



Dear Parents,

Hello, I can't believe it's already halfway through February; where did the time go? It has been a joy to have spent the past several months getting to know your children as well as many of you. I am excited, as a youth pastor, to go through this school year and do life together. Please feel free to contact me: call me, e-mail me, stop me when you see me, whatever works best for you. I value parents as a vital part of doing youth ministry. Again, please contact me if you ever have questions or concerns. My contact information is located at the bottom left of this page.

If you haven't heard yet, and knowing how good junior high students can be at relaying information to parents it wouldn't surprise me if you haven't, we are challenging the students (and leaders) to memorize the first three chapters in the book of James. A big challenge deserves a big reward - a weeklong road trip to eastern Washington! More specifically we are going to spend two days at Silverwood theme park in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and two days at a house in Twisp, Wa. If your student memorizes the 1st three chapters of James they are eligible to go on the trip. They can say it one chapter at a time to a youth leader starting now.

The dates of the trip are going to be June 21-25. We will travel by van and sleep in churches while the Coeur d'Alene area. We will be dining at every fine eating establishment we can find along the way (McDonald's, Taco Bell, etc).

Students will be responsible for the cost of the 2-day Park Pass as well as for food and souvenirs. This promises to be a fun trip and going there with friends makes it that much better.

Okay, before you rule this out I would like you to consider a few things. One, as a parent, you are probably very motivated to get your child placing importance on high moral values. As Christians we are directed to read and memorize scripture (Psalm 119:9-24) and James is a great book to commit to memory. This just may be a turning point for your child in how they view the Bible. Memorizing this book at this young age will be a great benefit throughout their life.

Two, yes the trip is not cheap, but read James and ask yourself what it is worth to you to have your child have these verses "hidden in their heart."

Three, yes this trip is a bribe, plain and simple. I know parents who have done this and more to get their child to memorize the Bible. This trip is also a great experience for the students to get to spend a wonderful week with their Christian friends and leaders while experiencing a little bit of freedom and adventure in a fairly safe atmosphere.

Fourth, every kid can do this. Expect to hear that whiney voice they use saying, "I can't do it." Don't believe it! This is a totally achievable goal. In the

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past I have seen numerous students of all learning levels accomplish this task. There is a memory tool for James on our church website - [www.rcbcbellingham.com](http://www.rcbcbellingham.com) on the MAX page.

Five, if you are dead set against having your child go on this trip please consider some other reward for them doing this memory work. Although the trip is great fun, our purpose is not to get kids to Silverwood, but to have them commit scripture to memory. So perhaps you can come up with some other bribe that might work for your family.

I wanted to let you know about this trip in advance to give your child time to study and also so your family can prepare for the expense. Below I have listed what might be some frequently asked questions. If there are any unanswered questions, in regard to this big event or for any other reason, please feel free to contact me.

God Bless,  
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## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **“What are the exact dates of the trip and what is the cut-off date?”**

We will leave the morning of June 21st and return on the evening of June 25th. The cut-off for memorizing is May 27th. I will be in contact with you regarding more specifics as we get closer.

### **“How much should I budget for the trip?”**

Tickets for the 2-day Park Pass are around \$65, if bought in advance. Money will also be needed to cover eight meals; my guess is \$65-75. Additional spending money is up to you.

### **“Can I, as a parent, go on the trip?”**

Regrettably we must say no for several reasons. We have limited space and part of the trip is enabling the leaders to get to know the students better. I hate to break it to you, but part of the fun of the trip is being away from you (just for a little while). Plus, do you really want to spend several hours in a van with jr. high students? If you do, let me know and I will get you a volunteer application!

### **“What are the sleeping arrangements?”**

While no arrangements are set in stone yet, the plans are being made to stay at a church in Spokane. Girls and guys will be sleeping in separate rooms.

### **“How many leaders will be going?”**

We don't know yet, but we will have enough to ensure adequate supervision. All the leaders will be members of our volunteer staff who have been screened through both a state and national background check process. They also must memorize the book of James.

### **“Are there scholarships available?”**

No, I am sorry to say that there aren't any scholarships available. I am even paying my own way there. If funds are an issue please consider having your child help fund the trip by doing odd jobs or baby sitting around the neighborhood. Or have them recite parts of James to family and friends as a fundraiser.