

Camp Blessing Director's Handbook

Part I

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CAMP POLICY

1. Directors need to be sure all volunteers fill out staff forms prior to the start of Camp and return them to the Camp Coordinator. Please let the Camp Coordinator know of any new staff (a person who has never worked at Camp Blessing) **at least one month** before your camp begins. **A background check form is required.**
2. Cabins must be supervised by two staff people over 18 at night even during staff meetings, and passive supervision during rest time.
3. A 12 year old camper may attend either Children's Camp or Teen Camp, but not both.
4. Completed paperwork is required for retreats/ weekend activities.
5. You are limited to 2 Junior Counselors at children's camp that must be at least 16 years old.
6. Please familiarize yourself and your staff with the Safety and Harassment Policies. These policies should be read by your staff. This is a State requirement.
7. It is the director's responsibility to send acceptance letters to all campers to let them know when to arrive and depart camp as well as what is appropriate and necessary to bring to camp.
8. Camp has a cleaning service that will clean after each camp. Please be sure that camp buildings are vacant for the cleaning people. If there are people staying over from one week to another week, belongs must be placed on a bunk. The camp coordinator will let you know when the cleaning crew is scheduled to come.
9. We will **not** to accept campers without the complete paperwork.
10. Fieldtrips **must** be planned prior to camps, so that bus transportation can be ordered.
11. Confidentiality – All information on the application is to be kept private. Share only information with staff that is absolutely necessary . The Camp Board recommends that only the Director/Co-Director and Nurse have complete access to camper and staff applications.

CAMP CONCEPTS

1. An experiment in Christian living -

This was the subtitle used under “Camp Blessing” from the first camps in the mid 1960’s. Camp is an experiment in Christian living—an opportunity to try to learn and practice Christian behaviors in a setting away from daily routine living, with the hope that the “experiment” will carry over in a dedicated life, in all future circumstances. Camp Blessing is where each participant is asked to make a commitment to the week to “do unto others, “considers other better than yourself,” and “do all things as unto the Lord.” It is a real opportunity to test spiritual living to the fullest.

2. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

This is one of the foundation verses of Camp Blessing. Bringing glory to God in all things—eating, drinking, working, and playing—brings a spiritual element to the most mundane task. If done to God’s glory, even the most routine task becomes a significant act of worship.

3. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:40)

This is the second foundation verse of Camp Blessing. We are challenged to serve, and to treat one another as Christ. No “cliques” no saving seats for someone else; rather, each person is accepted, and we reflect God’s love in our interactions with each other.

4. Make Me a Blessing.

This was the most popular song at the first week of camp in Vermont in 1963. We sang, “Make me a Blessing, make me a blessing. Out of my life, may Jesus shine,” changing the “me” to “us” in a unified song of praise. Half way through the week, the director of that first camp, Laurie Iannaccone, was sitting at the table with a few campers and staff members, when he said, “That’s it: it’s so obvious - - Camp Blessing.” Until that moment, we just called it “Camp! From that moment on, it became “Camp Blessing.”

5. All who are here are here by God’s will.

Within the first decade of camp, a concept evolved based on our faith that our prayers regarding each camp were answered, and that God’s will was being done at each camp. That meant no regrets about who could not be at camp that year – camper or staff – and no complaints about who did come. Each camp experience became a unique work of God, wherein He brought together a unique combination of people; each camp group experienced God’s work in their lives, individually and collectively. Thus, at each camp orientation, we could be confident that “this is going to be the best camp ever.”

6. A sample of God's kingdom.

This kingdom message has been a primary teaching at camps. Just as important has been the practice of creating a camp environment, which is a sample of God's kingdom – particularly at children's camps and special persons' camps. The grace that we receive as a gift of God through Jesus Christ is extended to others, and the fruit of the Spirit is evident.

7. Bible-based, and sustained by prayer.

All camps nurture an appreciation and greater familiarity with the Bible. Camp lessons are bible-based; scriptures are applied to our daily living situations, both at camp and in our lives back home. Prayer is emphasized for camp and throughout camp; prayer circles, prayer partners, prayer at staff meeting, and prayer as a first resort.

8. Set Ourselves Apart.

To do this we must leave the influences of TV, music, work, amusements, boyfriends/girlfriends, family living; cell phones, video games, computers, newspapers and magazines. Then we fill the void with a different, highly structured environment where all participate in the activities. In this way, barriers and facades are eliminated, and we can focus on others and ourselves in relation to Jesus and the gospel. Communal living, as New Testament times, is the norm. We learn to care for and about others because of the close contact we have throughout the day.

There are several elements, which are included:

1. Work – doing even the most menial tasks for the good of the group, learning to do your best as a service for the lord.
2. Worship, prayer, study – learning to rely on God, to learn about Him and His son Jesus, and to test prayer personally and in public.
3. Recreation, free time, play – to develop friendships with other Christians, to have fun, to learn to consider others even in play
4. Constant, consistent adult supervision to provide guidelines of behavior and, most importantly – love.

CAMP DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Pray.
2. Choose staff. Confirm and **reconfirm** your staff members as the camp approaches. Prayerfully consider accepting people who volunteer to work at your camp. Decide if you wish for intern participation, and how they may be used. Send Counselor job description to staff. Early communication with the Coordinator of Directors (a Camp Board Member) is very important for determining staffing needs.
3. Notify campers of acceptance/rejection as soon after you receive their applications as possible. Tell campers by letter, or email what to bring to camp, starting and ending times, etc. Keep in contact with the person receiving applications, and keep a common list “nailed down,” so you always know exactly how many, and which people are coming. For teen and children camps, send a letter, or email to parents, as well.
4. Accept total responsibility to overseeing the camp program. Do, or delegate clearly, such tasks as studies, recreation, crafts, sermons, etc. Rely on your staff; distribute and monitor the tasks. Encourage, and oversee them, by asking questions: “So what’s the plan for recreation tomorrow?” “Do you have all the supplies you need for crafts?” “How much time will you need to set up that work project?” “Have you had a chance to look over the study outline?”
5. Talk to the Coordinator of Directors about necessary arrangements for your camp. Give her/him the head cook’s name and address, so food can be purchased and delivered. Be sure to ask for help with the physical operation; the coordinator will be able to tell you if special arrangements need to be made for garbage disposal, shopping, grass cutting, etc. Check with the local committee about emergency procedures, inspection, rules (fire bans), etc.
6. Give attention to the times before camp starts and after camp ends – and the transition times between camps. What kind of supervision is needed for staff and campers who will be at camp between weeks?
7. Any staff requests for travel expenses should include the director’s recommendation and be submitted to the Coordinator of Directors.
8. File a Camp Director’s Report with the Coordinator of Directors **within two weeks** after your camp is complete.
9. Most important, lead the camp in a Christ-like manner. Set and maintain a spiritual tone. Trust that God will work through you and others at camp. Pray, be strong, have faith – the Lord our God is with you.

COUNSELOR JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Be prepared to give a full week's devoted attention to the camp and campers, putting your own problems and interest on the back burner. If you are not able to be there the entire time, clarify that beforetime with the director, to make sure it is all right.
2. Be prepared to help the director, following his/her direction. Do this willingly and quickly in all situations.
3. Accept assignments for leadership. Volunteer. Don't be shy; be inspired. Be willing to try new things
4. Be alert. Sense situations, problems campers are having, anticipate problems, which may arise. This is most easily done by being with campers and talking to them all the time.
5. Mix well with all the campers and staff; don't form "cliques" with any staff.
6. Be an example, Christ-like in every situation. You have the mind of Christ.
7. Be sincere. Young people can spot phonies every time.
8. Have fun without hurting others. Include campers, especially shy ones and new ones in games and activities. Keep you natural, competitive spirit in check.
9. Lead by example, not by a sharp tongue.
10. Stay somewhat rested. Pace yourself.
11. No matter how busy you are, give yourself time for prayer and devotions.
12. Bring individual campers, staff members, and situation before the Lord in prayer – silently and with them. Pray all the time; pray as a first resort.
13. Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit, and respond to its leading; assume that thoughts and ideas are from God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as answers to your prayers. "Quench not the Spirit."
14. When in disagreement or conflict, defer to the authority of the director.
15. Be prepared to stay at camp until camp cleanup is finalized.
16. Be prepared to be BLESSED mightily.

STAFF JOBS

1. Director
2. Nurse (RN, registered in State)
3. Someone to store Valuables
4. Someone to get campers to pray
5. Crafts
6. Recreation
7. Devotions (morning & evening)
8. Bell Ringer
9. Treasurer
10. Trips to the store
11. Handyperson/Safety Coordinator
12. Prayer circle coordinator
13. Study coordination
14. Study leaders
15. Head cook
16. Someone to handle the campfire (campfire needs to be completely out prior to leaving the area)
17. Worship leader
18. Skit leaders (if doing skits)
19. Sermons/Lesson reviews
20. Work crew leaders(k.p., main building/bathrooms/hall, cabin/camp)
21. Cabin Leaders

SUGGESTED DIRECTOR'S CHECKLIST

- October Clarify which day and time camp starts and ends, so publicity is correct.
 Start praying, and keep praying; ask others to pray for your camp
- November Invite staff: __ Nurse__ Handyperson__ Head Cook
 __ 2 Other Cooks__ Male Counselors __ Female Counselors
 Consider which staff can cover various functions; Bible studies, crafts, recreation, work projects, etc. **(one staff person needs to be a certified Food Handler.** This is a state law. The camp coordinator can get you a list of people who are certified and a list of nurses.)
- January Decide on your theme, notify Publicity Director, begin developing lessons/outlines
 Continue obtaining staff
- March Reconfirm staff who said they would be at camp; tell them the theme
 Communicate with the Board member in charge of interns
- April Delegate specific responsibilities to staff members
- May Send a letter, or email to staff, indicating who is on the staff, what their responsibilities are, when you want them to arrive at/leave camp.
 Check which camper applications have been received and make a list
 Check on special arrangements (i.e. off site/travel) prior to camp
 Send study outlines to all counselors
- June Check on applications recently received; update your list
 Send letters of acceptance to campers; and to their parents
 Confirm that the head cook is purchasing food
 Plan your staff orientation. Let the Coordinator of Directors know if you would like a board member present for staff orientation
 Prepare notebook/file folders for each staff; include schedules, assignments, words of inspiration/instruction, etc.
- July Arrive at camp a day early (if possible) to set up camp.
 Pray

Send in camp director's report within two weeks of completion of your camp.

CAMPERS ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

1. Director should lead this at the start of the camp.
2. Purposes of Orientation:
 - Set a spiritual tone – tell them what you want camp to be
 - Mention 2 or 3 of the camp concepts
 - Encourage and reassure them – demonstrate the grace of God
 - Introduce campers and staff members
3. Clarify staff jobs (nurse, bell-ringer, handyperson, etc.)
4. Be especially aware of first-time campers (and staff)
 - Name tags
 - Mixer
6. State/list/post the rules clearly
 - What the boundaries of camp are
 - Anticipate the schedule; respond to the bell
 - Stay on your own cabin side (males and females separated)
 - Turn in valuables, so you don't have to worry about them
 - Turn in distractible (cell phones, I-pods, etc....)
 - Stay out of the kitchen except when on K.P. (don't walk through)
 - No climbing – on the roof, up trees
 - No drugs, tobacco, chew, alcohol
 - If you want to go jogging, prearrange it with a staff member
7. Introduce the theme, and a few familiar, simple songs
8. If possible, have a campfire the first evening

CAMP BLESSING FIRE SAFETY PLAN

1. The smoke alarms and fire extinguishers will be checked during the “Work Weekend” camp. They will be ready to use and fully functioning at the beginning of each camp season.
2. A fire inspection will be done annually by the local fire department.
3. The safety procedures will be included in the “Director’s Packet” that will be mailed to each camp director in January preceding the camp season. Also, a copy of the safety procedures will be posted in the kitchen staff area and counselors’ cabins.
4. The safety procedures will be reviewed with all camp personnel at the first camp staff meeting by each camp director.
5. Each camp director should learn how to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at main switches.
6. All staff will have access to a working flashlight (located in laundry room).
- 7. In the event of a fire:**
 - Call 911. Staff must be able to provide directions using the Trappe River Golf Course as a landmark just south of camp on highway WW. The address is T12780 Highway WW.
 - Campers and staff will file out of buildings in an organized fashion and move to the church basement until the fire is under control.
 - Counselors will account for each of the campers in their cabin and will carry working flashlights with them.
 - Campers that are unaccounted for will be reported to the director immediately.
 - The Director will communicate with safety personnel and/or parents as deemed necessary.

TORNADO OR SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY PLAN

1. Check to see that the Weather Band radio is operating. The camp is in Marathon County. The Radio FPS code for Marathon County is 055073. This should not need to be changed.
Someone from the local committee will call if bad weather is expected.
2. A walkie talkie will be available for each cabin to alert them to possible problems with weather conditions (and to give each cabin a way to communicate any problems in the cabins to staff in Main building)
3. A list of campers/staff names will be posted in the Main Building by the Director.
4. In the event of a tornado or severe weather:
 - Turn on the weather band radio at the beginning of camp.
 - Notify the camp staff of the severe weather alert.
 - Counselors, campers, and all staff will proceed to the Main Building hallway if a severe weather alert is in effect.
 - Remind the campers of the importance to stay orderly and quiet.
 - Everyone will move to a safe area in the end of hallway in Main Building:
7. Complete an attendance check to see if everyone is accounted for.
8. Designated staff will search specific buildings for missing campers.
9. Campers/staff to assume a seated position with arms covering their heads until the “all clear” signal is given.
10. The Director will make all decisions and phone calls as deemed necessary.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Camp Blessing will not tolerate any form of harassment. Any staff member or camper who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from camp. Unwelcome verbal conduct and/or physical conduct of a sexual or aggressive nature constitute harassment. Examples of such conduct include, but are not limited to the following:

- Lewd or sexually suggestive comments, sexual flirtations, touching, off-color language or jokes, any display of sexually explicit pictures, slurs relating to a person's gender, etc.
- Physical or verbal bullying, intimidation, threats of physical harm, etc.

Proactive Measures to be taken by camp staff personnel.

1. All staff will submit a Camp Blessing Staff Form, which will include clause with a signature permitting a criminal and employment background check.
2. All staff will submit a form with information and a signature for a criminal and employment background check.
3. The Harassment Policy will be shared with all staff at the first staff orientation meeting by the director.
4. The campers will be made aware of whom they can discuss their concerns of harassment with at the first camper orientation meeting.

Procedures for background checks.

1. The Camp Blessing Staff Form must be completed by **all staff** and submitted to the camp coordinator before the camp begins.
2. Staff members who have worked at camp, will have a background check every three years. Any staff member who has never worked at camp **must** have a background check.
3. A Camp Board Member will contact the director and staff member about questionable background checks and let them know what decision has been made.

Reporting Procedures.

If there is ANY suspicion of abuse (physical or sexual) immediately call Marathon County Social Services at 715-261-7500; after hours call 715-261-1200. They will conduct an investigation.

1. Any staff member who believes he/she has been subjected to harassment by anyone shall report the incident to the Camp Director or Nurse.
2. Any camper who believes he/she has been subjected to harassment by anyone shall report the incident to the Camp Director or Nurse.

3. Any staff member or camper who is aware of harassment, whether or not he/she is the victim of the harassment must notify the Camp Director or nurse at the camp.
4. Complaints may be filed either verbally or in writing. They should be recorded by the Director or nurse in writing and signed. The report should include the specific nature of the harassment, dates, name of the alleged harasser, and any witnesses.
5. Parents will be notified if the person involved is a minor.
6. The camp coordinator will be notified immediately.
7. CONFIDENTIALITY: The identities and the incident will be kept confidential to the extent possible

Investigation.

1. The camp will provide a prompt, complete, and impartial investigation of the complaint. The investigation will be completed by both the Camp Director and Camp Coordinator.
2. The person who has been accused of the inappropriate behavior will be notified and a response to the allegation will be obtained. The alleged harasser will be asked to leave the camp until the investigation has been completed to protect them as well as other campers.
3. The investigation will focus on:
 - Whether the allegations are true.
 - Whether the alleged conduct constitutes harassment.
 - Whether action is needed and to act promptly.
4. The director and coordinator shall prepare a written report including:
 - A summary of the allegations and accused person's response.
 - An assessment of the credibility of person's interviewed.
 - A presentation of the findings of fact.
 - A discussion of the conclusions.
 - A discussion of the recommendations for corrective action.
5. If a conclusion is reached that harassment has occurred, the harasser shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.
6. If a conclusion is reached that no harassment has occurred, the alleged harasser will be informed that no disciplinary action is necessary.