

Allow me to officially welcome you to a week of ministry at Creekside. I would like to express my personal thanks that you made the sacrifice to spend an entire week pouring your life into students. Forest Home's youth camps are "counselor-centered" ministries, which in essence means we don't exist without you! You are the ones in the cabins and on the Sky Trail with them, and it's our desire to assist you in any way we can. Our staff is here to serve you so that you can be freed up to spend maximum time with your students—so please take advantage of the incredible ministry opportunities that await you. Know also that you are being prayed for daily (*really!*) by us as a staff. We firmly believe that nothing of significance can be accomplished apart from a dependence on God through prayer. We hope this is your experience as well.

Please take some time to read the counselor insert carefully. Inside, we've included some extremely important information that will help you in your ministry to your students this week. Whether you've been a counselor before or are brand new, you are going to want to be as prepared as possible. This booklet will hopefully be a help as you dive into all we have in store for you this week.

Again, we are glad you are here. It's our hope that this week would be both a meaningful and memorable one for you and your campers.

## Nate and the Creekside Staff

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Our desire this week is to help you, the church, fulfill its role as the main way that your kids will learn about and experience God. At Forest Home, we want campers to encounter Jesus, experience transformation and go back home ready to change their world.

We are very aware that we get to be a part of what you're already doing the other 51 weeks of the year and are grateful for that partnership.

Over the years, we have asked questions like "what type of impact does a week of camp have on the life of a camper?" or "How do we know if we are accomplishing what we set out to accomplish?" After many conversations with you, our church partners, we have developed some ministry outcomes. These outcomes are changes in behavior as a result of time spent at Forest Home. Below are some of the outcomes for this week of camp:

- Campers will make decisions to follow Christ.
- Campers will become more committed to the local church.
- Church leaders feel supported (*partnered with*) and cared for.
- Church groups and individuals are inspired to continue and / or begin the work of putting their faith into action in their community.
- Campers have learned and wrestled with Biblical Truths.
- Campers see the need and benefit of solo time with God.
- Campers connect their own identity with their relationship with God.
- Campers believe they can be valuable contributing members of society.

Ultimately, our desire for every junior high student in camp is that they either come to know Christ or continue to grow in Him this week. Program alone cannot accomplish this goal. We recognize our direct dependence on the Holy Spirit to work as He will. It is our hope that students would be able to take a short break from busy life at home and take part in a week of fun and spiritual growth.

## Your Role

You, the counselor, are **key** to this camp. Your life will be an open book for your campers to read as you spend extended periods of time with them. There is no opportunity for you to fake it in this environment. How you act this week is much more important than what you may say. Your attitude will be continually examined by the campers. You set the standard of camp. Take the challenge!

## **Building Relationships**

Make every effort to learn the names of each camper in your cabin as soon as possible. Call them by name and let them know you care about them as individuals. We encourage you to make an appointment with each of your campers some time during the week for quality one-on-one time to talk and hang out. Take every opportunity you can to encourage them or build them up when you see positive characteristics in their lives.

## **Spiritual Impact**

Make it clear from the onset that you are interested in spiritual things. You don't have to feel uneasy about this. Encourage your group to expect to talk openly about spiritual things, as well as see spiritual growth at the end of the week. As much as you can, help them set some realistic goals for spiritual growth. One suggestion might even be that you have some sort of group cabin devotions in the morning for those interested. Evening cabin times are key. There is definitely a place for being a little "wild" in your cabin, and having fun is a good thing. However, balance your evening time with some quality discussion. This is often the time when campers are the most ready to talk about the day's events. Try to tie together their impressions of the whole day. Feel free to discuss evening gatherings, team conversations or anything else that will direct your cabin spiritually. It's also a good idea to follow up with your campers once you leave Forest Home. We encourage you to keep in contact with them regularly if you don't already.

## **Take Care of Yourself**

"Ministering from a full cup" is a widely known Christian cliché. Whatever you want to call it, your ministry effectiveness to your kids is directly proportional to your own walk with God. Many of us come to camp tired and burned out, needing our own vacation! Don't forget to take time for yourself for the purpose of spiritual renewal. "The spiritual stuff" is not just for your kids! Remain teachable and God will surely work in your life as well as in your campers. For your sake and the sake of your ministry this week, discipline yourself to get up a little earlier and take a short walk, sit on a rock, or come to the dining room early and spend some time with God. Forest Home is a special place to do this, so take advantage of it—you'll be glad you did.

**1. READY TO SHARE:** God so often uses the camp experience to spur trusting relationships, and to lead people to Himself. Trust is built at the lake, during competitions, at meals, and during cabin conversations. This trust is important in the sharing of the Good News. To help build trust, here are some things to think about:

***The talk and the walk:*** What speaks loudest is not what we say we believe, but who we are. At a camp setting, you instruct and then stay with them. They will not only listen to you during cabin conversations, but will watch to see how much the Bible makes a difference in your life.

***With gentleness and respect:*** Be careful not to criticize or condemn the church or traditions of campers' families. Ask honest questions about what they believe and why. Help them understand the essence of the gospel. Remember that campers are people, not projects.

***One step closer:*** Often times we look for first time commitments, but it is important to understand that we are all on the path of coming one step closer to God. Your campers will be on different parts of this path. Be aware of where they are, and continue to guide them along the way.

**2. GOD'S UNIQUE DESIGN:** Sharing the Gospel is less about having all the right words and education, and more about coming to the realization of God's unique design in our lives and in this world. Sharing the Good News with your campers will require an understanding of their world and your own. Sharing also requires a sense of gentleness, respect, articulation of your story, grace and compassion.

***With gentleness and respect:*** In the book of Acts, Paul made a case for Christianity (see Acts 26) in front of governor Festus and King Agrippa. He shared his story and reasoned with officials. His confrontation is done with gentleness and respect.

***Telling your story:*** In John 9, Jesus heals a man who was blind from birth. The man then went out and told his story. Regardless of where you are in your journey of faith, you have a story. So, even if you don't know a lot about the Bible, you do know what God has done for you.

***Jesus showed grace and compassion:*** Be ready for those who have had a rough past. Show compassion, grace, and love as Jesus did with the woman at the well (see John 4). Emphasize a relationship with Jesus.

***Turn to the Scriptures:*** Let the passages speak for themselves. If campers ask questions about the Scriptures, take the time to look through it with them. Ask questions and help guide them to a better understanding.

3. THE GOOD NEWS

**The Bad News**

All are guilty of breaking God's law.

- None is righteous (*Romans 3:10*)
- All have sinned (*Romans 3:23*)
- We're prisoners of sin (*Galatians 3:22*)

The penalty for breaking God's law is death and eternal separation.

- Sins' wages are death (*Romans 6:23*)
- Sin sows destruction (*Galatians 6:8*)
- Sin separates us from God (*Colossians 1:21*)

We can do nothing to resolve this situation on our own.

- Obeying the law doesn't save us (*Galatians 2:16*)
- Good deeds don't save us (*Ephesians 2:8–9*)
- His mercy saves us (*Titus 3:4–7*)

**The Good News**

God loves us.

- God loves everyone (*John 3:16*)
- God showed His love to us (*Romans 5:8*)
- His love is great (*Ephesians 2:4–5*)

Christ died to forgive sin and restore our relationship with God.

- We are reconciled by Jesus' death (*Romans 5:10*)
- We can have a restored relationship (*1 Corinthians 5:18*)
- In Christ, we are restored to purity (*Colossians 1:22*)

We can be "saved" from the bad news.

- We must believe in Jesus (*John 3:16*)

We must repent.

- We must turn from sin, toward God (*2 Peter 3:9*)

Salvation has consequences for today and eternity.

- We receive forgiveness (*Colossians 1:14*)
- We have a new life (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)
- We have peace with God (*Romans 5:1*)
- We have confidence before God (*Ephesians 3:12*)
- Nothing can separate us from God's love (*Romans 8:35–39*)
- God works in us (*Philippians 1:6*)
- We have eternal life (*John 5:24*)

- Are you sensing the incredible challenge ahead of you?
- Are you excited about the opportunity to influence God's kingdom?

Here are four perspectives that will help you along your way.

**1. THE CAMPER'S PERSPECTIVE:** I'm the reason camp is taking place. You might find me high-strung, low-key, confused, or totally on track. No matter what my age, disposition, or social status, here's what I expect you to do:

**Have fun:** I will get excited about things that excite you, but I must sense your genuine desire to be involved with me. You have to earn the right to be heard by demonstrating you enjoy spending time with me.

**Set limits:** I might not seem like I want limits, but if you do not set any, I will not respect you. When you set them, I will expect you to be a consistent and impartial enforcer.

**Discipline with love:** I am not as old as you. I will make mistakes, and sometimes I really don't understand what I've done. Give me reasons for the discipline. When you correct me, be reasonable, gentle, and firm. Don't lose your cool, because you will lose your credibility.

**Listen:** I really want the opportunity to express myself. By carefully listening, you will earn the chance to get next to me. Ask me to clarify something you don't understand as you listen, and I will trust you even more.

**Keep things in confidence:** I will trust you more if you keep the personal things I share between us, unless I'm in danger of being harmed, and then you will need to report that to the proper authorities.

**Offer praise:** If I do something good, make a big deal of it. Being affirmed is important.

**Be a good example:** You cannot say one thing and do another. If you do, you've lost your credibility.

**2. CAMP DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE:** I'm the one ultimately responsible for guests and to see that the camp's objectives are fulfilled in the lives of campers and staff. With so many people on the grounds and so much going on, there is no way I can do my job alone. Therefore, I'm counting on you to demonstrate the following:

**A good attitude:** It's important to me and the overall program that you have a positive approach. For the sake of this ministry, I'm counting on you to be supportive when it comes to 1) leadership during strenuous or seemingly juvenile activity, 2) food that is not your favorite, 3) other counselors who rub you the wrong way, 4) regulations and procedures you don't fully understand, and 5) the speaker whose message might not be as relevant as you would like.

**Respect for property:** Please take care of the place, conserve energy whenever possible, report any maintenance problems immediately, and help with recycling.

**Maturity:** Within reason, have fun, but don't get carried away with pranks and raids that can escalate into wars of retaliation and completely overshadow your reason for being here.

**Appropriate physical contact:** Be cautious about being physical with campers, especially those of the opposite sex.

**Knowledge of emergency procedures:** Safety of everyone on the property is the highest priority. Upon arrival, please be sure you know the camp's emergency procedures.

**3. THE PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE:** I'm the person who looks at one particular camper in your care as "flesh and blood." For a few days, you are taking my place as provider and protector. I am counting on you—no, exhorting you—to be all of these and more:

**Conscientious:** Be safe and do not place yourself or my child in harm's way.

**Encouraging:** Inspire my child to try new and challenging things.

**Sensitive:** Recognize and be responsive to my child's needs.

**Spiritual:** Take time to talk and walk through my child's relationship with Christ.

**Available:** Spend significant time with my child.

**4. GOD'S PERSPECTIVE:** Understanding and applying God's perspective is what turns activity into ministry. The following is really what this challenge is about:

**Divine calling:** You are not in this position by accident. You have this great responsibility and incredible privilege to counsel campers. Are you ready to listen, learn, and grow?

**Loving the unlovable:** You are to welcome all your campers. Some of them will be difficult to love. They need attention too.

**Renewed personal commitment:** Spend time with God daily. Pray for yourself and your campers.

**Understanding spiritual success:** Spirituality is not usually made up of big decisions, but in reality, it comes out of little ones, such as deciding to get along with parents, helping at home, or submitting to authority. Salvation is the first step toward spiritual growth, but do not judge your success as a counselor on how many campers you lead to Christ. Rather, judge by your faithfulness to Him.

Cabin Conversation time is an important part of the week for you and your students. Each day, you will take time to discuss the Behind the Scenes times, seminars and main sessions of the day. The purpose for this is twofold. First, it gives students a chance to really process and personalize what they've experienced that day. Second, it is designed to facilitate discussion about spiritual things between you and your students as a part of an overall teaching / role-modeling experience. This time, for many students, is where they are able to process what they have heard and read throughout the day. Let your students know from the beginning that the time is mandatory. The following are some general principles for leading a great cabin conversation.

### Before You Start

Prepare. Pay attention to the morning solo times and evening messages and take notes of your own that you can refer back to. During or after meetings, take time to look over the discussion questions and formulate some of your own that will promote discussion among your cabin. Let your group know from the beginning your expectations (*i.e., length of time, courtesy, etc.*).

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**1. EVERYTHING MATTERS:** Everything you do will feed into the time you actually open the Bible with campers (*e.g. making jokes about questionable things, taking more than your share of pancakes*). You spend all day and all night with your campers; this is a great opportunity to talk about truth in the midst of the daily activities.

- Your actions throughout the day will provide natural opportunities to apply truth or discuss Biblical principles—not about unnatural God-talk or an over spiritualization, but about asking God to guide you through the natural teaching points He gives you.
- Think about natural teaching points in your life . . . learning isn't just about sitting in a circle to have a discussion, but about pointing out the lessons in every aspect of life.

**2. EVERYONE'S SPECIAL:** No "typical" camper—every individual has a unique set of parents, background experience, intellect, etc. Get to know the kids well. All kids, no matter what background, will need to be challenged Biblically. No one is beyond learning.

**3. GODLY GOALS:** What do you want to accomplish in this series of cabin conversations? You can have inadequate and positive goals. The goals you decide to set at the beginning of the week (*and summer*) will guide you through your cabin conversations.

#### ***Inadequate Goals:***

- Having campers parrot back verses out of context, like a Bible quiz. Bible facts are important, but truth needs to be related to life.
- Giving campers a religious feeling, a spiritual shot in the middle of a busy program.
- Providing a counselor with an opportunity to preach or prove how much he or she knows.

#### ***Positive Goals:***

- Allow campers to interact with truth.
- Help them discover what the passage says and make a personal application.
- Encourage them to read the Bible so they will take back new skills for daily use at home.

- Enable them to understand more of who God is, and what He is like. (*e.g. Why did Jesus Christ come to earth? Who is He? What is significant about His life and death?*)
- Help them make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

**4. TRUTH'S CONSEQUENCES:** The format of cabin conversations will be discussion rather than lecture, because we want campers to learn how to discover truth for themselves. People forget 90% of what they hear, but remember 90% of what they discover themselves.

Tips for good discussions:

- In a Bible discussion, the text is taken seriously. What does it say? The answer to this question is in the text, not our opinions or imaginations. Have the Bible open, look at the words, the way the words are used and structured . . . what does it say?
- When someone makes a contribution that is clearly not on target, never say, "That's wrong!" Instead ask, "In what verse did you find that idea?" You are their guide through a very confusing path, so continue to help them walk the trail.
- Help them see that the Bible isn't just a book for experts, but God speaks to all of us through His Word.
- Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion—participation is important because campers are important and their contribution is valued.

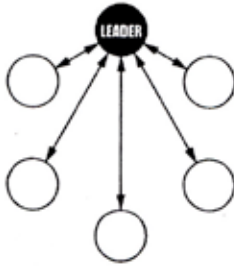
**5. SETTING UP THE CONVERSATION:** Think in advance how you will open your cabin conversations. How will you set the scene? Can you introduce the time with something that happened during the day? Is there a prop you can use? Remember that God's Word is alive, so the more you can help it come to life for your campers, the better.

***Ideas for cabin conversations:***

- Have someone ready to summarize the day you've all had or summarize your last cabin conversation (*you may even do this with a non-cooperative camper—it may help them during your discussion time*).
- Younger campers may enjoy acting out the passage: read the story, assign roles, and then talk about what happened.
- Divide campers into groups of two or three. Let them read the text and give them something to solve within the text.
- Don't be afraid of silence.
- Don't be the answer person.
- Encourage quiet campers by directing questions to them and looking at them as they speak (*you can discourage too-talkative campers this way as well—by directing questions away from them*).
- Handle tangents by asking campers to look it up and report on it later.
- Let the Bible speak for itself, don't make it say more or less than it does.
- Insist on reality; ask a second question if the answer seems too rehearsed. Get to heart of the matter and make campers think (*a.k.a. reword spiritual clichés*).

## Group Dynamics

The dynamics within a group, what kind of interaction is taking place, are also important. Look at the diagrams below and compare the discussion patterns.

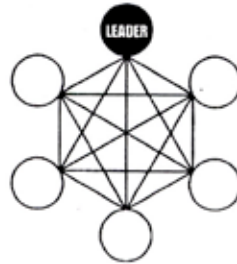
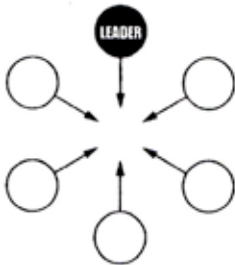


### ***The Free-for-All***

The leader asks a question. Everyone talks at once. No one listens to anyone else. No conclusions are drawn, and content is vague. The leader loses control.

### ***The School Teacher***

The leader asks a question, and someone answers it. The leader asks another question, and someone else answers it. The format is teacher/pupil, like a classroom quiz.



### ***The Ideal***

The leader asks a question. Someone contributes, and another person adds another insight. Participants listen to each other and build on each other's contributions. An on-target discussion.

A good Bible discussion isn't a question/answer time between a leader and a camper, but genuine group discussion. That demands that the leader have good questions. The questions must stimulate thought and not be so obvious that they insult the intelligence of those participating.

Church debrief time is an important point of connection and community building for your youth group. You spend so much time in your cabin groups during the week that a larger sense of community can feel minimized. The fact is that you came to camp as a group and will leave as a group. Because of this, we have scheduled a Church Debrief time during the week.

This time is set aside for you as the youth director to share your vision for ministry with your group. It's an opportunity for your group to have adequate "closure" on a powerful week together with an emphasis on "what happens now."

This is also a time for you to be an encouragement to your students in their progress toward maturity as human beings, as well as a time to admonish them to grow spiritually. Finally, it is a time for them to understand fellowship as it was intended to be, and a time for them to become aware of God's call to love and to serve one another in and out of the Church. Below are a few suggestions on what to discuss.

1. Share upcoming events for the next 3 to 4 months.
  - A. Youth group activities
  - B. Church-related activities
  - C. Encourage church involvement
  - D. Encourage service / ministry orientation
2. Talk with students about your youth group ministry.
  - A. What can we do as individuals to impact and minister to our families or those with whom we live?
  - B. How can we be involved with those in our church?
  - C. How can we impact our community for Christ?
3. Have students in your group talk about what has happened in their lives this week.
  - A. Encourage students to talk about any decisions they made this week.
  - B. Have others talk about their challenge to grow in specific areas.
4. Pray together for:
  - A. Church and its leadership
  - B. Youth group and its leadership
  - C. Forest Home and its leadership
5. Have a worship experience together.
6. Wrap-up:
  - A. Be an encourager.
  - B. Share your commitment to them.
  - C. Share your hopes and dreams for them individually and as a group.

## Schedule

Included on the back of your nametag is a week-at-a-glance schedule. You can also pick up a larger schedule from the deans any time during the week. Please do not share the camp schedule with your campers. We may make changes, which would be tough on camper expectations. Also, the element of surprise doesn't give them a chance to buy out of an activity before it's even begun.

## Cell Phones

You may notice when you visit us we now have cell phone service in the canyon. Because of our commitment to providing our guests with Sanctuary and Solitude, a core value, Forest Home is making the decision to remain a cell phone free place. This means that we will continue to ask our youth campers to leave all electronics (*including cell phones*) at home and ask that all of our guests join us in our efforts to keep our open / public areas at Forest Home cell phone free.

### **Core value: Sanctuary and Solitude**

*The "wilderness" has always had a unique way of disarming our hesitations, dissolving our reluctant spirits, and giving us a context for simplicity. This remoteness displaces us far enough from our routine where we hear God better, see Him clearer, and breathe deeper. We help our guests realize the value of remoteness and silence the distractions of life, so they can find true rest in Him.*

## Discipline

With 200-plus junior high campers each week, control is a significant issue at Creekside. As a counselor, it can sometimes be difficult to manage your group of campers. Feel free to ask for help. We as a staff are here to back you up and assist where needed. However, we are not a police force. This means that part of your ministry this week is being in control of your campers during meals, meetings, activities and at night in your cabins. You will always be sitting closer to students than we will, so a quick "shh," tap on the shoulder, or knowing glance to someone being disruptive will help us out tremendously during those meeting times.

It's important that your attitude be gracious, but firm, when it comes to discipline. Your campers need to know that when they choose to not respect you, other campers and the Forest Home staff, they have in essence chosen subsequent consequences. The consequences may range from a warning to something more severe. This frees you up from being the "bad counselor" because you haven't "given out anything." They chose the consequences. In order for this to be effective though, your students have to know what's expected of them and the consequences that may follow. Please feel free to use our camp deans as a resource this week.

## Health Care

It is the responsibility of the counselor to see that the health and safety of campers is maintained during the week at camp, and that any illness or accident is reported prior to leaving camp. Please inform our health care provider with the name and cabin number of any campers who may have a chronic illness such as asthma or extreme allergies. You may wish to have them check with the deans if there is any question regarding activity or diet. Question each of your campers the first night to see if any of them are on medications to be taken while at camp. Make sure the health care provider **RECEIVES** this medication.



It is the First Aid Station's policy to contact parents and guardians if a camper under the age of 18 experiences any of the following:

- Persistent fever of 100 or higher
- Vomiting more than once or vomiting in the presence of other symptoms
- Severe cold, allergy or flu
- Suspected or possible broken bones
- Any sprain or strain causing severe pain
- Any cut or abrasion that is more than superficial
- Any complication with a pre-existing condition
- Acute eye, ear or abdominal pain
- Any time there is illness of an unknown origin
- If there are any questions regarding medications sent to camp with the camper
- If the camper needs a referral to a medical doctor for any reason
- Any life-threatening conditions

### At Creekside:



Our first aid provider and camp deans are available if you have an **URGENT** need after lights out. Please use the phone in the back of the dining room and follow the printed instructions. If you have an **URGENT** medical or maintenance need and cannot reach any of our staff, use any red camp emergency phone.

### At Forest Center:

Call the First Aid Station at **x326** for medical emergencies, or contact the Roundhouse. If the Roundhouse is closed, go to the Emergency Phone outside the Roundhouse or Mountain View Hall. Pick up the phone and listen for emergency options.

### Front Desk / Roundhouse:

**DIAL "0" FROM ANY HOUSE PHONE (or 389-2300 from a pay phone)**

<b>Hours:</b> Monday–Friday	7:30AM–11:00PM
Saturday	7:30AM–3:00PM
Sunday	10:00AM–Midnight

### First Aid Station:

DIAL **x326** FROM ANY CAMP PHONE

It is located across from Blinco Lodge (*The Den & Crafts Center*) on the north side of the main road.

**Hours:** 8:00AM–10:00PM  
10:00PM–8:00AM (**On call/EMERGENCIES ONLY**)







