seek forgiveness from their Savior. Allow students time to spend in prayer and encourage adults to be available to counsel with students.

This is the last night of camp; tomorrow you will load up and head back home. In closing tonight, hand out to each student a blank piece of paper and guide them to journal about their week. Encourage them to focus on what they learned, decisions made, or things God has shown them this week.

Close your time together by having everyone stand in a circle and hold hands. Ask student volunteers to share about what they just wrote in their journals. Ask a student to close your group in prayer.

Be sure to give any instructions your students may need to know for tomorrow.

# BRAINTEASERS

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## **MIDNIGHT**

If it were two hours later, it would be half as long until midnight as it would be if it were an hour later. What time is it now?

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## **BULBS**

There are three switches downstairs. Each corresponds to one of the three light bulbs in the attic. You can turn the switches on and off and leave them in any position. How would you identify which switch corresponds to which light bulb, if you are only allowed one trip upstairs?

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## **SHE-GOAT, WOLF, AND CABBAGE**

A farmer returns from the market, where he bought a she-goat, a cabbage, and a wolf (what a crazy market). On the way home he must cross a river. His boat is small and won't fit more than one of his purchases. He cannot leave the she-goat alone with the cabbage (because the she-goat would eat it), nor can he leave the she-goat alone with the wolf (because the she-goat would be eaten). How can the farmer get everything on the other side?

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# BRAINTEASER SOLUTIONS

**MIDNIGHT SOLUTION:** 9 p.m.

**BULBS SOLUTION:** Keep the first bulb switched on for a few minutes. It gets warm, so all you have to do then is switch it off, switch another one on, walk into the room with bulbs, touch them and tell which one was switched on as the first one (the warm one) and the others can be easily identified.

**SHE-GOAT, WOLF AND CABBAGE SOLUTION:** Take the she-goat to the other side. Go back, get the cabbage, unload it on the other side where you then re-load the she-goat, go back and unload it. Take the wolf to the other side where you unload it. Go back for the she-goat.