

UCG

PRETEEN

CAMP MANUAL

North Central Region

I. Introduction

We want to first do the most important thing of all, and that is to thank you for donating your time and energy to the most important of endeavors ... teaching our children in God's truth and love in a fun and exciting environment! Your contribution as staff in executing a Godly, loving, and safe environment for our children is fundamentally what makes this preteen camp successful. This staff manual is designed to give all of the staff a common ground and unity of purpose in how we manage and lead our children throughout the time they participate in this camp. Please read this manual before arrival, and the highlights of it will then be reviewed at staff orientation on Sunday, July 26.

Over the years, this camp has maintained two fundamental goals for both the staff and the campers:

- **HAVE FUN . . .** by providing an opportunity for children to enjoy God's way of life in the recreational environment of an adult-supervised, God-centered summer camp.
- **HAVE FUN . . .** by providing children with an opportunity to develop leadership skills and healthy Church relationships as they interact with other children and adults in our camp environment.

You will help accomplish the above by focusing on the following FIVE imperatives for successful leadership:

1. Pray both before and during camp that God not only blesses every aspect of camp, but that Jesus Christ would literally participate directly in the camp through the Holy Spirit.
2. Through prayer and other supportive means, set as your #1 goal to have a Godly, positive, and enthusiastic attitude every day, hour, minute, and second of camp.
3. Prepare both before and during camp for your specific assigned responsibilities as nothing can replace preparation by ALL staff members in conducting a successful camp.
4. Manage your health to the best of your ability before and during camp by maintaining healthy sleep, diet, and exercise regimens ... this will critically impact the energy and attitudes you bring to the campers and your fellow staff members.
5. Finally, please pray before and during camp that all campers, staff, drivers, etc. not only arrive to camp safely, but that God blesses the camp with health and safety for all participants, and returns everyone home healthy and joyful.

II. Camp Objectives

Give campers the opportunity to:

1. Enrich and grow their relationship with God through interaction with caring, adult Christians who support the efforts of campers' parents.
2. Receive instruction in God's Word as it specifically applies to their age and maturity level.

3. Experience being away from home in a safe environment that is conducive to growth and education in God's Truth.
4. Learn to communicate and interact with adults in a respectful and responsive manner.
5. Associate with and make new friends of the same age within the church.
6. Develop new skills and work together in a spirit of cooperation and concern for others.

Give teen staff members the opportunity to:

1. Work with and be mentored under leadership of adult, converted Christians.
2. Learn to set a positive Christian example for our campers.
3. Experience the joy and satisfaction derived from serving the needs of others and not the self.

Give the adult staff the opportunity to:

1. Work with, supervise and mentor pre-teens and teens in a positive Christian environment.
2. Learn to be leaders in promoting a Godly, positive, and enthusiastic attitude.
3. Encourage and teach children to apply God's laws and commandments in resolving life's common, everyday problems.

III. Job Responsibilities

The Counselor's Job:

Of all the staff roles in the preteen camp, the role of the counselor is most important. All of the camp activities are designed to help the campers have a joy-filled, exciting, rewarding and educational camp experience! However, the counselor plays a *key role* in this process and it is the counselor's responsibility to make sure that *every child in their care is enjoying at least some aspect* of their camp experience. This requires a focus not only on the performance of the dorm as a whole, but a *REAL respect and understanding of the unique needs of every camper*. Counselors and assistant counselors alike need to display a deep, personal concern and obvious support for each camper by showing genuine love and understanding in all situations that arise.

As a counselor or assistant counselor, your job is to:

- Encourage and exhibit the application of the **Golden Rule: DO UNTO OTHERS, AS YOU WOULD HAVE OTHERS DO TO YOU.**
- Be sure a counselor or assistant counselor is with the dorm/group at all times. Under no circumstances should any camper be without direct supervision.

- Insure that proper respect is shown *toward* everyone *by* everyone – I.e., Emphasize the use of Mr., Mrs., Ms. when referring to the staff.
- Make sure your campers AVOID cliques as these can be very divisive and discouraging.
- Move your group from activity to activity in an orderly fashion, quickly and enthusiastically. *Familiarize yourself with your activity schedule before the start of each day.*
- Pay close attention to being “on time and in place” as this is critical to maintaining an orderly camp and teaching the campers lessons that are critical for success in life.
- Make sure that all living quarters are kept in a neat and orderly condition.
- Support our instructors and activity coordinators and be ready to assist them upon request – Generally speaking, the children love it when their counselor and assistant counselor participate fully in each activity.

The Activity Coordinator’s Job:

The job of the activity coordinator can make an exceptional impact on the success of the camper experience. The activity coordinator has the responsibility to help EVERY camper have an educational, invigorating, and growth-oriented experience through his/her area of activity. The activity coordinator also has the responsibility to effectively manage and engage his/her staff on a daily basis by providing effective coaching, encouragement, and at times, correction.

It is the responsibility of the staff, including both adult and high school volunteers, to enthusiastically support the direction and leadership of the activity coordinator. By doing so, it insures that the campers will have an excellent experience at each activity.

As an activity coordinator, your job is to:

- Prepare your daily class activity plans prior to arriving at camp – *It is important to bring a strong element of creativity to your plans!*
- To review these plans and prepare your staff on a daily basis for the effective execution of activities.
- Be a positive role model for the campers, and encourage your staff to do the same through strong individual attention and contagious enthusiasm.
- Consider and implement appropriate teaching techniques.
- Enforce camp safety rules.
- Reinforce the theme of the camp in your daily lesson plans.

- Evaluate your staff at least twice per day for 15 minutes and provide constructive feedback on improvement.

IV. Camper Check-In and Check-Out

The parents and/or guardians of our campers are entrusting their children to our care. In order to maintain their trust and insure the safety of our campers, it is imperative that care, concern and caution be exercised in these two important events: camp check-in and check-out. We request that these procedures be followed *in every situation and circumstance*. As counselors, you will be asked to administer these check-in and checkout procedures to each camper assigned to your care.

Check-In

Here is a step-by-step outline of our procedures for **camper check-in**:

1. All campers will be welcomed to camp as they arrive by the camp director (or their designated representative) and the camp doctor/nurse.
2. All parents, guardians or “transporters” (hereafter referred to as “adult escort”) must sign each camper in at the registration table by signing the Camper Check-In form.
3. The Registrar (Camp Director’s wife and assistants) will immediately determine if camper has filled out and turned in a Camper Registration form.
 - a. If a Camper Registration form has not been completed, they will be sent with their adult escort directly to the camp doctor/nurse.
 - b. If a Camper Registration form has been completed, the camper will be directed to a table where his or her dorm Counselor will be waiting to continue check in.
4. The dorm Counselor will then complete the Health Check-in form for each camper.
 - a. Campers bringing *any form* of medication with them (over-the-counter or prescription) will be asked to surrender them to the camp doctor/nurse, along with directions from the parent/guardian of the camper for administering the medications. The camp doctor/nurse will inform each counselor of any campers under his/her care that require medication and give the counselor a written schedule of the frequency/times the medication should be administered. *Under no circumstances should the counselor administer any form of medication to a camper. ALL MEDICATIONS will be dispensed and administered by the camp doctor/nurse.*
5. When the Health Check-in form is completed and turned in to the Registrar and the campers arrival is noted on the Dorm Check-in form, the camper is ready to move in to the dorm. *The camper is now officially in our care.*

6. Each Counselor or Assistant Counselor will escort *each camper in their care* to their respective dormitory – Every camper must complete the check-in process BEFORE THEY CHOOSE THEIR BED AND MOVE THEIR BELONGINGS INTO THE DORMITORY.
7. The assistant counselor will be available to assist campers in choosing their bed and unpacking their things.

Check-Out

Here is a step-by-step outline of our procedures for **camper checkout**:

1. At the close of camp, each dorm will be dismissed to their dormitory to finish packing all of their belongings and place them neatly on their bunk – You may wish to allow some time for each camper to pack up some of their belongings earlier in the day in order to expedite this process.
2. The camper check out process will take place beginning at 12 Noon in the lodge.
3. When the parent/guardian/adult escort arrives at the check-out table, they will sign out the campers to their care. This confirms that the parent/guardian of the camper *or someone designated by the parent or guardian of the camper* will be responsible transporting the camper back home.
4. *The camper is now in the care of his/her parent/guardian and is no longer officially in our care.*
5. Once the camper is checked out, direct the parent/guardian/escort to the sleeping area where they can collect the camper's belongings.
6. Counselors and Assistant counselors should stay with their campers until their parents pick them up.

V. Camper Behavior Management and Discipline

Philosophy

The primary responsibility for camper behavior management lies with the counselors, however, ALL staff members are responsible for behavior management during general camp activities and during “free time.” All staff members are responsible for helping campers achieve positive attitudes and outcomes in the areas of problem solving and interaction with others. Any discipline required to achieve these objectives should be fair and consistent, and corporal punishment is forbidden. If discipline is required, the staff member should consult with the counselor in order to achieve a consistent approach with the camper.

Campers and Respect

Campers are encouraged to *respect authority AND other campers* for their own safety and enjoyment and that of others. This requires conformity to general camp rules and specific rules set out by counselors and activity coordinators.

Campers are *encouraged to*:

- *Respect people since a major goal of camp is to develop a spirit of cooperation, rather than competition between individuals and dorms.*
- Show respect and concern for the personal property of others since we seek to reflect “The Golden Rule” in our conduct.
- Learn and demonstrate acts of courtesy, clean language, honesty and wholesome relationships with others, including cleanliness and good grooming.
- Respect others by striving to keep the dorm neat and clean – One of our objectives is leave the property in at least as good or better condition than when we arrived.

Campers are *to avoid*:

- Displays of hostility or disrespect toward other campers, counselors, camp administrators, workers or guests – This behavior needs to be addressed right away when it occurs and with appropriate firmness.
- Practical jokes or any other acts that may be construed as disrespectful toward authority are not allowed.

Guidelines for Preventing and Handling Problems

General Guidelines:

1. Be prepared for the day – Anticipate and formulate “free time” activities and discussions.
2. Spend as much time as possible with your campers, supervising their activities and their time in the dorm. *Consider yourself part of their group!*
3. Be patient, fair and impartial in all your dealings.
4. Look for early signs of friction between campers, such as loud or angry voices, pushing, teasing, etc. *Attempt to diffuse conflict before it has time to develop.*
5. Accentuate the positive and be quick to praise, slow to wrath!
6. Let your campers know the rules from the beginning and periodically restate them.

7. Know when to overlook small things . . . Pray for wisdom and discernment in knowing *when* and *how* to intervene in situations.
8. Above all, be consistent and avoid threats and/or threatening language.
9. Maintain a sense of humor. Be able to laugh at yourself. The skillful and careful use of humor can help diffuse many situations. Ask God for wisdom in this area of your responsibility.
10. *Listen to your campers.* Get all the facts before you make decisions or judgments.
11. *REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE – Matthew 7:12).*

Minor infractions are defined as actions that do not affect the attitude, health or safety of the camper or others.

EXAMPLES: Not paying attention; horseplay; poor manners; argumentative attitude; failure to follow directions; etc.

PROCEDURES for handling minor infractions:

- Mention the infraction to the group *without mentioning any names* – Make your comments a learning experience for everyone as you repeat the rules governing the misbehavior.
- Talk *privately* with the camper involved – Explain what he/she did wrong and calmly describe the action you will take if the behavior is repeated.

DISCIPLINE SUGGESTIONS for repeated minor infractions:

- Extra cleanup duties.
- Missing five to ten minutes of an activity with a “time out”.
- Walking or sitting with the counselor for a period of time.

Major infractions are defined as any actions that can cause dissension among campers or affect the health, attitude or safety of the camper or others.

EXAMPLES: Repeated acts of misbehavior with no response to the counselor’s correction; intentional misbehavior or rebellion; repeated attempts to talk or make excessive noise after lights are turned out; failure to be in an assigned area or activity; repeated improper, crude or vulgar language; horseplay resulting in injury to the camper or others; blatant disrespect or rebellion toward any staff member.

PROCEDURES for handling major infractions:

1. Bring the camper to the camp director – Be prepared to explain the details of the situation.

2. Upon due consideration, the camp director will administer discipline as deemed appropriate, including the involvement of the camper's parents, dismissal from camp, etc.
 - We ask all staff members for their support of these decisions.
 - If for any reason you disagree with the directors' decision, please discuss your disagreement with them privately.
 - We need your input and support as we seek to apply *The Golden Rule* in these matters.

VI. Accident and Emergency Procedures

1. All Counselors and Activity Coordinators will receive a whistle.
2. The EAP Team will have walkie talkies.
3. If an emergency occurs, **blow three short blasts on your whistle** to activate the emergency plan.
4. These emergencies include: Medical emergencies; lost camper; unidentified stranger; out of control individual, etc.
5. EAP team will respond to a reported accident or emergency and will determine the appropriate response.
6. **In case of severe weather or tornado:**
 - a. The dinner bell will continuously ring with the megaphone siren.
 - b. Immediately take shelter in the camper dorms, or closest available shelter.