

Morning Devotions

Day One: In Search of Adventure

Morning Meeting Greeting:

This is a fun way to start the day as a unified camp. Each morning, everyone should gather in a circle in a nice location outside. When it is time to begin the devotion, the leader (or a camper) will start the "Morning Meeting Greeting" by greeting the person to the right with great enthusiasm. The greeting will be passed quickly around the circle and will end when the last person greets the leader (or camper) who started it. The first day will require a brief explanation, but after the first time, they'll get it.

This is the greeting for today:

Greeting: "Good morning _____. Life is an adventure!"

Gesture: Right hand on neighbor's left shoulder,

For example:

Pete turns to the person on his right, places his right hand on her left shoulder, and says, "Good morning Tracey. Life is an adventure!" (Pete removes his hand from her shoulder after his greeting.) Tracey responds to Pete, "Good morning Pete." Then Tracey turns to the person on her right, places her hand on his shoulder and says, "Good morning Todd. Life is adventure!" Todd would respond, "Good morning Tracey." And so it goes around the circle.

Skit: *Get There!*

Have two to four campers act out this scene in the center of the circle:
The group is out in search of adventure. They are very focused on the end of the journey (finding adventure) and totally miss the adventure along their journey. They get agitated at the least thing and are very highly stressed. There is plenty of room for ad-libbing. Just get across the main point that this group does not enjoy the "here and now" because they are always looking ahead to the "point of arrival." Here is a suggested script:

Group enters laden with backpacks, ropes, or other camping-type props.

Camper 1: "Here we are in search of adventure."

Others: "Yeah! Adventure here we come! Wooooooo!" (high five, playful shoves, etc.)

Camper 2: "I bet we'll find adventure just over that mountain." (point into distance)

Others: "All right, let's go." (very excited and enthusiastic)

(All pretend to be climbing a mountain at a very rushed pace.)

Camper 3: "I'm sure it will be just over this crest."

Camper 4: "Hey, hurry up, we've gotta get there." (pushing impatiently)

Camper 2: "Get outta' my way, you're not movin' fast enough,"

Camper 1: "Okay, we're over. See that river? I think adventure is just at the end of those major rapids,"

Camper 4 "Hurry up and get the boat loaded - we're wasting time!" (growing irritation)

(All pretend to be in a boat, shooting rapids)

Camper 3: "Hey quit looking at the grizzlies over there and paddle faster!"
(All are angry now)

Camper 2: "Back off! Who cares about the bears? I was just trying to figure out the shortest run!"

Camper 1: "C'mon, y'all keep the boat straight!"

Camper 4: "Oh, we're never going to get there!" (Pretend to dock boat and get out)

(Each chatters angrily as they all move out of the circle and end the skit)

Camper 1: "I hope we find adventure on the other side of that jungle over there."

Camper 2: "Those tigers and lions will probably slow us down."

Camper 3: "Yeah, and we'll have to swing on those annoying vines and stuff."

Camper 4: "Oh, we're never going to find adventure at this rate!"

Processing:

Reflect on how the skit group was approaching life, and explore a better approach. Explain the importance of living in the moment and being open to the everyday adventure of living as a disciple of Christ. Briefly talk about the adventuresome approach of Jesus' ministry when he was on Earth. Stress that we must treat each day as a gift from God and an opportunity for new adventure. Include that God wants us to be excited and to have fun, to laugh and play and sing,

Skit: The Wonderful Now

Have two campers or one camper and an adult staff member act out this scene between a young person and a parent:

A young person goes out on a great adventure of discovery and delight. It is not revealed until the end of the skit that all this person is doing is walking out to the mailbox and back. The adventure is in his/her mindset, enjoying the moment instead of being fixated on just the end result of bringing in the mail.

Here's a suggested script:

Young Person:

(begins to walk very slowly across the circle making discoveries along the way)

Ahhhhhh what a wonderful day...the sun is shining through white poofy clouds, the birds are singing...WOW! (very excited and happy)

Oh, there's some dandelion growing. Dandelion greens are so nutritious... MMMMM.

(pretend to pick a leaf to taste)

Hey there are some ants. They're so fascinating. Cool! They're building a bridge with their bodies in order to cross that puddle of water in their way. God did an amazing thing in creating ants... (then looks up pretending to hear something) 000, 000! It's a Great Blue Heron—what an amazing wingspan. Must be at least six feet! Now that's a big bird!

(By now the young person should be across the circle. Makes a gesture of opening a mailbox and getting mail from inside, but doesn't say anything about it or give away what person is doing, then begins to walk back across the circle while saying the next line.)

What an amazing day Praise God for sun and clouds and plants and ants and birds and for being alive and well and just everything! (Now standing at original starting point.) Here you go, Mom (or Dad). (make gesture of handing something to parent)

Parent:

Thanks for getting the mail, honey.

Processing:

Reflect on how the young person was approaching life and compare it to the previous skit. Reinforce the points above and include that we need to rejoice and be glad for all the blessings we have. Read or have a camper read the following Passage from Doctrine and Covenants Section 161.

Be faithful to the spirit of the Restoration, mindful that it is a spirit of adventure, openness, and searching. Laugh and play and sing, embodying the hope and freedom of the gospel.

Closing:

Sing and clap: "This Is the Day" (Need music? See *Maranatha! Music Praise Chorus Book*, p. 210)

Have a camper close with a prayer asking God to help us see the excitement and adventure that comes from being a follower of Jesus.

Day Two: Maps of the Past

Morning Meeting Greeting:

Greeting: "Good morning _____. You belong in the circle of Jesus."

Gesture: Place right hand palm flat on neighbor's back and "draw" a circle.

Introduction:

Leader:

Briefly talk about circles and the sacred circle of Jesus. Include these thoughts:

"You'll notice that we are standing in a circle for our morning devotions. Circles are very important for a group, and they are very special. When we are in a circle, each of our hearts are pointing inward, so we are focusing our love for God and each other within the circle. Can you think of some other reasons standing in a circle is special or important?"

(Take a few moments for campers to brainstorm. If they do not get covered, include these reasons:

Everyone feels included; no one is pushed to the back or shut out.

Everyone is equal in a circle; no one is made more important.

We can connect with each other by looking around the circle.

"There is also a larger circle to which we all belong and that is the sacred circle of Jesus. All over the world there are people who call upon the name of Jesus and look to him to learn how to live a life of goodness and wholeness. Listen to these words:" (Read or have a camper read the following passage from Doctrine and Covenants Section 161.

Lift up your eyes and fix them on the place beyond the horizon to which you are sent. Journey in trust assured that the great and marvelous work is for this time and for all time. Claim your unique and sacred place within the circle of those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ. Walk proudly and with a quickened step.

Active Song: "All Life Is Sacred"

Leader:

Active Song: "All Life Is Sacred"

Leader:

"To celebrate our place within the circle of Jesus, we're going to learn an old Sufi Indian song called 'All Life is Sacred.' A Sufi is a type of holy person from India. I'm going to teach you the words and the movements that go with them, then we'll sing together." (Teach words with corresponding movements one line at a time.) (Sufi is pronounced: soo-fee.)

All life is sacred, the animals and the trees. (All join hands and circle counterclockwise.)

All life is sacred, the mountains and the seas. (Continue circling.)

All my relations. (Stop circling and release hands. Each person raises their arms to the sky and spins around.)

All my relations. (Spin around again with arms raised to the sky.)

All life is sacred, the animals and the trees. (All join hands and circle counterclockwise.)

All life is sacred, the mountains and the seas. (Continue circling.)

All my relations. (Stop circling and release hands. Each person raises their arms to the sky and spins around.)

All my relations. (Spin around again with arms raised to the sky.)

Hoya, Hoya, Hoya (Stop circling and release hands, all take 3 steps toward the center of the circle and move arms as if bouncing a big ball 3 times—one step/bounce with each "hoya." The "ball" is the earth. This gesture is symbolic of our stewardship of the earth and our agency to choose whether to take care of it or harm it.)

Hoya, Hoya, Hey (Same as above, except step backwards to original place.)

Hoya, Hoya, Hoya (Forward again.)

Hoya, Hoya, hey (And back again to original place.)

All my relations. (Each person raises their arms to the sky and spins around.)

All my relations. (Spin around again with arms raised to the sky.)

(Repeat entire song.) See sheet music on following page for tune and rhythm.

Closing:

Have a camper end with a prayer for the day, and ask for God to help us remember our place in Jesus' sacred circle.

Day Three: Open to Hew Direction

Morning Meeting Greeting:

Greeting: "Good morning _____. Be open to the Holy Spirit."

Gesture: Take neighbor's left earlobe between thumb and forefinger and tug gently

Introduction:

Leader:

"Being open to the Holy Spirit requires an open heart and mind. It means being kind and compassionate, because the Spirit cannot be with us if we're being cruel and judgmental. Being open to the Holy Spirit means being a good listener. Let's play a listening game."

Activity: Sound flap Exercise

Preparation:

Each person needs a piece of paper (8 ½ x 11) and something hard to write on (clipboard, book, etc.). Have a large selection of crayons, markers, etc. available in the center of the circle.

Introduction:

Leader:

'This exercise is called a Sound Map. Everyone get whatever supplies you would

like to use and spread out in this area. Sit perfectly still and listen very carefully Please don't talk or deliberately make noise during this time. Just sit still without writing for a couple of minutes. Then begin making your sound map. Create your map however you want, Show yourself at the center of the map and then write or draw the sounds around you. You can use words or pictures or symbols, whatever you like. Think about showing direction, distance, and volume of the sounds you hear. Be creative. Work quickly and try to get every sound you hear on your map. You have about ten minutes to do this. Please come and rejoin the circle when I call you back."

Processing:

Leader:

When everyone returns, you can have them show their maps and give everyone a few moments to look around the circle. Then ask the following questions:

"Who would like to share with us the loudest sound you heard?" (Take two or three responses.) "Who would like to share with us the softest sound you heard?" (Take two or three responses.)

"When Jesus lived on the earth, he could speak face to face to his disciples. Today he can speak to us through his Holy Spirit. Just as we listened carefully to the sounds around us today we must also listen carefully to hear Jesus speaking to us. Today we used our ears to hear; and sometimes to 'hear' God speak, we 'listen' with our hearts."

"God's voice has been called the 'still, small voice.' Similar to the way we sat still and listened today, we need to be still in order to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is hard for God to speak to us if we're always busy and always in a hurry so take time to be still and ask Jesus to speak to you and help you be a good witness for him."

Option: Collect the maps and post them in the dining hall or main meeting room.

Closing:

Have a camper close with a prayer asking for help in hearing Jesus' voice and following his leading.

Day Four: Traveling Light

Morning Meeting Greeting:

Greeting: "Good morning _____. Carry God in your heart.

Gesture: Make half a heart with left hand (thumb and forefinger) and finish forming the heart as you touch it to neighbor's right thumb and forefinger. (Your forefingers will make the top of the heart, and your thumbs will form the point at the

bottom.)

Opening Remarks:

Leader:

"As we carry Jesus in our hearts and feel the leading of his Spirit, he will empower us to do the good work we are called to. One very important good work we are beginning to hear the call to do better is to take care of God's creation. I think we can all agree that people haven't been doing a very good job of taking care of our environment. What are some of the problems we are facing in our environment today?"

Take a minute for campers to brainstorm. (Here are some to include if campers don't: water and air pollution, global warming, limited resources, deforestation, toxic waste, etc.)

"The time has come for us to all work together to help save our planet from the destruction that is taking place. Listen to this scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants 155:7 which tells us that the earth actually groans for us to save it."

(Read or have a camper read the following:)

Know, O my people, the time for hesitation is past. The earth, my creation, groans for the liberating truths of my gospel which have been given for the salvation of the world.

Activity: Put Yourself in Earth's Shoes

Preparation:

Write situations for campers to imagine on small cards or slips of paper. Use the list below, or come up with ideas of your own. It's okay to duplicate if you have a large camp. You will need one card for every two people.

Toxic waste from factories running into rivers, poisoning water, and making animals and people sick.

Thousands of acres of tropical rainforest cut down every day

Thousands of gallons of oil spilled into the ocean from an oil rig, killing birds and fish.

Millions of tons of garbage buried in the earth that could have been recycled.

Radioactive waste, which will be toxic for millions of years, buried in the ground and dumped in the ocean.

Pesticides sprayed on food crops killing thousands of songbirds and beneficial insects.

Millions of cars creating huge clouds of toxic smog that makes people, animals, and trees very sick.

Endangered species such as whales, panda bears, and tigers dying because humans destroyed their habitat.

Groundwater poisoned from pesticides running off farmland.
Huge 300 year old trees being cut down to make room for a shopping mall, killing hundreds of plants and animals.
Baby seals being and killed just for their fur so people can have expensive coats.
A lake so poisoned by factory pollution that it is not safe to swim in and the fish 1 are not safe to eat.
A bird so tangled up in fishing line that it can't fly
Urban children suffering from asthma because of air pollution.

Instructions:

Leader:

"One way we can begin to envision how to clean up the mess we have created on the planet, is to put ourselves in the earth's shoes, Sometimes when we hurt someone, we are asked 'How would you feel if I was pulling your hair, or talking bad about you?' This is one way to understand how the other person was feeling when we hurt them. We can also do this with our environment,"

Have everyone pair up and hand out a card to each pair. Give them four or five minutes to imagine how the earth would feel in that situation, and discuss it among the partners. Then call everyone back together and have a few people share what they talked about.

"As we all begin to work together to clean up and restore the wonderful creation God has given us, let's remember to ask ourselves how the earth feels when we destroy parts of it and how the earth feels when we are doing our part to help make it a healthier place to live."

Closing:

Have a camper end with a prayer for the health of God's creation, asking Jesus to forgive us for hurting the planet and help us know how to undo the damage we have caused.

Day Five: The Horizon Awaits

Morning Meeting Greeting:

Greeting: "Good morning _____. Embrace God's mysteries."

Gesture: Give neighbor a hug.

Introduction:

Read or have a camper read the following passage from Doctrine and Covenants Section 161.

Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Love will overcome the voices of fear and division and

deceit. Do not be hesitant to love your neighbor without conditions or qualification. Stand firm in the name of the One you proclaim and create diverse communities of believers and seekers, rejoicing in the continuing fulfillment of the call to this people to prophetically witness in the name of Jesus Christ.

Activity: A Flood of God's Truth for the World

Preparation:

1. Place an empty container (preferably a transparent one) in the center of the circle. You can place the container on a stand and decorate it like an altar or worship center if you like. Choose an appropriate size so that the container is overflowing by the end of this activity
2. Gather small cups (enough for everyone) and enough pitchers of water to fill those cups.
3. Make sure each cabin counselor has index cards labeled with each of their campers' names. Instruct them to record campers' sharing on their individual cards. These cards will be used later today in the theme class.

Instructions:

Leader:

"We are called to be people of action—not to sit around and talk about what we're going to do, but to actually do it. We need to be out there, spreading God's love and truth in any way we can. It may seem like we're not doing very much or making a big difference, but as the Doctrine and Covenants tell us, just a few people can transform the world. Today we have an opportunity to share with each other what we can do in our congregations and communities to spread the love of Jesus and further the work of God's kingdom,"

Have helpers pass out a small cup to each person and fill it with water from a pitcher. Let this be a ritual. A helper will hand an empty cup to a camper and fill it with water saying, "This is the truth of Jesus Christ within you,"

"You will notice the empty container in the center of our circle. This represents the work of building God's kingdom on earth. As long as no one is spreading God's message, there will be only emptiness. But as we respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will contribute to spreading God's truth by touching the lives of people around us. The Leader (or prearranged person) will start and we'll go around the circle. Share with us in one or two sentences what you are willing to do in your local congregation or community to spread Jesus' love and truth in the world, As you share, please approach the center and add your portion of God's love and truth to the container by pouring in your water. With each person's contribution, watch the container fill up and see how a few people can make a big difference by each doing what they can where they are."

Allow each person to share. (Make sure counselors record what campers share on index cards.) By this point in the camp, everyone should feel safe sharing. If someone is

still too shy to say something, they can just pour in their water. When the container starts overflowing, urge them to keep pouring into it if they seem reluctant.

"Thank you all for sharing. Your ideas for spreading God's truth and love are amazing, and I urge you all to do what you can to make them happen. In *Genesis 7:70*, we are told that righteousness and truth will sweep the earth like a flood. So each time you do something good in Jesus' name, think about this container spilling over and starting a little flood. With each person that adds to it with another good work, the flood of truth will spread a little farther and get a little deeper. Know that each of you can make a difference,"

Closing:

Sing: "It Only Takes a Spark,"

"I've Got Peace Like a River," or other appropriate song.

Have a camper or a visiting minister say a prayer of blessing for the contributions of each person, that they might have the courage and vision to be an active witness for Jesus.