

EQUIPPING

for intergenerational ministry

Supporting camping - Congregations



How can congregations support the camping journey?

Camping experiences offered to school-aged students throughout the LCA via Christian Life Weeks (CLW) and weekend camps provide an opportunity for a lasting impact on faith development.

We often refer to camping as a peak experience. Camps offer an opportunity for young people to 'go deeper' than they can at a once a week youth event. Young people often report a camping experience as a turning point for them in the formation of their faith.

Research shows us that when young people feel connected and integrated into their wider faith community they are more likely to stay. Therefore, it is important that the congregation acknowledges and participates in the journey of camp. This involvement can assist young people ensure that the experience of camp is not forgotten but becomes an important part of their lifelong faith formation.

How can you help?

PRAYER

Prayer is a powerful tool to encourage and empower people. Congregations can show support to young people by praying for them.

Pray for them before camp –the names of those going on camp could be listed in the bulletin. Bring the young people up to the front

of the worship service and pray over them before camp. Encourage your congregation to pray for them while they are away.

Pray for them after their return – encourage the prayer team of your congregation to surround these young people in prayer after camp so that they will be supplied with all they need to forge ahead.

CONNECTION

It is vital that a connection is made with these young people to show them that as their church family you care about them and that their journey is important to you. Research shows us that young people are looking for authentic and caring relationships. You will be amazed at how this intentional communication will impact your congregation.

Give the young people an opportunity to reflect and share their experiences.

1. Personal testimonies are powerful

Encourage the young people to share about their experience on camp, what they learnt and the things that impacted them the most. Help them to reflect and write down these things and share these at a space provided during a worship service, at a youth event or at a special celebration meal. (See No. 2).

2. Celebration meal

Some of the young people that attended camp from your area may not be regularly involved in a faith community. Host



a celebration meal for young people, parents, key leaders and mentors of your congregation. Include a time where they can share. This is a great way to include those on the 'outer' and encourage relationships and connections.

3. Expression

Allow the young people to create something to show their experience at camp. Photos, PowerPoint or video can be used. Ask them what they want to create to share.

LIVING IT OUT

To ensure this growth continues, find people within your congregation who can intentionally support and care for the campers.

1. Encourage Bible reading and devotions

We know that regular time in God's word encourages us in our walk. Often it is hard to know where to start. Help young people by providing an appropriate study resource and encourage them to identify time during the week that they could spend time learning more about their Father.

Is it possible to offer a small group for the young people to continue their walk together? It can be for a set time with the option of continuing if the group wishes to. In this time provide tools for their toolkit to ensure this new growth continues as they remain connected to the vine. Encourage conversations about walking with faith in every area of their lives and that God isn't just for Sunday mornings.

2. Help them to identify their gifts & talents

Have intentional conversations with the young people to find how they can use their

new-found enthusiasm to encourage and empower their church family. (See the Grow Ministries equipping sheet – 'Encouraging gifts and talents' for ideas.)

3. Worship time

A response that we often hear after camp is that "my church is nothing like camp".

To young people, this is a real concern which needs to be recognised. Rather than looking at this as a negative or criticism, we can encourage our young people to share their thoughts and ideas and seek ways that help them to feel more connected. It is important that the needs of the young people are listened to and provisions made in our congregations that allow them to participate. This allows us to move into a more intergenerational style of ministry where all ages and stages are valued.

This could include;

- Giving them the opportunity to join an existing band, using their musical skills to enhance worship on a regular basis or encourage them to start a new band.
- The use of YouTube clips of songs that they connect to.
- Opportunities for testimonies.
- Involvement in a ministry that has captured their heart.

4. Mentoring relationships

Mentoring creates relationships which in turn help create community within a congregation. It is a way of inviting people to share their lives, their stories and their faith together. It's a way that every congregation can be involved in youth ministry in an enriching and substantial way.

5. Encourage families to share their faith at home

Parents remain the number one influencers of faith. What Mum and Dad do and say is still the biggest factor in whether a child will have faith. Encourage your families to share their faith at home with practical resources.



For more information about Grow Ministries, our resources and training, please call **08 8267 7300** or visit our website: **www.growministries.org.au**

