

Junior High Camp Planner

RIVER OF LIFE

Community of Christ



Introduction

We are pleased to present the *Junior High Camp Planner River of Life*. We believe that it is important to introduce the rich tradition of outdoor ministry to youth early in their spiritual development. You will find new ideas for program planning. Please use these as a springboard for your camp planning and do not be limited by what we suggest.

We believe that the purpose of camping is to provide children and youth with experiences to foster their relationship with Jesus Christ through a community of joy, hope, love, and peace. Each new day gives campers opportunities to demonstrate Christ's love as they participate in classes, recreation, cabin devotions, kitchen duty, camp and cabin clean-up, campfire, and much more. In your leadership role, you are the catalyst which will bring it all together for this generation of campers. While it can be overwhelming, remember to rely first and foremost on the Holy Spirit as you prepare.

If your jurisdiction sponsors camps for other age groups, there is opportunity to share resources, props, equipment, and information. For example, service projects for each camp can be planned and coordinated so that they build on one another. Junior campers might use their talents on easier tasks, while junior high and senior high campers can perform more difficult ones. Consider working with other camp directors to consolidate staff training and music programming as well. This effort saves time, energy, and money, and makes the best use of the gifts of the campers and staff.

You may also wish to contact those in your area who have been involved in camping ministry before. If more assistance is needed, please feel free to contact Poul Wilson at (800)825-2806. In addition, it is recommended that you become involved with the American Camp Association, the Canadian Camping Association, or another such organization which can provide additional training and resources for camping.

May God bless you in your camping ministry.

Poul Wilson

Youth Disciple Formation Specialist

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Camp Administration

Seven Steps for an Effective Camp

1. Determine the purpose of the camp. The objectives of the camp should be written down and shared with the entire camp staff. Filter all planned activities and events through the purpose and ask the question, “How does this help further the purpose of the camp?”

2. Promote the camp. In today’s multimedia world, it takes several attempts at communicating the message to get through to those who need to hear it. Convey the purpose of the camp clearly. Be sure to include important dates and fees. Include a list of program activities and a schedule. Encourage participants to invite others. This might include incentives for registering with a friend who has not attended before.

3. Prepare the camp staff. Camp staff should be recruited early and included in monthly meetings as much as nine months before camp. Orientation, training, and motivation should be part of preparation. Job descriptions should be provided to each person at camp. Be up-front with the staff about the time commitment a camp takes not just the time during the week of camp, but the monthly meetings, training, etc. Excellent camps take a lot of time and a lot of commitment.

4. Plan an exciting program. Camp begins for children and youth from the moment they arrive on the grounds. Plan for excitement and adventure even during registration. Each part of the program should reflect the purpose/theme of the camp. Guest ministers, speakers, etc., should be given a copy of the camp purpose and objectives before they actually participate. Also, plan for after-camp experiences. An example might be a camp picture party just before school starts in the fall. There are many excellent resources to help in planning a

successful program.

5. Select the location. The theme “Journeying with Christ” lends itself to conducting camp in a remote location or having a caravan. Consider tradition, jurisdictional requirements, and, most importantly, the needs of the campers, in selecting a site. If you do choose a new location, visit the site beforehand to understand the lay of the land, to visualize where activities will be held, and to note any hazardous areas. Review any rental agreements at staff meetings and orientations. Food is an important part of camp; be sure to discuss food service with camp personnel if you do not provide your own. If possible, have staff arrive one day or one-half day prior to the campers—this allows them to understand the grounds and get settled before helping campers do likewise.

6. Setting the price. Camp fees should provide enough revenue to cover the expenses of the camp including a contingency. Offer honorariums to guest ministers or speakers. Determine a policy which includes the amount, reimbursement of travel expenses, and accommodations for the person and their spouse or family. Be sure to think through a cancellation policy. Sometimes it becomes necessary to cancel a camp. Include this in publicity as appropriate. Rather than reducing the price of camps, you may choose to offer camperships. Many congregations now consider camping part of their program of ministry and include all or part of each camper’s fees in their budgets. Consult with your jurisdictional financial officer regarding all camp budgets and fees.

7. Camp evaluation and follow-up. Seek opinions from campers and staff. Prepare a written report on the camp, share it at a jurisdiction conference and then file it

with the sponsoring jurisdiction. Include budget information. This will help in the planning of subsequent camps. Camping represents a great opportunity for children and youth to develop a deeper spiritual understanding. Encourage participants to connect with their local church and local churches to connect with participants. An example might be Camp Ministry Sunday during which youth can share their testimonies from camp.

Staff Orientation Ideas

1. Invite a group of parents to share their expectations about the child's experience at camp. A parent may expect safety, mature supervision, and greater spiritual understanding, but not broken limbs and inappropriate additions to their children's vocabulary.

2. Have a veteran camper talk to staff about what makes a good camp counselor.

3. Ask local law enforcement officers or emergency medical personnel to address the staff regarding emergency procedures. This would be especially helpful if the camp is located in a small community and/or a remote location. Staff members sometimes fail to consider the perception local residents have of them. If your camp uses local, state, or national property, ask a representative from the appropriate management service to speak.

4. Take staff on a walking tour of camp to assess areas of risk. Ask them to identify potential hazards. Point out where last season's accidents and injuries occurred and talk about preventative measures for the coming camp. Instead of identifying poison ivy in a picture, do it in the field.

5. Conduct a CPR refresher course, first aid, and other related skills. A staff member who has not practiced such skills since last year's camp might not remember how it's done when needed.

6. To demonstrate to staff what to do, stage mock emergencies moving the staff through the entire scenario from activating emergency plans to filling out accident and injury forms. This is also a good time to involve local law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

7. Put staff into activity groups, cabins, etc., to simulate an actual daily schedule. Rotate jobs and routines so that all groups have experience with tasks you expect them to teach and supervise once campers arrive,

8. Have each staff member write down one rainy day activity, then compile and distribute a copy to all staff. This will go a long way toward alleviating the midweek blues.

9. Use hands-on learning experiences as often as possible. Instructors can teach a lesson to other staff as if it's their first day with campers. Staff can participate in an overnight, lighting campfires, etc.

Working with Kids

Rule One: State Clear Expectations and Consequences

The more consistent one is with campers, the more they count on where you are coming from and the less they have to test you out. Include positive consequences and positive expectations, not just negative ones. What is working, like helping during a class or a great attitude during KP warrants recognition. Start early. Institute limits before camp and reinforce them during camp orientation, State your expectations or limits. Stay out of arguments. Calmly restate your expectation and leave (detach).

Rule Two: Pick Your Battles

While it is true that counselors and staff need to say "no" to campers, it is the context and delivery that changes a

situation. Expect responsiveness, not perfection.

Rule Three: Respect Privacy

Many counselors take it personally when campers cut them off or stop sharing their private thoughts. This is a healthy emergence of boundaries. Some counselors err by going the other way, sharing the details of their private lives with campers as a way of winning popularity or friendship. A counselor who does this is insecure and risks over stimulating a camper by divulging such information.

Rule Four: Do Not Embarrass Campers in Front of Their Peers

This is very important. Choose your moment carefully to reprimand or talk with your camper. Be careful not to draw too much attention to your personal relationship with them in front of their peers.

From the article "Working with Teens," by Bob Ditter, Camping Magazine, September/October 1995

Invite a General Officer to Camp

With all the field demands on the time of the members of the Joint Council (First Presidency, Presiding Bishopric, and Council of Twelve); it is easy for them to have less contact with children and youth in ministry. So invite one to camp. Be sure to work through the Mission Center President.

Risk Management at Camp

The selection of program activities is an important part of risk management in the camping environment. Before planning an activity, evaluate the risk involved for both

campers and staff members. Appropriate safeguards should be taken whenever possible to help reduce the potential for injury. One important safeguard is making sure that staff members are appropriately trained/certified for the activity under their supervision. Also, all equipment and facilities should be checked for safety before the camp begins. If the activity is supervised by organizations or individuals who are not part of the camp staff, it is important to document their training/certification and to obtain proof of their liability insurance. As a camp affiliated with the Community of Christ Church, any moderate to high risk activity should be planned in conjunction with the Risk Management Office at World Church headquarters. For more information, contact the Risk Management office at 800/825- 2806.

After Camp

What do I do with . . . ?

Answers for camp directors.

As many camps affiliated with the church are directed by volunteers, there are sometimes loose ends to tie up after camp. The following suggestions have been provided to help answer the question, "What do you do with...?"

Extra camp photos: Send them in post camp letters to campers and staff; sell them to parents and friends as campers are picked up from camp; use the best pictures in a new brochure about camp; send campers birthday cards, Christmas cards, etc., with a photo of the camper and a favorite activity. This is a great way to encourage their participation in next summer's camp.

Incident/accident/illness information collected during camp: Use it in next summer's staff orientation. Discuss activities that were more or less risky. Cite

examples of recurring health issues such as poison ivy, heat exhaustion, ticks, and injuries from running on rocky paths; elaborate on these common injuries. Ask the staff nurse for input on needed programming changes. Examine the effectiveness of your record-keeping. Was it abnormally warm for many days, rainy, cold, humid, etc.? How did extremes in weather affect camp illness or injury?

Health records: Make sure they are complete. Every visit to the health center should be documented including the initial complaint or concern; medication/treatment given; therapeutic effect of medication/treatment; doctor's visits; telephone calls to parents, physicians, pharmacy; and so on. Keep health records with incident and injury reports. Retain all records relating to medical treatment and medical history of staff and campers forever. These should be retained at the mission center office.

Leftover medications and health center equipment: Check dates of all stock medication in the health center. Throw away outdated medications or give away medication that will be outdated by next summer. Box medications in tightly sealed containers and store in an insulated building to avoid freezing. Box and store health center equipment and supplies to keep away dust, humidity, and rodents.

The food: Shelve canned and unopened bottled goods. Cover open-faced shelves with plastic or cloth sheets to keep the dust out. Give perishables, opened liquids, and powder mixes to a nearby homeless shelter, soup kitchen, or school. If you plan to keep powdered staples (flour, sugar, pancake mix, etc.) be sure to store in airtight plastic containers or bags to keep humidity and bugs out.

Staff lesson plans: Keep all lesson plans. New staff will appreciate the ideas. Designate a three-ring binder as the "lesson

plan/ideabook" and keep in the staff resource area, insert a tab for each program or activity for which you have lesson plans. Next season's staff can quickly locate helpful ideas' and easily add more to the notebook.

Lost and found items: Attach a tag to each item describing where it was found. If a camper calls in September and says she left a camera in Cabin 3, you can easily identify her camera as the one with a Cabin 3 tag. Look for laundry markers. If you find a name, mail the item back to the camper. Parents will be impressed and thankful. Attach a tag with the date the item was found. If it's not claimed after a year, give it to a camper who needs it or donate the items to a local family services organization.

Ideas taken from "What do I do with...?" by Karen Pavlicin, Camping Magazine, September/October 1995.

Director's Checklist

Nine months before camp or sooner

- Select the camp dates
- Schedule campgrounds
- Meet with Mission Center/ Bishop to establish budget
- Explore camp theme and general program guidelines
- Meet with jurisdiction camping committee, if available
- Investigate insurance and transportation requirements for off-site camp activities
- Secure camp staff
 - camp business manager
 - camp cook
 - camp nurse
 - counselors
 - camp pastor
 - waterfront personnel
- Consider optional staff
 - counselors—in—training

Five months before camp

- First meeting with staff (2 hours)
 - Outline individual duties of staff
 - Decide on class choices
 - Choose and assign teachers to classes and special activities
 - Discuss special activities, worship
 - Create daily schedule
- Publicize camp theme and camp dates

Four months before camp

- Meet with camp cook
 - Plan menus
 - Plan snacks
 - Make arrangements for food acquisition with camp manager
- Send out camp registration form to appropriate persons
- Meet with camp nurse
 - Review health forms
 - Discuss supply needs
 - Discuss potential problem areas (ticks, poison ivy, jellyfish bites, snakes)

Three months before camp

- Verify the following
 - Camp facilities
 - Review budget
 - Availability of staff
 - Plan meals and snacks

Two months before camp

- Camp staff training
 - Staff duties
 - Health considerations
 - Youth workers registration form
 - Camp staff behavior expectations
 - Camp rules
 - Camp discipline
 - Draft welcome letter to campers.
 - Have staff sign the letter.
 - Solidify classes and order supplies

One month before camp

- Send a letter to campers, signed by all staff, welcoming campers to camp.
- Send a "to bring or not to bring" list.
- Check meal planning with camp cook
- Send a letter to staff members

Day before camp

- Staff arrival at camp
- Finalize cabin assignments
- Assign latrine duties
- Make Kitchen Patrol (KP) assignments
- Camp and cabin decorating
- Setup classrooms
- Staff worships
- Relax and fellowship before campers arrive. It is your last chance!

First day of camp

- Campers register as soon as they arrive
- Campers go to cabins, tents, or rooms and unpack
- Counselors meet with cabin mates to get acquainted with each other
- Have a camper orientation meeting
 - Introduce staff, counselors, teachers
 - Go over camp rules
 - Explain expectations for camp
 - Distribute camp schedules mid assignments
- Sign up for classes

Camp Staff

Jurisdiction Camping Committee

In some jurisdictions, a team of persons with camping experience is appointed to develop and govern the camping facility and/or program. They are also charged with the responsibility to develop ongoing policies for all camps on all camp-related issues. Included in these issues are camping philosophy, expectations for individual camps, and general administrative rules regarding age grouping, costs, and health and safety standards.

Camp Director

The camp director should possess emotional and spiritual maturity. As a living example of his/her faith, it is important for the camp director to be a skilled leader and have a positive influence on both camp staff and campers. The ability to assist in staff training is vital in the total camp preparation experience. It is also important for a camp director to be sensitive and committed towards the physical, social, psychological, and emotional needs of the campers. The camp director is asked to be organized, enthusiastic, personable, and knowledgeable of camp policies and must be willing to support them.

Suggested resource: Basic Camp Management by Armand & Beverly Ball, published by the American Camp Association.

Business Manager

The business manager is responsible for keeping accurate financial records, paying the bills, and purchasing food and supplies as needed. The business manager must work closely with the camp director and the jurisdictional financial officer to make sure necessary records and reports are made in a timely fashion.

Camp Cooks

Camp cooks should have knowledge of quality and quantity cooking. They should also be sensitive to the eating habits of young people. Cooks should work with the director in planning menus and they should check with the campground's personnel concerning food ordering procedures.

Camp Nurse

Every camp must have a registered nurse on duty and a well-equipped first-aid station. The nurse must check with campers at registration and document any and all medication, illnesses, allergies, and medical concerns. The nurse is also asked to be available to give help in injuries and illnesses during camp. It is important for the camp nurse to keep accurate records of all medication administered to each camper.

Counselors

The cabin counselor is a key person in assuring that each individual camper will have a positive experience. Their responsibilities include the following:

*Help create a cabin community
Monitor cabin member attendance in classes, campfire, recreation, evening chats, and special events.*

Be sensitive to the needs of individual campers

Lead campers in cabin activities such as skits, cleanup, cabin devotions, and classes.

Counselors may also carry other responsibilities such as teaching a class or leading a campfire.

Counselor-in- Training (CIT)

CIT's are youth or young adults assigned to share responsibility in leadership roles with an experienced adult counselor as a mentor. CIT programs encourage the development of camp leadership roles.

Camp Pastor

The camp pastor should have qualifications to serve as a spiritual leader and offer pastoral care to camp staff and campers. He or she may be available for consultation and camper participation in worship services and classes as needed. The pastor is always visible and acceptable.

Waterfront Personnel

If pool and waterfront (lakes, rivers) activities are to be included as a part of camp, they must be under the supervision of certified water safety personnel. Please check with local, state/province regulations regarding waterfront safety requirements.

Camp Schedule

Day One:

3:00 p.m.	Registration	
	Pay camp fees	Cabin assignment
	Medical documentation	Settle into cabins
4:00 p.m.	Organized swim and volleyball	
5:15 p.m.	Camp Orientation	
5:30 p.m.	KP Report	
5:45 p.m.	Dinner	
6:45 p.m.	Class Selection	
7:45 p.m.	Mixer-Getting to know each other!	
9:00 p.m.	Campfire	
10:00 p.m.	Cabin Devotions	
10:30 p.m.	Lights out!	

Daily Schedule:

7:30 am.	Rise and Shine
8:00 am.	Breakfast, KP & Cleanup
9:00 am.	Devotions
9:30 am.	Class #1
10:30 am.	Class #2
11:30 am.	KP Report
12:00 noon	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Rest Period
2:00 p.m.	Class #3
3:00 p.m.	Swimming, Recreation, and Fun Stuff
4:30 p.m.	Free Time
4:45 p.m.	KP Report
5:00 p.m.	Dinner, KP & Cleanup
6:00 p.m.	Evening Activity
8:30 p.m.	Campfire
9:45 p.m.	Cabin Devotions Campfire
10:00 p.m.	Lights Out

Last day of camp:

7:30 am.	Rise and Shine
8:00 am.	Breakfast, KP & Cleanup
9:00 am.	Camp Cleanup
10:00 a.m.	Closing Service
11:30 am.	Camp Departure & Check Out--See you next year!

The camp theme is River of Life was selected, in part because of the transforming nature of rivers. Rivers bring new life to dry places, move important life-sustaining elements from one area to another and are very powerful.

Likewise, Jesus Christ can bring us new life, provide us life-sustaining elements, and can be a very powerful force in our lives and the lives of the children and youth with whom we minister



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