

# Welcome to InsideOut

Church camp leaders may find themselves acting as educator, guidance counselor, maintenance person, mentor, or song leader—sometimes all at the same time. You are also the embodiment of Christ Jesus to others longing to know God’s love. This can feel overwhelming, but as people of God we know that our great responsibility is matched by an even greater potential. The Spirit will guide you, your staff, and the campers in your work while the prayers of many cheer you on.

For this work you need to have the skills of a teacher, the comfort of a parent, and the wisdom of an elder. This curriculum is here to support you in that work. You will find in the pages ahead biblical theology done by scholars (who are also camp leaders), activities designed to help you share the Bible stories, games and projects that reinforce ideas and skills, and a whole lot of camping fun!

## How to use InsideOut’s *This Is Our Prayer*

Your purchase gives you access to all the tools needed for a great summer of camp. Activity files can be opened in either PDF or MS Word formats, allowing you the choice of a vibrant layout or an easily edited document. In each, you will find:

- **Biblical and Theological Overview** for each of seven days;
- **Daily Guides** followed by age-specific **Daily Activities** for each day;
- **Worship and Devotions** offering experiences and tools divided into two age-groups;
- **Extras** section for crafts, games, science and nature, challenge course and group building activities, multiday projects, and “Table Talk” conversation starters. This section also includes a complete list of Story Resources for exploring the Bible stories.

*This Is Our Prayer* also contains **Artwork and Graphics** suitable for T-shirts, marketing, and other use within the camp. These include daily

icons that match the themes, providing a visual expression of the concepts campers are learning.

Unique to *This Is Our Prayer* is a collection of prayer practices and spiritual disciplines provided by amazing partners. We are thankful for the work of partners such as Vibrant Faith at Home. The **Prayer Packet** has resources that match many of the daily activities, and more that are better suited for families or local congregations. We hope you will share these as we encourage campers to keep seeking God all year long.

All resources in the Prayer Packet will be made available free online starting in June 2020 so congregations and families can also explore the resources.

## Daily Guide

Each Daily Guide begins with a Title. The reference Scripture Passage is given. The Scripture Focus is one or two verses from a key moment in the story. It may be used as a memory verse. If not indicated otherwise, the Scripture Passage and Scripture Focus are taken from the New Revised Standard Version. Next, a Theological Summary is provided that demonstrates how the scripture and theme connect with campers. Today, campers will... describes the aim of the activities of that day. Next, the Daily Activities are categorized with five different labels. Really, they are just notating contemporary words for ancient Christian practices or spiritual disciplines. You could call them, “things Christians do in community.” For each day’s activities, you will see things that fall under the categories: #PLAY, #PRAY, #CREATE, #SERVE, and #LEARN. Some activities may fit more than one category. Prayer Practice... Leader Notes call attention to special details that counselors and other staff may want to be aware of. Finally, a Prayer for the day...

## Daily Guide

### Day 1: theme and scripture for the day

**Scripture Focus:** Quoted from the NRSV. If another translation or paraphrase is recommended for your age group, it will be listed here.

**Theological Summary:** This is a sentence that relates the scripture to the theme of the day.

### Today, campers will...

- These will list some goals for your campers today.
- You may have one or two to whom you want to give special attention.
- You will also find one acknowledging a legitimate fear.

**Daily Activities:** This is a list of the activities that will be featured this day. Instructions and information will be found on following pages.

Labels show which of the five categories that the activities fall into. As you plan your day, you will want to have at least one activity from each category. The categories are things Christian communities do together. They are:

- PLAY** includes games, sensory experiments, physical challenges
- PRAY** includes prayer or reflection
- CREATE** includes creative writing, arts, music, crafts, design, drama
- SERVE** includes outreach projects, consideration of others
- LEARN** includes Bible reflection, life application, understanding theme

**Prayer Practice:** Each day has a type of prayer or spiritual discipline to explore. Additional resources for this are found in the Prayer Packet.

**Leader Notes:** This section lists theological road bumps to be aware of, special notes of main theme, or important reminders about the nature of camp.

**Prayer:** This is a short prayer that reflects the daily theme that any leader can use if needed.

## Daily Activities

Daily Activities include step-by-step directions for six to eight theme-related experiences. Each practice will be **titled** and **labeled** so that you can quickly find the one you're looking for. The directions include four sections: **Why**, **Supplies**, **How**, and **BTW**.

**Why** gives your leaders a rationale for the activity. This will explain how the activity will function in your group, relate to the theme, or connect with needs of campers.

**Supplies** lists the items or resources you will need to complete the activity. How many of each item

you will need will vary depending upon your group size.

**How** gives step-by-step instructions—whether those are game rules, recipes, discussion questions, or other pointers.

**BTW (By The Way):** Sometimes there are opportunities to take activities to another level. BTW will offer suggestions for expanding an activity, adapting it for a different setting, or using some aspect of an activity in worship or other camp activity. This is our way of providing more resources, while inviting you to use your own creativity in reimagining activities and teaching moments.

## Story Resources

Following the **Daily Activities** you will find **Story Resources:** supplemental material in various media such as a list of storybooks that are faithful to the biblical text, a script for a play, a video that can be found online, or a contemporary film. You will want to check this section before camp to see if there are books or DVDs you want to borrow from your library or purchase. These are not required for any activities. They are intended to be supplemental resources that support the daily themes and scripture. A complete list compiled from all age groups is also available in the extras section.

## Worship and Devotions

Another thing Christians do together is worship. At camp, worship offers the unique chance to experiment—to try things that your campers might never have experienced in a traditional congregation. It also offers campers the opportunity to express their own creativity in worship. To support the worship work of your campers, This Is Our Prayer offers a full section of worship ideas and resources. This includes cabin devotions as well as liturgical resources. You will find innovative ways to share scripture, daily stewardship and communion resources, and some creative worship elements that will enhance worship for indoor or outdoor sanctuaries. This section also contains song recommendations. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of resources, but rather a jumping off place for

InsideOut: *This is our prayer*

your planning, or a backup if you run short on time and energy. Daily Worship is divided by age group with a section designed for Children and Intergenerational worship, and another specifically written for Youth. Cabin Devotions are divided the same way.

## Prayer Packet

This is a unique resource, just for *This Is Our Prayer*. Some of the material will be referenced in Daily Activities, such as labyrinths. Others are ideas and resources for your camp to expand campers' understandings of prayer and create experiences that will travel home. You will find activities here for each of the daily Prayer Practices.

## Customizing Camp

Your camp is special, and InsideOut is customizable to your setting. Some of the variables that may change the experience are:

- Number of days/length of camp
- Style of staffing (volunteer or paid)
- Specialty Camps (Music, Arts, Drama, Sports, Adventure, etc.)
- Denominational or doctrinal content
- Special resources you have (garden, animals, waterfront)
- Time of year/weather

Advance planning is key as you provide the right leaders with the right resources from the curriculum. Everyone needs the daily overview chart so they know the themes and learning goals for the day. Special activity leaders need sections specific to their area. Know in advance which activities you want to use as all-camp experiences and which will be done in other settings.

## Suggestions for Shorter Camps

- 1 Day – For a retreat study or an open house event, Day 5 (*Longing for Renewal*).
- 2 Days – For an overnight camp or a lock-in, Days 4 and 5.

3 Days – Days 3, 4, and 5 probably flow best together, especially for older campers.

4 Days – Combining days is hard with these themes – dropping a couple may be best.

\* Day 2 (*Longing Together*) – If you drop it, be sure to highlight communal actions other ways.

\* Day 6 (*Longing for Change*) – If you drop it, be sure to lift up working for change other places.

\* Days 1 and 7 – If you drop these, you open with community and close with seeking change for the community.

While the material is laid out for seven days, there is more than you could ever fit into one week. To extend the materials for a longer camp, split a few days in half.

## Shape Your Day

A typical schedule at camp includes three meals, worship, keynote or plenary sessions, small-group sessions, large-group activities, free time, recreation, cabin and hygiene time. There is a lot to get into a day. This makes for a long day for your campers and for your leaders. When planning your day, be sure that it includes enough time for rest at night and that you provide a little downtime (especially for volunteers) during the day. It is important to find opportunities to give campers choices, which may take the form of picking which craft project they want to work on or where they want to go for a snack.

As you plan your days at camp, take note of the arc of the week. Each day's theme and scripture build on the last. Your individual days at camp have an arc too. In the early part of the day, your campers will be presented with the Bible story. Throughout the day, Daily Activities will give your campers opportunities to come into deeper understanding of the scripture, of their community, and of God. By evening your campers are relating the knowledge gained from the day to their world. Don't neglect time for prayer and worship, or time for play and creativity. Balance is very important.

## About Your Campers

In addition to being familiar and comfortable with the content of the resource and the scripture, counselors need to understand the campers with whom they will be working. You don't need to be a certified teacher or neuroscientist to understand and respond to the needs of your campers.

In the past decade, significant discoveries about human learning and development have been made. While it is important to understand some general physical and social milestones your campers display, it is equally important to learn to assess and meet the needs of your individual campers. Children and adults within specific age ranges have multiple factors that determine the kind of input they require to learn and grow. As you get to know your campers, learn some of the facts about how brains work and how to maximize their potential.

**Safety First:** *In order for a human to learn, the environment he or she is in must feel safe.* Because the human brain developed as a tool to ensure safety, it functions best when it is safe. Safety is physical, emotional, and rational, and as a leader you need to consider how safe you are making your campers feel. Affirmation of behaviors that are safe will inspire confidence, and your campers will be more willing to take risks, a necessary element in learning.

**Learning Is Physical:** *Healthy, moving bodies make for active brains.* Even emotional and spiritual development depend upon physical health. Be sure to provide your campers with lots of physical activity, healthy foods, and plenty of rest. Camp can be a demanding physical endeavor, but science is showing that this is part of what makes it so transformative. Also, healthy habits formed at camp can make it home with your campers.

**Every Body Is Different:** *Each individual's needs are unique to them.* Life experience, gender, physical development, and chemistry shape not only desires but also needs. Remember that not all of your campers will benefit from all activities. It is important to get to know your campers' physical limitations and interpersonal abilities. Learn about each of your campers' special needs and be sure to communicate your findings with other leaders.

**Generations Change:** *Knowing how they see the world helps.* Your campers are part of the most private and practical generation on record. They see the importance of affirming others' beliefs, even when they disagree. They are technologically connected but still lonely. Learning is best done in collaboration, and personal exploration and visual images hold great power. They struggle feeling safe, but are intentional about caring for others.