

Snow Camping Adventure

It was New Year's Eve. Jake, Will, and Claire were darting around the house. They couldn't wait to play in the snow! It would be their first overnight, outdoor trip to Mt. Hood. They were going snow camping near Timberline Lodge. This meant camping in a tent perched on top of the snow. Timberline Lodge was getting ready for its annual New Year's Eve fireworks display. This was another reason Jake, Will, and Claire were looking forward to this trip with great anticipation.

The children's dad, Mr. Wittmer, had a great passion for the outdoors. He was an active member of the Portland Mountain Rescue Team and enjoyed mountain climbing, backpacking, and skiing. Mr. Wittmer always said he was made for the outdoors.

Mrs. Wittmer also enjoyed the outdoors, but she wasn't sure about spending the night on a mountain in the snow. Her hands and feet were often cold, and she feared that an overnight snow camping trip would be uncomfortable. This was the first time Mrs. Wittmer had agreed to go snow camping with her husband and three kids.

As soon as he heard his wife agree to come along, Mr. Wittmer raced through the house grabbing snow camping gear for the family trip. Then, he went to the store and bought some supplies for keeping warm. When Mr. Wittmer was done shopping, Mrs. Wittmer and the kids had cozy down sleeping bags, thick gloves, and warm winter clothes. They had goggles and headlamps too. This family adventure was a dream come true for Mr. Wittmer!

The Wittmer family also invited the Lee family to join them. Mr. Lee often went on outdoor trips with Mr. Wittmer. The two families had been friends for many years. Mr. and Mrs. Lee had two older boys, Tran and Sami. On New Year's Eve morning, the phone rang every ten minutes. Did Mr. Lee have a stove? Could Sami borrow a sleeping bag? Were there enough water bottles packed? What was the weather report? Even the kids were planning snowball fights and talking about the trip: Oh what fun!

After loading their separate cars, the two families headed towards snow-covered Mt. Hood. It was early afternoon when they set out. Jake, Will, and Claire passed the time by playing games like "I Spy" and Battleship. When Mrs. Wittmer suggested playing the "Quiet Game," Jake turned on his mp3 player and fell asleep. Sighing, Will and Claire also decided to take a nap.

With the kids asleep, Mr. Wittmer said, "This is going to be so much fun. I have always wanted to take my family snow camping."

"Well, I'm not so sure about this," said Mrs. Wittmer. "I am afraid we'll get really

cold or a storm might hit."

"Oh sweetie," replied Mr. Wittmer, "Don't worry. There hasn't been a severe storm up here in years, and I brought us great gear. Just relax and enjoy yourself."

"I'll try," smiled Mrs. Wittmer.

The children awoke as the car charged up the mountain. Excited, Claire asked, "Are we there yet?"

"Almost," said Mr. Wittmer.

The kids were thrilled as they gazed at the clumps of snow on the roadside. "I can't wait for the snowball fight," exclaimed Jake as he poked Claire and grinned.

"Mom, Jake is going to get me in the snowball fight," cried Claire.

"Now Claire," said Mrs. Wittmer, "I'll be on your team and help protect you."

"Then Dad is on my team," hollered Jake.

As the car reached the parking lot, the Lee family was already unloading. Jake, Will, and Claire popped out of the car. Tran and Sami ran over shouting, "We beat you. We beat you. Now we're gonna eat you."

"Now boys," said Mrs. Lee, "Come over here and finish getting your gear." Mr. Wittmer and Mr. Lee went out on a short exploratory jaunt. The kids decided it was time for their snowball fight to begin. After thirty minutes, the men came back with a great camping site in mind. They said it was close enough for a great view of the fireworks yet far enough away from other snow campers to give them lots of privacy. The families grabbed their backpacks and began hiking through the snow towards this perfect spot.

As soon as they arrived at the site, the Wittmer and Lee parents began stomping the ground. They looked as though they were participating in some sort of odd dance. Stomp, stomp, wriggle forward half a pace, stomp, stomp. The kids watched and giggled. After they had stomped the snow into a hard flat surface, the families waited for forty- five minutes because the snow had to settle before the tents went up. Finally, enough time had passed. The group unpacked three tents: one for the Wittmer family, one for the Lee family, and an enormous one in the center of the campsite that they could use for a common meeting place.

The families had also planned an early surprise birthday party for Claire. She couldn't believe it because her birthday was still three days away. Without letting her daughter know about the plan, Mrs. Wittmer had packed an elaborate ice cream cake in her cooler. Everyone sang and ate the birthday cake together. They shared stories about what made Claire so special to each of them. She had a marvelous time! After the party, the families drank hot chocolate and spiced apple cider to keep warm.

Finally, the New Year arrived with a bang! The fireworks coming from Timberline

Lodge were brilliant. The colors painted the sky in splashes of red, blue, orange, and yellow. The kids yelled out to welcome the year 2002. The adults quietly hugged each other and kissed. They were all so excited that they didn't notice the sky turning a dark gray, and the wind blowing stronger. After the fireworks display was over, the families said goodnight and marched to their separate tents to get out of the blustery wind.

All night long, the snow fell quietly, without stopping for a second. Early in the morning, Mrs. Wittmer awoke, hearing the wind beat against the tent. It was so cold; it hurt to poke her head out from where it had been covered by the sleeping bag. She needed to go to the bathroom, but it was so cold in the tent that it hurt to move. She crawled out of her sleeping bag and unzipped the tent door. All she could see was white! The tent was surrounded by at least two feet of snow, and her boots were filled too. She decided not to go out. Lying next to Mr. Wittmer she asked him, "Do you really love this?"

He was awake and replied, "It's not usually like this."

There was a call from outside the tent. Mr. and Mrs. Wittmer both leaped up, and Mr. Wittmer accidentally hit his wife's nose. It started to bleed! Mr. Wittmer quickly gave her a cloth to help stop the bleeding. All of the noise they were making caused the kids to wake up. "What is going on?" they asked. Mr. Wittmer told them things were fine and to go back to sleep. Mrs. Wittmer asked for her glasses. It was a good thing she had brought them because her contacts were frozen in their solution.

Mr. Wittmer went outside to check on the Lee family. As he got within one foot of their tent, he noticed the whole tent had collapsed on top of them! This was a violent storm. "Are you alright in there?" asked Mr. Wittmer.

"Yeah," Mrs. Lee replied. Mr. Wittmer and Mr. Lee decided it was time to head for the lodge. They were camping in whiteout conditions!

The women along with the Wittmer children remained in the Wittmer's tent. It took both of the men and the two Lee boys to keep the tent they were putting away from blowing away. As the struggle went on, Mr. Lee's forty-pound backpack rolled away. Holding hands so they would not get lost in the storm, the two men and boys recovered the pack. The snow was so blinding that they couldn't see one foot in front of the other. Once everything was packed up, Mr. Wittmer decided that they had no other choice but to brave the storm. After hours of walking slowly and carefully, holding hands, they finally made it to the lodge.

When they got to the lodge, they discovered this was the worst storm Mt. Hood had seen in forty-two years! All the roads and ski lifts were closed at Timberline. The two families gathered around the fire to wait for the storm to pass and roads to open. A few hours later, when the Wittmer family returned to their Subaru, they discovered that the

back window was cracked. The car was filled to the top with snow! Thankfully, the dry snow came out easily, and they were on the road before too long. This was a snow camping trip to remember.

1. What did snow camping mean?

- A. The tent would be on the ground with snow around it.
- B. The tent would be placed right on top of the snow.
- C. The campsite would be in a place where it snowed.

2. How did the story end?

- A. The families were safely on their way home.
- B. The families sat around the fire waiting to leave.
- C. The families decided to stay inside the warm lodge.

3. What probably caused Mr. Lee's pack to roll away?

- A. It was on a hill.
- B. The wind blew it.
- C. It was too heavy.

4. What was this story mostly about?

- A. How families can have fun doing something they haven't done before.
- B. How a New Year's Eve fireworks party was ruined by the weather.
- C. How a trip can go wrong even when there is careful planning.

5. How often had Mrs. Wittmer been snow camping with her family?

- A. This was her first time.
- B. She had gone once before.
- C. She always went with them.

6. What will Mrs. Wittmer probably tell her husband the next time he invites her to go snow camping?
- A. She will never go snow camping or any other type of camping again.
 - B. She will only go if he can promise that there won't be a snow storm.
 - C. She would be happy to go because the last trip was such a fun adventure.
7. What was Mrs. Wittmer probably thinking about the trip when she woke up to the snow and cold?
- A. It was her husband's fault that this happened, and she was freezing.
 - B. Her husband made a big mistake talking her into going on the trip.
 - C. This was just the thing that she was worried could happen.
8. What were the children looking forward to most?
- A. Snow fights and fireworks.
 - B. Sleeping in tents in the snow.
 - C. Drinking hot chocolate and cider.
9. What did Mrs. Wittmer discover right after her nose bled?
- A. She had to go to the bathroom.
 - B. Her shoes were full of snow.
 - C. Her contacts were frozen.
10. What was Mr. Wittmer probably thinking when he awoke and realized there had been a snowstorm?
- A. It was too bad for the rest of the group that this happened, but he liked it.
 - B. He could deal with it, but he would need to help his wife get through it.
 - C. He was glad it happened because he was hoping this would be a great adventure.
11. What did Mr. Wittmer do to get his wife to agree to go on the camping trip?
- A. He bought her all the best camping equipment that he could find.
 - B. He invited a family to go with them whose mother had been snow camping.
 - C. He told her the children would be disappointed if she didn't go.

12. Why did Mrs. Wittmer probably go on the camping trip?

- A. She enjoyed the outdoors and thought this trip would be a great adventure.
- B. She loved outdoor camping trips in the snow and wanted to be with her family.
- C. She only went to be with her family because she didn't like to be cold.

13. How did Mrs. Wittmer probably feel when Mr. Wittmer hit her nose?

- A. She knew it was an accident, but she was in no mood to forgive him just then.
- B. This was the last straw, and it was time to pack up and get out of the snow.
- C. She could take care of the nose bleed and was more concerned about the kids.

14. What secret plan did the families make?

- A. Make hot chocolate and spiced apple cider.
- B. Give an early surprise birthday party for Claire.
- C. Go for a hike to the lodge for a warm meal.

15. Why did the Lee family trust Mr. Wittmer to plan the camping trip?

- A. He had a lot of outdoor and camping experience.
- B. He enjoyed being outside more than anything else.
- C. He knew where to buy the best camping equipment.

16. What should have happened when the sky turned dark gray and a strong wind started to blow during the fire works?

- A. The group should have made another check to make sure the tents were staked down really well and were safe.
- B. Everyone should have gone into their tents a little earlier so they would be protected from the storm that was coming.
- C. Mr. Wittmer should have noticed that there might be a snowstorm because he knew about weather signs.

17. What was Mrs. Wittmer's worst fear?

- A. A storm might hit, and it would get really cold.
- B. They wouldn't be able to see the fireworks.
- C. All would be too cold to enjoy themselves.

18. What was Mr. Wittmer like?

- A. He loved the outdoors as much as he loved his family.
- B. He loved the outdoors but loved his family more.
- C. He loved the outdoors more than he loved his family.

19. Why didn't the families know during the night that it was snowing?

- A. They were so tired from staying up late they slept right through it.
- B. Their heads were completely covered by their sleeping bags.
- C. The wind was loud, and the snow didn't make any noise when it fell.

20. How would the parents probably talk about the trip after they got home?

- A. Mr. Wittmer did a good job of planning, but he should have had a back up plan in case a storm came up.
- B. No one could know that the storm would come, and Mr. Wittmer did a good job of planning the trip.
- C. They should have listened to Mrs. Wittmer and gone to watch the fireworks someplace where it was warmer.