

Day Camps/Kid's Clubs

Day Camps and Kid's Clubs are children's programs including music, games, crafts, Bible stories and lessons, and recreation. Camps/Clubs are designed for children ages 4 to 12. They can be utilized in campgrounds, backyards, parks, and the beach. Most camps/clubs run for 2 hours each day.

Youth are capable of leading all phases of day camp/kid's club and are expected to do so under adequate adult supervision. Remember that you are here to share the love and care of Jesus. It is imperative that no undue pressure is placed upon a child/children to make a decision. Please refer to the LCM "Childhood Evangelism" training piece for instructions about invitations and helping children make decisions.

Over-planning and flexibility are instrumental in the success and fun at day camps/kid's clubs for kids and leaders.

THE BASICS

Definition: Missions day camp and kid's clubs are an outdoor experience for children that blends the resources of the natural environment, the peer group, the leaders, and the Bible to contribute to physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth.

Purpose: Doing missions through day camps and kid's clubs is seeking to meet the needs of children (and families) who have little or no religious background. The camp/club is used as a tool to gain attention, earn the right to be heard, build a relationship, and share the Good News of Jesus with children and adults.

Goals:

1. To reach children and families for Jesus.
2. To help children develop new friendships, good life habits, a love for nature, and an understanding of God's plan for all of life – then the person may be led to see God's plan for his/her own life.

Concepts:

- Does not presuppose a religious orientation to the child's life.
- Does not rely on long-term involvement with the participant, although that may be the outcome of the experience.
- Does provide opportunities to share Jesus in fresh ways.
- Does offer a flexible program that is adaptable to your groups strengths and interests.

PLANNING, INVOLVMENT, AND TRAINING

Planning:

1. Become familiar with the location type and characteristics.
2. Try to get an estimate as the number of children to expect. Plan on a ratio of 1 leader to 6 children.
3. Plan to generate interest in the camp/club through banners, flags, signs, clowns, and a big smile.

Involvement:

1. Let the mission project be church wide.
2. Ask a professional and/or Sunday School teacher to prepare easy to use lesson plans and workbooks from selected material for the leaders.

3. Have organizations gather and donate supplies and refreshments (WMU, Sunday School, GA's, RA's, etc.)
4. Involve the youth that will be leading the camp/club in the preparation of the camp/club.

Training

Leaders in a mission camp/club should prepare themselves through training in the following areas.

1. Personal Bible study and devotion.
2. Personal witnessing training. (*See Me, an Evangelist?: Every Christian's Guide to Caring Evangelism* by William McKay.)
3. Missions etiquette: Acceptance of the setting they will be working in and the people they will be ministering to.
4. Missions concepts such as the attitude of servanthood; persons, not things; love in action.
5. Specific camp/club activities.
 - Arrival Activities: For early arrivals get their attention and keep the kids involved by using effective action games and activities with lots of action, movement, and laughter.
 - Bible study activities: Be able to tell all stories from memory.
 - Music activities: Have the songs listed, be able to teach them and sing them. Do NOT rely on children for all your ideas of songs to sing.
 - Games: List them, teach them, and play them.
 - Crafts: List them, teach them, and make them. All leaders should be familiar with each craft in order to help the children make it.
 - Nature and conservation activities: study the environment; utilize God's beautiful creation as a teaching tool. Do not destroy the environment.
 - Refreshments: Be aware of specific needs of individual children.
 - Clean up: Canvass the camp/club site before you leave each day in order to leave it cleaner than you found it.
6. Practice the project: Training should include doing the day camp/kid's club in your own community before taking it to the mission field. This serves as a way of preparation and an avenue of mission education to show those missions includes our community.

MATERIAL RESOURCES

Several materials existed which can be used for day camps and kid's clubs. LCM recommends that you use these materials as resources for ideas to develop your own camp or club. By doing this we assure that each week will be different than the last. As your team develops its curriculum, focus on material designed for non-Christian children. Assume that children have never been to church, do not know church vocabulary, and have never sung Jesus Loves Me. Operating under this assumption, we hope to reach each child. Some of material resources for developing your curriculum are:

- Team Kid (preschool and children)
- Friend's Club (Kid's clubs designed by WMU)
- ??? (New Backyard Bible Club material from LifeWay)

Packaging Your Materials

1. Purchase, sort out, and package all camp/club supplies before you arrive on field.
2. Provide enough materials so each day camp/kid's club team has there own, especially crayons, scissors, etc.
3. It is helpful to have a leaflet or some sort of literature for the children to take home at the end of the day.
4. Left over supplies: check with local supervisor to see if they can be used on the field. Leave them for the mission area if possible.
5. Camp/Club checklist and supply boxes. Prepare each camp/club team one box of general supplies and one box of teaching materials divided according to daily needs.

Check each box by a master checklist before leaving for the field and every day before each camp/club.

Sample checklist for one camp/club: name tags, construction paper, games list, tape, glue, Bible, Bible questions, ball, teaching pictures, crayons, markers, pupil handouts, unit memory verse, balloons, etc.

Presenting the Day Camp/Kid's Club

Sample Schedule

9:00 – 9:30	Canvassing—invite children around the site to your camp/club.
9:15 – 9:30	Early arrival activities
9:30 – 9:45	Nametags, get acquainted games
9:45 – 10:00	Singing
10:00 – 10:15	Bible Story/Scripture memory/Prayer
10:15 – 10:30	Craft related to the Bible Story
10:30 – 10:45	Games/songs
10:45 – 11:00	Refreshments
11:00 – 11:20	Fun craft
11:20 – 11:30	Closing activity and prayer/song
11:30 – 11:45	Walk children home and clean up site

Publicity

- Leaflets can be handed out person to person
- The use of clowns, characters, juggling, and so on can and do attract children's attention.

Keep the Program Going (Essential to keeping kids at camp/club)

1. Each person on the team must know what comes next and who leads it.
2. Anticipate the material needed and have it waiting.
3. Be able to tell stories from memory.
4. Be able to teach all games, songs, and crafts.
5. Keep the action flowing.

Keep accurate records

- Complete the LCM daily record sheet for each ministry and team.
- When kids arrive record their name and campsite/address for safety and follow up reasons.

HELPFUL HINTS:

1. Place children in age and grade levels and tell stories at each age level.
2. Always tell stories from memory.
3. Choose games that are safe and able to be well monitored and controlled.
4. Include songs that are fun and silly as well as "Sunday School" songs.
5. Use variety in your presentations by including puppets, clowns, cartoon characters, mime, drama, etc.
6. Plan for individual needs and how to deal positively with rowdiness.
7. Arrive early to your location.
8. Leave some youth to set up site while others canvass area for children.
9. Remember that ministry begins when the first child arrives!
10. There will probably be many early arrivals.

11. Assign youth and adults to be responsible for registering each child AS SOON AS THE CHILD ARRIVES.
12. Be sure to talk to parents and invite their visit to the camp/club.
13. Begin and end on time.
14. Avoid "church language" that is unfamiliar with secular children.
15. Be prepared with ministry follow up plans.