

The Fastest 79 Hours

Cabin Leaders
Survival training
Manual

By Danny Hartwell

Tri County Baptist Association

Director of Missions

Phillip Shuford

Children's Camp Director

Cindy Kinser

Junior High Camp Director

Bryan Ridenour

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INTRODUCTION: Things I learned from the Apple Dumpling Gang.

Because I had worked in the Behavioral Disorders program at school, when I served as a Cabin Leader my first time on The Hill I was assigned to a cabin of boys handpicked for me. We called ourselves the Apple Dumpling Gang. It was my most memorable week of camp I've had in all my years of camping, not because of problems but what I learned from the Apple Dumpling Gang.

Here are some things I learned:

- ✘ Not to take myself too seriously: Camp is about campers and they came to have fun. If I help them reach their goal, then my goal of bringing them to Christ would be easier to reach.
- ✘ To be flexible: The boys would not sit still for devotions, but I learned they would sit and listen to stories. Devotion time became story time, and the Bible is full of stories.
- ✘ To gain their trust: Our camp director was a grouch, especially toward these boys. Every night he would step in the cabin and yell—with threats. He didn't realize that yelling was part of their normal experience and didn't really mean anything. They did respond though to love and forgiveness. I set the cabin rules and treated them with respect and they treated me likewise.
- ✘ To get to know the campers: Spending time with these boys finding out their stories (some brought tears), letting them know it was all about them. Most importantly as they opened up I was able to determine where they were on their spiritual walk with the Lord.
- ✘ Sending a camper home accomplishes little: The director wanted to send one of the boys home and that would have been justified. I asked for another chance—he accepted Christ on the last night of camp
- ✘ The Lord can do wonders: Even with a group of boys labeled as “problem makers” if He is trusted. Every one of those boys left camp professing to know Christ as savior.

During a testimony time at the last night's campfire service, one of the boys said what he remembered was his cabin leader praying that “he wouldn't kill any of these guys”.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I read the training manuals of several Christian camps while doing research for this manual. I would like to personally thank Dan Mayer of the Phantom Ranch Bible Camp in Mukwonago, Wisconsin for his advice and sending me a draft version of their new cabin leader training manual.

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this manual is to train cabin leaders so that you might become better-equipped to serve the Lord in this great ministry. Use this as a reference guide to help you be the best Cabin leader ever. This manual is only the first step in becoming a well-equipped cabin leader. Every situation you face as a cabin leader will add to your effectiveness and you will gain new understanding. We pray that this will be part of a life-long process that will continue to make your service to the Lord more fruitful both in and outside the camp experience.

Parents will take great pains and go to great lengths to interview and check references on a babysitter who will spend an evening with their children in their own home. Then the same parents will send the same children to camp to spend a week with a complete stranger. That is an enormous amount of trust we can't afford to take lightly. You will be with their children 24/7 from Monday afternoon until they are returned to their parents Thursday evening, or about 79 hours. That's more time than a year and a half in Sunday School or more than five years of VBS—a staggering statistic with a great spiritual potential for good (or bad). It is up to us to take the pains and go the lengths necessary to accomplish the task at hand and to honor the trust the parents have in the camp staff. This manual will help by giving you some tools you will need to Survive the “Fastest 79 Hours” of the year.

...you can demonstrate what Christ-like living is all about in much the same way He did with His disciples.

Our main goal is to deal with every camper as an individual to help them take their next step in their relationship with Christ. For some that will mean salvation, some will know Christ but need help in walking closer with Him, and for others you will help plant the seed of the Gospel in their hearts with the prayer that they will come to faith in Christ at a later time. We also want to make the Bible the center of all activity, and this is where the 79 Hours is so important. In this time you can demonstrate what Christ-like living is all about in much the same way He did with His disciples.

Much of camp is in an outdoor setting where God's creation is on display. We have the opportunity to demonstrate to our campers what God has revealed to us about Himself in creation. For example those trees we walk by on the way to the pool or the spring, etc. are masterpieces of the Creator. Let the campers know how much you appreciate His handiwork.

Campers come to camp with an expectation to have fun. We come with the expectation to lead the campers into a closer walk with Christ. If we help meet the camper's expectation we will be better able to meet ours.

THE CABIN LEADER

So what is a Cabin Leader? A friend with patience who shows love even when pressed to the limits (and that will happen). A Cabin Leader will set an example of Christ-like behavior in the Dining Hall, in the cabin after lights out, during devotions and when one of the campers "acts out". A Cabin Leader is a special person that is at the heart of the camping experience. A Cabin Leader has a sense of humor and is quick to admit shortcomings and to move on. Cabin leaders know their limitations and the real reason they are committed to the Fastest 79 Hours.

A good Cabin Leader is reliable and able to adapt to changing circumstances. Above all the Cabin Leaders are accountable to God for their actions and how they relate to those in authority. (Heb. 13:17).

Qualifications

A Cabin Leader has a great responsibility. We want you to consider the following qualifications and grow in our ability to demonstrate them.

- ✘ *Love Christ First:* Your willingness to serve as a Cabin Leader implies a personal relationship with Christ and Love for Campers. This is a non-negotiable qualification.
- ✘ *Spiritual Sensitivity:* Many problems campers face relate to spiritual issues. You should be able to assist them in recognizing their spiritual needs and lead them in discovering God's help. You should be able to explain the way of salvation in terms they will understand. Campers need to see Christ reflected in your life throughout all camp activities.
- ✘ *Love for Campers:* Your campers will figure out quickly if you are here for them or for another reason. Make sure that they know they are your priority—that you are here for them and to help them have a week of a lifetime.
- ✘ *Flexible:* Stuff happens at camp!!! The power goes out, a thunderstorm rolls through in the middle of the night, or there's no hot water. Plans often need to change. It is essential that you are able to "go with the flow" and support the Directors with the changes that are necessary.

- ✘ *Enthusiastic*: You are the primary motivator for your campers. You must generate enthusiasm for every aspect of the program. Learn to say “Best Ever”. Campers will usually reflect your attitude.
- ✘ *Team Player*: You are a vital part of the camp team. The camp leadership has spent multiple hours planning the camp and you play a vital role in meeting their goals—**not your agenda**.
- ✘ *Dependable*: Incredible trust has been invested in you to speak and act appropriately with the campers in your cabin. Your ability to act “Christ-like” is essential.
- ✘ *Keep a Confidence*: Your campers should feel comfortable and safe with you. When they do they will begin to share things from their lives with you, some of which may be sensitive (at least to them). It is of utmost importance that you keep their confidence. The only exception to this rule is if they speak to you about any kind of abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional). If so, you must report that information to the Director of your camp, then follow their lead.
- ✘ *Firm*: The first day the campers will be given the “Camp rules”. You are expected to uphold the rules, even if it makes you the “bad guy”. To place “being liked” by the campers as priority over the rules will lead to problems. If there is a problem with the camp rules go to the Director.
- ✘ *Humor*: Camp is a good place to let your sense of humor shine.
- ✘ *Sensitive*: Watch out for what is going on in the lives of your campers. Take time to get to know the campers by name, and what makes them special. If one is withdrawing from the others, connect with that camper. Look for ways to get him/her back into the group. Encourage others to make them part of the group.
- ✘ *Patient*: This week will try your patience. Sometimes the best thing to do is to step aside and regain your composure. Never, NEVER “vent” on a camper. Never give consequences to behavior that you cannot enforce, or do not have the authority to give. Never strike a camper. Also, exercise spiritual patience. Don’t rush or push a camper to make a spiritual decision. Let the Holy Spirit do His work, your job is to be ready to help when the camper is ready. Did I say this week will try your patience?
- ✘ *Maintain your spiritual life*: Your spiritual time with the Lord is essential as you lead. This will be difficult with the demanding schedule you have. Make time to pray for your campers. Don’t make service to God more important than being with God.

In summary. An effective Cabin Leader:

- ✘ Enjoys his/her campers.
- ✘ Surrenders self-interests—the week is *not* about you
- ✘ Accepts personal responsibility

Don’t make serving God more important than being with God

We don't expect you to be perfect, just be aware and growing in your ability to be effective. If you sincerely love the Lord and desire to please and love kids, you are well on your way to being a great Cabin Leader

Cabin Leader/Camper Relationships

The thought that should be foremost in your mind as you prepare for camp that must carry over into the 79 Hours is **Campers First** (after the Lord). Your purpose should be, to come to minister not to be ministered to (yet if you open your heart to Christ you will be). Ministering is bonding with your campers, walking to the flag raising together, sitting in Chapel together, sharing stories together, swimming together, (notice the repeated word "together"?). It's being a friend. It's being mother/father, teacher, and an example to the campers. It will be tiring, and you won't get paid, but the rewards will be great.

Cabin Life

- ✦ *Become part of your cabin group early:* Learn the names of all your campers (encourage the use of their name tags). Find out something special about each camper, what are their interests. Let them know that you are excited about being at camp and being with them and to help them have the best 79 Hours of their lives. First impressions will help prevent homesickness.
- ✦ *Develop a sense of belonging:* No one left behind. Make sure everyone is included in cabin discussions, activities etc. Help them be responsible for each other. Unite the group. Watch out for the one that pulls away from the group, or tries to dominate the group.
- ✦ *Create Identity:* Make your cabin unique. A special name for your group/tribe. A special way you wear your clothing.
- ✦ *Identify the natural leaders:* Look for those who usually take charge of an activity or that other campers follow or look to for direction. Get them on your side, give them responsibilities. They can be a great help in dealing with the loner or the homesick camper.
- ✦ *Set the rules:* Cabin rules need to be set the first day. For example: don't touch/take anything that does not belong to you without permission, no swearing or disrespectful language, respect each other's privacy, no one is the butt of a joke, etc. By doing this you will set the tone of the cabin for the week. Hold them accountable even if this makes you the bad guy.

- ✘ *Rule of three:* Never allow yourself to be alone with a camper without someone else, preferably another cabin leader, within eyesight.
- ✘ *Cleanliness:* Encourage the campers to keep the cabin clean and set an example by keeping your area clean. Lines should be provided outside the cabin to hang wet articles. If there is no line let the Camp Staff know and one will be provided. As Cabin Leader you are to set an example by keeping your area clean.
- ✘ *Devotions:* You are responsible for cabin devotions. You will be given guidelines for devotions which will be taken from the Chapel service. Have the campers ready for bed before devotions begin, seat the campers in a circle so they can see each other, and make this a “family” time.
- ✘ *Atmosphere:* Create a spiritual atmosphere in the cabin which is conducive towards Christian teaching. This is done by setting a mature, consistent, spiritual example for the campers.
- ✘ *Show appreciation:* Look for ways to recognize the good in your campers. For example create a Look Who Was Caught Being Good Poster (be sure everyone gets recognized), and allow the campers to add to this recognition.

Look for ways to recognize the good in your campers.

CABIN LEADER TOOLS *What does it take to be a great cabin leader?*

- A. **Patience** (You will tested on this): Sometimes it is difficult to figure out a camper. One minute they love you, and the next minute you are their worst enemy. You’re going to need to be patient. It might take a camper all week to warm up to you.
- B. **Motivation:** Asking yourself the question, “Why do you want to work at camp?” could be quite revealing and will help determine whether you have a good experience at camp. Asking yourself the question, “Why do you want to be a cabin leader?” should result in one answer – help campers come into a new and/or stronger relationship with God -- which should and can be your motivation through those situations that require patience.

Campers need cabin leaders that see being a cabin leader as an opportunity to help young people learn about our God and what following Christ looks like. You’ll be part of an experience that will have a long lasting impact on kids’ lives. Unless you get into the proper frame of mind, the impact you make will be hindered.

- C. **Understanding:** Being a cabin leader demands a basic knowledge of what the camper is like. Recognize the individuality of your campers and let them be themselves. No one

likes it when an older person says, “When I was your age...” Being 12 today is different than when you were 12. Avoid using this line with campers unless it’s to compare your differences, which could be fun...or it’ll just make you feel old.

The age of puberty has dropped 4-5 years over the last century. Children are reaching these stages earlier and the trend will most likely continue; children as young as 7 could be rebellious and heavily influenced by their peers. The following material was Taken by permission from the Phantom Ranch Bible Camp 2019 cabin leader HANDBOOK, Mukwonago, Wisconsin. Know this information may be a big help in understanding what is going on in the lives of your campers.

Camper Development

Children’s camp

1. They are at the center of their world

- ✘ They talk all the time. After all that testing, they have conclusions about everything and they are going to give you all those conclusions. If they are proved wrong, they will most likely have an excuse. They have good ideas but often fail on follow through. Talking is how they get and try to keep attention on them. Just keep listening. Just keep listening. Just keep listening. When you listen attentively and humbly let them instruct you, you are telling them that you care about them and they will love you in return. Try your best to give other campers time to talk too.
- ✘ They can be very critical. Making conclusions on everything leads to having unreasonable expectations. They will have high standards for cabin mates, their cabin leaders, and themselves. When expectations are not met, they often have difficulty with forgive and forget. They can make camp miserable for other campers and they may be seen as a bully when in truth they just have unrealistic expectations. If you defend a camper that is getting picked on, the other campers may feel slighted and pick on him even more when you are not around. Instead, elevate this camper and make them look good. Help them contribute to the group. Catch them doing something good and praise them in front of others.
- ✘ They have a heightened sense of fairness. It is extremely important to this age group that people treat them fairly or even a little better than fairly. It can be tricky, but “as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18).” Don’t cheat at games (even if it is fun). Don’t show favoritism. Be as fair as you can be in their eyes.
- ✘ They have a great capacity for learning and memorizing. Push the limits!

- ✘ They will have reached some wrong conclusions. TV, movies, music, commercials, school teachers, adults (even their parents), peers, and older siblings may have miscommunicated truth. You have the opportunity to show them absolute truths from the Bible as well as integrity and moral values from your actions.

2. *Their most significant relationships are with adults more than kids their age*

- ✘ Their week revolves around their cabin leader. Younger campers can be very clingy. They'll do anything to get your attention – jumping on your back, getting in your face, poking you, pulling at you...a lot of touching you. They will look to you for direction on what to do next, come to you with every bump and scrap, and make you mediate every dispute. You are their mom, their dad, their older brother or sister.
- ✘ They will want to hold your attention. Campers may be coming with minimal attention from parents due to single parenting and working parents. They may tell you that they are bored. That's a pretty clear signal that they are actually looking for attention from you. Doing just about anything with you will hold their attention.
- ✘ Some are starving for a sense of warmth. Campers could be coming to camp as an escape or retreat from a difficult situation. They may not receive hugs or hear the words "I love you." They may not get high fives or splashed in the water any other time than at camp. These kids need some extra care, understanding, tenderness, and compassion. They may not be the easiest campers to work with, but we are here to serve not to be served. This one week at camp where they receive affection could change everything. The opportunity lost in these years will never be seen again. Use it wisely.

3. *They know their rights, but not their responsibilities*

- ✘ They may not respect you as an adult. Many kid's TV shows today teach kids that adults and parents are clueless and don't need to be respected. They may not expect to have to listen to you. They think it is their right to have stuff, nice stuff. Even the "poor" kids will have big TV's, iPod touches, expensive shoes and all this is seen as one of their "rights."
- ✘ Kids are capable of hurting kids. Campers have stolen from cabin mates, damaged property, and gotten into fights. Exercise firmness and compassion to ensure camp remains a place of refuge and is safe for all campers.

4. *They are at an age of spiritual commitment.*

- ✘ They want reality in their faith. Church kids will be bored with the same old stories and Sunday School answers. Help them to get a deeper understanding of

those stories and help them realize that they really do affect the way that they live. Be excited about the things of God with all campers, especially with the unchurched kids. No matter what you are doing at camp, live in such a way that proves your faith! They'll do what you do. They'll act like you act. They'll talk like you talk.

They'll follow God like you follow.

- ✘ They need to hear the Gospel clearly. Find time earlier in the week than later to make sure each one of your campers understands the Gospel. This means that *you* need to understand the Gospel. Don't ask "yes/no" questions. Ask them to explain it to you.
- ✘ They may need assurance of their faith. Campers at this age can have searching doubts about what they've grown up hearing. They may have parents who tell them that they are saved, but not fully understand how. Help them feel confident in their relationship with God.

Junior High Camp

No one likes it when an older person says, "When I was your age..."

Junior highers are great!

They've got a good sense of humor. They love to play games. They aren't too cool to try something different. And they are all very different thanks to the timing of puberty. A girl's cabin could have both giggly girls that don't care what they smell like alongside girls with model figures ready to break hearts. A guy's cabin could have young boys that love to burp and make other rude noises mixed with guys ready to shave and sing bass. Good times!

1. *Priority of Friendship*

It doesn't matter what is planned, it matters who's going to be there.

They tend to become like their friends, and are heavily influenced by them.

Best friends months before camp, could be enemies upon arrival.

Friendships will blossom with campers in different cabins. This is ok!

Work with friendships groups, not against them.

- ✘ Find out who in the cabin came with whom. This will help you understand the cabin dynamic. Take note of the people that join friend groups that are from other cabins. Pay attention to campers of the opposite sex that join the group.
- ✘ Jesus worked through friendships groups; so should we. Jesus would join a group of "sinners" and listen, observe, and wait for the group to become comfortable with his presence. He throws in a comment, asks a question, and listens and observes some more. Soon they are asking him questions, passing him some food,

and getting condemned by the Pharisees. Jesus came alongside. You should ease into their friend groups and be available. Sometimes you will be able to have one-on-one conversations with them, but expect mostly to relate to them as a group.

- ✘ Don't censure friendship when you discipline. Remember how much they value their friendships. Unless it's a serious matter, don't separate friend groups as a consequence. They won't get it. Sometimes it is better to confront a group than calling out the ring-leader. Value their friendships and treat their groups with respect. Avoid the appearance of favoritism.
- ✘ Take your time. Many kids reaching this age have been hurt by adults. They don't yet understand that pain is a part of every relationship. They may be hesitant to get too close to their cabin leader. They may be over sensitive. Be extra patient and sensitive. Give them time and space so they don't feel like you're policing them. If you are available, attentive, and observe they will open up to you in no time. When they are ready to spend time with you, drop everything! Don't push yourself on them. Be their guide, older sibling, boundary-setter, and teacher. Earn their respect and not just their approval.

2. *Submission to Conformity*

Friend groups are everything, and they are willing to pay the price of being in a group. They will wear, listen and watch, go to, smoke and drink whatever they have to in order to be in a group. Be yourself. Don't conform to them. Your enthusiasm may carry them through an activity they don't like, but consider finding out what they like and want to do. Be on the lookout for the camper who doesn't seem to fit into any group. These kids need extra attention from you to get them involved and help them feel accepted. They will also need extra encouragement.

3. *Confusion about Morality*

These kids are becoming immersed in a sinful world to the point where many

They need to know what God thinks of sin.

can't tell the difference between right and wrong. They may party on Friday and help in the church nursery on Sunday not noticing that the two don't correlate. You are going to have to ask the tough questions and challenge their morality. They need reasons beyond the potential consequences of STD's, alcohol poisoning, smoker's lung, drug abuse, lying and cheating at school. They need to know what God thinks of sin. Christians need to be holy (completely different from the world) because God is holy; kind and thoughtful because God is love; sexual pure because the pure Holy Spirit lives within us; honest because God is truth; respect life because life is from God. Campers will get their moral compass back on track by watching you interact

with staff of the same and opposite sex, showing love to all campers, being interested in a growing relationship with God (let them see you spending time with God and in prayer), and discover integrity watching you during games.

4. *Re-Evaluating their Faith*

Campers at this age make decisions about their faith all on their own. You'll hear them say that it all makes sense now or that they finally know what it means to live like a Christian. You may have said the same thing after a week of camp when you were this age. They are discovering and testing their faith. They need to be encouraged to explore. Question what they believe in order to help them decide to believe in God because they want to, not because they were told to. Compare their current way of living to what they say they believe. And pray hard! Praying for your campers of any age is vital. Campers at this age are trying to figure out themselves and the world and their relationships with friends and God. They desperately need your prayers and they need to know you are praying.

D. Knowledge:

- ✘ You do not need to be a Bible expert to be a good cabin leader, but you do need to...
- ✘ Be a student of the Word of God.
- ✘ Be familiar with what the Bible teaches, so you can teach others.
- ✘ Know some Bible verses so you can use them to lead a person to salvation in Christ.
- ✘ Know enough of the Bible to be able to teach a cabin devotional.
- ✘ Know enough about the Bible to answer some of the questions your campers have about the Bible or the Christian life. **WARNING:** These questions frequently come when campers are trying to avoid going to sleep at night.

E. Faith

- ✘ **Read.** No matter how busy you get, carve out time to read God's Word. It's his words for you. Look at the schedule for the week/day and decide with your co-cabin leader what times work best (i.e. before morning bell, after lunch, after lights out). Connect with another cabin leader or staffer to help you stick with your decision. If you don't know where to start, ask someone what they do. Consider reading, praying, thinking, and applying your way through the book of James.

- ✘ **Pray.** Don't stop praying! Pray for your campers by name, the program, and your co-cabin leader. Pray that the Spirit's presence would be evident and that Satan would be denied. Pray that you would remain strong physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Pray boldly. Ask for BIG stuff. Pray when tempted. It worked for Jesus! Pray so God will do his work. Jesus prayed that God would work through him. Make prayer a priority and expect great things! Pray short prayers all day. Pick a verse or thought from the Bible and pray it out loud, in whispers, and in your heart. Praying well is a skill that needs to be developed. Don't start trying to pray all day on your first day counseling. Start now and when it comes time to counsel, you'll be ready. You can't show up to a test without preparing and expect to ace it. You can't show up to counsel expecting to be the best without pre-praying.
- ✘ **Do.** Want more faith? Do more stuff! The more you humbly serve, the more your faith grows. The phrase "put your faith in God" is often used when talking about accepting Christ as savior and starting a relationship with God. It's a phrase that should be used *after* we become followers of Christ too. We wouldn't worry, have fears, freak out if we truly put our faith in God, the maker of heaven and earth who claims to care more about us than simple sparrows of which he knows every detail and is concerned. Put your faith in God and rely on him for everything you will need this summer. When you do more that requires God to be present you can't help but give him all the credit afterward. Doing this job is going to drain you, but it will not drain God. Get filled up on His words and pray throughout the whole day.

F. **Availability:** Being available is all about listening. Listening is not waiting your turn to talk. Listening is not giving of advice. Active listening is making the talker feel like they've actually been heard. Try repeating back what you just heard throughout the

Listening is not waiting your turn to talk

conversation to ensure you both that you're tracking with the

conversation. Use non-verbal communicators: a head nod, huh, hmm, oh, wow, uh huh, etc. Look at them while they are talking. Block out distractions. Suggest going somewhere less distracting, but still within eye shot of other staff (Rule of three). In order to be available you've got to be where your campers are. You can't share their joy of doing something for the first time if you are doing your laundry, reading a book, finalizing details for the weekend, idly chatting with facility staff, or tanning it up at the beach. You've got ONE week to accomplish what you have set out to do. Do work!

G. Proper Self-Concept: It is important to evaluate yourself - your talents, weaknesses, and characteristics. Be honest. It means that you will recognize in which situations you might be able to counsel and which ones might be a disaster. It involves admitting to God areas where you are weak and asking Him for the power to overcome those weaknesses. You are probably not going to be a perfect cabin leader this summer. There will be times when you feel woefully inadequate. GOOD. That is where God wants you. Admit humbly where you are and ask God to empower you with his Spirit to counsel.

Remember, if you continue to have a defeated, unworthy self-concept, you are no help either. You have to be confident that God has you where He wants you and that you have something valuable to share with campers. Having a proper self-concept is not just being humble enough to admit you have weaknesses. It also means having a good enough self-concept that you will be able to make your camper's week at camp a good one.

You need to have a proper balance of confidence and competence; *humble confidence*.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CAMPERS

Helping Campers: Open Up & Question Asking Tips

Rapport and openness are goals you will need to work hard at early in the week.

- ✘ Remember their name, use their name.
- ✘ Show interest when they are talking; don't get distracted.
- ✘ Add a third element to conversations to decrease potential awkwardness – another person, a soda, looking at trees, ping pong table, a canoe, anything!
- ✘ Avoid “why” questions – they can put people on the defense.
- ✘ Avoid questions that can be answered with either “yes or no” – they don't go anywhere.
- ✘ Communicate that it's safe to answer – there are no wrong answers.

Examples: “getting to know you” questions:

Where are you from?
What kind of pet do you have?
How many siblings do you have?
What is your favorite... animal, ice cream,
food, camp memory, etc.?

What are you looking forward to this
week?
How many times have you been to camp?
Do you like to play sports / games?

Examples “relationship building” or “going deeper” questions:

If you could have any kind of pet, what would you choose? How come?

If you could have any kind of a birthday party, what kind would you have?

If you could teleport to any place in the world where would you go?

If you had 3 bags of money, how would you spend the money?

If you could have any superpower for a week which would you choose?

If you were instantly able to play any instrument perfectly that you have never played before, what would it be?

If your home was totally destroyed in a fire but you could save just 1 thing, what would it be?

DISCIPLINE

✦ **Discipline Defined:** Discipline is **training** expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior, especially training that produces spiritual improvement.

✦ Types of Discipline

1. Leading campers to follow simple rules for the sake of the groups' experience and well-being.
2. Encouraging people to excel spiritually, personally, and mentally.

* Reasons for Discipline

1. Discipline is always for the **CAMPER**.
The camper's behavior may cause him/her to lose friends and have a miserable time at camp.
2. Discipline is for the **CAMP**.
One person cannot be allowed to spoil things for everybody else.
No one has the right to be destructive with property or injure another person.
3. Discipline is to be maintained for the sake of the **OTHER CAMPERS**.
Campers have a right to security, safety, food, rest, a good time, and spiritual help.
4. Discipline is for the **CABIN LEADER**.
You need to maintain your leadership role and your position.

* Preventative Discipline

1. Always be there: Most problems between campers arise because the cabin leader was not there. Lack of supervision is a major cause of accidents, too.
Be where the campers are. This one principle will solve or prevent many problems.
2. Never assume that campers know expectations: Make the expectations and rules known from the very beginning. Go over the rules of camp, the rules of the cabin, the expectations of obedience and cooperation, and who is in charge.
3. Earn their respect: Respect is not earned by being physically big, by yelling, by having a title, or by lording it over others.
 - ✦ Respect is an earned reputation. Be consistent from day to day.

- ✘ Respect is earned by assumption. You must *assume* your role as the leader, and then tactfully demand respect that is appropriate for the position. (i.e. coaches)
- ✘ Respect is earned and maintained by your conduct.
- ✘ You must show campers respect. Your respect is evidenced in the words you choose (*no sarcasm*), your tone of voice, and in the way you give direction. Do you sound like a drill sergeant or do you say “please” and “thank you?”

* Responding to a Situation

Respond with Biblical principles of love, patience, and instruction. The following principles have proven to be effective in dealing with campers.

- ✘ Behavior issues are a matter of the heart: *Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.* (Prov. 4:23 NASV)
- ✘ Don't make assumptions before you act: *He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.* (Prov. 18:13 NASV)
- ✘ Appeal to the conscience: “Was that kind?” “Was that honest?” “See how you hurt John.”
- ✘ When correcting establish personal responsibility: Most campers try to blame someone else for their actions. Your counseling should take the following path: take responsibility, ask forgiveness of God, and make it right with others.
- ✘ Establish GOD as the final authority: Let them know what God wants and expects.
- ✘ A short admonition will usually be sufficient: “We don't bang our cups on the table.” “Let's be quiet, it's time to pray.”
- ✘ A shared time-out: This is often helpful for both camper and cabin leader if anger is involved. This usually means separating the camper from the group, lovingly finding out what the problem was, and having the camper sit in a private place for a few minutes to calm down and think about his/her actions. It is best to do the time out with the camper. Leaving them alone can be very damaging to the camper cabin leader relationship. Sitting next to / near them in silence shows love, care and helps them calm down faster (remember the Rule of Three).

* Special Situations

Every cabin experiences problems. Many are common, but some will be unique and difficult to overcome. If you are unfamiliar or unexperienced in any situation contact your Camp Director and they will help you or get you the help you need.

- * **Bed-wetting:** This is a touchy situation that only you and the camper can work on. Under no circumstances do you allow other campers to know about this problem. It might help to monitor liquids after supper, and be sure they use the bathroom before going to bed. Whatever you do, do it in privacy. Remember the camper is not doing this to make it more difficult for you. When this happens be very discreet and remove the bedding and let your camp director know. They will arrange have the bedding cleaned.
- * **Homesickness:** This is especially true for younger campers who are away from home for the first time, but it can happen to older campers as well. It can come on at any time but especially during quiet times especially at night. Your presence is especially needed, also you can help them make friends by calling on the more experienced campers to come to their side for encouragement. Do not let them call home. Should it get out of hand, contact your Camp Director and if a call home is deemed necessary let them make that decision. If they are complaining of some health issue take them to the nurse.
- * **Bullying:** Bullying involves an individual or a group repeatedly harming another person—physically, verbally, or socially. Sometimes these harmful actions are plainly visible, but other times, such as when gossip and rumors are used the actions are covert. Bullying behavior might include assault, tripping, intimidation, rumor spreading and isolation, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, destruction of another’s property, and name-calling. In addition to watching for inappropriate/aggressive behavior among your campers, listen carefully to conversations that could be a form of bullying. Make sure that you are not joining in with the bully unintentionally by ignoring the situation, denying it, or laughing along with him or her. When you witness bullying behaviors, take the bully aside and explain why their behavior is unacceptable. Remind him/her of the cabin expectations for treatment of fellow campers. Have him/her apologize. If the bullying continues, report the situation immediately to the Camp Director. After you’ve dealt with the bully, privately talk with the bullied. Say something like, “I’m sorry that happened to you, do you want to tell me about it?” Don’t tell them what they should have done or what you would have done. Listen and help them think through how to address the problem effectively. Encourage them to report any bullying behavior to you, another cabin leader, or any staff member immediately. Make sure they understand that it is completely unacceptable and they should not tolerate it.

* What Not To Do

- ✘ Campers are not be physically touched, hit, grabbed, or shaken for discipline. See note on page 18
- ✘ Campers are not to be humiliated or emotionally abused.
- ✘ Physical exercises, such as running, push-ups, etc., are not to be used as discipline.
- ✘ Withhold sleep, food, or restroom privileges. Never place a camper alone without supervision.
- ⊗ The above are serious offenses and may require discipline against a staff member!!!
- ✘ Do not hold bitterness or grudges. Once the discipline is over the camper should be welcomed back as restored.
- ✘ Do not get angry or lose control. If you do, you owe your campers an apology.

* **Disciplinary Action**

- The Camp Director should handle most instances of discipline if a punishment is to be given. If you are faced with a discipline problem that may lead to a punishment, utilize the following three-step approach:
 - ✘ At the **first** instance of misbehavior, the cabin leader should inform the camper that their behavior is inappropriate and then give them a warning. Perhaps say something like this, “You are misbehaving. This is the first warning. Do not do it again.”
 - ✘ At the **second** instance of misbehavior, the cabin leader should repeat the previous step and let them know that if the behavior continues they will have to talk to the Camp Director. Perhaps say something like this, “You have misbehaved again. This is your second warning. If you do the misbehavior one more time, we will go talk to the Camp Director.”
 - ✘ At the **third** instance of misbehavior, the cabin leader should remind the camper that you have warned them and that now the two of you need to go see the Camp Director to discuss the misbehavior. Perhaps say something like this, “You have continued to misbehave, and I warned you that if you continued we would need to go talk to the Camp Director. So now I am taking you to see the Camp Director.” At this point, the Camp Director is responsible to issue any disciplinary measures that are appropriate.
- The benefit of this approach is that the cabin leader does not have to worry about handing out punishments or worrying if they are employing the right kind of punishment. In addition, the cabin leader will not be put in the position of being “the bad guy.”

- If the misbehavior is extreme or very inappropriate, then the cabin leader should take the camper to the Camp Director without any warnings. These actions include (but are not limited to):
 - ✘ Any camper who fights with any physical contact.
 - ✘ Any camper who is caught stealing.
 - ✘ Any camper that intentionally breaks or damages property.
 - ✘ Any camper caught defacing property.
 - ✘ Any camper causing any type of threat (real or imagined).
 - ✘ Any camper who purposefully does not report to an assigned area.
 - ✘ Any camper engaged in bullying.

Note: It is understood that staff may have to physically grab or restrain a camper for the purposes of making the camper or another camper safe. Examples could be to extract a camper from a fight, or to keep a camper from running into traffic. Any instance of this should be reported to the Camp Director. Failure to do so may increase liability should any charges be made against the camp or the staff member.

CAMPER NEEDS

Physical

- ✘ **Sleep:** Make sure campers are getting enough sleep. Tired campers (and cabin leaders) get cranky. However, if you have campers who like to “party at night,” do not let them take naps during the day. Encourage them to get the proper rest at night.
- ✘ **Eating Well:** Too much sugar or sweets often makes campers hyperactive. Encourage them to eat vegetables, fruits, and salads and help them understand the benefits of these food items. This is a great time for you to lead by example.
- ✘ **Meds:** Make sure campers who need medication receive it at the proper times. Be aware that there may be a lag time before medication helps the camper.
- ✘ **Boredom:** A bored camper is usually getting into trouble. Redirect campers’ energies to new activities with your involvement. Some campers need you to sit next to them more than others.
- ✘ **Sunblock:** There is nothing worse than a sunburned camper...oh wait, yes there is! Having to tell a sunburned camper’s mom why their child is burnt to a crisp. If a camper did not bring their own, there is usually some at the beach. Apply early and often. Better safe than sun poisoned.

- ✘ Hydration: duh! Do you want them to die?!? Even on cold days and water game days, they need water. Water will be provided at locations near the activities. Encourage your campers to drink plenty of water.

Emotional

- ✘ Self Image: Learn campers' names (yes you have heard that before) and use them. It is generally best not to give nicknames to the campers. They are important to Christ, they should be important to you.
- ✘ Acceptance: Be a friend to each camper just the way they are. Do not show favoritism. You need to spend time with each camper, not just *chosen* ones.
- ✘ Encouragement: Always be looking for opportunities to praise and compliment. This is extremely helpful for the troublemaker campers. Encourage campers to participate in all the different activities at camp
- ✘ Love: Pay special attention to each individual camper. 1 John 3:18 says "Let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." This does not mean that we do not need to use loving words. Your actions and words need to leave no doubt that you care.
- ✘ Genuineness: Think before you speak, joke, ~~tease~~ *don't tease*. Campers need to laugh, but they don't need sarcasm. They need to see their role models acting authentically. Make the words of your mouth and the mediations of your heart pleasing to the Lord, your Rock and Redeemer (*Psalm 19:14 personalized*)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- ✘ During camp there is a nurse on duty throughout the camp. The Nurse's station is located at the back of the Camp Office.
- ✘ Campers are not permitted to have any medication with them in the Cabin. All medications are to be turned in to the Nurse at registration. This includes any over the counter medicines. If a camper is found to have medication take them immediately to the Nurse.
- ✘ Cabin Leaders are not to administer any medication, including aspirin etc. You **must not** suggest medical treatment to the campers. This is the responsibility of the nurse.
- ✘ You will be notified of the times your campers need to go to the nurse for their medication. Allow another camper to accompany them.
- ✘ It is your task to be aware of the general health of your campers. This includes watching areas such as personal hygiene, their level of fatigue, and sudden changes in behavior or appearance.

- ✘ Any sickness should be reported to the nurse. The nurse will decide when the camper will be allowed back into the cabin. Cooperate with the nurse, and let the camper know of your concern. Do not allow a sick camper to lie in bed unsupervised. If ill have the camper report to the nurse.
- ✘ Special attention should be paid to any complaints of earaches, abdominal or stomach aches, sunburn and fevers, etc. These should be reported to the nurse.
- ✘ Be sure your campers get **plenty of water**, especially during daytime activities.

ELECTRONICS

Campers are not permitted to have any electronic devices including cell phones. As a cabin leader a cell phone could come in handy if you need to contact the nurse or if you need help and this is understood. You must not

You must not allow your cell phone to stand in the way of your ministry to your campers.

allow your cell phone to stand in the way of your ministry to your campers. Any private calls should be made when you have free time away from the campers otherwise they may feel that they are not important to you. For some this will be what they experience at home. They should not even know you have a cell phone—especially the first day.

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

The most exciting time at camp is leading a camper to faith in Christ. The following is taken from *SBC.net*. It is essential that you know this well enough to explain it to your campers in your own words. You may have a process that you are familiar with and have used and that is ok.

The most exciting time at camp is leading a camper to faith in Christ.

When you counsel with someone there will be forms provided to let the camp leadership know. This is very important. You will be told where you can get these forms and where to turn them in.

How to Become a Christian

You're not here by accident. God loves you. He wants you to have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus, His Son. There is just one thing that separates you from God. That one thing is sin.

The Bible describes sin in many ways. Most simply, sin is our failure to measure up to God's holiness and His righteous standards. We sin by things we do, choices we make, attitudes we show, and thoughts we entertain. We also sin when we fail to do right things. The Bible affirms our own experience – "there is none righteous, not even one." No matter how good we try to be, none of us does right things all the time.

People tend to divide themselves into groups - good people and bad people. But God says that every person who has ever lived is a sinner, and that *any* sin separates us from God. No matter how we might classify ourselves, this includes you and me. We are *all* sinners.

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

Many people are confused about the way to God. Some think they will be punished or rewarded according to how good they are. Some think they should make things right in their lives before they try to come to God. Others find it hard to understand how Jesus could love them when other people don't seem to. But I have great news for you! God DOES love you! More than you can ever imagine! And there's nothing you can do to make Him stop! Yes, our sins demand punishment - the punishment of death and separation from God. But, because of His great love, God sent His only Son Jesus to die for our sins.

"God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

For you to come to God you have to get rid of your sin problem. But, in our own strength, not one of us can do this! You can't make yourself right with God by being a better person. Only God can rescue us from our sins. He is willing to do this not because of anything you can offer Him, but *JUST BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU!*

"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy." Titus 3:5

It's God's grace that allows you to come to Him - not your efforts to "clean up your life" or work your way to Heaven. You can't earn it. It's a **free gift**.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

For you to come to God, the penalty for your sin must be paid. God's gift to you is His son, Jesus, who paid the debt for you when He died on the Cross.

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."
Romans 6:23*

Jesus paid the price for your sin and mine by giving His life on a cross at a place called Calvary, just outside of the city walls of Jerusalem in ancient Israel. God brought Jesus back from the dead. He provided the way for you to have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus. When we realize how deeply our sin grieves the heart of God and how desperately we need a Savior, we are ready to receive God's offer of salvation. To admit we are sinners means turning away from our sin and selfishness and turning to follow Jesus. The Bible word for this is "repentance" - to change our thinking about how grievous sin is, so our thinking is in line with God's.

All that's left for you to do is to accept the gift that Jesus is holding out for you right now.

"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." Romans 10:9-10

God says that if you believe in His son, Jesus, you can live forever with Him in glory.

"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16

Are you ready to accept the gift of eternal life that Jesus is offering you right now? Let's review what this commitment involves:

- ✘ I acknowledge I am a sinner in need of a Savior - this is to repent or turn *away* from sin
- ✘ I believe in my heart that God raised Jesus from the dead - this is to trust that Jesus paid the full penalty for my sins
- ✘ I confess Jesus as my Lord and my God - this is to surrender control of my life to Jesus
- ✘ I receive Jesus as my Savior forever - this is to accept that God has done *for* me and *in* me what He promised

If it is your sincere desire to receive Jesus into your heart as your personal Lord and Savior, then talk to God from your heart:

Here's a Suggested Prayer: It is our faith not the prayer that is necessary.

"Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and I do not deserve eternal life. But, I believe You died and rose from the grave to make me a new creation and to prepare me to dwell in your presence forever. Jesus, come into my life, take control of my life, forgive my sins and save

me. I am now placing my trust in You alone for my salvation and I accept your free gift of eternal life."

LEADING A CAMPER TO CHRIST

There is no need to adapt the Gospel for children. The Gospel is the Gospel and is already reduced to the point where a child can understand it. Christ said, *"Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."* (Mat 18:3). A child/camper is capable, at an early age, of understanding that he/she is a sinner, that God hates sin and punishes sinners, that child can understand the Gospel that God has provided a substitute in Jesus Christ who was punished in our place. His death on the cross took the child's punishment and he arose from the grave to show that God accepted what He did for us. It is believing the Gospel that saves the camper. Saying a prayer, does not save unless it expresses true faith in the Gospel. Trying to adapt the Gospel to Children by suggesting they "ask Jesus into their heart" may cause the child to "believe something he/she does not understand.

Use "God's Plan of Salvation" to familiarize yourself with the essentials of the Gospel. Use those verses which you are most comfortable with when working with a camper. Being familiar with the others may help when a child asks questions.

At every point during the presentation be sure the child understands what he/she is being asked to believe. If they don't understand the concept of personal sin then they may not be ready to move on. In that case do not pressure them to "make a decision". Trust the Lord to guide them. Share the whole Gospel and let God use that information when the child is ready

FOLLOW-UP

When you counsel with someone there are forms provided to let the camp leadership know. This is very important so that we can inform their church for follow-up. You will be told where you can get these forms and where to turn them in. Do not neglect this.

Don't sweat the small stuff...
it's all small stuff

One last word: I know that there are some that pride themselves in finding errors in documents such as this. I pride myself in my ability to add errors for them to find. Enjoy.