

PARENT/STUDENT SERVING GUIDE

12th Grade Conversation

OBJECTIVE

As your teen thinks about college, it is easy for them to start checking out of school, the youth group and the commitment to serving. This is a great time to encourage them to take a mission trip. These mission trips develop leadership skills as well as remind us that God desires us to use them in a mighty way. God does not want them to check out but to engage and go serve.

THE 411

The teen years are often described as the “me first” years of life. In many ways this is natural, because they are self-absorbed and trying to figure out who they are in this confusing culture and world we live in. This does not mean we can just accept that teens are this way and will grow out of it. This is the time when we as parents guide them to understand how God has called us to live, think and act like Jesus, who did not come to be served but to serve. His life was a life of giving, sacrificing and being filled with love. He calls us to model this as His ambassadors in this life. What a great opportunity to discuss with our teens the importance of serving and thinking of others before ourselves. One of the best ways we learn this lesson is by serving on a mission trip.

SUGGESTION

Talk to your teen about going on a mission trip with your church. This trip could be to the inner city or out of country. Your church might not have these kinds of opportunities, but most likely a church near you provides them. You might have to do a little research to find out.

DISCUSSION

Discuss with your teen what trip your youth group and church offers that they could be part of.

Discuss making this a priority and scheduling for it.

Discuss the finances of the trip and how your church encourages the students to pay for their trips.

Help your teen develop a financial and prayer team for his trip.

IDEAS FOR AFTER THE MISSION TRIP:

The transition after a mission trip can be difficult for a teen to process. Make sure you give your teen space and some time to process. Don't bombard them for every detail right after they return. Plan a time to communicate about the trip within the first two days. Try to ask more questions about what they learned than what they did. Ask questions along the lines of what they saw, what they experienced, what they wrote in their journal, what they learned about themselves and what God did in them and through them.

Make sure you follow up with questions about their plans for staying connected to God and for serving.

Ask them how this experience will change their lives here at home.