

Where should I
pitch my tent?

for me
from me
with you for you
US

With whom?!

THE STORY...



ME - PERSON

THAT'S ME!!!



Every July, the inter-parish association "St. Mary of the Way" organizes summer camping trips in the Rocky Mountains. For over forty years many young people have been able to see the amazing sights of our country's most beautiful mountains along with other boys and girls from different states.

This group has always characterized itself by opening its doors to youth regardless of their economic, cultural or even religious association. Not all of the campers that went on these trips believed in God or attended catechism classes at their parishes. In fact, many of them hadn't set foot in church in a long time. Nonetheless, this was not an obstacle; actually, it was considered to be a enormous opportunity. Just like every other year, these young people got on the bus once again. Some of them, the minority, already knew each other from past summers, but it was the first time that the majority of them were meeting.

It was a pretty unique panorama. Some of the youth seemed enthusiastic, talking and introducing themselves to everybody. Others were wearing sunglasses and just taking up a seat, not talking to anyone. Even without looking too hard, you could see faces of joy, excitement, indifference, anger, boredom, fear... In the end, it was no different from the 39 previous trips. The trip home would be a whole nother story, but let's not get ahead of ourselves.



YO -PERSONA

Many of these kids had never even left their neighborhoods, so it wasn't unusual to see a lot of jaws dropping going down the wide and windy highways that wound through the mountains. Even the ones who couldn't care less where looking over the tops of their sunglasses, astonished by the monumental sights.

- **Miriam:** Oh my goodness! That mountain is huge!
- **Michael:** It's ok.



Once they got to the base camp, the camping leader gathered everyone together, gave them a warm welcome, and explained the rules of the camp, which everyone accepted without hesitation.

After this first meeting the campers were divided into the groups that they would share meetings, games, jobs, etc. with for these two weeks.

It is right at this moment that we find ourselves. The first group meeting, when no one knows each other. Nine boys and girls who will share many experiences and memories.

YO -PERSONA

In this first group meeting, we meet Sam and Grace, the counselors of the group that we are going to get to know and with whom we are going to learn.



The group is made up of nine campers, five girls and four boys. They all introduce themselves, some enthusiastic and some more scared. They have to cut Martha off, but getting Enrique to talk is like pulling teeth.

-Sam: Well, guys, why did you come on this camping trip? What are you hoping to get out of it?

-Michael (has moved from family to family over the last four years and now lives in a group home with other youth. He prefers to be a leader than just another one of the group. Sometimes a little direct. He takes off his sunglasses, rolls up his sleeves a little to show a tattoo on his right arm that totally totally overshadows his bold piercings). I came because they forced me to and to see if I can score (smirking).

-Martha: Well, I don't know what you're thinking, man, because with that horrible tattoo and those ears and nose full of holes you don't have to do much.

-Michael: Excuse me, my body is mine and I can do what I want with it. If I tattoo my whole body what do you care? Or could it be that you like me?

-Grace: (the other counselor) steps in:- Okay, guys, calm down. Michael said something interesting and I would like to ask you guys a question. Is the body something I have or something I am? Is it meant for me to use, or for me to *be*?

Everyone's face is different, but Michael doesn't hesitate for a second:

- Michael: The body is meant to be used and shown off. It doesn't really matter what you do with it.

YO -PERSONA

-**Sam:** What do you guys think?

-**Martha:** (eldest of six siblings, responsible, perfectionist, with very defined ethical values) answers Michael, annoyed by what he said before.
- Dude, you're tripping! My body is part of who I am; without my body I can't relate to people or communicate or even exist. Everything that happens to my body happens to me and what goes on on a deeper or more emotional level is reflected in my body.

A few seconds of complete silence follow Martha's comment. Even Michael looks a little confused. Sam takes advantage of the moment to ask another question:

-**Sam:** Guys, I want to ask you some other questions that can maybe give us a hand: When do we or other people don't accept our bodies? Does that make *us* feel like we're not accepted? Why were we created with bodies? Is it possible that our identity is inscribed in our body? Who are you guys?

The kids think about it and are kind of stunned trying to respond to questions that they had never asked themselves before, so the counselors decide to conclude the meeting, encouraging everybody to think about it some more.

