

TUFF STUFF YOUTH DEVOS

For Camps and Retreat

Welcome To The Tuff Stuff

These five devotions are based on the book **Do Hard Things** by Alex and Brett Harris. I am taking the five principles used in their book, and using them as stepping stones of spiritual growth for your campers.

Begin your first night with getting to know your campers. Find out where they are on their spiritual journey. Find out where everyone goes to school, who goes to church and who doesn't etc. Some campers have not even begun a relationship with The Toughest Man of all, Jesus Christ, so be patient and prayerful for all you campers.

I have tried to stay generic to age as many of you will have different age campers. Please feel free to use parts or all of the devotion as it pertains to your group, but do your best to incorporate the principle of the lesson.

The five principles are

1. Get Out Of Your Comfort Zone
2. Go Beyond The Expected
3. There Is Strength In Numbers
4. Do It Anyway- Respond Now- Reward Later
5. Take A Stand Against The Easy Way Out

The break down of the devotions look like this:

Tuff Stuff

This may be some opening questions or activity to get kids thinking. Use the activity if it will burn off a little energy, especially for the younger guys and girls.

Tuff Guy or Girl

I'll focus on a character from scripture that demonstrates toughness, not as we or they might see toughness, but toughness as God sees it.

Tuff Questions I and II

After reading the story, I've provided some tuff questions to get you group talking. The second group of tough questions moves campers from the text to personal application. If a question feels too mature, chop it down into small bites.

I hope that you all have a fantastic week of camp and that these devotions give you the platform to engage your campers in talking about Jesus Christ and their walk with him. Don't forget that doing the hard stuff begins with you!

TUFF STUFF DAY 1

Principle: Get Out Of Your Comfort Zone

Key Verse: "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

Tuff Stuff For Guys or Girls: Open with a competition to see who is tougher. You can do this in many ways: arm wrestling, indian leg wrestling, most push ups etc.

Tuff Questions Part 1: Who is the toughest person in the movies? Who is the toughest person in sports? Who is the toughest person you know in real life? and Why? What makes a person tough or not?

Tuff Guy From The Bible: Gideon Read Judges 6 1-17 and Judges 7 or /and
Peter Read Matthew 14: 22-32

Tuff Girl form the Bible: Mary Read Luke 1: 26-38

Tuff Questions Part 2

In your opinion, what makes these two characters tough?

How is Gideon called out of his comfort zone and what is his reaction?

What is Mary's reaction to being called our of her comfort zone?

Give me an example of what it means to be called out of your comfort zone?

Have you ever stepped out of your comfort zone? How?

If God calls you out of your comfort zone this week, what will your attitude be?

Challenge: The Lord may call you out of your comfort zone this week. Be open and see What God will do.

Prayer: Lord, make me tough enough to step out of my comfort zone to know You better.

TUFF STUFF DAY 2

Principle: Do More Than Expected

Key Verse: Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:38

Tuff Stuff For Guys or Girls: Have everyone (including you) stand in a circle with an object from their bunk. The can bring something small like a brush or big like a pillow or suitcase. The object of this game is to pass the objects around the circle, but if someone drops an object, they are out, but their object stays in. The winner is the last one to drop anything.

Tuff Questions Part 1: Have you ever had to give something away that you did not want to? What was tough about doing that? Have you ever given something away and it was tough to do, but you knew it was the right thing to do? Explain.

Tuff Guy From The Bible: Abraham and Isaac Read Genesis 22:1-19

Tuff Girl From the Bible: Woman who worshipped at Christ's feet Read Mark 14:1-10

Tuff Questions part 2

What do you think was going through Abraham's mind at this time? What if it were you?

When it comes to others, how can you do more than is expected?

What would you give up a year's wages for?

Do you think it's silly to give to God? Why or why not?

How can you practice doing more than is expected this week in our cabin?

Challenge: If you will do the difficult, God will do the impossible. What does this mean to you?

Prayer: Lord, make me tough enough to give my best to You and to others.

TUFF STUFF DAY 3

Principle: Strength in Numbers

Key Verse: Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:12

Tuff Stuff For Guys or Girls: Have the whole group lock arms except for two people. The goal of the two people is to pull apart the rest of the group. You may want to do this outside. If a person is torn away, they become one of the pullers.

Tuff Questions Part 1: What is the greatest team (this does not have to be sports related) you have ever been a part of and why? What was the strength of your team?

Tuff Guy From The Bible: The paralytic Read John 5:1-9, Acts 2 (with a focus on 40-42), Luke 5:17-26

Tuff Girl From The Bible: Woman at the Well John 4:1-42

Tuff Questions Part 2

Have you ever been in a place in life where you felt like no one could or would help you? Explain.

How tough do you think it was for this woman to go back into town and bring this good news?

What do you think the purpose of the church is? Does attending church give us a certain strength?

How do you think you could strengthen others if you belonged to a church?

Challenge: Being a Christian means “you” are the church and others need you.

Prayer: Father, help me find a community (church and youth group) of believers to help me grow in my relationship with you.

TUFF STUFF DAY 4

Principle: Respond Now - Reward later

Key Verse: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 (also see Luke 16:10)

Tuff Stuff For Guys or Girls: This is a good time for a trust fall. You and the other counselor will be the catchers. Encourage each camper to stand straight and arms by their sides. Stand about 3-4 ft behind the camper and let them fall back (put a mattress on the floor for extra measure). Ask them afterwards, "How hard was it for you to trust?"

Tuff Questions Part 1: All this hard work is for nothing! Have you ever said or felt this? Describe a time when you did.

Tuff Guy From The Bible: Simeon Read Luke 2:25-32,

Tuff Girl From The Bible: The Widow's Sacrifice Luke 21:1-4, Mark 12: 41-44

Tuff Questions Part 2

Do you think Simeon felt like not showing up to the temple some days? What if he would have missed the day Jesus showed up? What does this say about his commitment?

Jesus noticed the widows sacrifice. Do you think he notices your sacrifices?

What are the small things of life you find hard to do? (clean your room, etc.)

What are some of the small, important spiritual disciplines you are skipping (prayer, etc)?

Do small things add up to big things? How so?

Challenge: God will trust you with the big things if you are faithful with the small things. Do you agree?

Prayer: Father, give me the grace to do the small things in great ways.

TUFF STUFF DAY 5

Principle: Take A Stand Against The Easy Way Out

Key Verse: Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 2 John 1:8

Tuff Stuff For Guys or Girls: Standing can be hard work. Try having contest where campers must stand on something small, like a book. Ask them to stand as long as they can. A few seconds in, ask them to stand on one foot. Make sure to give a reward to the one who stands the longest. Standing has it's rewards.

Tuff Questions Part 1 When was the last time you took a stand for something or someone? Explain.

Tuff Guy From The Bible Jesus Read Matthew 26:36-46, 52

Tuff Girl From The Bible Esther Read Esther 2:1-7, 17,18, 3:1-9, 4:16-15 (use your discretion of how much more of the story you would like to read)

Tuff Questions Part 2

Why didn't Jesus call down a legion of angels? Why didn't he take the easy way out?

Why did Esther risk her life before the king?

Is there an area of your life where you are taking the easy way out? What is at risk if you take the easy way out? What is the reward if you hang in there?

Challenge: The easy way eventually becomes the hard way and we will be unprepared for it. How should you be preparing now?

Prayer: Lord, don't let me take the easy way out.

EXTRA TUFF STUFF

I tried to keep each lesson to one sheet for easy reading but don't let that stop you from expanding the stories or characters I have included.

Consider using these ideas for all ages as openers or to build community in your group.

- Have younger kids make a tuff art gallery (this lets you know what they think is tuff)
- Try having some clay and let them shape something tuff (The Dollar Store is your friend)
- Give them a word or gesture clue to say "that's tuff" when you signal them.
- Make an acronym from T.U.F.F that best fits your cabin. It could be your motto like Together, United Faithful and Forgiven.
- For the older guys or girls ask them to make top ten list of TUFF songs, movies, etc ever. Let the older cabins share and see how they compare.
- You could ask campers to grab or share clothes and have a tuff guy/girl dress up competition. Make sure you have your camera ready.
- Don't forget to use illustrations of TUFF moments from your own life for each of these principles, but share only what is appropriate. Don't make campers suffer from TMI.
- Make a song list of Christian songs that you think are TUFF and let the kids wake up to one a day.
- Choose a song that best fits the principle of the devotion and let the kids listen to it as a closer to your devotion or use it to spark more questions.

Feel free to add your own ideas.

Last Thought

I know the word "tough" conjures many images and stereo types but don't let these be the only ones. You have to be tough to forgive, love, make changes, get along, and a host of other scenarios. It's o.k to show your tender side too. Tough guys and girls can pray, cry and let go. Let's emphasize the full spectrum of godly toughness.

My prayer is that these devotional will help your campers grow stronger and tougher in the Lord. **Don't forget to have fun while you are at it.** Heck! It's camp!

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