



## Camp Staff Training Manual and Information

### *Why You Are So Important*

Someone once said that everything rises and falls on leadership. That is true at camp as much or more than anywhere else. Between weather, injuries, and campers who are homesick or have bad attitudes, there are a lot of variables that can have a negative effect on camp. Your leadership, enthusiasm, attitude, and maturity can make all the difference in the world. Here are some key areas where we need you to shine at camp this summer:

1. **Spiritual Leadership:**

You will be the pastor or shepherd for your campers. You will provide the pastoral care and ministry they need most. During small group times, at the altars during service, and all throughout the day you will help students to deepen and develop their personal relationships with Christ. Please be spiritually prepared to minister to others.

2. **Team Leadership:**

You will set the tone for your students and your team throughout the week. Your attitude will be contagious. If you complain about everything, your campers will complain about everything. If you are pumped, they will be pumped. At some time during the week, your group will feel like they got ripped off in a team competition, didn't get enough points for their team cheer, or be mad at the next room for being too noisy. That's your chance to really lead them in a positive way. You can do it!

3. **Be a Team Player:**

Showing up on time for morning staff meetings, following the schedule and rules of the camp, etc. are all really important. It keeps harmony on the team, keeps things flowing smoothly, and allows us to maximize camp for all the campers. If you have concerns with how something is going, please talk to the Camp Director (Skyler Sanford).

### *Camp staff Registration Process*

**IMPORTANT:** The Regional Board has approved (as of May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024) all Background Checks and Ministry Safe trainings to be renewed every 3 years -- instead of every 2 years.

Camp staff will fill out a form to apply to come to camp with your church. Included in that form:

- A question about background checks. To the best of their knowledge, do we have one on file that is within 3 years of begin run? Even if they say no, they can still submit the application and deal with the background check at a later time.
- We will automatically send the pastor an email asking if they approve this person to represent your church at camp.
- Information about sexual abuse awareness training. Central Region has a prescribed online course that is a requirement of all staff.
  - It is free for the person taking it but will require 60-90 minutes to watch some online videos and take a short quiz of retention.

- **Passing this training is a requirement for all camp staff.**
- If they have not completed the training, they will be asked if they are willing to do so. If they say yes, the application can be submitted and a link to the training will be emailed to them.
  - We have the ability to track each person. How much of the videos they watched and how they did on the quiz.
  - If they choose not to take the training, the application will not be submitted.
- Here is an example of what they will see when they log on to complete the training.

#### Sexual Abuse Awareness Training



I have watched ALL 9 training videos on this page OR received the full training from an approved trainer and/or in group training.

take quiz

## Basic Truths

1. **You will get tired.**  
After running all day, staying up late and still getting up early for the morning staff meeting, you will feel it by the middle and end of the week. A lot of us get cranky when we're tired. You have to be ready to 'go the extra mile' and serve. Remember, the Psalms promise to us that, "The Lord gives strength and power to His people."
2. **You will have a camper or two who will push you.**  
Somehow God always blesses each of us with a student or two who likes to challenge us, do their own thing, constantly complain, etc. You can't get them all transferred to someone else's cabin, and you can't leave - so you will have to do your best to develop a relationship with them and minister to them. One of the joys of camp is watching students like this change over the course of the week as God works in their lives.
3. **Not everything will go your way.**  
Your team will do the greatest cheer in the history of camp and you won't get that many points for it. A game or contest will come down to the wire and the other team will get the win. Please know that we do everything we can to involve everyone and make sure that all have a good time. When things don't go your way, please have a good attitude, for your sake and for the sake of your campers. If there is a problem, see the Camp Director (Skyler Sanford) and we'll see what we can do to work things out for you.

## Your Responsibilities

1. **Hang out:**  
Once you have put your things away, the best thing you can do is hang out with campers during registration time. Challenge them to a game of basketball, Hit the carpetball tables, or take a walk around the camp grounds with

them. We want to get out on the grounds and hang with students ASAP. The most important thing to remember: WE ARE HERE FOR THE CAMPERS. The more time you spend with them, the better.

2. **Be on time:**

We will have a staff meeting each morning. Please be on time for it, and the rest of each day's activities.

3. **Stick around:**

Staff/Students are not allowed to leave the campus for non-camp related reasons without the permission of the Camp Director (Skyler Sanford). This includes during free times, in the evening, etc.

4. **Respect those in leadership:**

You will be shown respect by those in leadership and we expect that same sense of respect and cooperation. If you have an issue that needs to be addressed, please speak to the Camp Director (Skyler Sanford) and he will help you to get it resolved.

5. **Be happy:**

You will help to set the tone for the camp.

## ***How to Minister to Campers***

There are some key times/ways that you can disciple and minister to your campers:

1. **Small Group Times:**

You will have an opportunity each morning to split out into small groups, which is essentially a time with your campers. This is a great chance to minister to students. Also, at the conclusion of our evening service, you will meet with your small group to talk about the message and "seal" what God is doing in their hearts and minds.

2. **Service/Altar Time:**

The altar/prayer time at the end of each service is a prime time for ministry to campers. As you pray with and for them, believe that God will bring a spiritual breakthrough for them. Many students make first time commitments to Christ, fresh commitments to Christ, and receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit at our camp. Be ready to impart something powerful into their lives.

3. **Hanging Out Time:**

One popular camp speaker said that it was always his goal to lead at least one student to Christ at camp OUTSIDE of the chapel services. In other words, he tried to take advantage of opportunities throughout the day to interact with campers and minister to them whenever the opportunity was there. During meals, playing Frisbee golf, or hanging in the Snack Shack you can minister to students.

## ***Leading Your Small Group***

1. **Allow students to share what God is doing in their lives:**

It is vital that students have the opportunity to process what is happening in their lives spiritually during service and other ministry times. Many young people will come to camp struggling with issues and problems and as God works in those areas, they need to 'debrief' about those things. Also, these times of sharing will help bring your campers closer to one another and help them understand that they are not alone in their walk with Christ.

2. **Share a challenge that fits the focus of the day:**

Talk about subjects pertinent to the message from the previous night. Ask questions about that topic or about what they shared the night before.

3. **Spend time in prayer together:**

You might want to ask several different students to pray or you might want to allow them to lead out in prayer as you pray together. You might want to ask for prayer requests and then pray for each one. However, you do it, make sure you lead students in prayer as part of your small group times.

## ***Altar Ministry 101***

Ministering to campers at the altars following the evening services is a highlight at camp. There are a few basic guidelines we ask you to follow:

1. **Guys w/ guys, Girls w/ girls.**

When praying with campers at the altars (or at other times), we ask that men pray with the boys and women pray with the girls. We will encourage this with the campers as well as they pray with each other. Youth pastors and leaders may want to pray with students of the opposite sex from their groups and that's fine.

2. **Ask campers how you can pray with them.**

When you pray with a camper, the best way to start is simply by asking them what their first name is and how you can pray for them. Campers will respond to the altar call for a number of reasons and it's good to know how we can pray for them and not assume we already know what they want prayer for.

3. **Share the Word with them.**

We encourage you to have your Bible with you as you minister around the altars. If students need Christ, you can show them key salvation scriptures. If you are praying with them about other needs, you can share God's Word with them and show them how it applies to their lives. We need to connect students to the Word of God.

4. **Be sensitive to what God is doing.**

Allow God to lead you as you pray with students. He may give you a word of knowledge or insight. Go for it! We want students to see the power of God demonstrated.

## ***Dealing with Discipline***

The Do's and Don'ts of discipline at camp: **Do:**

1. **Address problem behavior right away.**

Don't wait until a bunch of issues pile up and then explode. Deal with things quickly.

2. **Handle problems with campers one-on-one when possible.**

Most young people (or adults) don't handle correction very well when it's done in front of a group. If something happens in front of the rest of the group, you may have to deal with it publicly, but, if possible, do it privately.

3. **Focus on the problem not the person.**

You don't want to attack them personally, make sure you make the behavioral issue the focus.

4. **Get help.**

If you need help, talk with the Camp Director (Skyler Sanford). He will help you to deal with the issue.

**Don't:**

1. **Lose your cool.**

Don't say things that you will want to take back later. Never use physical intimidation or aggression to deal with a camper.

2. **Ignore it and hope that someone else will deal with it.**

We have to work together in dealing with problems.

3. **Blow it out of proportion.**

Things like innocent pranks, staying up way too late, etc. have been a part of camps for years. While we don't condone it, and will deal with it, we don't need to make it seem like the world is coming to an end either.

## ***Sensitive Issues***

Sometimes in ministering to campers, issues of abuse or other major issues can arise. If a camper shares with you that he/she is being abused physically or sexually you need to:

1. **Maintain confidentiality.**

This is not something that should be shared with the rest of the campers in your dorm or with other staff at the camp. The well-being of the camper and the reputation of someone else is at stake and we don't want to have to try and take something back later.

2. **Act Immediately**

Bring the camper to the Camp Director (Skyler Sanford). He will meet together with you, and the camper(s) involved, to handle the issue and inform the proper authorities if necessary.

3. **Please be cautious**

When a camper prefaces something they want to tell you about with: "You have to promise not to tell anyone", you need to explain to them that it depends on what they share with you and that there are some things that you cannot make that promise about.

4. **Err on the side of caution**

If you are not sure, get Skyler Sanford involved. Don't spend a lot of time thinking about what you should do, and don't look to other leaders for advice. Please involve Skyler at the earliest possible moment.

## **Camp Rules & Guidelines**

**\*\*ATTENTION\*\***- Youth Leaders are required to go over **ALL** rules with every student attending camp **BEFORE** arrival to camp grounds.

### **Stuff you should NOT bring to camp**

The following items are not allowed at camp: tobacco, narcotics, vapes, alcohol, weapons of any kind, pornography, fireworks, or other combustible materials. Possession of any of these items will be cause for immediate dismissal from camp. Also, campers should not bring valuables such as laptops, iPads, tablets, or other electronics.

### **Dress code**

Everyone must wear shoes when walking on the grounds.

**Guys** – Shirts must be worn at all times, except in the pool or at the lake and if you are a 'skin' for basketball. Your shorts need to stay up around your waist. For swimming, guys must wear swim trunks that stay up, no speedos and no cut offs.

**Ladies** – Your shirt and pants should touch. Your shorts or skirts should be at least mid-thigh. For swimming, ladies must wear modest one-piece suits. If you have a two-piece, you must wear a t-shirt over it.

### **Staying in dorms at night**

Most of the girls' dorms will have bathrooms and showers inside the same facility with them. Boys will need to leave their cabin and walk a short distance to the bathhouse. At night, girls may not leave their dorm buildings under any circumstances. Boys may leave their cabins for the purpose of going to the bathroom but not leave the cabin/bathhouse area. Any student found, for any reason, outside of these confines will immediately forfeit the remainder of his or her camp experience. No warnings. No refunds.

**Wandering**

There will be no wandering alone, period. You must have someone of the same gender with you at all times and your leader must know who you're with and where you'll be at all times. No exceptions.

**Social skill**

Fighting, intimidating, or verbally abusing anyone, camper or staff, is not permitted and may result in the camper losing their privilege of finishing camp. Public displays of affection are not allowed during camp.

**Mobile phone policy**

**Phones and other electronic devices will not be allowed to be used at camp.** If they come with the camper, the device will be taken from them, placed in a protected area, and returned prior to departure from camp. The primary reason for this is attention. The hope and goal is to encourage our students to take their focus off the electronic world and pay attention to God and the friends around them. If a parent is concerned about connectivity with their student, give them your primary youth leader's number, as well as Skyler's cell phone number (515-707-7215).

**Common Sense Thinking**

When you make decisions during camp week, use common sense and treat other people the way you would want to be treated. Also, show respect for the camp grounds and facilities.