



# The Magical Mystery Tour



## WHAT I'D DO DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME

Our "Magical Mystery Tour" surfaced my own need to trust God more in my life and ministry, rather than over-relying on my talents and planning abilities. Even as I told our teenagers that we were simply going to trust God to lead us where he wanted us to go, there was still a big part of me that was thinking through a backup plan for each day, "just in case" God didn't lead us somewhere. After experiencing the thrill of God coming through for us in surprising and sometimes patience-stretching ways, I know I need to ditch my "backup" mentality for our next trip and learn to trust God more deeply myself.

There were two days (the first day and the last work day) that were frustrating for several in our group because we just weren't finding anything to do. The next time we do a trip like this, I'll be more awake to those frustrations and act more quickly to address them. Asking kids to talk about their frustrations, or playing a stress-relieving game, or just praying together would've really helped those frustrating times become learning times.



Josh Jones

## "PLANNING" FOR THE TRIP

It's an oxymoron to say that we planned this trip—actually, the point of our preparation was specifically to *not plan*. We spent a lot of time in prayer and I asked our teenagers to write in prayer journals for the two months leading up to the trip. We met each Sunday and Wednesday after our regular youth group meeting to pray together for our trip. And, as I've already mentioned, we all went through a four-month study of the Holy Spirit.

I want to be clear—it wasn't just our teenagers who didn't know where we were going. I had no idea from day-to-day (even hour-to-hour!) where we would be. I've heard of groups going on "mystery trips" where only the adults know the destination, but this was a faith-stretching trip for *everyone* on our team, not just the kids.

We did have a loose plan for the "what if's" we expected to encounter along the way:

- We planned to sleep in hotels for four nights and camp out for three nights, depending on where we were each night. We guessed at average costs for campsites and hotel rooms.
- We planned to eat half of our meals at fast-food places and buy groceries for picnic meals for the rest.
- We brought sleeping bags and camping gear (tents, stoves, lanterns, and so on) for the nights we thought we'd be camping out.
- We brought car maintenance tools for the people we expected to meet on the side of the road who'd need help (wrenches, screwdrivers, tire irons, jacks, canopies we could set up to shade the sun, and so on).
- We brought other random tools just in case we came across a need (shovels, rakes, power drills, saws, and so on).
- We had nine cases of bottled water under the benches in the van for us to drink and to give out to people who were stranded on the side of the road.
- We brought three ice chests to store the food we bought from grocery stores.
- My phone has a GPS, so we could navigate easily in every town. And we had maps of about eight states that surround Colorado, just in case we headed in any of those directions.
- We budgeted for meals and lodging. We also budgeted \$100 a day (for the whole group...not per person) to spend on helping people, whatever that meant. We also gave every person on the trip \$20 to spend on someone else. I gave no instructions on how I expected that to happen—they just had to find a way to spend that \$20 on someone who needed help. For our team of 13, we had a total budget of \$250 per person to cover the group "help" money, the individual "help" money, the lodging, the meals, and the gas. I think we made it through the week on only \$150 per person.