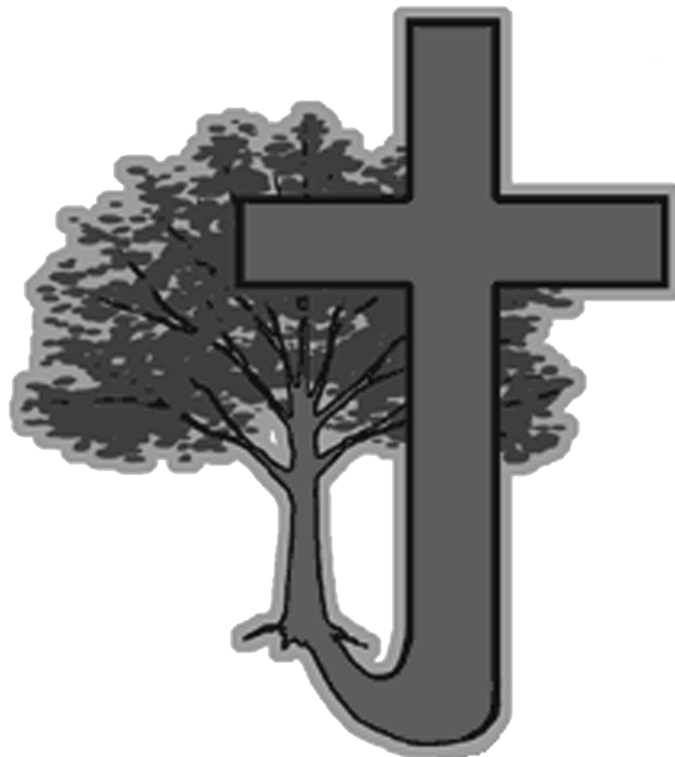




TREE OF LIFE

COUNSELOR'S HANDBOOK



Introduction and Purpose

Tree of Life Bible Camp is an opportunity for both camper and counselor to grow both spiritually and mentally, grow in our love for God and our neighbor (John 13:34, Matthew 22:37-39) while enjoying God's creation and the fellowship we enjoy as children of God.

The command was given us to "train up a child in the way he should go...(Proverbs 22:6)." Camp provides an excellent chance for you to use your gifts to carry out that command. This guide was written to help you with any questions you might face during camp week, also to help the entire staff to be effective Christian role models together as a whole. Please take the time to study the following information so your week at Tree of Life will be beneficial and fruitful.

What is Expected of You

As a counselor at Tree of Life (TOL), certain things will be expected of you. Expectations are not there to scare you, or test you, but more so to guide you. We hope the following information will be helpful to you in preparing for your week at camp.

Camp Rules – You will be expected to obey all camp rules as laid out by the camp Board of Directors, also aid in enforcing them. Most of the rules are already defined before the camp week begins, but others will be added as needed. Counselors are urged to be prime Christian examples in everything they do, both at camp and at home. In doing so, one must be capable of adhering to the rules that certain authorities have placed before them. These rules include dress codes, behavior guidelines, boundary limitations, disallowance of articles, etc., beyond the understood Christian actions God has laid out to us in his word. You are urged to study the rules supplied to you in this handbook by the Board of Directors. Be ready to enforce and also abide by them. Failure to comply does result in disciplinary action.

Responsibility – Your position as a counselor should not be undervalued. A counselor at TOL is faced with a variety of conditions that require responsible reactions. This is not a vacation week and should not be approached as one; yet, we do feel it can be loads of fun and fellowship, that is, if it is approached properly. You will be placed in charge of several young people. It is not an easy task, simply stated. Now, add a schedule to follow, personal hygiene to take care of, fellow counselors to assist, etc., and you are faced with a load. Counselors, men and woman, need to dress with modesty and set a good example for their campers. This must all be taken in perspective, though; we are not trying to scare anybody away, only to point out the importance of the task you confront. There will be other counselors available to help, some who have been involved for a long time, not to mention directors and assistants who will help everyone. Counselors are placed in the care of these special children by their parents. It is our utmost responsibility to make sure they are tended to as expected. So what does this entail?

A counselor needs to be with his or her group at all times. This includes evening devotions, when we ask the counselors to sit with their young people. There will be times given to you when you may take a break away from them. Counselors are responsible to be with their groups after lights out also. Even though your group is supposed to be sleeping, this doesn't relieve you of your duties. Counselors should be willing to help in events that their groups are involved in throughout the week, as well as helping their fellow counselors and teachers. You should be getting the message that you are responsible for each and every child in your control for the entire week. We will appreciate every effort you put forth to making the week enjoyable for those around you.

Schedule - A schedule will be provided for you to follow. An example is presented in the next section of this manual. It is important to understand that, while the schedule is flexible, the schedule should be followed unless there is good reason to change it. The Activities Director will aid in any schedule problems.

Fellowship – We also expect, as Christians, that everybody will treat each other in true Christian fellowship. This shouldn't need to be stated, but during the pressures of the week it is easy to forget the reason behind our involvement. As Christians working together to serve the Lord, we ought to be able to live and work in harmony. We must all make an extra effort to show love and forgiveness toward each other, because serving at camp is hard work and can be stressful.

Discipline – Some hints to consider: It's in the nature of children to see how much they can get away with. Therefore, you must set firm limits. We advise the counselors, in any age group, to talk together about the rules, so there will be consistency in the enforcement of the rules and the application of discipline. It is best to be strict the first day or two (but not harsh). Then relax a bit as your campers come to know what you expect of them, and you learn you can trust them. Don't think you can be lax and easygoing the first day, and then shape them up later; that never works. Have high expectations, and your campers may well live up to them. Above all, show your campers that you care about them. Part of that is not letting them do things that would be harmful.

What You Should Expect From Us

You should expect from the Board of Directors everything they expect of you. We will share every bit of helpful knowledge that we have with you in the hope that your week will be enjoyable. We are there to work with you. May God be with you in all you are to do.

Let's begin by welcoming you as a TOL counselor. Now that you know what we expect of you as a counselor, here's what you will be doing.

Camp begins on a Sunday late afternoon (no meal is served) and ends on a Saturday noon. Each day is filled with exciting events and educational studies. It is our hope you will enjoy the schedule and help the children to enjoy it. Meals and other specific events (like cabin clean-up, personal chores, etc.) are scheduled with everything else to aid you in keeping track during the day.

The following section will help you in preparing for the camp week by laying out examples of the first day, a day during the week, and the last day, so you are ready when you arrive on the grounds to begin your exciting task.

A Day at Tree of Life

Sunday – Day 1 – Sunday is an important day for everyone involved at the camp. It is important to you as a counselor because it is the day that you meet your campers and introduce yourself and your position to them. The importance of this first day means each counselor should be at camp at least 30 minutes prior to the arrival of campers. This is vital to the system. Camp registration takes time and effort from the Camp Director's staff, and makes it essential that counselors are present and ready to go when registration begins. Counselors will be responsible for a couple of things during registration and the registration time will be announced early enough so you can make arrangements in advance.

First, check in with the Camp Director. Pick up a schedule for each of your campers and one for yourself. Familiarize yourself with the campsite and your cabin's location. The Camp Director's staff will aid you with this (so will the campers if you're a first time counselor). Next, you are to welcome campers as they arrive, and introduce yourself to them. As more arrive, it would be a good idea to stay near your cabin to meet your campers because the registration people will send them there. Also introduce yourself to the parents, if possible, so they can relate to you as their child's counselor for the following week. It is now time to begin supervising, not only your campers, but also others that will be milling around while their counselors are still awaiting the arrival of more campers. When all of your campers are accounted for (some may arrive late), it will be time for your cabin meeting. Meet with all of your campers at your cabin.

At your cabin meeting, introduce yourself and give them a short biography of who you are. Learn the names of your campers. Ask if there are any campers "new" to TOL. Review TOL policies (see pages 8-9). Hand out the camp schedules and review. Discuss behavior expectations. Identify campers who need to take medication or have other special needs. Junior and Intermediate counselors should keep their campers' snack bar cards because the kids often lose them.

Regarding behavior expectations:

- Rule of Two. No camper is allowed to be alone, doing their own thing. For example, if your camper needs to use the restroom and leave a group activity, they must inform you and take a buddy with them. This helps prevent the "loner" camper who isolates from others, and perhaps gets into trouble.
- Boys are NOT ALLOWED to go into girls' cabins. Girls are NOT ALLOWED to go into boys' cabins.
- Campers are to be ON TIME for their daily activities. You will need to help them accomplish this.
- Christian respect for each other and for those placed in authority over them (all staff).
- NO bad language. NO inappropriate clothing.

Any Day That Week – The schedule that is provided will be easy for you to follow. Just as an introduction, the following will be a similar schedule to what you will see that week. We add some helpful guidelines to explain the different categories.

Sample Schedule

Time	Event	Explanation
6:30 AM	Softball	Bring your baseball glove, meet at the baseball field.
7:00 AM	Rise and Shine	Time to get up and begin preparing for the day. Clean cabin.
8:00 AM	Announcements, Prayer, Breakfast	Notice you have 1 hour to have them ready for Bible Study. Assemble in front of the bathhouse.
9:00 AM	1) Bible Study for campers 2) Daily staff meeting	1) You will know in advance where to go. Campers get their Bibles. 2) Meet at the bleacher area.
10:00 AM	Break	Give the campers their snack bar cards and collect afterwards
10:15 AM	Bible Study	Counselors may get a break.
10:30 AM	Activity	Look to daily schedule.
12:00 PM	Announcements, Prayer, Lunch	Assemble in front of the bathhouse.
1:00 PM	Quiet Time	Get your campers to your cabin. Material will be provided.
1:30 PM	Activity	Look to daily schedule.
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Various Snack Bar Times	In cafeteria, provide their snack bar cards.
4:00 PM	Activity	Look to daily schedule.
5:30 PM	Announcements, Prayer, Dinner	Assemble in front of the bathhouse.
6:30 PM	Activity	Typically an activity led by the Activities Director involving ALL of the camp.
8:15 PM	Devotion	Songs, devotion for entire camp, with a short sermon by one of the staff pastors. Meet at the bleachers.
Evening	Group Activity/Lights Out/Sleep Tight	The intermediate and senior groups have their own group activities after devotion. Juniors head straight to bed, with lights out at 10:00. Intermediates lights out at 10:30. Seniors lights out at 11:00.

Remember, this is just an example. Times and events may vary. An emergency fire drill will happen during the week. This schedule will be helpful in giving you an idea of a day at camp.

Saturday – Last Day – Wake up and begin as any other day, except keeping in mind that you and your campers will be leaving in a short while. After breakfast, your campers need to pick up their belongings and clean the cabin. Be sure to have your campers fill out the Camp Survey sheet, this is very important. Staff has a Survey sheet to complete too. There will be a grounds sweep to clean the camp. Bring your cabin's garbage bag down to the bathhouse. Then, a final devotion will wrap up the week. More time will be given to clean individual cabins, take photos, and say good-byes. As campers begin to leave the grounds, counselors need to stay until all of their campers are picked up and accounted for. If you can stay after your campers have left, the camp staff will appreciate it. There are minor duties to tend to. If counselors must leave, please notify the Camp Director of your remaining campers.

We hope this section has been helpful in familiarizing you with Tree of Life Bible Camp, and as your position as a counselor. Working together we'll make this a great camp for everyone.

Tree of Life Counselors' Do's and Don'ts

Do.....

- Take an active role in being a good Christian leader.
- Enjoy yourself while at camp; first by leading your group, second, by enjoying the Christian company of fellow counselors and staff.
- Help your group to enjoy themselves as well.
- Support the rest of the camp staff and their decisions.
- Work with your fellow counselors; give each other breaks when needed.
- Be a role model for our youth.
- Take your position seriously.
- Watch your group when it is your responsibility.
- Be slow to anger and quick to help.
- DO remember: YOU are this camper's "parent" for the week.
- Uphold camp rules and policies.
- Take care of the facilities, equipment, etc., and encourage your campers to do the same.
- Put the best construction on everything.
- Care about the camp and its goals.
- Put the welfare and enjoyment of your campers ahead of your own.
- Pray for the camp, its leaders, and those who support the camp.
- Look to the Lord for your strength.

Don't....

- Forget the reason you are at camp.
- Be unwilling to accept helpful criticism from others.
- Leave your group unattended for any reason.
- Allow children to participate in wrongful behavior.
- Let individuals go off by themselves, remember the “Rule of Two.”
- Feel you can't ask for help.
- Enjoy yourself at others' expense.
- Use this time for you own benefit.
- Fear the Camp Director; he's there to help you.

Although there is a schedule at Tree of Life, time is included for personal involvement with your campers. We encourage the counselors to use time wisely. After devotion there are activities for the Intermediates and Seniors. Before camp, be creative and come up with your own games and ideas ahead of camp time. Please prepare your group's activities before camp; be prepared. It is also possible that you will be asked to lead the entire age group in some kind of activity. It will be helpful for you to plan games for large groups. The internet, local library, and youth group leaders may have some terrific new ideas we could incorporate at TOL. Regarding SKIT NIGHT, it is helpful to come up with skit ideas ahead of camp time for your cabin. Do some research. All skit material needs to be pre-approved by the Camp Director. Please don't be shy in sharing your ideas and your critiques with the staff at camp. Enjoy!

Please, if possible, plan to attend the Post-Camp Meeting that is normally scheduled two weeks after camp. An announcement will be provided.

Camp Council

The purpose of the Camp Council is to ensure that proper and immediate corrective measures are taken at camp, should any disruptions of the harmony and spirit of the camp occur. The organization of the Camp Council will be:

Junior Council

Camp Director
Junior instructor
Junior counselor

Intermediate Council

Camp Director
Intermediate instructor
Intermediate counselor

Senior Council

Camp Director
Senior instructor
Senior counselor
2 boy seniors + 2 girl seniors

The Camp Director will be the chairman of each council. At the Camp Director's discretion, a pastor may sit as an ex-officio member of any disciplinary council. Each council will meet to handle only the problems occurring with its own campers. For instance, should there be a problem with a Junior girl, the Camp Director plus the Junior instructor and a Junior girl counselor (other than the girl's own counselor) will meet to decide what action is necessary. In case of the Senior council, if it were a Senior boy, the Camp Director plus a Senior instructor, a male counselor (other than the boy's own counselor) and two elected Senior boys would meet. The election by the Seniors of their four representatives for the Senior council should be made by the end of the first day of camp. These four will serve the entire week of camp.

Should a discipline problem arise that cannot be handled by the "local" counselor of the cabin, then the matter will be referred to the Camp Council for action **that same day**. Both sides of the issue will be heard. The action of the council will be binding. The Camp Director will have the final jurisdiction. Whether or not a problem is "worthy in seriousness" of being brought before the council will be left to the judgment of those involved, or that of the counselor.

If dismissal results from the Camp Council decision, the involved Spiritual Advisor will at the close of camp inform the camper's home pastor of the reasons for the action taken at camp. Copies of the Camp Council's decision will be sent to the camper's parents and the TOL Board of Directors.

Tree of Life Lutheran Bible Camp

Camp Policies

The following is a list of camp policies currently in effect. It should be noted there may not be a “policy” for every situation. Good common sense and judgment should be used in all cases.

1. **Camp Dress Code** is motivated by 1 Corinthians 6, which reminds us that “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you... Therefore honor God with your body.” Clothing shall be modest. This is a subjective thing. The Camp Director will have final authority on improper attire. Low cut tops, tube tops, off-the-shoulder tops, sagging pants, undergarments showing, bare midriffs, and short-shorts are considered immodest and not allowed. Skirts and shorts must reach the tip of extended fingers. Bathing suits must be modest, no bikinis. Clothing must not depict or suggest alcohol, tobacco, or drug use, violence, or profanity. Some type of footwear must be worn at all times, except when swimming. No flip flops are allowed for water games; injuries will happen.
2. **Cell phones/Radios/CD Players**: may not be used outside the cabin. Special circumstances require staff permission. Each cabin will be allowed one radio/CD player, under the control of the counselor, for quiet play of God pleasing lyrics during morning wake-up and evening wind-down times only. IF these items (for example, a cell phone) are seen being used by the camper outside the cabin, it will be confiscated and returned upon the close of camp.
3. **Electronic** or battery powered games and comic books are not permitted.
4. **Public displays of romantic affection** (PDAs) are not allowed. This cuts off an area of temptation that the world exploits, making the camp a week free from these pressures.
5. **Shaving cream** and other materials, like pellet guns and skateboards, are not permitted at camp. Musical instruments are OK.
6. **Visitors** (parents and family of the campers) are welcome at camp on Thursday and Friday evening for skits. *Otherwise visitors are not generally permitted.* This mandate is out of concern for the safety and security of all TOL campers and staff, as well as the Capital Mountain Camp staff. All visiting family shall check in with the Camp Director upon their arrival. Visitors will not be allowed to deter staff from supervising their campers, or to detract from the operation of the camp.
7. **No staff members** or camper shall leave the camp premises without direct permission from the camp director or his authorized representative.
8. **Privacy of Quarters**: The privacy of each cabin must be respected. Also, please respect one another’s belongings. “Raiding of cabins” will not be tolerated.
9. **Rule of Two**: Always have your campers paired with another camper if they need to leave any activity. No camper is ever to be seen walking alone. If you see that happening, ask that camper, “Where’s your buddy?” Also, a counselor and a camper are not permitted to be alone. If a camper needs to speak privately with a counselor, let another counselor know and have him or her observe from a reasonable distance.

Capital Mountain Ten Commandments

The following guidelines must be understood by all staff and campers in order to ensure the fullest enjoyment. It is the counselors' and Camp Director's responsibility to communicate these guidelines clearly to his/her campers. Please state them positively as a way to fully enjoy the camp. **DON'T ASSUME ANYTHING!**

1. **PLANNED ACTIVITIES**: Everyone is expected to attend all planned activities and listen carefully to all directions and announcements, unless excused by the Camp Director for medical or other sufficient reasons.
2. **BOUNDARIES**: The camp boundaries are marked. Please keep in mind that poison oak is native to the area. Straying from designated trails or areas could result in a very unpleasant camp experience. If cabin leaders or counselors take their group out of the designated area, i.e. the "night hike," always inform the Camp Director as to the destination.
3. **PRIVACY OF QUARTERS**: The area around the girls' cabins is a "girls only" area. The area around the boys' cabins is a "boys only" area. The privacy of each cabin must be respected. Within the cabins please respect one another's belonging. Remember, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Raiding cabins in any form is not allowed. **STEALING WILL ABSOLUTELY NOT BE TOLERATED AT CAPITAL MOUNTAIN.**
4. **SMOKING AND DRINKING**: Smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages are prohibited at Capital Mountain. Because of the high fire danger in the area, anything flammable must be totally restricted. There may be a designated zone for smoking off campus for staff who do smoke.
5. **GRAFFITI**: Writing on walls, tables, equipment, and trees is forbidden. A repair charge will be assessed for graffiti.
6. **LIGHTS OUT MEANS QUIET, TOO**: In order that all, including the staff and neighbors, can get needed rest, an all-in, quiet camp is expected by the time announced by the Camp Director, and at least by 11:00 p.m.
7. **ENERGY CONSERVATION**: Please turn off the lights when you are the last one out of a building.
8. **LITTERING**: Please help us keep the camp attractive by placing litter in the containers provided. Leave cabins swept and clean. A poor cabin inspection can provide your cabin with bathroom cleaning privileges. Thanks!
9. **SAFETY**: We realize that everyone wants to have fun, but always keep safety in mind. If an accident does occur, always report it to the person in charge, no matter how minor. For insurance purposes we must have a record of accidents having occurred.

Tree of Life Lutheran Bible Camp

Duties of Camp Staff

Duties of the Camp Director (CD):

A. Coordinator between our camp and staff, and the host camp's director and staff.

1. Arrive at the camp prior to registration and inspect the facilities and grounds with the host director. Make inventory of any existing damage (doors, windows of cabins, lights, etc.). See that cabins are set up with the correct numbers of beds and are ready for campers.
2. At close of camp, again inspect the facilities with the host director. Collect any articles left behind for "Lost and Found" and bring them to the post-camp meeting.
3. Assist Camp Treasurer in settling the contract with the host camp.

B. Head authority and leader of our camp.

1. Go over camp rules at Sunday evening group meeting.
2. On Sunday night arrange and/or conduct orientation for staff who missed the Staff Orientation meeting. Be sure their kids have supervision during that time.
3. Notify staff concerning who is in charge when CD is off campus.
4. CD in charge of morning roll call before breakfast.
5. CD to conduct daily staff meeting to go over Thanks to God, situations, daily schedule and other necessary items.
6. Arrange for transportation for fields trips and senior overnighiter. Get driver names, phone numbers, and maps as needed.
7. Equip counselors to handle disciplinary problems. If they are unable to handle the situation, CD handles it (usually by separating the misbehavior from their group by having them sit with you and be bored). For a major issue, if possible, involve the Camp Council (disciplinary council).
8. All skits need pre-approval from the CD.
9. CD to randomly supervise camp activities, with special concern about camper safety (especially staff "never being alone" with a camper).
10. Pre-plan fire evacuation.
11. Assist all staff with activities. Make announcements. See to it that leaders are set for devotions, mealtime prayers, and the evening sing-along.
12. Authorize miscellaneous purchases needed at camp.
13. Take charge in any emergency. Accompany anyone transported to outside medical facility. Assist in filling out insurance claim forms.
14. Make sure all campers have transportation home on final day of camp.
15. Help to see that all supplies are returned to home congregations.
16. Lead by God's Word, example and prayer.

Duties of the Camp Treasurer:

(Some of these duties may be delegated if needed.)

- * Keep the camp financial records. Pay bills and reimbursements. Take in donations and other income. Report at each board meeting.
- * Take in the camper registration forms and fee payments.
- * Perform cabin assignments. Make a camp roster, listing campers by group and gender, and listing staff. Provide the roster to the camp director and the host camp. Make snack card labels.
- * Print snack bar cards (as needed) and bring them to camp.
- * Bring sufficient petty cash to camp for purchases, to make change, and for snack card refunds. Bring the camp checkbook and camp debit card to camp in case they are needed.
- * Run the camper check-in at camp. Distribute prepaid snack cards, sell additional snack cards, and take in any camper registration fees that were not prepaid.
- * Turn over camper registration forms (with health history) to the camp nurse at camp.
- * Make snack card refunds on the closing day of camp.
- * Prepare our host camp bill on the closing day of camp (Capital Mountain does not do this!) and pay it.
- * Prepare a written financial report for the year-end meeting.
- * Provide tax receipts for individual donations at year end.

Some items to bring for Camp Treasurer:

Camp cash box
Scissors
Tape
Tacker or push pins
Extra pens
3-ring binder for camper registration forms
3-hole punch
Yummy and fattening candy to share with the staff. Chips are okay too.
Notebook, stamps, paper, envelopes
Checkbook, ATM card, and camp ledger book
Laptop computer
Small printer, spare cartridge paper (not needed if camp-owned printer will be there)
Batteries

Duties of the Camp Publicity Director:

- * Update camper and staff applications (Word documents) each year.
- * Print masters and send them to churches -- usually around Easter, but as early as possible is good.
- * Make downloadable PDF of camper and staff applications and put on web site, as soon as updated version is available.
- * Update online versions of camper and staff applications (Google Forms) each year.
- * Update bulletin insert, poster, etc., and send to churches.
- * Send announcement to appear in Forward in Christ.
- * Make miscellaneous web site updates as needed: add news, make PDF of minutes and add them, update dates, update text of pages to match application forms, etc.
- * Post camp news to our Facebook group. Invite and/or add campers, staff, parents, etc. to the group.
- * Update our general-interest email list (camp@TreeOfLifeBibleCamp.org) from past year's camper/staff applications and any email received about camp.
- * Send out email announcements whenever there is something to announce.
- * Keep our board of directors email list (board@TreeOfLifeBibleCamp.org) up to date.
- * Keep our medical staff email list (nurse@TreeOfLifeBibleCamp.org) up to date.
- * Update US mail list from past year's camper/staff applications.
- * Send out US mailing of combined camper/staff apps to the above in spring, comfortably before school is out, preferably earlier.
- * Get digital photos from people who brought their cameras to camp and upload them to the web site gallery shortly after camp.

Duties of the Crafts Director:

Before camp:

1. Select type of craft work to be done at camp and present to the Board of Directors. Make request for funds needed for supplies, and purchase supplies.

At camp:

1. Upon arrival, inspect crafts area and let the CD know if it isn't suitable.
2. Assist youth in constructing their crafts. Use the counselors to assist you.

Duties of the Activities Director:

Before camp:

1. Set up and prepare the daily schedules in conjunction with the camp Board of Directors.
2. Keep inventory of equipment. Make request for funds for new equipment and supplies, and purchase same.
3. Set up field trips or other special activities.
4. Attend counselor orientation meeting and explain the camp schedules.

During camp:

1. Set up daily morning counselor meetings for briefing on the day's activities. Designate which counselors are responsible for various duties and activities.
2. Monitor the daily activities. Make sure campers are participating. If counselor assistance is needed, make sure that is clear to the counselors.
3. If any extra supplies are needed throughout the week, the Activities Director and/or Camp Director will travel into town and purchase the necessary supplies.
4. Organize the camp Olympics. Designate which counselors are responsible for which events. Tabulate the results and organize the awards ceremony.
5. Provide update inventory of equipment at the post-camp meeting.

Simple Law & Gospel

“Why will you go to Heaven one day?” That simple question was asked of one of our campers in a discussion in the cabins. The answer that was given shocked the counselor. “I don’t know. I don’t know if I’ll go to Heaven. I haven’t been very good sometimes.” Two others chimed in with similar responses.

How would you respond to a discussion like that? Would you “be prepared to give the reason for the hope that you have?” The purpose of this guide then is to aid you in talking with your campers about sin and grace, that is, God’s love in forgiving our sins.

You need to determine why they don’t know if they’ll go to Heaven. Generally, they will fall into three camps: 1) Those who just don’t know about Jesus. 2) Those who think their sins are too great for God to love them. 3) Those who don’t think their sins matter.

Ask them, “Why do you think you’re not going to Heaven?” If you can get an answer, you can go from there. Often times their ‘look’ will give a clue to their feelings. A shrug indicates they don’t know about Jesus or too guilty and ashamed to talk about it. An arrogant or cocky look will indicate an impression that “My sins aren’t sins.”

Next, remember that you’re talking to kids. Don’t try to sound like someone with a Master of Divinity degree. Be yourself and be genuine with them. Lead them to see God’s love for all people.

How can we do that? You have their respect as their counselor (even if it may not seem that way). Your role as a counselor willing to tell others about his/her faith will make a huge impression. Let them know of your fears and feelings (which are probably pretty similar).

You can use the following simple guide if you wish:

[FOR THOSE WHO DON’T KNOW JESUS or THINK THEIR SINS ARE TOO GREAT]

Perhaps the simplest and best passage to share with them is most familiar. John 3:16 “For God so loved the World that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” Focus on each small section.

Whom did God love? *The world.* **Are there any exceptions to that?** *None.* **Does that mean God loves you too?** *Yes!*

Ask them, “**Are there any conditions to God’s love?**” Do we have to do something to earn it? Do we have to love him first? NO! *There **are** no conditions!* God is Love (another Bible passage). He will never stop loving you.

That's why Jesus came. God gave him to us. You don't earn a gift. **Ask them, "Do you earn your birthday presents?"** *Of course not.* God gave him for us because he wanted us to go to Heaven so much. Jesus left the perfection of Heaven and became a human being, tempted in every way, just like we are, but did not sin. He knows what we're going through. He will help us in rough times. Jesus gave up his life to pay for our sins. He wants us to be with him forever by faith.

Whoever believes in him will not perish. Again ask, "**Are there any exceptions in 'whoever'?"** *No, there are not.* Belief is just the simple confidence that Jesus saved me from the punishment of my sins. Yes, there is punishment for sin. But we don't have to be afraid, because on the cross Jesus paid for every single one. The only way to perish is to reject Jesus. If they are worried about that, ask them this: ***Can you make this statement? "Jesus died for my sins." If you can say that, you have faith.*** And faith gets you to Heaven. No one has to perish in hell. God wants you to be saved!

Other good passages to share are Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace (God's undeserved love) that you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works so that no one can boast." Or Acts 2:37-39 (possibly also using verses 22-24).

[FOR THOSE WHO DON'T THINK THEIR SINS ARE SINS]

For them, the best passage is James 2:10: "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point, is guilty of breaking it all." Or try 1 John 1:8: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

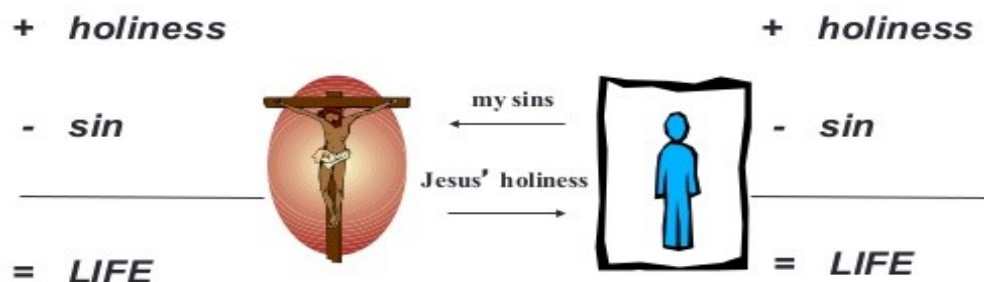
We need to get them to see/admit that they have not always been kind, or have had hateful thoughts or said bad things to people. Use this illustration: "Pretend you have just finished a long hike. You are very thirsty. Someone puts a cold glass of sparkling water in front of you. Then that person puts one drop of ink in it. Would you drink it? Not likely, because it's polluted." The same is true with God's view of us. One sin makes us polluted.

Then go back to the first part about forgiveness in Jesus.

Finally, tell them why you will go to Heaven one day. Share with them your favorite verse and why it means so much to you.

Another way to share God's message of salvation is by drawing. This illustration is called "God's Great Exchange."

GOD'S REMEDY



GOD'S GREAT EXCHANGE

Conclusion

Christian counseling of Christian youth can be one opportunity that far exceeds many others. We understand that God has given each individual talents of his or her own, and that being a TOL counselor may not be for everyone. We pray that it will be a truly enjoyable, educational, and uplifting experience for you. Each person must give of himself or herself to make this possible.

We hope this manual has been helpful for all who have read it and have chosen to be a TOL counselor. There are many case-by-case situations left unapproached that must be handled with one's individual talents and with the help of others. Don't be afraid to embrace your position and carry out your responsibilities. With God's guidance, each of us can overcome new challenges and help others do the same. Counseling at TOL doesn't take a professional. It will take effort and dedication. With God on our side, it is a task you will enjoy. We are pleased you have chosen to enjoy Tree of Life Bible Camp with us. God be with you!

This 2nd Edition of the Counselors Handbook was put together with the help of Pastor Jason Schmidt, Mr. Jason Covey, and Dr. Greg Pluckhan

2nd Edition, 2017

Hiking Trails

Hiking Trails

Hiking Trails

Chapel
Meeting Room

Basketball Courts

Play Field

Horse
Shoe
Pit

Amphitheatre
bleachers

Volleyball
Court

PARK
AREA

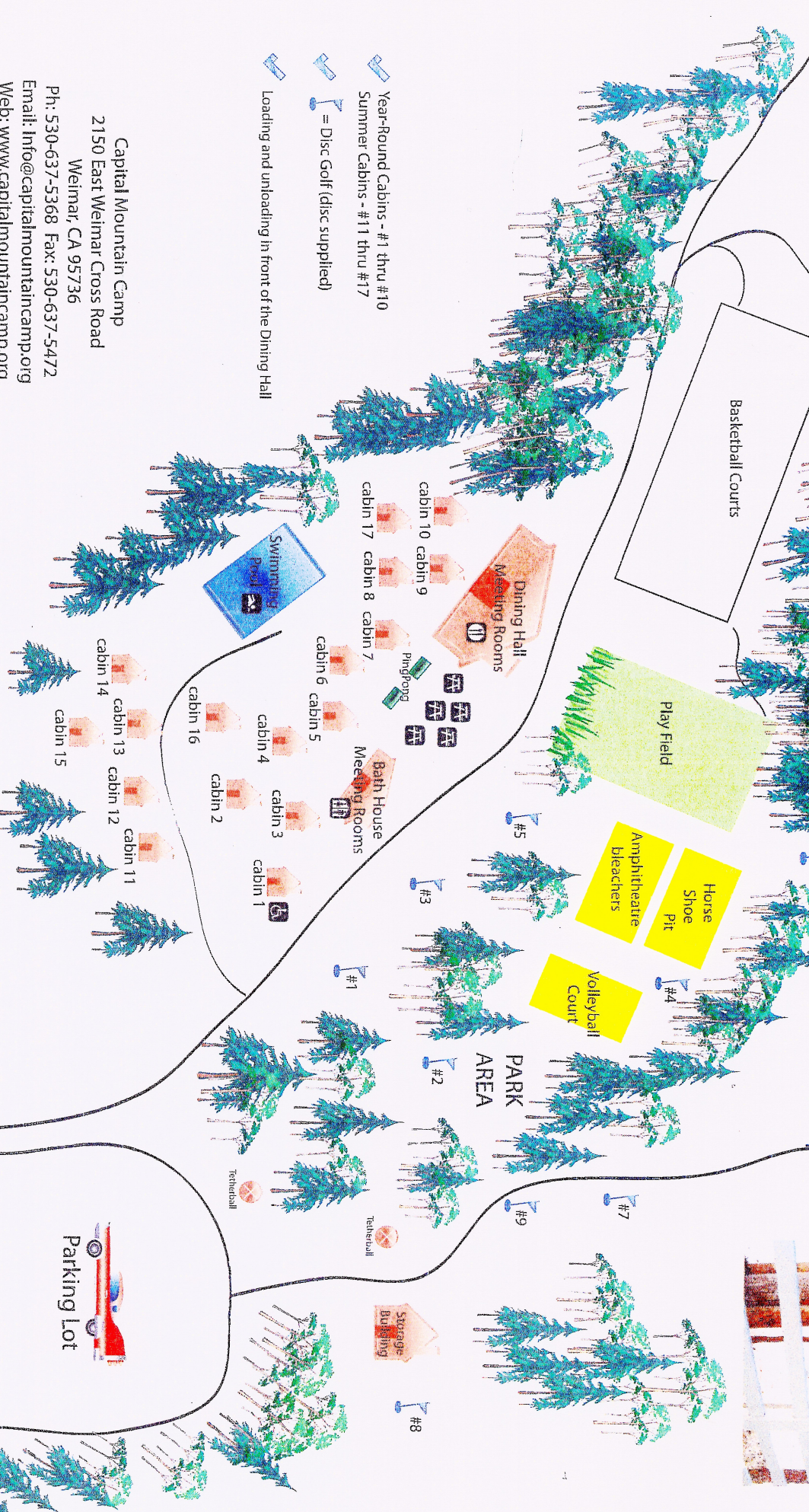
Storage
Building

Parking Lot

Private property



- Year-Round Cabins - #1 thru #10
- Summer Cabins - #11 thru #17
- Disc Golf (disc supplied)
- Loading and unloading in front of the Dining Hall



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