

# A Workbook for Day Camping in a Missions Setting

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The material in this workbook is designed to share our ideas about the use of day camping in a missions setting, and to generate new thoughts about day camping possibilities. Our focus is on day camping as a missions tool. Thus, we presuppose a missions orientation on the part of the day camp leaders.

## I. Theory

### A. Definition for missions day camping:

Missions day camping is using the tool of day camping to do missions. We understand day camping to be an outdoor experience for children that blends the resources of the natural environment, peer group, day camp leaders, and the Bible to contribute to their physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth. It is especially suited for children in first through sixth grade, but should be able to incorporate children on either end of that grouping. Very young children need to be accompanied by a parent. Children older than sixth grade who want to participate may be useful serving as helpers.

Doing missions through day camping is seeking to meet the needs and hopes of children, and families, who have little or no religious background. It is using day camping as a tool to gain attention, earn the right to be heard, build a relationship, and share the good news of Christ with children and adults.

### B. Goals: (As stated by Larry Haslam)

1. To reach children and families for Christ.
2. To help children develop new friendships, good life habits, a love for nature, and an understanding of God's plan for all of life. Then, the camper may be led to see God's plan for his or her own life.

### C. Concepts-day camping as a missions tool

1. does not presuppose a religious orientation in the child's life.
2. does not rely on long-term involvement with the participant—although that may be the outcome of the experience.
3. provides opportunities to share Christ in fresh new ways.
4. offers a flexible program that is adaptable to your group's strengths and interests.
5. does not necessarily require a large financial investment.

## II. Planning, Involvement, Training

### A. Planning

1. Become familiar with location type and characteristics. Motel, beach, campground, theme park.

Best daily schedule: Monday- Friday or Friday- Saturday

Best time schedule: Mornings, afternoons, evenings

2. See specific project site in the early stages of planning. Video cameras are helpful here.

Note competition: arcade, pool, highway, playground, etc.

Note exterior resources.

3. Try to get an estimate as to expected number of day campers. This will help your plan for the number of leaders you will need to run the day camp. Good group ratio is 1 leader to 6 campers.

4. Plan to generate interest in the day camp with banners, flags, signs, clowns, puppets, and the best of all, a big smile.

#### B. Involvement

1. Let the mission project of the day camp be churchwide. Get prayer support.

2. Ask professional or Sunday School teachers to prepare easy lesson plans and workbooks from your selected material for the day camp leaders.

3. Have church organizations gather and donate the supplies and refreshments needed.

4. Involve people that are leading in the day camp in the preparation process.

#### C. Training-workers in a missions day camp should prepare themselves through training in the following areas:

1. Personal Bible study and devotion.

2. Personal witnessing training.

a. Know how to share your personal testimony. Keep it brief and simple.

b. Know how to share the plan of salvation. Keep it brief and simple.

c. Be prepared to allow plenty of time to listen.

3. Missions etiquette: accept the setting you will be working in.

4. Missions concepts

a. Develop an attitude of servanthood.

b. Recognize individuals as people, not things.

c. Put love into action. It is easy to love the lovable. Love as Christ loves.

5. Specific training: training to do the specific activities selected for the day camp:

a. Arrival activities: for early arrivers, get their attention and keep the day campers involved. Especially effective are games and activities with lots of action, movement, and laughter.

b. Bible study activities: be able to tell any Bible story. Be creative with drama. Make sure the person telling the story is sharing correct information. Relate the story to current life.

c. Music activities: have the songs listed, be able to teach them, be able to sing them. Do not rely on the day camp children for all of your ideas for songs to sing. Songs with motion work best.

d. Games: list, teach, and play. Avoid games prone to injuries like Red Rover. Search out games that are group building and affirming.

e. Crafts: list, teach, and play. All day camp leaders should be able to do the craft in order to help the children with their craft.

f. Nature and conservation activities: study the environment and utilize God's beautiful creation as a teaching tool. Do not destroy the environment.

g. Refreshments: be sure to leave the day camp site as clean as you found it. Check with your day campers for possible food allergies.

6. Practice the Project: training should include doing the day camp in your own community before taking it to the mission field.

Possible project sites: apartment buildings, local campgrounds or parks, city housing projects, and younger children within your own church.

### III. Material Resources

A. Materials available for the day camps are variable and vast. The following are good resources:

*Youth On Mission, Vol. 4.* Tim and Janet Bearden. Available from WMU at P.O. Box 830010, Birmingham, Ala. 35283-0010, (205) 991-8100.

*Excel, Simple and Effective Mission Team Training For Youth.* Pamela Smith. New Hope Publishing. P. O. Box 12065. Birmingham, Ala. 35202-2065.

Missions VBS. Convention Press. LifeWay Christian Resources.

B. Design your own material.

Using a combination of the above materials, or material you have previously used, you can develop a great day camp curriculum. It is important that all day camps follow a theme through each day, and that the theme be related throughout the week. Each day should stand alone in its presentation of the gospel and crafts, etc. This is particularly true in the mobile settings of resorts.

### IV. Packaging the materials

A. Purchase, sort out, and package all day camp supplies before you arrive on the field.

B. Provide enough materials so that each day camp group has its own especially craft items such as: crayons, construction paper, glue, scissors, etc.

C. It is helpful to have a leaflet or some other literature for the children to take home at the end of the day. Examples would include a Bible-many day campers will not have a personal Bible-or a pupil's leaflet from the day camp material.

D. Left over supplies: check with the local supervisor to see if any of your left over supplies are needed. Leave them for the mission area if possible.

E. Other helpful items to put on your day camp list:

carpet squares, trash bags, water jugs (full of water), and paper towels

F. Day camp checklist and supply boxes

Prepare for each day camp group-one box of general supplies and one box of teaching materials divided according to daily session needs. Check each box by a master checklist before leaving for the field and every day before each day camp.

## V. Presenting the Day Camp

### A. Sample day camp schedule

9:00-9:30 canvassing-invite children to day camp

9:15-9:30 early arrival activities

9:30-9:45 name tags and get acquainted games

9:45-10:00 singing

10:00-10:15 Bible story, scripture memory, and prayer

10:15-10:30 craft related to Bible story

10:30-10:45 games and songs

10:45-11:00 refreshments

11:00-11:20 fun craft

11:20-11:30 closing activity, prayer, and song

11:30-11:45 walk children home and clean-up day camp area

### B. Plan to arrive early so as to be set up and ready to go and to have time to canvass the area.

#### 1. Canvassing guidelines

a. Be polite. Introduce yourself, who you are with, and explain all of the day camp details.

b. Walk through the mission setting (campground, park, etc) and talk to people who are outside.

c. Invite parents to come and visit the day camp.

d. If a day camper comes along with you while you are canvassing, you are now responsible for walking the child back at the end of the day camp activities. This is a nice thing to do anyway.

e. Generate interest through colorful banners, balloons, clowns, Bible characters, parades, etc.

f. Avoid wearing sunglasses. Eye contact is essential at all times.

#### 2. Publicity guidelines

a. Check with the local supervisor as to what has been done, what is permissible, and what are the best techniques for that specific location.

b. Have permanent signs in each setting advertising all programs of the ministry.

c. Personally hand out leaflets and flyers. Do not leave them on doors, campers, etc.

### C. Begin and end on time! Be prepared for early arrivals and get started!

### D. Keeping the program going. The children have arrived out of curiosity, and now you have to keep them interested.

1. Know what comes next in the day camp schedule and who leads it.

2. Anticipate the materials needed and have them ready and waiting.
3. Be able to tell—not read—all stories. Use drama to bring the stories to life.
4. Be able to teach all songs, games, crafts, etc.
5. Keep the action flowing. Now is not the time for big decisions, now is the time for action.
6. If a child wants to leave day camp—first try to get the child involved again. If the child still wants to leave, walk the child back to the campsite or home area and inform the parents.

E. Avoid church language that is unfamiliar to secular children. Use healthy theology that avoids manipulation.

F. Assign someone in each group to watch for day campers who wander in late, who wander off, or who seem to have a hard time joining the group. Make sure they are invited, feel wanted, and loved.

G. Keep accurate records.

1. Daily attendance sheets.
2. Day camp leaders records:
  - a. Child's name for your personal follow-up
  - b. Location, example: campsite number, for your personal follow-up
  - c. Home address for future follow-up

H. Be prepared with ministry follow-up plans. If a promise is made to write, follow through.

What to Do in Case of an Accident:

1. Stabilize the situation. Comfort the child.
2. Locate their parents. Walk the child back to his or her campsite. If the child should not be moved, send a day camp worker to notify the parents.
3. Notify the campground office about the accident.
4. If necessary, give the parents information about the local medical clinic or hospital.
5. Do not leave the situation until responsibility of the situation has been passed on to the parents or the campground management.
6. Immediately fill out the accident report form (sample on next page).
7. Notify the resort or leisure ministry director immediately.

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