

# DETOURS AND SPARKPLUGS

## SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

## AND CAMPFIRE HELPS

*Detours are suggestions for evening events for the entire camp; "Sparkplugs" are creative ideas on how to include the daily themes in the campfire setting.*

### **Day One:** **Finding the Road** *Detour*

#### *Need It:*

*Index cards -five cards of the same color for each group*

*Treasure - candy, toys, pencils  
treats, enough for each camper*

*Pencils/pens - used to write the clues  
on the index cards*

### **Hide It - Find It**

The evening activity is learning to find things. It is a treasure hunt with a twist. Divide the campers into four or five equal groups. Give each group five index cards of the same color. Each team will hunt for clues generated by another group. Assign one or two counselors per group. One counselor is in charge of the treasure (a bag of candy, inexpensive toys, pencils, or other treats: one per camper). The group is to plan a treasure hunt for another group. For junior campers, instruct the counselors to have a plan in mind before they meet with their groups. The counselors will need to take the initiative in making the treasure hunt work.

1. Each team writes clues for another group and (as a team) place the clues #2-#5 to be found around the campgrounds and to "hide the treasure." The treasure must be hidden in a common area and not in the

cabins or in personal property.

2. All teams will place their #1 clue in a fishbowl. Each team is to select their first clue from the fishbowl. They cannot pick out the colored card they placed in the bowl.

3. Instruct the teams they are to adhere to the following guidelines: wear shoes or other appropriate footgear; confer as a group; do not hide the treasure in other campers' clothing or personal property; work as a team.

4. Allow the teams approximately 30 minutes to find the treasure and report back to the meeting area.

### ***Sparkplug***

The first campfire of camp should be BIG! Allow those campers or counselors with campfire building skills to construct the campfire. Have the campfire last approximately 45- 60 minutes, no longer. Many are excited about seeing old friends (some they see two or three times a year!) and the day has been an emotionally exhausting one. Sing fun songs, transitional songs, and worshipful songs to close the campfire. Have the camp director give a short talk about finding the road to Christ. Let the camp director know you want it to be inspirational, uplifting, and short! End the campfire with everyone forming a circle to sing, "Pass It On."

**Day Two:**  
**Along the Road**  
*Detour*

**Find It - Do It**

Today's activity requires finding a need and filling it. Preparation by the camp director is necessary to investigate service project(s) the campers are able to perform for the campgrounds and/or surrounding community. Suggestions for a service project include:

**Campgrounds improvement:** Arrange a service project for the campers. Discuss areas of need with the camp manager. Let the campers choose the projects they want to accomplish. Be sure to have safe and adequate tools and equipment for the campers. Give detailed and comprehensive instructions to all campers on the use of tools, equipment, and materials. Be aware of special needs campers and their ability to work with tools and equipment. Choose projects simple enough for the junior campers.

**Local community service project:** This project may include abandoned property cleanup, highway cleanup, working in a local library, delivering meals to shut-ins, or helping in a Special Olympics festival (if applicable to your area). Be aware of local rules and regulations regarding children of junior camp age.

**Nursing home visits in the surrounding area:** Contact the director of local nursing homes and arrange for the campers to visit residents. Spend a morning at the nursing home - visiting residents, helping staff members with patient care (as the law will allow), reading to residents, and singing to them.

**National Forest Service help:** Speak with a forest ranger for ways campers can help in the cleanup of forest service land, building of birdhouses, painting of buildings, or repair of signs.

**Special Olympics help:** If there is a Special Olympics festival in your area during your camp week, offer the help of the campers where needed in the festival.

**Distribution centers:** Telephone the manager(s) of local food or clothing distribution sites and homeless shelters for the teenagers to help in the sorting of food, clothing, and its distribution to those who are in need. Spend time with the teenagers discussing appropriate behavior to the needy, understanding the reasons people need help; the ability for those who have much to share with others, and the importance of being a giver and not a person who judges others. Help the teenagers to understand that not all who are less fortunate are lazy, illiterate, or dumb. Sometimes bad things happen to good people.

***Sparkplug***

**Pre-campfire preparation:** Have one or two counselors prepare a campfire and have it lit before the campers arrive at the campfire site. Find a place on the campgrounds to have a campfire that is not in the usual campfire setting, but meets the safety requirements of the campgrounds. Have the campers meet at the camp entrance. Have the campers walk to the selected campfire spot. Allow 10-15 minutes for the walk. Approximately every 50 feet, have the campers stop and pick up twigs and wood for the campfire. When the campers arrive at the campfire site, they are to place their kindling and wood into the already lit campfire. After all campers have arrived, proceed with the planned campfire program. During the meditation section of the campfire, ask an adult and a young person to speak about the road of life they have traveled and how they are able to get over the bumps they have experienced.

**Day Three:**  
**Fork in the Road**  
*Detour*

Today's evening activity is about choices. The campers will have an opportunity to play different games. The only rule about this evening's activity is: Everyone must be somewhere doing something. Set up four stations around the campgrounds. Gather the entire camp in the dining room and give them the following instructions.

Each activity will take 15 minutes. By the end of the activity period, each camper will have participated in all four events. A whistle is blown to tell everyone when it is time to rotate to the next activity.

Each camper will choose the order of activity they will participate. They may participate in activity #1 then proceed to #3, on to #2, then end with activity #4. They can only take two friends with them to any activity. The four activities are:

Station #1: Puzzle time! Have eight to ten different puzzles for the campers. The campers are to begin putting the puzzles together in the time allotted. They are to leave their unfinished puzzle on the table and let the next group attempt to complete the puzzle.

Station #2: Relay! Okay! Set up relay races using strange and unusual objects. Instead of handing off a baton, have the campers hand off bananas. Other suggestions include a three-legged race (run backwards); basketball dribble (on grass); balance a glass of water on the runner's head.

Station #3: Dig It! Set up a volleyball net. The volleyball game will consist of two teams. The idea is to work from 15 points to zero. The first team to score zero points wins. Teams begin with the score 15-15. With each play won, the team "wins" a -1 point.

Station #4: Striker! Play a game of

soccer. However, play it with a twist. The soccer ball must be passed at least 9 times before it can be kicked for a goal. This gives the campers an opportunity to exhibit team play.

***Sparkplug***

Build two small campfires side by side. With tiny rocks or pebbles line a pathway leading to the small campfires. About one meter (approx. 3 ft.) before the campfires, create a fork in the road, one road leads to one campfire on the left, the other to the campfire on the right. At the close of campfire, have one camper and one counselor give short testimonies about choices they have made in life and the way they had to live with those choices. While it is important to have the campers think about the consequences of their choices, encourage the testimonies to be uplifting, positive, and comforting.

**Day Four:**  
**Rocks in the Road**  
*Detour*

***Need It:***

*Birthday party decorations*

*Birthday party favors (one for each camper,)*

*Birthday cake - Enough to feed the entire camp*

*Ice Cream - If it is in your budget!*

Getting older sometimes creates rocks in the road for many young people. Give a birthday party bash for the camp. Decorate a dining hall area or open shelter as you would for a birthday party. Hand out party favors. Sing Happy Birthday to everyone. Plan games for a birthday party.

### ***Sparkplug***

Sing songs that have the word “Rock” in it. Examples: *Rock ‘A My Soul, Rack of Ages) The Wise Man Built His House Upon The Rock, Jesus Is The Rock and He Rolled My Blues Away*. At the end of the campfire, pass out a basket that has rocks of different sizes in it. Have each camper select a rock. After the closing prayer, have each camper bring their rock to the campfire and line the edge of the campfire with their rock. The rock symbolizes the strength they receive from Jesus. As the rocks are lined around the campfire, they form a circle that binds each and every person to Christ. They are surrounded by people who care for them and people they care for in return.

### **Day Five: On the Road Detour**

#### ***Need It:***

*Paper or plastic sacks (grocery store type)*

*Scavenger hunt list*

*Prizes for the whole camp (small and inexpensive)*

Create a scavenger hunt list for the camp, a different list for each group. However, each group will have the same number of items for the hunt. The groups can be paired up by brother-sister cabins, numbering off, or kitchen patrol lists. For junior campers, keep the lists simple. Have a counselor accompany each group. Prepare a list that can be completed within 30 minutes. Offer prizes for the group that finishes first. Have them share the prizes with the rest of the camp.

### ***Sparkplug***

This is the last campfire of the camp. It is also an emotional time. The campers know that they will be returning home the next day. Some campers will return home to happy, comfortable homes, others will resume stressful lives. Make this campfire fun, exciting, great skits, and close with a friendship circle. A friendship circle has each camper crossing their arms and holding hands with the person on each side of them. Have the camp pastor give a short and encouraging talk about being *on the road again* and having Christ in their life journey.