

In the beginning, there were no sleepovers...

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When birthday time rolls around for my boy's one item always listed on their celebration itinerary is 'sleepover'. We host sleepovers throughout the year but the birthday sleepover is different. Instead of one friend, there could be 5, 6, 7 or 8. Eight was the magic number this year for my youngest child's birthday soiree. An event of this magnitude is as elusive as Bigfoot to the adolescent. Parents know what goes down at these things. No matter how fun the party, kids just want to stay up all night.

So armed with only pizza, juice boxes, XBOX360 and our wits, my husband and I were ready.

The drop off...

There are three types of parents when it comes to a sleepover. The concerned, 'are you sure about this' parent. This is the same parent pulling away in their car when asking that question. Then there's the, 'No take back, who cares if you changed your mind, we've already made plans for a date night and nobody is going to keep us from a dinner out where no one spills juice or milk' parent. And lastly, the, 'Now if he gets scared in the middle of the night, forget my name, forget my number, forget me. He can wait until the morning' parent.

When all the boys arrived, we started to get concerned. The adult to child ratio was 2-8. Because of the power shift, we did what any normal parent would do- deleted 'Lord of the Flies' from the DVR and braced for a long night.

It begins...

My boys speak in two volumes- mumble and ear-splitting. The mumble is reserved for answering questions about homework, cleaning rooms or brushing teeth. And when you add 6 additional children to that equation you get a noise factor only compared to the background music at Abercrombie & Fitch during the holiday shopping season. At 11pm after countless rounds of 'nerf gun war', wrestling and XBOX, it was time to quiet the troops. At 11:30 it was time to give the troops a reminder. At 1am, they got their 3rd 'reminder'. At 2am it was my husband's turn. When he didn't return after 5 minutes and the kids were still as loud as ever I went in as back up.

Every light was on upstairs. It seems our reminders only fed their need to stay up and make us crazy. When I walked into my oldest child's room, my husband was standing there with a look of both fear and disbelief on his face. Then I noticed what he was looking at. Candy wrappers as far as the eye could see. And in the middle of all that garbage, a very large and now, empty candy jar. The candy jar that was full of kit kats, Snickers and Hershey kisses up until this sleepover. When we asked who ate the candy and took the candy jar out of the playroom, they all stood there, chocolate covering their mouths (and my furniture!) with a look of glazed over confusion. Like a person looks when leaving a casino after 18 hours at the slot machine. But No one did it? You gotta love that about boys. They weren't giving up a friend.

By 4am all was quiet. At 6:30am it started again. The noise, the running, playing, shouting, and laughing. My husband and I looked at each other in the way we did when our boys were newborns. So we did what we did back then... We made coffee and made a note to schedule a vasectomy.

The last child was picked up at noon. We shut the door to our last guest and looked at each other the way we did the last time we hosted a big sleepover. And repeated to our children what we said back then... "You're both grounded, go to your room!"

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