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“Twice Chosen”

When I first heard about the camp that Chosen International would be holding for teens who were adopted, the idea interested me. However, as the departure date for camp drew nearer, I was filled with anxiety. Subconsciously, I thought, “If these kids at the camp were rejected like I was, there must be something wrong with them, too.” I had always felt a little different, in some cases, unworthy, because of my adoption. In my mind, I never wanted to accept the fact that I had any adoption issues, so it was with great hesitancy that I headed off for Chosen’s camp at the Oregon coast. When the bus came to pick me up, I observed the other kids very carefully. They seemed awfully friendly, but I knew they must be “different” too. To my surprise, as the camp experience began, I realized that these kids were just normal teenagers. And although they were “different” in a sense because of who was raising them, it did not mean they were any less cool than anybody else. What I really noticed was that we all had a special connection and comfort together that other teenagers just wouldn’t understand.

I began to feel much more confident at the camp. I felt comfortable and accepted as we played some crazily fun games and relays, and participated in exciting activities such as duct taping a (willing) member of our cabin to the wall. We also did cabin devotions, and private journaling in the afternoons, and spent time at the beach. We worshipped God together and attended seminars that were very encouraging and heart touching.

At these meetings, we had the opportunity to listen to some extraordinary speakers who shared their own adoption stories. They explained to us as adoptees, even though it was painful at times, we need to understand that we are not mistakes. We were chosen by our adoptive parents who chose to accept and love us in ways that our biological parents could not. And that even more importantly, we were chosen by God, who knew what was best for us and where we would be most desired. They told us that we were “twice chosen!” The speakers also shared that God is our ultimate Father, and He has never hurt or abandoned us. He will never leave our sides. The speakers really helped me to understand why I felt the way I felt and why I had the fears I had. They told me I was not alone. And I began to believe it...

In the evenings, we experienced more powerful moments around the bonfires. They brought us together so we could get to know each other more personally, and during this time we were able to listen to those campers who wanted to share their stories. We were there to encourage and relate to one another. It was very obvious that the staff really loved Jesus Christ and had a burden in their hearts to be there for us. Camp began to feel like family to me. For once in my life, I really felt understood, like part of the group. I knew many had felt the same pain that I have. I felt like this was helping me heal some inner wounds.

Going to Chosen International’s camp was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I not only had a blast, I met tons of new friends who helped encourage me. I also received the love and support that I really did need as an adoptee. I would recommend this camp program to just about anybody, but I would recommend it especially for those who are hesitant; for whether they realize it or not, they are probably the ones that need the comfort and support the most.

One of the most encouraging things that made me especially praise the Lord that I had attended the camp happened a few weeks after I came back to school. On graduation day, one of my teachers approached me and whispered in my ear, “Hannah, I just thought you should know that ever since you’ve come back from that camp...there’s been a whole new beauty that shines right through you.”