

Effective Youth Ministry Free Resource

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Regards,

Ken and Julie Moser

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Camp Schedule

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SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR YOUR WEEKEND CAMP

(with leaders instructions)

The goal of this camp schedule is to help you prepare a camp that is both Christian in content builds strong relationships, and is enjoyable. You can re-arrange times and activities according to your group size, type of campsite, age of youth etc. Whatever you plan you must make sure that the goals you set for the weekend are met in your program (for example if your goal is for youth to have personal devotions, don't set them at a time during camp when they will not do them i.e., very early before breakfast).

FRIDAY

Don't give the youth a schedule with all the times – it may become a burden if you are behind schedule (as some youth will continually point this out to you). Also don't give them a schedule that explains everything so that there are still some surprises for them to enjoy. However, it is important that the meal times are printed clearly on the schedule.

5:00 pm Arrive at Church/pick up point.
Load bags on to transport.
Dinner: You can...
a) ask people to bring a packed dinner that you will eat on arrival to camp,
b) send cooks ahead early to prepare dinner for arrival,
c) leave early enough to have time to prepare a simple dinner
d) stop some place on the way (fast food restaurant etc.)

At the meeting point have everyone seated, or stand in a circle:

1. Welcome them
2. Check names on camp role
3. Introduce new people if there are any and introduce leaders, camp parents, speaker etc.
4. Explain purpose of weekend e.g., learn, grow in faith, love each other, have fun
5. Explain any simple rules (keep to only 2-3) including, listen to the leaders, love each other.
6. Pray
7. Depart

When you arrive at campsite

Place bags etc. in the main hall and take the group on tour of the campsite. Make this a fun time (If you had a leader who was able he/she could act as a humorous tour guide with comments and stories along the way). As you tour the site, show people where their cabins will be. This is

also a good opportunity to introduce any rules the campsite has as well as restricted areas (i.e., no boys in girls cabins and visa versa).

Return to the main hall. Have the campers grab their gear and send to get settled in Cabins. [You will want to have organized cabin allocation and given this to cabin leaders.]

[Eat dinner together if the group hasn't eaten.]

Meet Together Part 1

Spend 30 min in mixer, get to know you games. You want to promote meeting people they don't normally hang out with at youth group. Make sure that the icebreakers you run really do promote getting to know each other. (For more on this see the chapter on Mixers in "Creative Christian Ideas for Youth groups" by Ken Moser pages 18-34.)

Short Evening Session

(You can include: singing, prayer, perhaps 'spotlight', Bible game etc., and 5 min talk to introduce them to the topic the weekend and then 5-10 minutes meeting time in their discussion group.)

9:30 pm Evening snack [no caffeine or sugar] followed by campfire [or some kind of closing time] that includes singing and prayer. For those from more traditional churches you may want to finish the evening with a simple 5-10 pm liturgy like "Compline" (see free resources effectivelyouthministry.com)

10:30 pm Bedtime (It is important to enforce bedtime so that people are well rested for the talks etc., during the daytime, a culture of sleeping than fatigue due to late night activities needs to promoted.)
Guidelines for cabin leaders: it is fine to let your cabin talk a bit and have some fun time together. However, don't let this go on too long. After a short time, work hard to get everyone lying down in bed and turn the lights out. Allow chatting time (20mins), you can then:

- a) tell a bedtime story*
- b) read a bible story*
- c) allow some more chatting time (20mins in soft voices)*

Finally when you think it is time begin to enforce quiet.

Do not allow late night raids, snacks, pranks!

SATURDAY

8- 8:30 am **BREAKFAST** (if you are self catering, be flexible if you can. If you finished a campfire at too late, make sure breakfast time still allows 8 hours of sleep).

Allocate a leader to run each meal. This will include: getting the youth settled ready to eat, giving instructions on how the meal is to be served, saying a prayer of thanks for the food and then sending the youth in an orderly way to collect their food. Also make sure that youth remain seated until the leader tells them they are allowed to leave the dining hall for the next activity. N.B. Do not let youth wander away once they are finished eating.

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR THE MORNING:

Don't start the day too early. Young people need plenty of sleep. You want a schedule that is designed to benefit them and not harm them (you don't want them to be overly tired, irritable and prone to sickness for the following week of school). Leaders also need to be well rested to be able to serve.

Don't start the day with leaders meeting – leaders need sleep!

Don't start the day with optional devotions or Bible reading – very few will do them!

Don't let the kids get up when they feel like it (they always rise early on the first day out of excitement), give them a bedtime AND rising time. For example, before you go to bed tell them what time breakfast is and tell them a time they are allowed to get up and talk (e.g., no rising, whispering, noise before 7:30 am if breakfast is at 8:30 am).

9:30 am **MORNING SESSION Sample program:**

Open in prayer

Share a question with the person next to you: who had a great sleep?

Sing

Personal Devotions (20mins)

Devotions are a time to go find a quiet space to read a section of the bible and pray. It is important to provide printed notes or specific instructions. Don't assume everyone will know what to do. Some key points are: this is something to do on your own, if you need help ask a leader to help you, don't distract others if you finish early, you will need a bible. Leaders also need to have a devotion time and not use this time for organization. The strength having devotions at this time is the youth are awake and it sets the tone for the group - we are a group who reads the Bible and takes God's word seriously.

After devotions, call the group back together. Ask for volunteers to share what they read with the main group.

Some other items you can do before the talk: Memory verses, Bible games, testimony, more singing etc. (For program ideas see "Creative Christian Ideas for Youth Groups" by Ken Moser.)
Finish the session with the first full talk.

MORNING SNACKS

Discussion Groups. Make sure the youth are mixed into different groups. There must be a good balance of Christian/non-Christian, boy/girl etc. Each group needs an adult leader.

Guidelines for a good discussion group:

- *Begin by having everyone share their name, school and one interesting fact about themselves.*
- *Ask a non-serious sharing question that will help the group to get to know each other a better (some examples: What is the farthest you have travelled? Who is the most famous person you have met or seen in person? If you had \$1000 to spend in one day what would you spend it on?).*
- *Ask a sharing question that will introduce the topic from the morning talk (e.g., if the talk was on 'love' ask, how does the media present love?).*
- *Ask the group what interested them from the talk.*
- *Make sure that you also listen during the talk and perhaps write down some questions for your group.*
- *Ask questions printed/prepared beforehand by speaker or leader of camp (if available).*
- *If there is time left over give the opportunity for people to share their testimony (how they became a Christian) if the group is able.*
- *Pray*

1:00 pm LUNCH

1:45 pm Have an activity after lunch such as a hike, sport etc., for about an hour. The type of activity and the length of organized time will depend on the age of the youth (younger ones need more structured time than older ones).

Free Time (if the group is younger you should make the after lunch activity go longer or provide some optional organized activities. Make sure that during free time there is still adequate supervision. Do not allow youth to wander away from camp without a leader.

Provide snacks later in the afternoon (It is a good idea to have a bowl of fruit available at all times.)

5:00 pm

Prayer Groups for kids/Leaders meeting for leaders.

Break the youth into prayer groups of 5-6 kids in each. If you can, organize the older, more mature Christian youth to facilitate the group. This will be a time of sharing about the camp (“How is everybody enjoying the camp so far?”), sharing matters for prayer and then praying. They often will do more sharing than praying and that is OK. This activity gives older youth the opportunity to lead. It also introduces the idea of praying together as young people and hopefully will teach young people to pray together once camp is over. Camp parents should walk around the grounds and supervise while prayer groups are happening. (If you do not have older youth who can run prayer groups, you may have to have your leadership team do this.)

While the young people pray, the leaders also meet to share and pray. They will be a little tired by this time, so some nice coffee (and maybe a treat of some chocolate) will help. Share about how camp is going for them and the kids and pray.

If the group is very young you may need to skip prayer groups. At this time, you could have an alternate activity like electives. These would be run by leaders and include topics such as: prayer, getting along with your parents, the Christian and school etc.

(BTW, don't tire your leaders out by early morning or late night leader's meetings.) One possible time to have a leader's meeting is just before or after dinner. At this time you will need your camp parents to supervise the young people during this free time.

6:00 pm

DINNER

EVENING SESSION (1 hour. This includes a shorter session, and a 2nd shorter talk). Always try to have this session after dinner as most people are tired in the late afternoon. After dinner people are alert again.

Depending on time and weather you might have an outdoor wide game. This does not need to go for too long.

SNACK followed by campfire/close time.

Bedtime.

SUNDAY

(Similar to Saturday morning.)

8:30 am BREAKFAST

9:30 am MORNING SESSION similar to Saturday morning session including devotions and the third talk.)

MORNING TEA

Discussion Groups.

Have people pack up their rooms before coming to lunch. If you have time, cleaning up before lunch makes the last moments on camp focused on lunch and being together rather than running around cleaning before you jump on the bus.

1:00 pm LUNCH

Wrap Up – this includes sharing some things they have learned, some things they have enjoyed on camp and a short time of prayer. Be sure to warn them that they will be tired and possibly slightly sad when they get home. Encourage them to be friendly to their parents and answer any questions their parents may have about camp and go to bed early.

Depart camp.

ALSO...

This is a sample program only. Make the schedule your own by coming up with your own creative ideas. You can: have a T-shirt printed for every camper, run various competitions over the weekend with prizes (i.e. the person to learn everyone's name first, learning the memory verse etc., scavenger hunt for finding an 'object of the day'). There is no limit to how you can make the camp uniquely your own.)

OTHER RESOURCES FOR CAMPING:

See also, "Guidelines for running a discussion group" in "Free Resources" effectivelyouthministry.com

See also, "Camp preparation" in "Free Resources" effectivelyouthministry.com

See also, "Guidelines for camp cooks" in "Free Resources" effectivelyouthministry.com

See also, "Instructions for camp parents" in "Free Resources" effectivelyouthministry.com

See also "Powerpoint: End of day Compliment" in "Free Resources" effectivelyouthministry.com