

Setting up and Organizing Your Camp

From ideas for welcoming campers to sending them off one week later, your *InsideOut* curriculum resource is intended to be a guide for all you do this week. Of course, summer camp programs come in many shapes and sizes and use a variety of program and leadership models. You can design a camp curriculum that fits the needs of your camp, your program, and your staff.

The word *curriculum* is often understood as a specific print resource. In its original use, however, the word means “the course to be run.” Everything that happens at camp is curriculum; it’s part of the “course to be run” during the days at camp. Your *InsideOut* resource, is meant to be a guide or partner for what you choose to do during your camp: Bible study, community building, games, hikes, worship, and so on.

You are the expert in what your camp needs. This resource provides the ingredients, but you get to mix them up and make the right “course to be run” for your camp, staff, and campers.

To help you adapt *InsideOut* to your design for your camp, the DVD-ROM contains program materials for all age levels as well as extra resources for a great week at camp. The format of this resource makes customizing the resources to fit your camp as easy as possible. All of the materials are available to you on the DVD-ROM, which contains non-editable PDF files and editable Word files. Using the PDF files, you can review all the material. Using the Word files, you can copy and paste the materials you select into your own word processing program, arrange their order, and edit their content to create a plan that is right for your camp and staff. Your purchase of this resource allows you to print and/or photocopy whatever you need for use at your campsite.

Setting Goals for the Experience

The first step in getting ready for camp is to set goals for your summer program. As you consider the time you have at camp and the young people who will attend, you need to decide what you want to happen:

- What kind of experience do you want campers to have?
- What do you want them to take home?
- What do you understand about how God is at work in their midst? about who Jesus is?
- Is camp a place for faith formation, religious education, evangelism—or all?
- What are your camp’s most important values?

Whatever your camp goals, keep them in mind as you create your plan, train your staff, and relate with your campers. Stating these goals clearly at the beginning of your planning will influence the decisions that you make and the curriculum resources that you choose or create.

Begin goal-setting by writing down five or six broad goals. For example, you may want campers to learn some Bible stories, or to accept Jesus Christ as Lord, or to experience Christian community—or all three. You may want campers to practice stewardship of God’s creation, to take a wilderness trip, or to provide service for the camp or community. Write down these goals, leaving space below each one. Then, for each goal, write down specific objectives, stating what campers can do to reach that goal. Your list might look like this:

Goal: Campers will learn four stories of Jesus.

Objectives: During the time they are at camp, campers will

- Open their Bibles on a daily basis
- Read at least four stories from scripture
- Have a chance to reflect on each story
- Be invited to explore each story’s meaning for their own lives

Goal: Campers will practice stewardship of God’s creation.

Objectives: During the time they are at camp, campers will

- Explore God’s creation
- Learn about the ecological crisis
- Worship the God of creation
- Identify three things they can do to care for God’s creation after they go home

Once you have identified and written down these goals and objectives, you are ready to determine the ways in which this particular resource can assist you in reaching them. Feel free to choose among the activities or to adapt them for your camp program.

Organization and Leadership of Your Camp

Camps may be organized in a variety of ways and may use different leadership models. As you design your curriculum, you need to understand the way these two elements work at your camp. For example, as you arrange these resources for use at your camp, you need to know who will use the curriculum, what the schedule is, and who will plan worship. To organize campers, your camp probably uses a variation of one of these three basic models:

Small-Group Decentralized Camping

In this model each small group—usually co-ed—lives together 24/7 with two counselors, a male and a female. The group plans all their activities together. The emphasis is on the community that develops within this group as they work and play, worship and pray, disagree and forgive together.

Although the group plans its own schedule, it adapts parts of its schedule to the larger camp schedule. For instance, the times for meals and special activities are probably set for the entire camp. Groups decide if and when they want to sign up for things such as swimming and arts and crafts. As a leader, you need to know what activities are available and the times at which they are held.

Within this model some camps set a time aside for all groups to gather for Bible study and/or worship. During these times, a designated camp chaplain or pastor may serve as the leader. This person is then responsible for developing the Bible study and/or for planning and leading worship.

Centralized Camping

In centralized camping, campers may also live in small groups. The schedule for group activities, however, is set with only limited opportunities to adapt the schedule to the needs of individual groups. In small-group decentralized camping, each group stays together for all activities; in a centralized form, campers may participate in several different groups during the day. They may sleep with one group, do daily activities in a variety of groups, and eat with yet another group. In this model, designated resource persons lead large-group activities, such as Bible study, games, or worship.

Conference Camping

Conference camping is actually a type of centralized camping. The focus is on the large group, however, rather than on small groups. In a conference format, the schedule and activities are planned ahead of time by a camp program director or team of leaders. Campers come together for a plenary session and then move from activity to activity in small groups.

Leadership Models

Another factor to consider is the leadership model of your camp. Some camps have full-time camp or program directors, who are responsible for overseeing the program. Other camps have site managers who host volunteer camp directors or deans. A committee of the camp’s governing body is charged with overseeing the camp program and recruits these leaders. These volunteer camp directors come to camp for short periods—usually a week—and are responsible for the program and staff during the time they are there.

Several models are used for staffing camps. At some camps, the staff—usually college-aged students—is hired for the entire camp period. Other camp staffs are made up of volunteers who come for a week at a time. Some camps involve a mixture of weekly volunteers and paid staff.

The role of staff also varies according to the model being used. In the small-group model, each group of campers has two counselors who live with the group twenty-four hours a day. These leaders are generalists who lead Bible studies, comfort the homesick, help settle conflicts, play and pray with campers, lead games, and act as role models.

In camps where campers change groups during the day, leaders may be specialists. For example, one person may only teach swimming, while another person is responsible for creating all the arts and crafts opportunities. These leaders may or may not live in tents or cabins with campers.

Evaluation

The evaluation done after the camp program ends complements the goal-setting with which you began. Through evaluation you will discover how well you reached your goals. Using the results of your evaluation, you can begin to plan for the next year of camp.

Be sure to develop evaluative tools for campers, parents, and staff to use. Their responses will help you find out how these three important participant groups perceived your camp program. Ask campers and staff what they thought about camp while their memories are fresh, before they go home. After camp is over, mail evaluation forms to parents.

On all your evaluation forms, ask specific questions rather than just general ones. If you want to know how campers liked the food and what food they liked best, ask them to name their favorite camp food. Ask parents such things as why they chose to send their children to your camp. If you have some new element at your facility or in your program, include questions about that. Be sure to ask if there are things that members of these groups would like to see added or changed next year.

**Copyright ©2013 by Chalice Press, part of InsideOut: Christian Resources for Outdoor Ministries,
www.christiancampresources.com.**

Plan Your Training

You can use the following ideas for study of each of the seven sessions. Do this plan as is or divide it into shorter sessions spread throughout the day.

A. Use one of these methods to introduce the biblical story and focus:

- Direct staff to the chart provided with the Daily Overview for this year's curriculum.
- Read or have someone else read the passage from the Bible.
- Read the focus statement. Ask someone who is a good storyteller to tell the story. (Ask that person in advance so he or she can prepare.)
- Read the focus statement. Lead the staff through the story using one of the three Bible study methods described in the handout below (Bible Study Methods) or by choosing one of the age-level learning activities in the Explore section of the curriculum.
- Read the focus statement. Ask a small group of staff to present a skit of the story, which they can prepare themselves or choose one from the Daily Worship Plans in the Extra Resources of the curriculum. (Ask them in advance so they can prepare.)

B. Use one or more of these to introduce the background material and theological issues:

- Play the video provided with this curriculum. It introduces the theme and Bible background.
- Ask a small group of staff to prepare a presentation or lead a discussion using information from the Biblical and Theological Overview section.
- Invite a local pastor or educator to present the information.
- Deal with any issues, such as the Trinity and sin and salvation, related to the theme, examining them from the perspective of your tradition. Help counselors, especially those who are not theologically trained, to feel equipped to respond to campers when issues arise around some of the issues indicated above.
- Use maps, photos, and other illustrative material.

C. Use the Leader Reflections questions

At the end of each day's Biblical and Theological Overview are reflections addressed to the leaders. Use them as a springboard to a discussion of the ways in which the biblical material and concepts intersect with their own lives and faith.

Sample Training Exercises

1. Create an Activity

Invite staff members to explore the concepts and stories by developing and leading an activity. Divide into four to five small groups (depending on your numbers). Explain that you will assign a type of activity (Bible study, creative activity, environmental activity, service activity, or game) to each group and that they are to develop an activity to achieve one of the goals in the focus statement for the session. Tell them that they can use any of the Daily Guides or Extra Resources from the *InsideOut* resource itself or develop one of the study suggestions on the handout, Bible Storytelling Methods. Once they have prepared the activity they will lead the rest of the staff in it.

Give the groups about twenty minutes to prepare and then allow up to an hour for all the groups to lead their activities. After each activity, facilitate a fifteen-minute evaluation session involving everyone. Ask those who led the activity for ideas about how they might improve their session. Other staff members can contribute constructive and positive comments about ways that it could be strengthened. As the camp leader, participate in the evaluation, offering suggestions and taking advantage of any teachable moments.

Supplies: Bibles, Daily Guides and Extra Resources, Bible Storytelling Methods handout, recreational equipment, arts and crafts materials, and environmental education materials

2. Play Who Are You?

Explain to the staff that they will work in small groups to choose a biblical character from one of the Bible stories and identify what they admire and how they want to be like that character. You can use this activity for any one Bible story or after completing the exploration of all the Bible stories.

Have staff self-select into small groups. Assign one or more of the Bible stories to them. Give the small groups about ten to fifteen minutes to choose a biblical character from the story (or stories) and to decide what they like or admire about the character. Each small group will create a short skit about the person, letting the others guess which one they have chosen.

Gather the whole group for the presentations. Have all the small groups present their skits at one time, or scatter them throughout the day. After each skit, invite the trainees to talk about what these characters have to teach them about being camp counselors. Ask: “What kind of camp counselor would each of these biblical characters have made? How do you want to be like them this summer?”

Keep a list on a large sheet of paper of all the qualities the group identifies in the biblical characters. Afterward, post the list where staff can see it during the remainder of the training.

After the activity is finished, gather back together. Use questions such as the following to encourage discussion about the study and how they could use the method with campers:

- What did you like about this activity?
- What did you find difficult about this activity?
- Would you use this activity with campers? Why or why not?
- With what age campers would this work best?
- What do you think campers would like about this activity?

Supplies: Bibles, listing of scripture from the Daily Overview, large sheets of paper, and markers

3. Learn the Stories

Explain to staff that they will work in small groups using one of the Bible stories to reflect on what it tells them about Jesus. Then they will use a form of artistic expression such as a cartoon, poem, song, mural, and so forth to describe the nature of Jesus to the rest of the group. Let them choose their groups. Assign each group one of the Bible stories, or choose a specific activity of this type from *InsideOut*. Give them about fifteen to twenty minutes to talk about what the story tells them about Jesus and to prepare an artistic expression about what they found out.

Gather back together to share the artistic expressions. You can have all the small groups make their presentations at one time or scatter them throughout staff training.

Use questions such as the following to encourage discussion about the study and how they could use the method with campers:

- What did you like about this activity?
- What did you find difficult about this activity?
- Would you use this activity with campers? Why or why not?
- With what age campers would this work best?
- What do you think campers would like about this activity?

Supplies: Bibles, listing of scripture from Daily Overview, a variety of types of paper (such as newsprint, construction, notebook), and a variety of drawing materials (such as markers, pencils, pens, crayons)

Bible Study Methods

Steps for Small Group Bible Study

- Step 1: Have one person read the biblical passage aloud.
- Step 2: Ask each person to identify one word or phrase that seems important to that person.
- Step 3: Invite each person to share that word or phrase with the group.
- Step 4: Have someone else read the biblical passage aloud again.
- Step 5: Tell each person to write down what the biblical passage has to do with his or her life now.
- Step 6: Invite each person to share what he or she wrote in #5 with the rest of the group.
- Step 7: Have someone read the biblical passage aloud a third time.
- Step 8: Ask each person to write down what God seems to be saying to him or her in the passage.
- Step 9: Invite each person to share what he or she believes God is saying to him or her in the passage.
- Step 10: Join hands and invite each person to pray aloud for the person on his or her right.

Shared Praxis

1. Identify the issue or challenge to be discussed. Invite people to name their own experiences concerning the issue or challenge.
2. Invite people to discuss the issue or challenge and how it affects their lives. Encourage them to reflect on why they do what they do and what the likely or intended consequences of their actions are.
3. Introduce the biblical story and background information about the setting of the story. Read the story and talk about what happened in the story. Encourage people to discuss the faith response the passage invites.
4. Encourage people to talk about how the story speaks to their own experiences with the issue or challenge. Invite them to discuss what can they learn about the issue or challenge from the biblical story. Encourage them to have a conversation between their own stories and the biblical story.
5. Provide the opportunity for the learners to think about how their future behavior might change because of hearing the story and thinking about it. Give them an opportunity to choose a faith response for the future.

Theologizing Methods

1. Remember an experience. It can be any experience that the group has shared or a story from scripture.
2. Recall and retell the experience. Group members use their own words to retell the story.
3. Identify feelings of the people in the story. If there are unresolved feelings in the group about this experience, talk about them.
4. Isolate the main issue (such as love, conflict, or peace) found in the story or experience.
5. If you began with a group experience, relate these main issues to biblical stories or theological concept(s). If you began with a biblical story, relate these main issues to the experiences of the group.
6. Clarify what the implications are for beliefs and/or behavior, both at camp and at home.

Bible Storytelling Methods

Skits

Tableau—Read the scripture, and talk about the different scenes in the story. Imagine you are going to draw the different events in the story. Instead of drawing them, stand still/freeze as if you are the figures in the drawing. Do this for each of the scenes in the story. Have someone read or tell the story as each scene is made **Supplies:** Bibles, (optional: costumes)

Narrated—Have one person read or tell the story. This can be fun if the person tells the story without the actors knowing what the story is. They act it out as the narrator describes what they are doing. **Supplies:** Bibles, (optional: costumes)

Camper Developed—Read the scripture. Talk together about a way to act out the story. Discuss who will say what. **Supplies:** Bibles (optional: costumes)

Puppets

Finger Puppets—Put one bandage over the top of a finger and wrap a second bandage around the finger over the two ends of the other bandage. Draw a face on the bandage. Sometimes you can loosen the bandages enough so the finger puppet slips on and off your finger, but normally you just use the puppet once. **Supplies:** One-inch-wide bandages (two for each person), fine markers, Bibles

Paper Plate Puppets—Draw a face on the surface of the paper plate you would normally eat on. You can draw the hair, or use glue and yarn to add hair. When the face is complete, attach a craft stick to the back with masking tape. **Supplies:** One paper plate (the cheap kind) for each person, markers, craft sticks, masking tape, Bibles (optional: glue, yarn, and scissors)

Clothespin Puppets—Hold the clothespin up as if you were going to push it down onto a clothesline. Use a fine marker to draw a face on the round top. Then using the fabric, fashion clothing for the puppet. Cut out a three-inch by one-inch rectangle. Cut a slit in the middle and put the fabric over the “head” of the puppet. Tie it with yarn.

Supplies: Push clothespins (not the clip type), scraps of fabric, yarn, glue, scissors, fine markers, Bibles

Easy Poetry

Cinquain poetry is based on a certain number of words in each of its five lines. The words can be any length and do not have to rhyme. Line 1: One word: a person, place, or thing

Line 2: Two words that tell about the word in Line 1.

Line 3: Three words that also tell about the word in Line 1.

Line 4: Four words that tell a feeling about

Line 1.

Line 5: One word that is like the word in Line 1.

Haiku is a form of poetry that comes from Japan. It depends on the number of syllables in each line. Here’s how you do it:

The first line has five syllables.

The second line has seven syllables.

The third line has five syllables.

Supplies: White copy paper or notebook paper, pencils, handout with poetry forms, Bibles

Respond Artistically

Mural—Read the Bible story and decide what the major scenes in the story are. Divide the butcher paper into panels or use a separate large sheet of paper for each scene. Draw the different scenes to the story. Hang the scenes in order on the wall. **Supplies:** Bibles, butcher paper or separate large sheets of paper that can be taped together, markers, masking tape or pushpins

Cartoon—Read the Bible story and decide how you will tell the story as a cartoon. Draw the pictures of the cartoon. Hang on the wall. **Supplies:** Bibles, white copy paper, pencils, black ink pens, masking tape or pushpins

Song—Read the Bible story and write it as a song. Choose a familiar tune to sing the words to. **Supplies:** Bibles, large sheets of paper and markers

Copyright ©2013 by Chalice Press, part of InsideOut: Christian Resources for Outdoor Ministries, www.christiancampresources.com.