



Community of Christ

Camping

GUIDE

2026



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Introduction

Hello friends,

I hope you are doing well! I want you to know how grateful I—and the whole Community of Christ faith community—are that you've taken on this important responsibility. Whether this is your first time directing or you're a seasoned leader, this ministry always brings something new and, at times, challenging.

This resource is here to support you on this adventure. Please remember that you are surrounded by love, prayer, and encouragement. If you have any questions or need extra support, don't hesitate to reach out to me at htinsman@CofChrist.org.

Happy camping!

Blessings,
Humberto Tinsman
Emerging Generations specialist, Community of Christ



CAMPING THEOLOGY/OVERVIEW

Why Camp?

Community of Christ seeks to provide a quality camp experience that encourages children and youth to develop a Christ-centered discipleship.

Our Goals

1. In God's creation we will help campers define and explore their unique and personal spiritual journey with Christ, emphasizing the natural world in our teaching and program activities.
2. We will create intentional sacred community that challenges what we see day to day.
3. Using educational tools, we will create a learning environment for all campers to grow in faith and their faith communities.

Vision

To instill in our children and youth the mission and vision of Community of Christ through our:

Enduring Principles

- Grace and Generosity
- Sacredness of Creation
- Continuing Revelation
- Worth of All Persons
- All Are Called
- Responsible Choices
- Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)
- Unity in Diversity
- Blessings of Community

We also will invite and encourage campers and staff into mission through Community of Christ's:

Mission Initiatives

- Invite People to Christ
- Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
- Pursue Peace on Earth
- Develop Disciples to Serve
- Experience Congregations in Mission

HOW TO REPRESENT COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

“Community of Christ,” your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.

Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God's shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God's peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:1–2a

Community of Christ is a global faith movement that invites all people to Christ. We are a Christian community that believes God still is working with creation, and all life should be protected and valued. In Christ, we work together to help make the world a better place. We believe that through our faith we can help create a world today that loves each person as God loves us. We call this vision Zion. Zion is not confined to one place, time, or model, but like the Spirit of God, continues to grow and move with each new generation.

Community of Christ believes all people can be divinely inspired. Throughout human history, some individuals and communities have been so inspired that they recorded their experiences. Through a communal process, these writings have become what we now call scripture. In Community of Christ, we recognize three primary sources of scripture: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. While scripture is a valuable guide for our spiritual journey, we do not worship scripture itself; rather, we use it as a tool that points us toward God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ.

We also believe in faithful disagreement. No one is forced to believe in a particular way. Instead, as a church body, we practice common consent and collectively agree on theological principles, policies, and practices that represent our identity and ongoing story.

As staff members of a Community of Christ camp/retreat, we represent this movement. For many campers, this experience may be their first—and perhaps only—introduction to who Community of Christ is and who we are becoming. While some staff members serve as priesthood members with specific callings, the greatest calling for every disciple is to follow Jesus Christ. During your time at camp, we ask that you reflect on how your words and actions embody our best understandings of Christ’s teachings. Are we inviting and loving our neighbors? Are we showing our campers what it means to live as a community centered in Christ?

We each struggle on our faith journey and often find ourselves in tension with an imperfect and un-Christlike world. To hide this reality would create a false narrative that could cause harm. Instead, we encourage staff members to be honest with campers about their questions, fears, and doubts—while also sharing how you have found hope, healing, or are continuing to seek God’s presence.

As our sacred story reminds us:

Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3c

The very best of Community of Christ emerges when individuals ask difficult questions and courageously follow where God’s Spirit leads. We are part of this radical witness that says yes to intentional community and love; boldly resisting the voices of fear, hatred, and abuse.

**Let us each do our best to live
the sacred call of Community of Christ.**

PREPARING FOR CAMP

Six to Nine Months Before Camp

- Meet with Mission Center leadership.
- Explore theme, curriculum, and general program guidelines.
- Identify Leadership Team members.
- Identify staff:
 - Business manager
 - Cook
 - Nurse/medical staff
 - Cabin Staff
 - Teachers
 - Camp pastor/theme class teacher
 - Campfire leader
 - CITs (Cabin staff in training)
- Review the camp budget with the Mission Center Financial Officer or equivalent.
- Review how families sign up for camp.

Five Months before Camp

- Schedule several meetings with the Leadership Team and staff.
- Notify all staff and leaders of child-protection training and the application process.
- Send dates to congregations and groups in your area. (Use different methods of advertisement, e.g., postcards, videos and social media.)
- Confirm food plan.

Three Months Before Camp

- Verify the budget.
- Verify your specific camping-scholarship capacities.
- Create a camp T-shirt or takeaway. (This also could help fundraise the camp.)
- Prepare the camp daily schedule.

Two Months Before Camp

- Schedule camp-staff training.
 - Staff duties
 - Staff arrival and departure times
 - General health and safety updates
 - Registered Youth Workers status update
 - Staff rules and behavior expectations
 - Camper rules and expectations
 - Solidify classes and other camp activities/traditions
- Order Camp T-shirts. (consider ordering extra shirts if possible for late registers)

One Month Before Camp

- Send campers a letter welcoming them to camp. (Include a packing list and what not to pack.)
- Resend/post camp advertisements.

Two Weeks Before Camp

- Create housing assignments.
- Create a camp-cleaning plan (kitchen patrol, bathroom duties, e.g.).
- Prepare worship services (staff worship before camp, other special worships).

One Week Before Camp

- Create name badges or other ways to share names and preferred pronouns.

One Day Before Camp

- Housing assignments finalized
- Staff orientation and training on campground
- Cabin and classroom preparations
- Staff worship

Additional Pre-camp Information

- Give at least six weeks before camp for the staff to be processed as Registered Youth Workers.

POST CAMP

What we experience together at camp is just the beginning of a lifelong spiritual journey. We hope our campers continue growing in faith and developing their relationship with Community of Christ long after the week is over. Consider taking these next steps to help support that continued connection.

One Month after Camp

- Send thank-you cards to leaders and staff.
- Send thank-you cards to congregational leaders and donors who make camps possible.
- Send a thinking-of-you card or email to campers; include the dates for camp next year.

SELECTING STAFF

Putting together a camp staff can feel like a mind-boggling challenge. It often means reconnecting with old friends and building new relationships. The key to forming a great team is to start planning early, ask early, and build commitment through shared responsibility and preparation.

Begin with the essentials: What roles are absolutely necessary? For example, a camp nurse, cook, or other required positions. Some of these may be provided by your camping association. Others may need to be recruited on your own. From there, think about the roles that will enrich the camp experience—such as leaders for crafts, journaling, sports, or other activities—and the skills those roles will require.

If possible, meet with potential staff members before officially inviting them to serve. Remember that we all are on different journeys—some who have served in past years may not be able to return, while new staff might be ready for certain leadership responsibilities but need additional training.

As you consider and reach out to potential leaders, remember the qualities that make a great staff member:

- **A genuine love of Christ:** No other motivation is sufficient to carry someone through the rigors of working with kids over a long period; Christ's agape love gives and gives without expecting a response. It is through that love that we serve the youngest among us.
- **Registered Youth Worker:** All Are Called, but we must create a safe environment for our campers. All staff members are required to be Registered Youth Workers. This must be done at least six weeks before camp starts.
**If this is not done, that person cannot be at camp.*
- **Active involvement in Community of Christ with an understanding of the church's Basic Beliefs:** This will be the only time many campers will experience Community of Christ, who we are, and who we are becoming. Each staff member should know who and what the church is. Each person also should remember that as staff members they are representing the church. Disagreements or frustrations about the church should not be shared with campers. Staff members should encourage further engagement with the church and should know what local and broader ministries are available. Staff members DO NOT have to be regular attendees in physical gatherings but should have SOME connection to the church.

- **Sincere love for youth:** Not everyone is called to work with youth. Youth often take every ounce of grace and love you have. If a staff member cannot relate with youth or make room for those who might not fit their ideals of “normal,” they might not be called to work with youth in a camp setting.
- **Enthusiasm:** Staff members must be trendsetters! We are asking for youth who might not know each other or camp to create community in just a few days. This is difficult! As staff members we need to be the first to engage and get involved in the fun, the sacred, and the challenging.
- **Dependability:** We have to show up for our campers. Many may not have a home life where they receive much positive adult attention. This is our opportunity to show a different way of shaping community, a community of Christ.
- **Confidentiality:** Camp can be one of the few places where young people feel safe to simply be themselves. Because camp often creates a sense of trust and vulnerability, campers may share personal experiences—including concerns about abuse or neglect.

If a child shares something that indicates they are being abused, or if you have reasonable suspicion of abuse, you are **REQUIRED** to report it to the camp director and the Community of Christ Office of General Counsel. They will guide you in following all local mandated reporting laws. Do not share this information with anyone else.

There may be additional requirements based on your state or country. Please make sure you are familiar with your local child protection laws and procedures before camp begins.

- **Patience:** To be in leadership with children and youth is not easy. We tend to be judges when we should be patient guides. We need to remember that we each are on this journey of life and sense God’s Spirit in different ways and times. Spiritual breakthroughs happen during this time. We need to make room for those who might not be ready at the start of this experience but grow into fellowship with God.

Many more characteristics help make a strong staff member. The list provided is not meant to be a checklist, but a guide for the qualities we all strive toward. As a director, it’s important to be thoughtful and intentional about whom you invite into this experience.

We believe All Are Called, but in different ways. Many opportunities to support the camping experience exist beyond serving as a full-time staff member. Your primary responsibility as a director is to protect campers and create a space where safety, trust, and belonging are at the center of everything we do.

IMPORTANT STAFF ROLES

All roles at camp are important, but the following are crucial. Some already may be filled through your local camping association, but it's always wise to confirm their availability—especially if you are new to directing.

Business Manager

The business manager is responsible for maintaining accurate financial records, paying bills, and buying supplies. This person must work closely with the camp director and mission center leadership to ensure that records and reports are completed in a timely manner.

Additional Responsibilities

- Provide a process for staff reimbursements.
- Manage petty cash, documenting all expenses and collecting receipts.
- Ensure staff reimbursements are submitted before the close of camp.
- Track and document any donations to maintain an accurate record of camp finances.

Co-director/Program Director

Having a co-director or program director can greatly support leadership and planning. This role is especially helpful for someone interested in directing camp in the future. The program director coordinates class options and teachers, class locations, and helps provide materials requested by instructors. This person works closely with the camp director to maintain smooth leadership and staff support.

Additional Responsibilities

- Help with camper or staff issues.
- Help lead large games or activities.
- Coordinate kitchen cleanup or camp cleaning assignments.

Camp Nurse

- Every Community of Christ camp must have a designated individual to oversee the health and safety of campers and staff members. Acceptable qualifications include:
 - Licensed medical doctor
 - Nurse practitioner
 - Registered nurse (RN)
 - Licensed practical nurse (LPN) with first-aid training
 - Paramedic

- Emergency medical technician (EMT)
- Licensed first-aid responder

All licenses must be current.

Additional Responsibilities

- Ensure camp maintains a well-equipped first-aid station.
- Review camper medical information at registration (medications, allergies, illnesses, etc.).
- Administer and record medications as directed by parents/guardians.
- Respond to illnesses or injuries and maintain accurate first-aid logs.

Note: Requirements may vary by area. Directors should confirm expectations with mission center/camp leadership.

Cabin Staff (cabin counselor)

The cabin staff play a vital role in ensuring that every camper has a positive experience.

Responsibilities

- Build a sense of cabin community (through names, songs, or traditions).
- Monitor camper participation in classes, campfires, recreation, and other activities.
- Be attentive and sensitive to individual camper needs.
- Lead cabin responsibilities such as cleanup, devotions, and other duties assigned by the director or leadership.

Cabin staff are the “front line” of camping ministry. Their selection should be made with care and intentionality.

CITs (Cabin Staff in Training)

CITs are youth or young adults (minimum age 15 to the age of 21) who serve alongside an experienced staff member as a leadership apprentice. CITs who are 15 and older can be a great resource for Junior Camp, and those who are 18 or older can be a valuable addition to Junior High Camp. However, CITs should not be used for Senior High Camp due to their close age range with the campers. This role helps develop future camp leaders while providing support to current staff.

Possible Responsibilities

- Help the cabin staff as needed.
- Help build cabin community.
- Be attentive to the needs of campers.
- Lead or help with camp activities.
- Participate in a dedicated CIT leadership class.
- Support the camp director.

Camp Pastor(s)

Camp pastors serve as spiritual leaders and provide pastoral care to campers and staff members. They should be approachable, visible, and supportive throughout camp life.

Responsibilities

- Teach or support daily theme classes.
- Share short talks at campfires.
- Pray with and for the camp community.
- Be familiar with scripture and its application to daily life.
- Be grounded in Community of Christ theology and church life.
- Provide a positive, uplifting presence.
- (Preferred) offer sacraments as needed.
- Support the director and staff.

Camp pastors can serve at any age level and strongly are encouraged whenever possible.

Final Note

Depending on the size of your camp and available volunteers, additional roles may be needed. When selecting staff, always ask: Does this person uplift the camp community, reflect the message and calling of Jesus Christ, and help nurture lifelong discipleship within Community of Christ?



INTRODUCTION

This year we invite the church to focus on the Mission Prayer at camp. Our central theme is: *“Becoming a Blessing: Living the Mission Prayer as a Way of Life.”* The lessons here are dedicated to youth-camp experiences. They are DIFFERENT lessons that will be provided for reunions and retreats.

The daily themes for reunion have guided us on this journey:

- Surrender to the Spirit’s Lead
- Discover a Sacred Rhythm
- Awaken to God and One Another
- Risk New Conversations and Actions
- Bless All of Creation

Camper Friendly Themes

While the reunion daily themes are suited for adults and families, below are the additional youth-friendly daily themes that keep the spirit of our focus:

- Trust the Spirit’s Guide/Ask for Help
- Find Your Sacred Groove
- See God Everywhere
- Try Something Brave
- Love the World Around You

The Mission Prayer continues to play a vital role in our life together, helping us live the Enduring Principle of Continuing Revelation. It also creates a meaningful way to introduce the practice of prayer. Many campers—and even some of our staff—may not yet have prayer as part of their spiritual journey. By focusing intentionally on the Mission Prayer, we provide a key expression of Community of Christ’s theology and a practical tool for life—one that can sustain us in joy, hope, sorrow, and tragedy.

For others, the Mission Prayer already may be a familiar part of their faith and spiritual practice. Still, there's always room to grow. Everyone is invited to explore each part of the prayer, to consider how it can shape camp activities and gatherings and to discover anew how God is present in all things.

Staff members preparing the central theme class are encouraged to adapt the lesson plans to the needs and contexts of their campers. Our shared focus remains on introducing prayer—especially the Mission Prayer—as a spiritual practice and a communal invitation to live God's Continuing Revelation. Throughout the classes, we suggest videos from different churches and faith movements. While we have vetted these videos, we have not done so for their entire channels. Before showing any content, we always should ask: Does this resource align with our best understandings of our Basic Beliefs and public theology? When in doubt, it always is better to choose another resource.

Below are daily theme lessons that might help you prepare the rest of camp! Note that junior camp has three days of lessons, while junior- and senior-high camp have five. If your junior camp is a full week, consider breaking up lessons 1 and 3, or supplementing activities from the junior- and senior-high helps.

Day 1

TRUST THE SPIRIT'S GUIDE

Surrender to the Spirit's Lead

Scripture Focus

Matthew 14:22–33 (Peter and Jesus on the water)

What You Will Need

- a way to project and share videos
- three bandanas
- Touchstones (pages 21-22)



Welcome learners into the space.
10% OF TIME

Welcome campers into the space with fun music. Greet each camper by name, with fist-bumps, or high-fives.

Explain what theme class is and what you hope it will feel like this week. Share expectations about being fully present for the experience.

Ask campers to put away all distractions, including smart phones. Explain that we only get to build this community once, and being present helps us make the most of our time together. Acknowledge that this might be challenging but invite both campers and staff to take a risk, try something new, and be fully present in the experience.

Introduce the Touchstones as a way we will respect and support each other.



What is the sacred text?
20% OF TIME

Share the Mission Prayer by projecting it on a screen or having it printed for campers.

Consider having campers volunteer to read the various lines or having each camper read one word (with the option to skip for those who may not be comfortable reading in front of others).

God, Where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace, Amen.

Say: This week we're going to spend a lot of time with the Mission Prayer and think about how it connects to our lives, our church, and even the world around us. To help us, we'll look at a really cool story from scripture—stories that come from followers of Jesus and faith communities all over the world. Today our theme is "Trusting the Spirit's Guide." So buckle up, get ready, and let's jump in!

Show one of following videos:

- For children, animated video (about two minutes):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVy9HGr3Qig
- For older youth, action video (about two minutes):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2XtWVH5ziY

Or have the campers read Matthew 14:22–33 NRSVue:

Jesus Walks on the Water

²²Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, ^[a]for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."
²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, ^[b]he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"
³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."



What do we learn from our sacred text? 20% OF TIME

Divide the campers into small groups, assigning a staff member to each to help guide conversation. Project discussion questions or give each group a printed copy. Invite campers to discuss the questions in their groups, and then have them share their insights with the larger group.

Discussion Questions

1. How does this story show what it means to *trust the Spirit's guide*?
2. The Mission Prayer says, "God, where will your Spirit lead today?" How is that similar to Peter stepping out of the boat?
3. Can you think of a time when you felt like God was asking you to "step out of the boat"? What happened?
4. How can we encourage others and ourselves to step out of the boat?

Call the groups back and work through the questions, allowing each to be heard.

Say: In this story, Jesus calls Peter to do something that seems impossible. Peter takes a risk—he trusts Jesus and the Spirit—and because of that, he walks on water. Sometimes in life, we want to stay in control, but we sometimes face things we simply can't control. Trusting in God's Spirit doesn't mean we're doing nothing; it means we're doing something even braver. We're choosing to trust God. And when we stay faithful and let God work in our lives, we can trust that God will be with us and save us in the storm.



Let's use what we learned in a fun way! 30% OF TIME

Say: Now let's practice listening—not just to the Spirit, but to each other! Remember, we are a Community of Christ, which means we're not on this journey alone.

Game Instructions

- Ask for six volunteers and split them into pairs.
- Blindfold one camper in each pair; the other will be the guide.

- Spread pairs apart so the guides need to give several clear directions for their partners to find them.
- Once the blindfolded campers reach their guides, reset.

Now, line up the other campers along the sides. Tell them their job is to make as much noise as possible. Run the activity again. It will be much harder for the blindfolded campers to hear their guides.



What are the lessons we learned from our game.
10% OF TIME

Afterward, ask:

- What was that experience like?
- How did it feel when the path was clear?
- How did it feel when there was a lot of noise?
- What helped you focus on your guide's voice?

Say: God is always speaking to us. In Community of Christ, we believe that even amid life's storms, God never stops inviting us to come closer. I know it's not always easy to hear, but that's why the Mission Prayer is so important. It helps us pause, listen, and not rush ahead just because we think we know where God is leading. By trusting God's Spirit, we open ourselves to the impossible becoming possible. As we continue our time together at camp, let's practice listening for God's Spirit in everything we do.



Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME

Thank the campers and close by sharing the Mission Prayer together.

God, Where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace, Amen.

Bonus Fun

Consider inviting the campers to memorize the Mission Prayer this week. This could be a fun challenge for the group (e.g., If we can recite the Mission Prayer together without looking by the end of the week, we will earn a prize.)

Courage & Renewal Touchstones



CENTER for
**COURAGE &
RENEWAL**

Give and receive welcome.

People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.

Be present as fully as possible.

Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.

What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for, and know that you do it with support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.

Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in a Circle of Trust does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak from your center to the center of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting people to do their own sifting and winnowing.

No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.

This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help". But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions...

instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help "hear each other into deeper speech."



Learn more at www.couragerenewal.org

Courage & Renewal Touchstones



CENTER for
**COURAGE &
RENEWAL**

When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.

If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself:

- I wonder what brought them to this belief?
- I wonder what they are feeling right now?
- I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?

Set aside judgment to listen to others – and to yourself – more deeply.

Attend to your own inner teacher

We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions and silence in a Circle of Trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

Trust and learn from silence

Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silences as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality

A Circle of Trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people whom we chose to say it – whether in small groups or in the large circle – and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Know that it's possible...

to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.



Learn more at www.couragerenewal.org

Day 2

FIND YOUR SACRED GROOVE

Discover a Sacred Rhythm

Scripture Focus

Luke 10:38–42

What You Will Need

- a way to project and share videos
- slips of paper or index cards
- a pen/marker
- a small container or bowl

Preparation (Before Class)

Write everyday scenarios on slips of paper and place them in the bowl. Examples:

- cooking dinner
- cleaning a room
- doing homework
- talking with a friend
- playing video games
- praying
- helping someone who fell
- scrolling on a phone
- reading the scriptures
- playing soccer



Welcome learners into the space.

10% OF TIME

Welcome campers back to theme class! Keep playing upbeat music if possible. Review the expectations for theme class and the touchstones you've already established.

Ask campers what they remember from yesterday's class. Guide them toward recalling that God always speaks and invites us—even during storms.



What is the sacred text? 20% OF TIME

Begin with the Mission Prayer (project if possible so everyone can see).

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Say: Yesterday we talked about how God invites us even when storms are around us. Storms can take many forms, and Jesus knew we sometimes get so focused on them that we lose sight of what matters most. Today we're going to read a story about that.

Project Luke 10:38–42. Have one camper read it aloud and then ask another camper to read it again.

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him.^[a] ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at Jesus's^[b] feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her, then, to help me." ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things, ⁴² but few things are needed—indeed only one.^[c] Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Or show a video version of the Luke 10 scripture

- For children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUAuGzApcUM>
- For youth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2e1bCykvkc>



What do we learn from our sacred text? 20% OF TIME

Divide campers into small groups. If possible, mix up groups from yesterday so campers meet new people. Assign a staff member to each group to help guide the conversation. Project or share the questions below.

Discussion Questions

1. In this story, Martha is busy serving while Mary is sitting and listening to Jesus. Who do you relate to more right now—Martha or Mary? Why?
2. What things in your life sometimes distract you from finding your sacred groove?

3. If you could design a rhythm of life that balances “being” with God (like Mary) and “doing” for others (like Martha), what would it look like?
4. How do you hear the Mission Prayer in Mary’s example of listening? How do you hear it in Martha’s example of serving?
5. What might it mean to pray, “Where will your Spirit lead today?” before jumping into your daily routines?

Allow time for small-group conversations, and then invite individuals to share with the larger group.



Let’s use what we learned in a fun way!
30% OF TIME

Mary and Martha Charades

How to Play

1. Divide the camp into two teams (or stay as one large group if time is short).
2. A volunteer draws a slip from the bowl and acts it out without speaking.
3. Once the group guesses correctly, ask:
 - “Is this more like Mary (focusing on relationships/Jesus/listening) or Martha (busy with tasks)?”
 - “Why do you think so?”
4. Continue until everyone has had a turn.



What are the lessons we learned from our game.
10% OF TIME

Ask:

- Was it hard to decide if someone was “Mary” or “Martha”?
- Are both kinds of activities important in our lives?
- When might we need to be more like Mary and stop to listen to God?

Remind campers: Martha’s work wasn’t bad—but Mary made the choice to pause and listen to Jesus, and we need that, too. The Mission Prayer invites us to find our sacred groove. Life often is busy, and we default to Martha. But Jesus also calls us to pause, listen, and go deeper.

Encourage them to carry this theme into their day: *“Find your groove. Be present. Remember that God is in everything.”*



Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME

Close by saying the Mission Prayer together:

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Day 3

SEE GOD EVERYWHERE

Awaken to God and One Another

Scripture Focus

Mark 10:46–52

What You Will Need

- a way to project and share videos
- a Hula-Hoop (or other boundary marker)



Welcome learners into the space.
10% OF TIME

Welcome campers with music and good energy! By now, they should know the expectations for theme class. Still, if needed, invite them again to be “awake and ready to respond.”

Take a few minutes to revisit the two stories you’ve covered so far (Peter walking on water; Mary and Martha). Ask if campers have any questions or insights about those stories. Did anyone take time to pause?



What is the sacred text?
20% OF TIME

Say: Today’s theme is “See God Everywhere.” In our first two stories, Peter was so scared by the storm that he didn’t trust Jesus, and Martha was so busy serving that she forgot to listen. Both lost sight of God. But Jesus didn’t just teach lessons—he healed people he met along the way.

Project or read aloud Mark 10:46–52, or show the video: *Bartimaeus Story*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBx_Fuuai5c

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher,^[a] let me see again.” ⁵²Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.



What do we learn from our sacred text? 20% OF TIME

Use the questions below for discussion. Invite campers to share their answers with a partner or in small groups. Allow time for small-group conversations and then invite individuals to share with the larger group.

Ask:

- What stood out to you in this story?
- Why do you think the disciples told Bartimaeus to be quiet?
- What lesson might Jesus have been trying to teach his disciples?



Let's use what we learned in a fun way! 30% OF TIME

Blind-trust Game

How to Play

1. Have the camp form a large circle. (It's OK if belongings like chairs are inside the circle.) Place a Hula-Hoop in the center.
2. Ask for a volunteer, with eyes closed, to spin a few times and then walk into the circle. The group's job is to guide the person safely toward the Hula-Hoop.
3. Once successful, try again with two campers starting at opposite ends of the circle. Guide both at the same time without letting them bump into things—or each other.
4. Continue adding more campers if safe.



What are the lessons we learned from our game.
10% OF TIME

Ask the walkers:

- How much trust did you need to let others guide you?
- How badly did you want to open your eyes?

Ask the guides:

- How did it feel to guide someone who couldn't see?
- How much patience did it take?

Show: Open Your Eyes (about six minutes).

Say: Our Mission Prayer reminds us to open our eyes. This story wasn't only about Bartimaeus being healed—it was about the disciples, who were blind to his need. God calls us to open our eyes, see the world as God sees it, and care for one another. With faith, we can do anything together.



Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME

Close our time together by sharing the Mission Prayer:

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Bonus Fun

Has anyone memorized the Mission Prayer yet?

Day 4

TRY SOMETHING BRAVE

Risk New Conversations and Actions

Scripture Focus

Luke 19:1–10

What You Will Need

- a way to project



Welcome learners into the space.

10% OF TIME

Welcome campers with music and energy! By now they should know the flow of class, but you can remind them again to be “awake and ready to respond.”

Briefly go over the stories and themes covered so far. Ask if any campers have been noticing or praying the Mission Prayer during camp activities.



What is the sacred text?

20% OF TIME

Doing the right thing like following Jesus sounds really easy. But there are times in life when it can be hard. We might be scared that others might judge us. We are going to explore a story of someone who chose to be brave.

Project Luke 19:1–10 (Zacchaeus).

Ask for volunteers to read aloud or show: *Zacchaeus Story*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BjtbJFz2ug>.

Jesus and Zacchaeus

¹ He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷ All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” ⁸ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” ⁹ Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”



Let's use what we learned in a fun way!
30% OF TIME

Human-knot Game

Step 1: Form the Knot

1. Have everyone stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle.
2. Everyone puts their right hand into the circle and grabs the hand of someone not directly next to them.
3. Then everyone does the same with their left hand, creating a “human knot.”

Step 2: Untangling with Words

- Work together to untangle until you form a circle again.
- Talking is allowed. Use words to share ideas, directions, and encouragement.
- Staff: Don't solve it. Let campers figure it out.

Step 3: Untangling without Words

- Try again, but this time with no talking.
- Campers must use gestures, eye contact, and courage to keep going.
- Remind them: Mistakes are OK. Be brave and keep trying together.



What do we learn from our sacred text?
20% OF TIME

Say: Just like Zacchaeus, we sometimes need courage to try something new or uncomfortable. In this game, you had to be brave enough to untangle—even when it was awkward or confusing. Without words, you had to trust your group and step out of your comfort zone. That’s courage, too!

Reflection Questions

Ask campers to find a sharing partner, then invite them to share with the larger group

1. Zacchaeus had to be brave to climb the tree. Where did you need courage in this activity?
2. How did it feel when you couldn’t use words? How is that like moments when we don’t know what to do but still need to act?
3. Zacchaeus’s courage helped him meet Jesus. How might our courage help us experience God’s love—or help others experience it?



What are the lessons we learned from our game.
10% OF TIME

Say: In our Mission Prayer we ask for courage to risk something new. That’s not always comfortable! What feels easy for one person may feel hard for another. But remember: We never take risks alone. God is with us, and this camp community is with us. Knowing that helps me take bigger risks to help make the world a better place.



Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME

Close with the Mission Prayer.

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Day 5

LOVE THE WORLD AROUND YOU

Bless all Creation

Scripture Focus

Matthew 13:31–32

What You Will Need

- a way to project and share videos
- poster paper (one per camper)
- markers/crayons
- mustard seeds in small bags (one per camper)



Welcome learners into the space.

10% OF TIME

Welcome campers and invite them to sit on the ground or somewhere they can draw.

Say: This is our last theme class together! I'm so thankful for your time and the community we've built. We've learned that prayer isn't just something we do—it's a tool that helps us remember God is with us in everything. Our Mission Prayer can go with us wherever we are.



What is the sacred text?

20% OF TIME

Sometimes in life, I know we can feel so small and we wonder what change can we actually make? Jesus teaches us that little things can make a world of difference.

Project Matthew 13:31–32 (The Parable of the Mustard Seed).

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Show a mustard seed and say: A mustard seed is tiny, but Jesus compares it to the kingdom of heaven. That reminds us that God’s kingdom grows from even the smallest beginnings. Sometimes the most important things are the ones we might overlook.



Let’s use what we learned in a fun way!
30% OF TIME

Say: We’ve played a lot of games this week, but now I want to risk something new! Grab a poster and something to draw with. (Give campers time.)

I’m going to play a song. As it plays, draw whatever your spirit and heart lead you to draw. Remember all we’ve learned this week—our scripture stories and our Mission Prayer. Afterward, we’ll share.

Play one of the following songs:

- *Plowshare Prayer* by Spencer LaJoye
- *Give Me Your Eyes* by Brandon Heath



What do we learn from our sacred text?
20% OF TIME

After the song:

- Invite campers to share with a partner what they drew.
- Ask if any would like to share with the whole group.



What are the lessons we learned from our game.
10% OF TIME

Say: Prayer is powerful. Our Mission Prayer is a tool we can carry into everyday life, reminding us of what we've experienced here at camp. Before we go, I want to give you something small to remember this time together.

(Pass out mustard seeds in bags.)

Say: Even the smallest things—like this seed—can grow into something beautiful. Remember: God makes beautiful things in all shapes and sizes. When you go home, know that you are never alone. God and the Community of Christ are with you always.



Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME

For the last time, pray together as one community voice:

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Day 1

ASK FOR HELP

Surrender to the Spirit's Lead

Scripture Focus

Matthew 14:22–33 (Peter and Jesus on the Water)

What You Will Need

- a way to project and share videos
- either a visual of water/ice/water vapor or a glass of water, a glass of ice cubes, and a glass of hot water with steam rising
- optional:
 - handheld fidget tools
 - coloring pages
 - crayons/colored pencils/markers
 - Play-Doh
- Touchstones (pages 41-42)



Welcome learners into the space.
10% OF TIME

Welcome campers into the space with fun music playing. Greet each camper by name, with fist-bumps, or high-fives. Explain what Theme Class is and what you hope it will feel like this week. Share expectations about being fully present (including phones). Consider offering campers handheld fidget tools, coloring pages, Play-Doh, the option to sit or stand, etc., to help them focus in the way is best for them. Having choices for campers throughout the week may help individuals stay engaged. Remember that attentiveness and engagement look different for all campers. Introduce the Touchstones (pg 40-41) as a way we will respect and support each other.

Share the Mission Prayer by projecting it on the screen or having it printed for campers and reading it aloud.

God, Where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace, Amen.

Say: This week we're going to spend a lot of time with the Mission Prayer and think how it connects to our lives. Today, we're going to focus on the first line. 'God, where will your Spirit lead today?' That's the first step to becoming a blessing—asking God for help!



Let's use what we learned in a fun way!
30% OF TIME

Note: Not all campers have the same background knowledge. While our focus this week is on the Mission Prayer and on Bible stories, we first need to explain the connection between God, Jesus, and the Spirit. Consider using this analogy about water in its various states, with either physical representations (a glass of water, ice, and steam) or an illustration.

Say: First things first, let's talk about what we mean by the Spirit. That's one way we think about God. We are taught that God is a three-in-one, Father (or Parent), Son, and Holy Spirit. God is all of these, all at once. There is no perfect way to describe God, but we are going to look at a way to help us better understand the Trinity.

I want you to consider water. When we typically think of water, we might think of water we drink. But I want you to think back to science class, where you learned about the states of matter. Does anyone remember what they are?

Work with campers to establish the three most common states of matter: solid, liquid, gas.

Continue:

So water has three forms: liquid (like water we drink), gas (like water vapor or steam), and solid (ice).

Let's start with ice. In some ways, it's the easiest to think about. It's easier than water or water vapor to hold, right? It's not flowing or "all around us." Instead, what you see is what is there. I could reach into the glass, take out an ice cube, and pass it around. That's kind of like Jesus, who we sometimes call "God the Son." He was God in human form. He lived, died, and came back to life here on Earth. The Bible stories we are going to talk about this week are all from over 2,000 years ago, when he was living on Earth.

Next, let's think about water vapor. It's kind of everywhere, right? There is water vapor in the air. There is water, in gas form, all over. But we often think about it rising, like

steam, or being above us, like clouds. That's kind of like God the Father (or Parent). We think of God as being in heaven.

Lastly, let's think about water as liquid. Did you know that our bodies are more than 50 percent water? That makes a lot of sense for this analogy, because Jesus taught us that God sent the Holy Spirit to live in us. It flows all around us, just like water.

So in the first line of the Mission Prayer, we are talking to God in two forms, God the Father (or Parent) and the Holy Spirit, which is all around and within us.



What is the sacred text?
20% OF TIME

Say: Now, we're going to look at a story from the Bible about a time when someone asked Jesus for help, and then could do something that seemed impossible!

Show the following video (about two minutes), [youtube.com/watch?v=oVy9HGr3Qig](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVy9HGr3Qig), or have the campers read Matthew 14:22–33:

Jesus Walks on the Water

²²Immediately he made the disciples get into a boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,^[a]for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, ^[b]he became frightened, and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Discussion

Depending on the size of your group and comfort of your campers in sharing, walk through the following discussion questions. If working in small groups, assign one or more staff members to each group. Note that below each question are prompts to help generate ideas if campers need help thinking through the question or expressing thoughts.



What do we learn from our sacred text?
20% OF TIME

1. What do you remember from the story?
 - What happened at the beginning. Why were the disciples scared?
 - What happened next? What did Peter do?
 - What happened when Peter started noticing the wind?
 - How did Jesus help Peter?
2. How do you think Peter was able to walk on water? Why did he start sinking?
 - What did Peter ask Jesus to do before he started walking on the water?
 - Where was Peter's strength coming from? Where was his focus?
3. Can you think of a time when you felt like God was asking you to "step out of the boat" or be brave? What happened?
 - Have you ever been brave in doing something kind for someone else, even if it wasn't popular?
 - Have you ever been brave in asking for help when you were scared?

Say: In this story, Jesus calls Peter to do something that seems impossible: walk on water. Peter takes a risk—he trusts Jesus and the Spirit—and because of that, he walks on water. Sometimes in life, we face situations that seem impossible. Just like Peter, we can ask God for help to be brave in tough times. The Holy Spirit can give us strength to do hard things.



Let's use what we learned in a fun way!
30% OF TIME

Say: We've talked about the Trinity and used an analogy of water in its different forms. Then we heard a story about Peter asking Jesus to call him out of the boat to walk on water. So, we're going to play a game inspired by being on the water: Ships and Sailors.

Game Instructions

A leader stands in front of the group calling "orders." Teach the group what each cue means, and then practice them a few times. When the game officially starts, campers will get "out" if they do the wrong cue or can't find a group for the twos and threes. When they are "out," encourage them to stand along the edge, calling different orders.

Ships, run to the left!
Sailors, run to the right!
Hit the deck (drop onto your stomach)!

Captain's coming (stand at attention in a salute or with arms behind back)!
Person overboard! (One person lays on the ground, the other stands with one leg resting *above* them and pretends to look.)
Row your boat! (Form groups of three and pretend to row a boat.)



**Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME**

Say: God is always speaking to us, and we can always ask God for help. Sometimes, it may be hard to focus on the direction of the Spirit. Just like in the game, we'll need to work together. In Community of Christ, we believe that even during life's storms, God wants us to lean on God. The Mission Prayer is an important tool to help us remember to draw close to God every day. By trusting God's Spirit, we open ourselves to the impossible becoming possible. As we continue our time at camp, let's practice listening for God's Spirit in everything we do.

Thank the campers and close by sharing the Mission Prayer together again. Invite campers to read with you.

God, Where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace, Amen.

Bonus Fun

Consider inviting the campers to memorize the Mission Prayer this week. This could be a fun challenge for the group (e.g., If we can recite the Mission Prayer together without looking by the end of the week, we will earn a prize.)

Courage & Renewal Touchstones



Give and receive welcome.

People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this circle we support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.

Be present as fully as possible.

Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your listening as well as your speaking.

What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.

This is not a "share or die" event! Do whatever your soul calls for, and know that you do it with support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.



Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.

Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in a Circle of Trust does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say. Speak from your center to the center of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting people to do their own sifting and winnowing.

No fixing, saving, advising or correcting.

This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help". But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.

Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions...

instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help "hear each other into deeper speech.



Learn more at www.couragerenewal.org

When the going gets rough, turn to wonder.

If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself:

- I wonder what brought them to this belief?
- I wonder what they are feeling right now?
- I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?

Set aside judgment to listen to others – and to yourself – more deeply.

Attend to your own inner teacher

We learn from others, of course. But as we explore poems, stories, questions and silence in a Circle of Trust, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, to your most important teacher.

Trust and learn from silence

Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silences as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.

Observe deep confidentiality

A Circle of Trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people whom we chose to say it – whether in small groups or in the large circle – and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.

Know that it's possible...

to leave the circle with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.



Learn more at www.couragerenewal.org

used with permission

Day 2

TRY SOMETHING BRAVE

Risk New Conversations and Actions

Scripture Focus

Luke 19:1–10

What You Will Need

- a way to project and share videos
- optional:
 - handheld fidget tools
 - coloring pages
 - crayons/colored pencils/markers
 - Play-Doh



Welcome learners into the space.
10% OF TIME

Welcome campers with music and good energy! By now, they should know the expectations for theme class. Still, if needed, invite them again to be “awake and ready to respond.”

Share the Mission Prayer by projecting it on the screen or having it printed for campers. Invite them to put their hands out, one facing up and one facing down. Have each camper read one word of the prayer, and then “clap.” The next person will read the next word. Tell campers they can skip their turn by clapping to the next person if they don’t want to read.

God, Where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace, Amen.

Say: Yesterday, we focused on the first line of the Mission Prayer. We talked about the Holy Spirit and heard about Peter going out of the boat, walking on water, and then asking

Jesus for help. Today, we're going to focus on the next part of the Mission Prayer, "Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new..."



What is the sacred text?

20% OF TIME

Say: Now, we're going to look at a story from the Bible about a man named Zacchaeus, who tried something brave. It's helpful to know that in the time of Jesus, tax collectors were not well liked. Their job was to collect taxes from people to give to the government. Sometimes, they took more than they needed and kept some for themselves.

Show the video, *Zacchaeus Story*, or have the campers read Luke 19:1–10 NRSVue.

(Jesus) He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."



What do we learn from our sacred text?

20% OF TIME

Depending on the size of your group and comfort of your campers in sharing, walk through the following discussion questions. If working in small groups, assign one or more staff members to each group. Note that below each question are prompts to help generate ideas if campers need help thinking through the question or articulating thoughts.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you remember from the story?
 - What happened at the beginning. What did we learn about Zacchaeus?
 - What did Zacchaeus do? Why did he do it?
 - What happened at the end?

2. Why do you think Jesus went to Zacchaeus's house? Why did it upset the crowd so much?
 - What do we know about Zacchaeus's job? Do you think people liked him very much?
 - Did Jesus care what people thought about Zacchaeus?
3. At the end of the story, Zacchaeus decides to give half of everything he owns to the poor and to make things right with anyone he might have wronged. Jesus says salvation has come to his house. What do you think that means?
 - Do you think Jesus helped Zacchaeus change? If so, how?
 - What do you think Zacchaeus needed saving from?



Let's use what we learned in a fun way!
30% OF TIME

Human Knot Game

Step 1: Form the Knot

1. Have everyone stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle.
2. Everyone puts their right hand into the circle and grabs the hand of someone not next to them.
3. Then everyone does the same with their left hand, creating a "human knot."

Step 2: Untangling with Words

- Work together to untangle until you form a circle again.
- Talking is allowed—use words to share ideas, directions, and encouragement.
- Staff: Don't solve it—let campers figure it out.

Step 3: Untangling without Words

- Try again, but this time no talking is allowed.
- Campers must use gestures, eye contact, and courage to keep going.
- Remind them: Mistakes are OK. Be brave and keep trying together.



What are the lessons we learned from our game.
10% OF TIME

Say: Just like Zacchaeus, we sometimes need courage to try something new or uncomfortable. In this game, you had to be brave enough to untangle—even when it was awkward or confusing. Without words, you had to trust your group and step out of your comfort zone. That's courage, too!

Discussion

Work through the following discussion questions with the whole group. Below each question are prompts to help generate ideas if campers need help thinking through the question or articulating thoughts.

1. Zacchaeus had to be brave to climb the tree. Where did you need courage in this activity?
 - Which round was most challenging? Why?
 - How did you show bravery when you got stuck?
2. How did you feel when you couldn't use words, and what did you do?
 - Was it easier or harder?
 - Did you feel uncomfortable? If so, did you face that?

Say: Zacchaeus's courage helped him meet Jesus, and he was changed forever. In our Mission Prayer we ask for courage to risk something new. That's not always comfortable! What feels easy for one person might feel hard for another. But remember: We never take risks alone. God is with us, and this camp community is with us. Knowing that helps me take bigger risks to help make the world a better place.



Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME

Close by sharing the Mission Prayer together.

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Day 3

LOVE THE WORLD AROUND YOU

Bless All of Creation

Scripture Focus

Matthew 13:31–32

What You Will Need

- a way to project and share videos
- poster paper (one per camper)
- markers/crayons
- mustard seeds in small bags (one per camper)



Welcome learners into the space.
10% OF TIME

Welcome campers and invite them to sit on the ground or somewhere they can draw.

Share the Mission Prayer by projecting it on the screen or printing it for campers. Invite them to “popcorn” pray the Mission prayer, having campers say one word at a time, jumping in whenever they feel comfortable. If there is a pause of more than a couple of seconds, a staff member should jump in with the next word.

God, Where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace, Amen.

Say: Yesterday, we learned all about Zacchaeus and how our Mission Prayer asks us to risk something new!

This is our last theme class together! I’m so thankful for your time and for the community we’ve built this week. So far, we’ve focused on the first two parts of the Mission Prayer. Today, we will look at the last piece: “become a blessing of your love and peace.” A big part of how we do that is showing God’s love.



What is the sacred text?
20% OF TIME

Project Matthew 13:31–32 (“The Parable of the Mustard Seed”). Show a mustard seed.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Say: A mustard seed is tiny, but Jesus compares it to the kingdom of heaven. That reminds us that God’s kingdom grows from even the smallest beginnings. Sometimes the most important things are the ones we might overlook.

Say: We’ve played a lot of games this week, but now I want to risk something new! Grab a poster and something to draw with. (Give campers time.)

I’m going to play a song. As it plays, draw whatever your spirit and heart lead you to draw. Remember all we’ve learned this week—our scripture stories and our Mission Prayer. Afterward, we’ll share.

Play one of the following songs:

- *Plowshare Prayer* by *Spencer LaJoye*
- *Give Me Your Eyes* by *Brandon Heath*
-



What do we learn from our sacred text?
20% OF TIME

- Invite campers to share with a partner what they drew.
- Ask if any would like to share with the whole group.



What are the lessons we learned from our game.
10% OF TIME

Say: Prayer is powerful. Our Mission Prayer is a tool we can carry into everyday life, reminding us of what we've experienced here. Before we go, I want to give you something small to remember this time together." (Pass out mustard seeds in bags.)

Even the smallest things—like this seed—can grow into something beautiful. Remember: God makes beautiful things in all shapes and sizes. When you go home, know that you are never alone. God and the Community of Christ are with you always.



Send the learners with a blessing.
10% OF TIME

For the last time, pray together as one community voice:

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me the courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.



INTRODUCTION

One of the most impactful moments during camp is when a camper finds a friend. Building quality relationships at camp is a great success, and this includes the bonds between campers, staff, and directors.

A key part of fostering these relationships is understanding the role of camp staff. Staff members are a central part of the camping experience and connect with campers. At the same time, staff are called to be friends and mentors, **not peers**. Healthy relationships require balancing these roles, knowing when and how to set limits, and communicating those limits clearly and compassionately.

Helpful Hints for Staff

Establish a Good Relationship Early (First Impressions Last!)

- Greet each camper individually.
- Greet and visit with the person who brought the camper. This short interaction can teach you a lot about the camper and provide reassurance that the child is in good hands.
- Learn and use each camper's name and preferred pronouns.
- Be a friend to campers, *but remember—you are not their peer.*
- Practice patience and understanding.
- Set and review rules and guidelines immediately, along with clear consequences.
- Praise good choices! Share your appreciation freely.
- Try to see things from the camper's point of view.
- A good sense of humor will make life more enjoyable for you and those around you. Don't forget to laugh!
- Don't forget to breathe. Sometimes stressful situations or lack of sleep can make us act out of haste.

The First Day of Camp

- Watch carefully for signs of homesickness: isolation, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, etc. (This can happen at any age.)
- Pay special attention to shy campers who seem lost. Offer help in finding their way around.
- Stay close to your group and begin shaping a positive, fun, and welcoming camp culture.
- Set the example about phones and screen time. If you must take a call, walk away and complete it quickly.

Cabin and All-camp Activities

- Participate fully in all group experiences with your campers.
- Attend all-camp activities. Your involvement will encourage campers to feel connected to the whole group.
- Be prepared to look silly and have fun! Jump in wholeheartedly, but when campers take the lead, let them shine.
- Stay in the middle of things. At meals, camp gatherings, and group activities, position yourself at the center, rather than the edges. This reduces conflict, helps manage noise levels, and shows campers they are supported. Staff who sit apart or cluster together unintentionally send the message that campers are on their own.

Important

Your **top priority** is to create a safe and welcoming space for campers. Nothing should take away from this. For many campers, this may be their only connection with Community of Christ.

Staff should avoid letting personal theology or concerns about the church get in the way of building positive relationships. Staff members are encouraged to be familiar with current Community of Christ theology and understandings, as well as ways youth can engage with church after camp. Remember, we are called to Invite People to Christ, and camping ministry is one of the most meaningful ways we live this mission.

Teaching Classes

Always have at least two back-up plans for each day in case of rain or other unexpected changes. Back-ups also allow flexibility if the campers are not engaging with your first plan. Stay flexible and responsive.

For All Staff

Adaptability is the key to ministry. While it is important to stay on schedule—especially for meals and lights out—flexibility is essential. Do not let changes to the schedule affect how you interact with campers.

WHAT TO HAVE AT ALL TIMES

Introduction

Camp is a wonderful experience that pulls us away from the busyness of daily life and into an intentional community shaped in nature. As staff members, our first and greatest responsibility is to protect and serve the campers. To do this well, we need to be equipped with items that ensure a safe, fun, and meaningful experience for everyone.

This is not a complete packing list, but a guide to the essentials you should keep with you in a backpack or shoulder bag at all times.

Essentials to Carry

- Water bottle: Stay hydrated and encourage your campers to do the same.
- Bandages: for small cuts and scrapes.
- Electrolyte powder (e.g., Liquid IV): helpful on hot days or when there's need for an energy boost.
- Sunscreen: Note that even if you have darker skin, sunscreen is important! Staff members set the example by using it consistently.
- A whistle or another way to get group attention: crucial for safety and organization.
- Bug spray: Prevent pesky bites.
- Cell phone/flashlight: for emergencies and evening activities.
- Hand sanitizer: Keep germs at bay.
- Tissues: For runny noses or unexpected messes.
- Snacks: great for quick energy, community-building, and the occasional lighthearted bribe to keep campers engaged!

This is a basic list, so feel free to add items that fit your style of leadership and care. If this is your first time as a staff member, having these essentials will help you feel prepared and confident.

HOW TO REPRESENT COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

“Community of Christ,” your name, given as a divine blessing, is your identity and calling. If you will discern and embrace its full meaning, you will not only discover your future, you will become a blessing to the whole creation. Do not be afraid to go where it beckons you to go.

Jesus Christ, the embodiment of God’s shalom, invites all people to come and receive divine peace in the midst of the difficult questions and struggles of life. Follow Christ in the way that leads to God’s peace and discover the blessings of all of the dimensions of salvation.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:1–2a

Community of Christ is a global faith movement that invites all people to Christ. We are a Christian community that believes God still is working with creation, and all life should be protected and valued. In Christ, we work together to help make the world a better place. We believe that through our faith we can help create a world today that loves each person as God loves us. We call this vision Zion. Zion is not confined to one place, time, or model, but like the Spirit of God, continues to grow and move with each new generation.

Community of Christ believes all people can be divinely inspired. Throughout human history, some individuals and communities have been so inspired that they recorded their experiences. Through a communal process, these writings have become what we now call scripture. In Community of Christ, we recognize three primary sources of scripture: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. While scripture is a valuable guide for our spiritual journey, we do not worship scripture itself; rather, we use it as a tool that points us toward God, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ.

We also believe in faithful disagreement. No one is forced to believe in a particular way. Instead, as a church body, we practice common consent and collectively agree on theological principles, policies, and practices that represent our identity and ongoing story.

As a staff member of a Community of Christ camp or retreat, you represent this movement. For many campers, this experience may be their first—and perhaps only—introduction to who Community of Christ is and who we are becoming. While some staff members serve as priesthood members with specific callings, the greatest calling for

every disciple is to follow Jesus Christ. During your time at camp, we ask that you reflect on how your words and actions embody our best understandings of Christ's teachings. Are we inviting and loving our neighbors? Are we showing our campers what it means to live as a community centered in Christ?

We each struggle on our faith journey and often find ourselves in tension with an imperfect and un-Christlike world. To hide this reality would create a false narrative that could cause harm. Instead, we encourage staff members to be honest with campers about their questions, fears, and doubts—while also sharing how you have found hope, healing, or are continuing to seek God's presence.

As our sacred story reminds us:

Be patient with one another, for creating sacred community is arduous and even painful. But it is to loving community such as this that each is called. Be courageous and visionary, believing in the power of just a few vibrant witnesses to transform the world. Be assured that love will overcome the voices of fear, division, and deceit.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3c

The very best of Community of Christ emerges when individuals ask difficult questions and courageously follow where God's Spirit leads. Whether you are a member or a friend of this movement, you are part of this radical witness that says yes to intentional community and love; boldly resisting voices of fear, hatred, and abuse.

Let us each do our best to live the sacred call of Community of Christ.

Blessings!

CABIN DEVOTIONS

Cabin devotions are a meaningful way to end the day and help campers center themselves before rest. These times can look different, depending on your group and its needs. But the goal is always the same: create space for reflection, sharing, and spiritual grounding.

Below is one example of how a cabin devotion could look. Feel free to adapt it to your needs and the culture of your cabin or camp.

Sample Cabin Devotion

1. Welcome and Gather Campers

- Explain that this is a time to talk about the day, reflect together, and share experiences.
- Introduce the activity: “Highs, Challenges, and a God Moment.”
 - *Highs*—Something fun or something you enjoyed about camp.
 - *Challenges*—Something you struggled with or found difficult.
 - *A God Moment*—A time when you felt connected to God, others, or nature.

(Campers always should feel invited, but never pressured, to share. As the week goes on, most campers will grow more comfortable and open. Staff also should share to help build trust and community.)

2. Reflect on the Theme

- After everyone has shared, take a few minutes to connect the conversation to the camp theme or the theme of the day.

3. Scripture or Poem

- Share a short scripture passage or poem.
Before reading scripture, staff should briefly explain what scripture is and how Community of Christ approaches it. For example, you might say:

In Community of Christ, we honor three sacred texts: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. Scripture is an important tool for us—it helps us understand God’s presence in the world—but we do not worship scripture itself. Instead, we use it as a way to hear God’s Spirit and be guided toward Christ.

If campers or staff want to know more, affirmation three from the Community of Christ Statement on Scripture is a good starting point:

Scripture is a library of books that speaks in many voices. These books were written in diverse times and places, and reflect the languages, cultures, and conditions under

which they were written. God’s revelation through scripture does not come to us apart from the humanity of the writers, but in and through that humanity. In the earthen vessels of scripture we have been given the treasure of divine love and grace.

More resources can be found at CofChrist.org/scripture/.

4. Example Connection

If the theme of the day is “*God, where will your Spirit lead today?*” you could share this passage:

Do not be fearful of one another. Respect each life journey, even in its brokenness and uncertainty, for each person has walked alone at times. Be ready to listen and slow to criticize, lest judgments be unrighteous and unredemptive.

—Doctrine and Covenants 161:3b

Then you might say:

God wants us to listen to one another and reminds us that we are called to build a better world together. When we ask God for help, we also need to listen and be patient. Camp is one small step in that journey. Let this not just be a one-time experience, but the beginning of something new in your life and community.

5. Closing Prayer

- Ask if a camper would like to close in prayer.
- If no one is comfortable, you can offer a prayer that reminds the group that God listens to us, and we also should listen to God and one another.

Conclusion

Every devotion adds to the sacred community being formed at camp. We recommend a three-part approach:

1. Community building—giving campers a voice and creating connections.
2. Spiritual grounding—linking the day’s experiences to scripture or theme.
3. Closing prayer—inviting God’s presence into your shared journey.

For some, the spiritual side of devotion may feel challenging. We encourage you to challenge yourself, be open, and be vulnerable with your campers. They are struggling and searching, too. By sharing your own doubts and faith journey, you open the door to deeper conversations as the week goes on.

If you need support in leading these devotions, reach out to your director or camp pastor. They gladly will help you make these meaningful connections.