

CONNECTING WITH JESUS

Even very small children need to know that Jesus loves them always! Parents and other caring adults have been heard to tell a small child that Jesus will be mad at their actions or behavior, even when they are in Sabbath school or that Jesus won't love them if they are naughty. All children need to be reassured of God's love no matter what they have done, what their home life is like, or who their friends are. Once they are reassured of God's love for them, they need to begin learning how to have a relationship with Him.

"Do not teach your children with reference to some future period when they shall be old enough...If properly instructed, very young children may have correct views of...salvation through Christ." CSS p. 79, 80

Children need to know prayer is not an "adult" activity, but a conversation with the Lord who loves them deeply. They need to know in an "instant gratification" world that God isn't a genie in the sky granting only the wishes of those most deserving. He is a loving Father who listens to them, hears their worries and joys, and is doing what is best for them-- even if it involves waiting. They need to learn from the adults in their lives that "no" is not an answer denying love but because of love. Because God loves them He sometimes says no for their best good.

Children need to be taught to worship God. Even as adults we tend to forget to worship and praise God in all things and at all moments. Quite often we reserve our worship for Sabbath. Changing this pattern of life can be difficult and even frightening but doesn't Jesus deserve our love and adoration continually because of what He has done for us? God wants to do so much more in our lives if we will simply open our hearts to Him and focus our sights on Him, and allow Him to work in us. The children need to see God as He really is, not the erroneous picture that is too often painted of God as, "I'm watching for you to do something wrong," or "you're too little for my attention."

As you share these programs with the children, may you be blessed by God and given His wisdom and His Spirit to lead the children to Jesus.

Adapting the Program

The ideas found in these pages are just suggestions. Do not be afraid to let your own creativity take over and do something that may be more appropriate for your specific group. Adapting these ideas to meet your needs will better communicate to your children those concepts that you want them to take home. Activities and songs can be substituted with those you are more familiar and that teach the same point. Make changes as needed to use the materials you already have access to. Adapt these ideas to fit the way in which you best communicate God's love to the children.

PLANNING CALENDAR

5 Months Before Camp Meeting

- Begin praying for this year's Beginners camp meeting program. Pray that God will lead you in planning the program and choosing staff.

- Pray for the Beginners who will come.
- Meet with your conference coordinator to obtain program and teaching materials, plan schedules, workout budgets, and conference wide promotion.
- If available, obtain inventory of Beginner Camp Meeting materials left from previous years. Determine what can be used in this year's program.
- Search out resource books of ideas and materials that will enhance the theme.
- Visit facility where the Beginners will convene and make a diagram of the area(s) you will be working in.
- Recruit an assistant. At least one other person should be familiar with the program in case of an emergency.
- Choose the program material you will use. Include your assistant in this process.
- Plan the main program, usually the one in the morning.

4 Months Before Camp Meeting

- Begin recruitment of staff.
- Plan the afternoon program.
- Assign a craft leader, if needed, to plan and choose the crafts and begin gathering supplies.
- Contact and set-up appointment dates with special individuals who will be contributing their skills as a part of the program.

3 Months Before Camp Meeting

- Follow up recruitment of staff with phone calls or visits. Supply necessary materials to those who accept a staff position.
- Purchase songbooks. Organize all music into one notebook complete with a contents page. Send a copy of the notebook to the musician. Purchase or make tapes if a pianist is not available. **Obey copyright laws.**
- Make a list of needed supplies.

2 Months Before Camp Meeting

- Plan Sabbath programs for Sabbath school and afternoon meeting. (It is recommended that children join parents for church time).
- Collect and organize all program materials including audio/visual supplies.
- Prepare (or have prepared) one sample of each craft.
- Collect and organize all program materials, name tags, registration cards, including audio/visual supplies.
- Prepare registration materials.

1 Month Before Camp meeting

- Purchase, collect, or make materials for room decorations.

- Send encouragement letters to staff. Include the daily schedule and the date and time for the first staff meeting.
- Plan the agenda for the first staff meeting.
- Plan short staff worships for each morning of camp meeting (unless this is done by your general camp meeting coordinator).
- Complete all xeroxing including any letters to parents.

During Camp Meeting

- Have daily prayer and planning meetings with your staff (even if the general coordinator has daily devotions with the whole group).
- Make sure information on registration cards is complete for effective follow-up.
- Assign no more than eight children to each helper to ensure effective relationship building.
- Utilize the staff in leading the programs. Keep them informed of any revisions or scheduling changes.
- Prepare appreciation certificates, thank-you's, or gifts for staff.
- Prepare a sign-up sheet for staff for the following year.
- Have a meeting half way through the week and at the end for assessment and evaluation.

STAFFING

In the Beginner Department it is usually recommended that parents of children under the age of two stay with their children. Parents can make many valuable contributions to the success of your program. They can help with table time, Bible Story Activity Time and with singing. Providing the words to all songs and finger plays you will be using makes it easier for parents to become involved. Print the words on song cards, in individual song sheets, or on overheads for projection onto a wall or screen or use PowerPoint.

Search for staff who

- are committed to Jesus Christ, who love and respect Beginners
- act with a personal confidence and love

Where to look

- Among your local church members and friends
- People you know from other churches around the conference
- Pastors within the conference (generally assigned by conference camp meeting committee)
- Those who have worked with Beginners at camp meeting in the past
- Friends of the staff you have already recruited

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Division Leader

- Attends organizational meetings and worships called by the camp meeting coordinator
- Participates in camp pitch as it relates to their division
- Recruits table time leaders and other helpers
- Plans decorations and room arrangement
- Plans all programming, leads out in programs, or assigns others to do so
- Shares responsibilities with the assistant leader and others, assigning tasks and providing necessary program materials and resources
- Orders, collects and distributes supplies for all programming
- Chairs organizational meetings with the department
- Organizes schedules for all helpers, special guests, programs
- Selects musicians in advance and provides them with music
- Controls the budget and is responsible for all expenditures and receipts
- Gets names, addresses and phone numbers of all volunteers for permanent record
- Keeps other records as requested by camp meeting coordinator e.g. attendance
- Inventories, packs and stores permanent division supplies when camp meeting is over
- Sends appreciation letters or gifts to all volunteers

Assistant Leader

- Attends camp pitch to assist the leader
- Attends organizational meetings before and during camp meeting as requested
- Attends worships
- Assists leader in preparation of programs as assigned
- Assists leader as they lead out in the program
- Becomes "eyes and ears" for the leader during programs, anticipates and handles problems that arise during the program
- Makes observations and shares ideas about the program's strengths and weaknesses
- Is prepared to step in and take over if an emergency arises for the leader
- Helps leader inventory, pack and store supplies after camp meeting is over

Table Time Leaders

- Builds a relationship with children assigned to the station and seeks to lead them into a relationship with Jesus
- Assists leader by personal participation in the activities of the program
- Lovingly and patiently handles problem situations
- Assists assigned group of children in program by providing appropriate materials and assistance
- Assists children with crafts but allows children to do their own work
- Makes observations and shares ideas about the program's strengths and weaknesses

Musician

- Becomes familiar with music in advance of camp meeting
- Arrives early at each program
- Familiarizes self with the program format to anticipate need of the leader.
- Plays at all meeting or provides an adequate substitute in consultation with the leader

Bible Lesson Coordinator

- Prepares materials needed for each lesson story and activity page. If lessons are taught in small groups, provides materials for each teacher or assists them in finding materials
- Schedules storyteller(s) and provides them with needed materials
- Work with leader to define budget for materials and is responsible for all expenditures and receipts
- Assists leader to inventory, pack, and store supplies after camp meeting is over

Registrar/Door Tender/Bathroom Monitor

- Greets and signs-in children daily
- Organizes name tags daily so parents and staff can easily find them
- Encourages parents to complete registration form
- Monitors who comes and leaves the room. May need to accompany child to the bathroom
- Monitors the door at dismissal time to make sure the right child goes with the right adult