

**MIDWEST BIBLE  
CAMP STAFF  
HANDBOOK  
&  
POLICY MANUAL**

**AS ADOPTED FROM  
ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN CAMP  
2003 EDITION**

# Prime Goals

In the serious reflection of past staff, the following represent the major reasons for the very existence of Midwest Bible Camp. Every activity should be measured by how well it helps fulfill these purposes:

- I. TO HONOR GOD
- II. TO FIND REAL JOY IN DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
- III. TO COME TO MATURE, LIVING FAITH
- IV. TO DEVELOP SELF-CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN OTHERS.

The following, though not expressing the prime goals of MWBC, are well worth our consideration:

## ***GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN CAMPING***

“The Christian camp should provide opportunities:

1. To deal with campers as individuals, counseling them personally in the areas of their spiritual need (note Jesus' example in John 3-5);
2. To encourage definite spiritual decision at the level of the camper's readiness (as in Jesus' example in John 3:5);
3. To help establish good habits of Christian living--prayer, Bible reading and study, personal devotions, and sharing Christ (2 Timothy 3:14-17; Acts 1:8; 2:42);
4. To have practical experience in leadership, service, and application of spiritual truths to daily living (2 Timothy 2:2; John 13:1-17; Luke 22:24-28).

“In addition, the Christian camp seeks other outcomes related to the total development of the camper, such as:

1. The establishment of sound health habits--cleanliness, adequate rest, proper diet, wholesome exercise, and good attitudes toward the body as God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20);
2. The profitable and wise use of leisure, independent of artificial, machine-made amusements (Ephesians 5:15, 16);
3. Learning outdoor skills as a means of developing character and as training for future Christian service (1 Corinthians 9:19-27; 10:31);
4. Development of the ability to get along with others unselfishly (1 Corinthians 13; Romans 12:9-21);
5. Learning responsibility for one's own decision (Galatians 6:4-9).

"Modification of "Guiding Principles for Christian Camping" by National Sunday School Association, Wheaton, IL, as reprinted in *Help... I'm a Camp Counselor*, Norman Wright (Gospel Light).

## ***GENERAL GUIDELINES***

1. Cooperate with camp personnel by helping to keep the camp beautiful and in good condition.
  - a) Regular cleanup details will be assigned
  - b) Directors will work out a system whereby our campers will clean restrooms.
  - c) The facilities are to be use but do not abuse.
  
2. Cooperate with our camp guidelines and regulations.
  - a) Restricted areas (to campers)
    - i. the lake, except with an adult guide
    - ii. cabin areas of the opposite sex
      - • **Boys are not allowed in the girls' area; girls are not allowed in the boys' area.**  
**Practical jokes and cabin raids are not allowed. Parents expect us to provide a safe and well-supervised atmosphere.**
    - iii. kitchen
  - b) Observe curfew: all staff are to be on grounds by 12:00 midnight, and in cabins by 1:00 a.m. For older sessions, 2 hrs. after lights out, or subject to local curfew.
  - c) Regulations:
    - i. no camper is to use the telephone except with permission from the camp director and accompanied by counselor. All calls are to be collect or credit call.
    - ii. each camper is expected to keep the camp schedule, which has been planned with all campers in mind.
    - iii. no smoking will be permitted; campers found smoking or with any form of tobacco or controlled substance will be sent home; any legally prohibited substances will be turned over to authorities.
    - iv. a camper will not leave any activity except by staff permission.
    - v. campers are not to leave camp except with permission of camp director and accompanied by adult staff.
    - vi. campers should be strongly discouraged from borrowing--even to the point of prohibiting, if possible.
  - d) Campers must observe appropriate dress:
    - i. Appropriate Dress will be no shorter than approximately knee-length. Jeans and slacks are recommended. No "undershirt" style-tank tops will be worn as outerwear, and no bare midriffs are allowed. Tops should be modest. Shoes must be worn at all times outside the cabins. For lake activities, swimsuits will be worn under loose fitting old street clothes and old shoes. [See the dress code illustrated on the web site!](#)
    - ii. A robe or regular clothes must be worn over swimsuits to and from the lake (or pool)
  - e) Boy-girl relationships should always be that which is becoming to Christians
  - f) From the Registration Brochure:
    - i. every person is required to respect the camp schedule
    - ii. all campers will attend the Bible classes, devotionals, chapel services, evening worship, and all other activities unless excused by the camp nurse
    - iii. all campers must be in their cabins after "lights out"
    - iv. no one is permitted to leave the camp grounds without permission from the camp

- director; must be with adult and have parent/guardian approval
- v. no pets, guns, hatchets, or knives are permitted; all kinds of fireworks are forbidden
  - vi. destruction of property or wildlife will not be permitted; flowers are not to be picked, and animals are not to be disturbed
  - vii. directors reserve the right to send any person home if in their judgment such action would improve the present camp session. Under such circumstances, no refunds will be made.

## Counselor and Teacher Together

### *We are partners...*

... you and I; partners with the Lord in a great and rewarding task. We are not here, necessarily, because we love sleeping on cots in open air cabins, running through the woods in the rain, or being eaten alive by bugs. WE ARE NOT HERE FOR A VACATION.

We are here because we love young people. We are here because we love God, and we want our young people to know and love God and His Son Jesus. We have determined in our heart to help these young people to grow spiritually, physically, socially, and mentally--not as a group of young people, but as each individual person growing and maturing at his/her rate and need.

You are a family for the duration of this camp session, and you will live together, eat together, play together, pray together, laugh together, cry together, feel anger together, feel joy together, feel love together, and learn together. You as counselor and teacher will be the guiding influence.

Now, if you put 8 to 10 young people from different places, backgrounds, and stages of maturity--plus a counselor and teacher-- in a rectangular room lined with double bunks and say, "Here, live together for this many days and nights," you can have a completely miserable disaster, or you can have a beautiful, sharing and growing experience.

The key is you--not you, the counselor, or you, the teacher--but YOU--PARTNERS, one in purpose. And the power and energy to move that key is Jesus Christ. When what we do and what we say comes from and a love and knowledge of Jesus Christ, He can do through us what we alone cannot do.

### *Work together as a team*

Discuss ways that will work out best for both of you. Make plans together, and keep your communications open. If a plan isn't working, talk about it and don't be afraid to make a change. You can read in the Staff Manual what your responsibilities are, and where you are expected to be. Be where you are expected to unless you have made prior arrangements with your partner. That way, the burden of responsibility will not fall too heavily on one person.

Although you are designated "counselor" or "teacher," you will find that your roles intertwine. The teacher may find that he/she is counseling, and the counselor may find he/she is teaching in an informal situation. Your insight and experience with each of your campers can help the other to accomplish the growth desired.

**NEVER FEEL LIKE YOU ARE ALONE IN THIS.** Reach out for help when you need it. We can all help each other. We are one big community here, but you are a family within your cabin. Things may not be organized in your cabin exactly as in the cabin next door (except, of course, for the general camp rules). So encourage your campers to ask you if they have a question. Encourage them to ask questions so little rumors won't get started and

cause upsets. If you don't know the answer, say so and then check with the Directors or Spiritual Life Director. Keep confidences with your campers. Be happy--**don't complain**--and encourage your campers not to complain. If you see a camper in your cabin not involved or included make a special effort to include him/her, perhaps by asking another camper to help you. Get to know each camper as an individual, and spend some time alone with each one. Encourage them to try something new--meet new people.

The first few minutes of rest period can be an effective time to communicate to your campers information about activities for the day and other special cabin activities. You may also want to give your Camper Council members (if a council is instituted) a chance to report and get feedback. This will be one of the few times during the day when all your campers are together and quiet.

Camper orientation on the first evening is very important. It is usually conducted by the counselor with the teacher present and participating as each team has planned. Orientation can set the mood for your cabin for the whole session. Get off on the right foot.

Listed below are some things that a counselor is not, and things that a counselor should be. These may help you in how you present yourself to your campers.

#### ***A COUNSELOR IS NOT...***

- A baby-sitter
- A buck sergeant
- Just one step above a camper
- Just to survive
- A judge

#### ***A COUNSELOR IS...***

- A facilitator of all camp aims
- [A representative of the session director in achieving the objectives of the session](#)
- [A representative of the board of directors in providing a spiritually upbuilding session](#)
- A model
- A sharer of confidences
- A giver of support
- A listener

Remember that camp is a deliberate artificial environment designed to facilitate a change (growth). Our priority is souls which we have an opportunity to influence for eternity. Plan to have maximum impact. Let them know what a special place camp is and how wonderful it is to be here together.

It is important for the campers to know what is expected of them. This is accomplished by going over the rules with them at orientation. Don't present them as a list of "no's" that are going to spoil all their fun. Present them in a positive way leading them to understand the purpose of

them.

**The following is an example of some comments you might choose to use before presenting the rules.**

### Introduction to rules

[For Staff:] In our “postmodern” era, many young people (campers and staff) tend to view rules and guidelines as unimportant. Because of the great importance of our work at RCC, because of the vital responsibility we have in making a safe camp, and because of our desire to have God’s blessings as we respect the authority of state and local ordinances, we expect our camp rules and guidelines to be seriously obeyed. We don’t want to create a rigid, military atmosphere, but underlying all we do should be the spiritual attitude of submission and obedience in a spirit of love. Trustees and directors will try to set an example of those qualities

[For campers:] Rules are necessary for orderly living. When we accept the rules, we can concentrate on having fun. Self-discipline allows you to function in whatever situation you find yourself. No discipline allows you to function only in the situation you choose for yourself. Rules are to help, not to hinder. The rules here may not be the same as the rules you follow elsewhere, but each has a purpose for this situation.

Accepting rules helps us to grow, and growing is part of Christianity. Our aim is to grow in Christ. For this camp session, we will be living in a Christian community. You will be able to forget all those outside pressures that hinder your Christianity. Everyone here is working toward the same goal. We can relax and enjoy being together and sharing the joys of being together and sharing all of God's nature and spiritual blessings. So let's go over the rules and then relax and enjoy our time together.

You will also want to use part of your orientation time to get better acquainted. Let each one introduce and tell something about themselves or use any other method of sharing and getting better acquainted.

### **Remember!!**

You are not alone. Ask for help, pray for help and guidance--be positive, be happy and love every minute of your camping session. Have that beautiful sharing and growing experience that God has awaiting each of us--staff as well as campers.

# COUNSELORS

## *PREPARATIONS AND ORIENTATION*

A high calling... Remember that the counselor is an important link in the camping program. He is primarily responsible for the overall development of each of his campers, and thus must spend as much time as possible with each in an effort to better understand and guide him. It is with the counselor that the camper lives and is most influenced.

### 1. Qualities of a successful counselor

- a) Must be a faithful Christian whose life can be respected by youth
- b) Should be mature and stable in thought and action, but young in heart
- c) Should be willing and able to give and to receive instructions
- d) Should cooperate with all members of the camp staff
- e) Should be understanding, with concern and sensitivity to counseling opportunities
- f) Should have imagination, resourcefulness, and enthusiasm
- g) Must enjoy the Christian life and enjoy young people
- h) Must be willing to be spent for the Lord, not just to spend time at camp
- i) Must have a deep trust in prayer and in God's power to transform lives

### 2. Authority

- a) The General Camp Rules and Directions for Counselors have been set by the Board of Directors for Midwest Bible Camp
- b) You will be directly responsible to the Directors
- c) Your campers will look directly to you for guidance except when they are placed directly under the oversight of another staff member, such as a teacher, the athletic director, etc.
- d) No counselor, as an individual, has the right to add to or take away from camp rules.
- e) If you feel that a change or addition would be helpful to the camp work, talk it over with the Directors. They, in turn, will bring it before the other staff or the camp directors for discussion and consideration.

### 3. Before your campers arrive

- a) Familiarize yourself with counselor material that might be sent to you or which you have
- b) Attend staff orientation sessions.
- c) Set your cabin in order.
- d) Get well acquainted with your cabin co-workers and clarify understandings of responsibilities. Wear your name tag, if furnished.
- e) Familiarize yourself with the camp grounds and facilities.

### 4. Upon arrival of campers

- a) Wear name tag if provided
- b) Have one of two counselors at registration table whenever possible to meet arriving



campers and get them settled in cabins. The other should be at the registration table.

- i. Use this occasion to get acquainted with campers and make an effort to meet their parents.
- c) Trust your campers until rules are clearly broken; then still be a friend. Bring out the best in your campers.
- d) Get to know your campers
  - i. Be worthy of their confidence. Be a good listener. Keep your eyes open.
  - ii. Seek early possibilities for seeing that each camper in your cabin leaves camp a bigger person with at least one area in which tangible, visible progress has been made and felt. Be prepared to give reports of progress.
- e) Plan a brief orientation with your own campers in your cabin the first night at camp. Go over all the guidelines.
  - i. encourage campers to ask questions
  - ii. clarify camp authority, schedules, and rules and post them clearly
  - iii. try to have good reasons for all policies that are recommended; this would be a good time to discuss boy-girl relationships from a positive standpoint. Campers may hold hands.
  - iv. yours is the opportunity to make the ethical standards we follow constructive. To honor God and His word, to present Christ, to challenge our youth, to help them see that we are in no way trying to take advantage of them or restrict them from doing; but rather to provide the atmosphere where they can know the joy of Christian living.

## 5. General responsibilities

- a) You are responsible for the guidance and general welfare of those campers entrusted to you
- b) You are to know where your campers are at all times.
  - i. You will accompany any young camper who needs to leave the cabin after lights-out.
  - ii. Only two Intermediate or Senior campers may be out at a time after lights-out, for bathroom or emergency nurse visitation.
  - iii. You will see that your campers are in bed and are quiet on time.
  - iv. **No camper is to leave camp grounds** without the combined permission of his counselor, camp director, and chief counselor.
- c) You are to see that campers keep their cabins in order, inside and out.
- d) Cooperate with all staff members who guide your campers in special activities.
- e) At least one counselor will accompany your campers when on athletic field, swimming or canoeing, hiking and at canteen.
- f) Both counselors (or counselor and teacher) should be with campers during campfire, flagpole, meals, movies, cookout, study-rest period, and special evening programs.
- g) When at the pool or water activities, the chief counselor or director of water activities will appoint one counselor to be in charge each day.
- h) Lead your campers in preparation for stunt/talent night and other special activities. Deadline for submitting stunt description and talent is noon, Wednesday. Check and audition with program director, and be original.
- i) Your campers will enter the dining hall by cabins (unless otherwise announced) and all of your campers should be there before entering.
- j) When one of your campers needs medical aid, one counselor will assist him to the doctor

and hospital if he needs to go. Please follow the nurse's directions.

k) **No major changes in camp procedure** will be made each day after the counselor's meeting. Should you foresee changes that need to be made in our program, plan to bring them up for discussion at the counselors meeting, so all counselors may have common understanding, or discuss with chief counselor.

l) Come prepared to make counselors meetings rewarding

i. have any reports assigned you ready, including your scoring and any special assignments

ii. be prepared to report on your campers

iii. have any matters clear in your own mind so they can be handled quickly. Bring up only items that need to be discussed before the entire group. Other items should be handled with the chief counselor to save time.

m) Put more reality and fun and pride in cabin up-keep so it will not be simply a matter of drudgery or regimentation and competition. It is not your responsibility to do the work for preparing your cabin for inspection.

## 6. Spiritual development

a) Cooperate with Bible teachers and create a spiritual atmosphere that makes Bible study meaningful.

b) Be an example of a happy Christian under every circumstance. You must enjoy camp yourself.

c) Give respect and attention to every spiritual activity.

i. Conduct a meaningful 3 to 10 minute cabin devotional each evening before saying "good night" to your campers.

ii. OYF time after lunch may be used as a time to reflect on the Bible lesson given in the morning session.

iii. Counselors are invited and encouraged to participate in the Bible Classes. Generally, every two cabins will be assigned one Bible Teacher, so most of your campers will be in the same class.

d) Lead all campers to be alert and on time as a group in the morning and at all other devotional programs.

## 7. Scheduling

Each counselor will be expected to work out schedules for the following activities for his own cabin. These of course, will need to be coordinated through the chief counselor.

a) When cooking out, the cook must be informed 24 hours ahead of time which cabin/table will be taking a meal to cook out, and for how many persons. Each counselor will be responsible for making his own arrangements with the kitchen.

b) No camper will leave the camp out site during the night except for an emergency and accompanied by a counselor.

c) All water activities will be under the supervision of a designated staff member. All rules of safety will be strictly enforced.

d) Hikes will be announced at a general assembly.

e) Counselors will be responsible, along with directors, for planning and directing special camp activities.

f) A "Camper Council" may be selected to get ideas from the campers' viewpoint. If a

Camper Council is used during your session, two campers from each cabin should be selected.

#### 8. Privileges

- a) Enjoy yourself during the session, but remember that *your main purpose is to develop your campers*.
- b) If you find it necessary to leave camp grounds at any time, inform either the chief counselor or camp director.
  - You may leave the cabin after lights out, with the agreement and understanding of your co-worker.
  - One counselor must remain in the cabin at all times.
- c) Be certain to abide by the curfew in order to get rest for the next day's activities.
- d) Engage in every recreation and special activity which you would enjoy when time is available.
- e) Get enough rest to feel well and stay ahead of your campers.
- f) Your free time is a good time to visit with other counselors/staff; to rest or sleep; to do laundry or visit town; to engage in recreation with fellow-staff; to catch up on some reading; to dream; to do nothing.
  - Counselors are encouraged to remain on the camp grounds as much as possible.

#### 9. KP and Bathhouse Duties

- a) KP and Bathhouse duties will be assigned on a rotating schedule.
- b) The whole cabin is expected (including both counselors and any other adult assigned to the cabin) to help with KP and Bathhouse.
- c) KP will be under the direction of the Dining Hall Supervisor. The Counselors will be assigned areas of responsibilities to have their cabin help with. When the assigned jobs are completed, it is expected that the Counselor will check with the Supervisor for other assigned work. All staff and campers are expected to stay in the Dining Hall until KP is finished.
- d) The Counselors are in charge of cleaning the Bathhouses. A list of duties is posted in each Bathhouse. See the Camp Supervisors for supplies. All Bathhouse trash is to be dumped in the blue container in front of the Bathhouse. All trash, grass, and leaves are to be swept up before washing down the floor. Do not wash trash, grass, leaves, paint chips, etc. down drain. Mix bleach solution as directed, no stronger and rinse after using.
- e) Ultimately, it is everyone's responsibility to see that all of the camp is kept clean. Encourage every camper to pick up after themselves and to help make the camp a little better each time they walk through.