

GOT FAITH? YOUR FAITH IN ACTION BIBLE STUDY

Camp Johnsonburg 2002 Summer Curriculum
Welcoming, Body Caring, Stuff, Grief and Loss, and Taking Time

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SUNDAY – Got Faith?

John 13:34 and Matthew 14: 22-33

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

The Golden Rule

The passage known as “the golden rule” should be what sets the tone of welcoming all of the campers not only into the unit but into the camp community for the week. This can set the example from the beginning – for both campers and staff!

Peter’s Got Faith!

This passage from Matthew is a favorite passage of many in our midst. Why, you might ask? Perhaps because we can see ourselves in the fear and doubt of Peter as well as in his leap of faith – right out of that boat and into Jesus’ arms. We want to ask Jesus for some sign that he will catch us if and when we fall. When things are going fine of course we’ve got faith! But when we become frightened sometimes the faith we thought we had seems to be missing all of a sudden. Peter is very much like you and me.

Here are some ways to look at this passage:

- Jesus says be still and calms the storm.
- Jesus says do not be afraid...did you know that “do not be afraid” is the most frequent command in the Bible? It appears over 350 times.
- Peter has faith...at least for a period of time...and it does return!
- There is fear and doubt present in this passage but Peter also exhibited a huge leap of faith!

This is the passage that we will be using each morning for devotion time. The idea is to get one Scripture passage that the campers can go to every day and reflect on. The repetitive ritual nature of it will allow them to absorb this passage into their lives and to help them to explore Scripture more closely. It also assists the camper in being able to go home and share the scripture with their family.

Here are the QUESTIONS TO PONDER each day:

MONDAY: What do you fear or doubt about welcoming someone?
 What would your leap of faith be regarding welcoming someone?

TUESDAY: What do you fear or doubt about your body image?
 What would your leap of faith be regarding your body image?

WEDNESDAY: What do you fear or doubt about the stuff you gather?
 What would your leap of faith be regarding the stuff you gather?

THURSDAY: What do you fear or doubt about grief and loss?
 What would your leap of faith be regarding grief and loss?

FRIDAY: What do you fear or doubt about taking time?
 What would your leap of faith be regarding taking time?

OPENING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

Let us remember that when we gather in God's name, God is in our midst and we greet each other on holy ground. Thank you, God for the safe travel to camp today. Be with us this week as we talk about our faith and what it means as we welcome one another, as we care for our bodies, as we think about the stuff we have gathered, as we cope with grief and loss and as we take time to be with you, in your creation and as your created. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Have one of your campers read Matthew 14:22-33 to the group. Then share with the unit the ways to look at this passage.

CLOSING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

God we give thanks for this opportunity to walk on water this week!

MONDAY'S BIBLE STUDY: Welcoming

Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 10:25-37

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

We want people to stretch and greet and include -- inclusion is the key (particularly for young teens who can be brutally exclusive). The questions that are then raised are:

- Who and what are we including?
- People who are different? Absolutely...differences in color, race, cultures, unique differences (sexual orientation)

The key is on the acceptance of self and others. But the other side of the welcoming is the drawing of appropriate boundaries -- or rather, limits. As an elementary, we welcome other elementary age youth -- but the wacky guy who lives down the street is another thing entirely. How can we balance that?

OPENING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

We are all children of God.
We are female and male, of all ages and conditions.
We come from many social, economic, and racial/ethnic backgrounds.
As God's children,
we are called into a loving relationship with
our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.
We experience God's love
as the Holy Spirit leads us in the living of life.
Help us to welcome all of God's children into the journey with us.

SCRIPTURE

Have one of your campers read Matthew 19:13-15 and Luke 10: 25-37 to the group.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- How are children (*and youth*) generally treated in serious/adult situations?
- What is the significance of Jesus' actions?
- What do you think this means?
- What does this mean for us?
- What is the parable of the Good Samaritan about?
- Why is it surprising?

STORY

"Teddy and Miss Thompson" (from *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 1994 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)
The Point: "Welcoming" has long-lasting effects.

ACTIVITIES

"Bad Company."

Create a list of people (contemporary or historical) who you would NOT invite to a party. The upshot here is that Jesus spent most of his time with people who will probably make the list.

"Observation Game."

A person leaves and changes something on his/herself, and upon return, the group attempts to guess what has been changed. The Point: "Welcoming" people requires that we pay close attention to them; otherwise, our greeting is superficial. We need to make real efforts to listen and pay attention to others to truly welcome them in love.

OVERALL APPLICATION

Welcoming is about creating space in our lives for strangers. This means knowing how to be a grateful guest as well as a gracious host. Communities honor Jesus - who was often homeless himself - as they make people feel "at home" and offer them a place at the table.¹

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do we welcome each other here at camp?
- What does it mean to welcome and what are our boundaries?

For older youth:

- Should we pick up hitchhikers?
- Should we stop to help someone whose car has broken down on the side of the road?
- Should we give money to the poor on the street in cities?

CLOSING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

As youth and adults, as Children of God,
We respond to God's call through the Holy Spirit
To be connected to each other, the church and the world.
So that our lives proclaim with joy that Jesus Christ is Lord!
Let us welcome one another! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

¹ <http://208.42.65.59/waytolive/about.html>

TUESDAY'S BIBLE STUDY: Body Caring

Genesis 1:26-31 and Psalm 139: 13-16

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

God created us in God's image and called us "good"! Yet how do we celebrate the body as it is? We try to accept the various forms and shapes that our bodies take, but one of our concerns is that we, as a society, set unattainable standards, and we confuse our God-given value with unrealistic standards that ultimately come from the need to sell (cosmetics, cars, music, clothing, etc).

OPENING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

God, who knit us together in a mother's womb,
help us honor what you have made.
Let us touch this masterpiece gently,
with reverence, with delight, blessing what you have blessed.
[campers touch body parts as they are blessed]
The face -- For the housing of our thoughts.
For the muscles of our emotion.
The arms -- for embracing what is sacred.
For grasping, then releasing, your gifts.
The belly -- for taking in nourishment. In some, for the nurture of new life.
The thighs -- for carrying another's burden.
For pushing off from the ground.
The feet -- for walking your paths of peace. For standing on holy ground.
God, who formed these inward and outward parts, fill us with wonder at such knowledge, knowledge that we
are wonderfully made. Amen.
-- Lani Wright, Oregon.

SCRIPTURE

Have one of your campers read Genesis 1:26-31 and Psalm 139: 13-16 to the group.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What do you think it means to be created in the "image of God"?
- What do you think it means to be "fearfully and wonderfully made"?
- What do these passages tell us about ourselves?
- What do these passages tell us about God?

STORIES

For Younger Youth:

"The Cracked Pot" (from *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks 4* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 2001 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)

The point: We are all different; we are not all good at everything. Some can sing and dance, others are good at sports, and yet others are good listeners. And the list goes on and on. Sometimes the shortcomings that we have (i.e., the "cracks in the pot") lead us to find other unique talents that God has given us, which springs up "unexpected flowers."

For Older Youth:

"The Scar Study" (from *Still More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 1999 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)

The point: We are our own worst critics. Sometimes the things that we think are "wrong" with us aren't bad at all. And when we are so focused on ourselves, we often lose sight of others.

"You, too, Can be Beautiful" (from *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 1994 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)

The point: Don't let the media or advertising tell us what we are supposed to be. After all, in reality, the superstars are not as beautiful as the media makes them.

ACTIVITIES

Create a skit for Vespers

Perhaps talk about the specific challenges youth face with drugs and alcohol and the effects they have on the body; another possibility could focus on clothes and school or the like. Then using one or both of today's scripture passages incorporate them into the skit. How does that fit into our 'body caring' image and belief system? How should it?

Self-Image²

Many of us are self-conscious about the size or shape of our own bodies. Have the campers reflect on the following questions, giving them the opportunity to write in their booklets.

- Write down your feelings as you pay attention to honoring your body.
- What do you affirm and what do you celebrate?
- What are sources of bodily shame?
- What have you been told by others about your body image?
- As you grow older, what are you learning about caring for your body?

OVERALL APPLICATION

"The body - your own or that of someone else - is a strong yet vulnerable gift from God. Life with Jesus is not just a spiritual thing but involves your whole being, including your body. We seek a way to live that honors every-*body* as made in God's image and therefore "holy and awesome."³

CLOSING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

Psalm 139 declares:

[God,] You created my inmost being
and knit me together in my mother's womb.
For all these mysteries –
For the wonder of myself,
For the wonder of your works –
I thank you.

We do thank you, God, for the wonder of ourselves, because we are unique, marvelous, talented creations of your hands. May we appreciate and value all the wonder of our life and care for the bodies that you gave us. Help us to remember that when you created us you called us – "very good!"

² from the Resources section of the "Practicing Our Faith" website

³ <http://208.42.65.59/waytolive/about.html>

WEDNESDAY'S BIBLE STUDY: The Stuff We Gather

Matthew 6:19-21

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

Today's passage is a continuation of Jesus' famous "Sermon on the Mount" which starts in the fifth chapter of the gospel of Matthew and continues until the seventh chapter. Jesus has just been all over Galilee -- teaching and preaching and healing -- news about him spread quickly and folks from all around came to him to be healed. Huge crowds have followed Jesus and the scripture says that he healed them all. At one point, however, Jesus sees the crowd, heads up the side of a mountain and sits down. The text then says that he gathered his disciples around him.

The gospel writer Matthew is not just talking about Jesus' twelve disciples but the crowd that had followed Jesus. He's talking about you and me. And then Jesus began to teach them, giving them 'words to live by' which will sustain them in all manner of circumstances. It is then that he taught them the famous "beatitudes" -- 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God'...'blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' He spoke to them regarding the law of Moses, about how he did not come to do away with the law and the prophets but instead to fulfill them. He taught those gathered there on that mountain about anger, about marriage and divorce, about promises, revenge and love. Then we come to today's passage where Jesus teaches his disciples there on that mountain about giving, about fasting and about storing up one's treasures.

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Play Stations. Nintendos. DVD Players. Computers. CD-Burners. Closets and dresser drawers bursting open with clothes we've never worn. Toys and games. CDs and cassettes. Boom boxes. Close your eyes and take a look around your house or your room at the "stuff you have gathered." So how should we as Christians deal with all the stuff we have gathered? One group of teens suggests that we "deal with stuff (material possessions) in a way that deepens [our] relationship with God, other people, and the whole created world. By putting stuff in its rightful place, we can figure out the difference between good stuff and bad stuff and let go of stuff we don't need."⁴

OPENING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

Dear Lord, we are gatherers. We gather things as if we are trying to fill our lives with meaning. We gather sneakers and clothes, video games and computer equipment, CD's and magazines. Yet you tell us, "Store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too."

Jesus, let us keep on a track to you. Help us to avoid being owned by what we own. Instead of trusting in property or wealth, may we trust in you. Only you give our life meaning and purpose. Thank you.

SCRIPTURE

Have one of your campers read Matthew 6:19-21 to the group.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What treasures have you stored up here on earth?
- Is your heart with those treasures?
- How do our possessions get in our way and separate us from one another and from God?

⁴ <http://208.42.65.59/waytolive/about.html>

STORIES

“How to Catch a Monkey” (from *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 1994 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)

The Point: The world sets traps for you that are not unlike the monkey trap. You hear constantly that if you just have enough money, enough stuff, enough power, enough prestige – then you’ll be happy. Under that illusion people spend their whole lives trying to pull the orange out of the coconut. Don’t fall for it. Don’t be trapped by thinking you must have it all.

“The Jewelry Store Caper” (from *Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 1994 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)

The Point: In our world someone came in and switched all the price tags. It’s hard to tell what is of value and what is not. Great value is given to the accumulation of material wealth and the power that goes with it. The world puts a high price on ‘stuff’ – as well as on popularity, prestige, beauty, and fame. But Jesus taught that such things are virtually worthless in the only “jewelry store” that matters: the kingdom of God.

ACTIVITIES

What would you take?

We live in an age where we seem defined by what we have rather than what we are – yet can stuff be valuable if it connects us to each other and our God? If you needed to get out of your house in 5 minutes, what would you take? Have the campers make their list in their booklets. After a few minutes, have those who feel comfortable share with the entire group.

I don’t want junk!⁵

A young Quaker woman at college wrote home via e-mail:

“I’ve been meaning to write about Christmas. I still don’t know exactly what I want for Christmas, but the main thing is I DON’T WANT JUNK. This is really important. I’ve been feeling lately like I have way too much STUFF. An idea might be blank tapes or good pens or nice colored paper or something really useful. I’m working to break the chains of consumerism – starting with myself.

P.S. I think that to say ‘don’t give me any gifts this year, donate it all to charity’ is not good because it keeps the other person from having the pleasure of giving, which is the most important part. It’s just that people feel compelled to give even if they don’t have a certain gift in mind that they want to give and know the other person would love...Anyway, I can’t decide if this sounds like a rude thing to ask. It’s just that I simply can’t keep tons of junk and I’m trying to avoid it. Does this make sense?”

Some questions to ponder:

- Does this make sense to you?
- Have you ever felt like you have too much “STUFF?”
- If yes, what can you do about it?

⁵ story from “Practicing Our Faith” book

The Challenge⁶

Share with your campers this hypothetical story...

Alexx undertook a radical assignment: give away forty (40) personal possessions, one item per day for the forty days of Lent.

- Do you think you could do the same?
- What would it be like to have less stuff?
- To have a room with less clutter?

Alexx was up for the challenge, though his friends wondered what in the world he was up to. Everybody has stuff, though not everybody values, owns, or has access to the same stuff. Jesus had a lot to say about the way stuff can block us from loving God and neighbor.

- How do we think about stuff as Christians?
- How can we distinguish between good stuff and bad stuff?
- What are ways young people can resist the consumer mentality of buying and craving more and more stuff?

Ad-vantage

Divide into teams and explain that you want to see how many advertising jingles they can remember. Each team must sing the first few measures of the jingle. Begin with one team and then move quickly to the next one and so on. No team is allowed to repeat a jingle. Afterward, discuss how advertisements peak our interest and make us thirsty for material things. (What do they appeal to? Why are they effective?). Also discuss which ads are targeted for which specific age groups and why advertisers use specific approaches to reach teenagers and young children.

Possession Confession

Have campers think back to their most prized possessions. Pass out copies of the "Possession Confession" worksheet and pens or pencils. Challenge them to fill out these sheets and sign them. Make sure that the possessions are things that campers can go a week without. (For example, someone's prized possession might be a car that is absolutely necessary for getting to work. Help this student think of another possession.) Some of the campers are actually going without some of their most prized possessions this week. Ask them which ones they are going without. Could they do without them when they return home?

POSSESSION CONFESSION WORKSHEET

I, _____ (write your full name),

really like my _____,

but I know I'll never find true happiness in this. As an exercise of submission to God and a reflection of his ownership of everything that I have, I will go one week without using this possession.

(signed)

(date)

⁶ activity from "Practicing Our Faith" website

CLOSING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

Pray the hymn, *Take My Life*:

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879

Music: Louis J.F. Herold; arr. by George Kingsley

*The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Songs
Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky*

1. Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
2. Take my hands, and let them
move at the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee,
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
3. Take my voice, and let me sing,
Always, only, for my King.
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee,
Filled with messages from Thee.
4. Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose, Every
power as Thou shalt choose.
5. Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne,
It shall be Thy royal throne.
6. Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

THURSDAY'S BIBLE STUDY: Grief and Loss

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

We've all experienced it at some point or another -- a sense of grief and loss. Perhaps it was because of the death of a loved one, or due to a move from one state to another. During those times we feel a loss of security, even innocence. We go through several stages of grief. Often we even lash out at God. What we need to learn is that it's okay to be angry at God. God can take it. Jesus promised, "I'm not going to leave you orphaned."

Many of us experienced great grief and loss after the tragedies of September 11th, 2001. While we didn't anticipate this day to be exclusively about that day we think it is a good metaphor for how things change and how we say good-bye. Maybe we can call this day "Saying Good-bye" -- it's sad and we need to feel the sadness; yet the old order gives way to the new -- time to mourn, etc. Saying good-bye to missed opportunities -- the teenager who breaks up with a girlfriend needs to have the cataclysmic devastation honored in order to move on and heal. What is striking is the idea of cycles, or renewal, of grieving a loss as a way of letting go and preparing one's spiritual soil for the new.

OPENING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

Here is a poem/prayer written by Ann Weems at a time of intense grief and loss in her life...

I am depressed, O God.

I see no end to this cycle of sadness.

People tell me: 'Everything will be all right,'

But it isn't, and it won't be.

They quote Paul to me:

"All things work together for good for those who love God."

Don't I love you?

Wasn't I brought up in your holy house, O God?

Didn't I memorize your words and sing hymns to you?

Don't I bow down to you?

Isn't that what I'm doing now?

No one can tell me any good can come from this moment!

Let them have their say if it makes them feel better!

But I don't want to hear it!

I know what I've been through.

I know what it is to have death walk the halls of my home.

What has happened can't be undone.

What is done cannot be prettied up.

But you, O God, can stop the aftershocks.

O God, tear through the night

to rescue the one you have left too long.

Help me, O Holy God,

out of this tomb of pain.

-- Ann Weems

SCRIPTURE

Have one of your campers read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 to the group.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What is this passage about?
- How might it apply to our lives today?

STORIES

“Bad Luck, Good Luck” (*More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 1995 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)
The Point: We do not know God’s mysterious plan, but through Christian hope, we know that things will be made right again someday, that God is at work even in tragedy.

“Life Inside the Womb” (older youth)

(from *More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* by Wayne Rice. Copyright 1995 by Youth Specialties, Inc.)
The Point: Perhaps life-after-death is analogous to life-after-birth.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE PSALM WRITERS?

Use this outline to show what we can learn from the Psalm writers:

1. Psalm 23:1-6 (you don’t necessarily need to read the campers the passages)
 - God is with you.
 - God will take care of you.
 - God can strengthen you.
2. Psalm 42:1-11
 - It’s OK to tell God of your grief.
 - God can give you hope.
 - Look to God for your hope and comfort more than you look to anyone or anything else.

ACTIVITIES

Poetry 101

Read the poem “Footprints” by Mary Anderson to your campers (they can follow along in their booklets). Discuss it with them. Have them draw what that poem looks like to them. Have them write their own poem.

Art 101

Draw a picture to remember a family member, dog, or cat or something that you have lost.

Music 101

Listen to “Beautiful Day” by U2 or “Ironic” by Alanis Morissette and then write a poem about it or write the next verse for the song.

OVERALL APPLICATION

The death of a loved one comes crashing in like a sudden storm. To lament means to go public with our pain, sharing our tears and anger with God and others instead of keeping it all bottled up inside. Through lament, we trace the rainbow through the rain.⁷

Donald Capps, of Princeton Theological Seminary, suggests that there are typically two responses to loss that are destructive—namely,

- 1) an extreme denial of the loss or
- 2) a denial that the loss is of any significance (what Freud calls “rejection”).

An appropriate and healthy response to loss is to grieve. In doing so, one usually separates from the lost object slowly making the lost object a memory. If one were to deny the loss, one may enter an emotionally paralyzed state and lose touch with reality. On the other hand, if one were to deny the significance of the loss, the repression of the loss would probably continue to torment the individual. That is, the pain, though denied, would still be very real and would probably manifest itself in other ways, if even unconsciously, perhaps against others or oneself. Somewhere in between here is the appropriate response: a recognition that the loss is in fact real, significant, and painful.

⁷ <http://208.42.65.59/waytolive/about.html>

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- What losses have you had in life?
- What did that feel like?
- Did you feel God's presence?
- Do you allow yourself to grieve? How?
- Or what are some healthy ways of grieving?

CLOSING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

"My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never, ever leave you during your times of trial and suffering. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you!" Comforting God, we need to hear those words and to really believe them. We are thankful that you are strong enough to take our angry words and screams and shouts, that you can hear us through our endless tears and that your ever-loving arms are always there to encircle us. Help us through our times of grief and loss to see that there truly is a season for everything. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

STAR WATCH

As a prelude to tomorrow's focus on the Sabbath and taking time to be with God in God's creation, plan a Star Watch with your unit tonight! At night looking up at the stars, really feeling how broad creation is and what a small part of that you are – taking yourself less seriously.

FRIDAY'S BIBLE STUDY: Taking Time

Exodus 20: 8-11, Matthew 12:1-14 and Psalm 46:10

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

What does it mean for us to “take time” and just be with God? What is up with practicing the Sabbath anyhow? The Sabbath is a gift from God given to humanity right from the beginning. It’s an attitude waiting to be lived ever since Moses received the Ten Commandments and Jesus declared that the Sabbath was made for us! It is a promise that unfolds the more we participate in it. A vacation with God planned from the beginning to be enjoyed into eternity.

Author Dorothy C. Bass, in “Practicing Our Faith” puts it this way:

“Sabbath keeping is not about taking a day off but about being recalled to our knowledge of and gratitude for God’s activity in creating the world, giving liberty to captives, and overcoming the powers of death.”

The Sabbath – it’s an invitation from God to slow down. And to quote that great theologian, “Slow down, you’re moving to fast. Got to make the morning last.” Wouldn't it be great if the campers, after being with us this week, could help parents slow down? It sure would!

OPENING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

Be silent.
Be still.
Alone,
empty
before your God
say nothing.
Ask nothing.
Be silent.
Be still
let your God
look upon you.
That is all.
God knows,

understands,
loves you will
an enormous love.
God only wants to
look upon you
with love.
Quiet.
Still.
Be.

Let your God –
Love you.

-- Edwina Gately

SCRIPTURE

Have one of your campers read Exodus 20:8-11, Matthew 12:1-14 and Psalm 46:10 to the group.

OPENING QUESTIONS

Possible answers in parenthesis...

- What comes to mind when you hear the word ‘Sabbath’?
(Sabbath means simply “to stop, to cease.”)
- What does Sabbath mean to you?
(A chance to refocus our lives and turn our attention to family, friends, worship, God, the Bible and to caring for other people)
- The Exodus (20:8-11) commandment to “remember” the Sabbath is grounded in the story of creation. Since we are created in God’s image, (remember what we talked about on Tuesday) what behavioral cues do we take from what we see of God in this story?

STORIES

“Going West” (from Marva Dawn, “Keeping the Sabbath Wholly”, page 65)

The Point: We think that we can't possibly do everything we have to do and take time off to be with God. Well, we can't possibly do everything we have to do WITHOUT taking time off to be with God!

ACTIVITIES

Friends with God

In John 15:15 Jesus calls us friends.

Friendship with God is one biblical image I find very helpful in developing a Sabbath attitude. It's an image that gives us enormous dignity and invites us to an adult and mature relationship with God. Each of us brings our own personality, gifts, idiosyncrasies, and strengths to our friendship with God. We don't have to imitate someone else's relationship with God. We can be ourselves with God. How comforting! How freeing!

When the invitation to a Sabbath vacation comes from our divine Friend, it is compelling. Taking time with a friend is less a duty than a privilege. We don't have to be commanded to spend time with a friend. It's a joy to be together. We know the relationship will diminish or die if we don't stay in touch.

So how do friends stay in touch?

- they make five minute phone calls
- take half an hour walks
- talk over dinner
- share intimate silences
- they write notes and letters
- they go on trips together
- they argue, weather estrangement and hostility, put up with each other's idiosyncrasies, risk being vulnerable
- friends have conflicts and reconciliations
- friends even serve each other (John 15:15)...but their serving arises out of love and compassion and caring, not out of duty and servitude. And that makes all the difference.

Friends want to be together as often as possible. Experiencing God as our Friend can make us seek Sabbath time more often. We may find out that the Sabbath was made just for us, and not we for the Sabbath (as Jesus taught in Mark 2:27). Developing a Sabbath discipline based on staying in touch with our Friend is more a joy than drudgery. Frequent conversations can make God's presence and power more real to us. Realizing that our Friend is present right now, right here, can make us relish the sacredness of each moment.

- Have the campers list ways that they stay in touch with their friends....
- How can those same ways help them stay in touch with God?

God's Creation

Go on a nature walk with your unit and really take the time to notice God's creation. After the walk ask the campers:

- How do you fit into God's creation?

CLOSING PRAYER (suggestion...or you can use your own)

God, teach me to let my soul rest, to still my worries and doubts,
to stop my constant clatter of questions and protests.
Let me come to you sometimes and just sit quietly,
like a mother smiling at her sleeping baby and listening to its soft breathing...
or like a small child intent on hearing a kitten's purr or a little bird's chirp...
or as if I were trying to hear a soft breeze moving across a pond,
a leaf dropping onto the grass.
Let me learn to wait patiently and trustingly for you
to make things clearer to me.
Teach me to be as calm as a lake after sundown...
as trusting as a baby in its mother's lap.
Teach me to grow gradually, unprotestingly, like a flower...
To go unresistingly wherever you send me,
like airborne seed obeying the breeze.
Teach me to turn always toward you,
the very essence of love and of life,
the cause of love and life,
the nourisher of love and life,
the purpose of love and life –
the way leaves keep turning toward the life-giving sun.

-- Joan Bel Geddes

Evening ritual to replace campfires:
(just in case there is a 'fire ban')

Have a place where each night the group gathers their stones for the day.

“What if ... Rocks.”

What if we welcomed others more...

What if we cared more for our bodies...

They start their evening time together around the lack of a campfire by each placing their stone in the middle of the fire ring or some designated place in their unit.

At the end of the week, they take their rocks and add them to the path coming out of the Labyrinth.

The idea is that though we are all individuals, putting our talents, gifts, etc together we can make something that lasts and is larger than our individual effort.

Help the group create a ritual that will begin their sharing time.

It hopefully will help them spawn conversations and songs that would normally spring from the warmth and fellowship of the campfire.

Camper Booklet

A NOTE TO PARENTS....

(Campers feel free to read this, too)

Our program at the Presbyterian Camp rests in the Biblical and psychological premise that for children to grow healthy and become members of a community, we must accept them exactly as they are -- with all their rough edges, their fears, their loathings about self and others, their innocence, their uniqueness.

A child's job is to grow up on his or her own schedule. As staff at Johnsonburg, our contribution to this growth is:

- to accept each camper as is, and celebrate their unfolding in the magical present,
- to let campers stumble and make mistakes,
- to help pick them up and point them along the path again, and
- to assist them in making choices about their lives.

This summer, our theme is Got Faith? Your Faith in Action!

We encourage you to look through this booklet and talk with your child about the Bible passages and the issues they raise.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

Morning Devotions:

Each day at 9:00AM you will assemble with your unit and read the Matthew 14: 22-33 passage – Jesus and Peter Walking on Water. There are two questions that you will be reflecting on. Feel free to write or draw your responses in this booklet!

Bible Discussion:

At another time during the day, there will be discussion and activities about the Bible theme of the day. We encourage each camper to find the passage in their own Bible but we did include the NRSV translation in this booklet if you need.

IN ALL THAT WE DO,
WE ASK FOR RESPECT FOR SELF AND OTHERS.

“No Discount” means we won’t put down (undervalue or discount) ourselves, others or situations until we have thought about them.

“Good Choice / Bad Choice” recognizes that we all make good and bad choices, and that even so we are all loved unconditionally by God.

Weekly Camp Schedule

SUNDAY – Got Faith?

John 13:34

The Golden Rule...”Love one another”

Matthew 14:22-33

“Jesus and Peter walking on the water”

MONDAY -- Welcoming

Matthew 19: 13-15

“Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."

Luke 10: 25-37

“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." “

TUESDAY – Body Caring

Genesis 1:26-31

“So God created humankind in [God’s] image,
in the image of God [God] created them;
male and female [God] created them...
...God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.”

Psalms 139:13-16

“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.”

WEDNESDAY -- The Stuff We Gather

Matthew 6:19-21

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

THURSDAY – Grief and Loss

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”

FRIDAY -- Taking Time

Exodus 20:8-11

“Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.”

Matthew 12:1-14

“When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, ‘Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.’ “

***All passages on this page and those following have been taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible**

SUNDAY – Got Faith?

John 13:34

“The Golden Rule”

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

Matthew 14:22-33

“Walking on Water”

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. [23] And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, [24] but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. [25] And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. [26] But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. [27] But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

[28] Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." [29] He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. [30] But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" [31] Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" [32] When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. [33] And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

MONDAY – Welcoming

The key is on the acceptance of self and others.

SCRIPTURES: Matthew 19: 13-15 -- Let the little children come

Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; [14] but Jesus said, "Let the little

children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." [15] And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

Luke 10: 25-37 -- Good Samaritan

[25] Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [26] He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" [27] He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." [28] And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

[29] But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" [30] Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. [31] Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. [32]

So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. [33] But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. [34] He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [35] The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' [36] Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" [37] He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

OPENING QUESTIONS

- How are children (*and youth*) generally treated in serious/adult situations?
- What is the significance of Jesus' actions?
- What do you think this means?
- What does this mean for us?
- What is the parable of the Good Samaritan about?
- Why is it surprising?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do we welcome each other here at camp?
- What does it mean to welcome and what are our boundaries?

For older youth:

- Should we pick up hitchhikers?
- Should we stop to help someone whose car has broken down on the side of the road?
- Should we give money to the poor on the street in cities?

TUESDAY – Body Caring

God created us in God's image and called us "good!"

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 1:26-31

-- The Creation Story

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

[27] So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

[28] God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the

sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." [29] God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. [30] And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. [31] God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 139: 13-16

-- I am fearfully and wonderfully made!

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

[14] I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.

[15] My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret,

intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

[16] Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.

In your book were written

all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What do you think it means to be created in the "image of God"?
- What do you think it means to be "fearfully and wonderfully made"?
- What do these passages tell us about ourselves?
- What do these passages tell us about God?

ACTIVITY

Self-Image (from the Resources section of the "Practicing Our Faith" website)

Many of us are self-conscious about the size or shape of our own bodies. Reflect on these questions:

Write down your feelings as you pay attention to honoring your body.

What do you affirm and what do you celebrate?

What are sources of bodily shame?

What have you been told by others about your body image?

As you grow older, what are you learning about caring for your body?

WEDNESDAY – The Stuff We Gather

How can we deal with “stuff” in a way that deepens our relationship with God, other people, and the whole created world?

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:19-21

-- For where your treasure is...

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; [20] but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither

moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What treasures have you stored up here on earth?
- Is your heart with those treasures?
- How do our possessions get in our way and separate us from one another and from God?

ACTIVITY

What would you take?

We live in an age where we seem defined by what we have rather than what we are – yet can stuff be valuable if it connects us to each other and our God? If you needed to get out of your house in 5 minutes, what would you take?

Possession Confession

POSSESSION CONFESSION WORKSHEET

I, _____ (write your full name),

really like my _____,

but I know I'll never find true happiness in this. As an exercise of submission to God and a reflection of his ownership of everything that I have, I will go one week without using this possession.

(signed)

(date)

THURSDAY – Grief and Loss

For everything there is a season!

SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

-- For everything there is a season

For everything there is a season, and a time
for every matter under heaven:

[2] a time to be born,
and a time to die;
a time to plant,
and a time to pluck up what is planted;
[3] a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down,
and a time to build up;
[4] a time to weep,
and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
[5] a time to throw away stones, and a time to
gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from
embracing;
[6] a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
[7] a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
[8] a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What is this passage about?
- How might it apply to our lives today?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- What losses have you had in life?
- What did that feel like?
- Did you feel God's presence?
- Do you allow yourself to grieve? How?
- Or what are some healthy ways of grieving?

Footprints

One night I had a dream. I dreamed I was walking along the beach with God and across the sky flashed scenes from my life. For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand. One belonged to me and the other to God.

When the last scene of my life flashed before us I looked back at the footprints in the sand. I noticed that many times along the path of my life there was only one set of footprints. I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in my life.

This really bothered me and I questioned God about it. "God, you said that once I decided to open my heart to you, you would walk with me all the way. But I noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, in times when I needed you most, you should leave me."

Then God replied, "My precious, precious child. I love you and I would never, ever leave you during your times of trial and suffering. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you!"

Mary Stevenson
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FRIDAY – Taking Time

Taking time to listen to God as a way of spiritual growth.

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 20:8-11

-- The Sabbath Commandment

Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy.
[9] Six days you shall labor and do all your work.
[10] But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work--you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your

towns. [11] For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Matthew 12:1-14

-- Jesus and the Sabbath

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. [2] When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." [3] He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? [4] He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. [5] Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? [6] I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. [7] But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have

condemned the guiltless. [8] For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

[9] He left that place and entered their synagogue; [10] a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. [11] He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? [12] How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." [13] Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other. [14] But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Psalms 46:10

-- Be still!

"Be still, and know that I am God!"

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What comes to mind when you hear the word 'Sabbath'?
- What does Sabbath mean to you?
- The Exodus (20:8-11) commandment to "remember" the Sabbath is grounded in the story of creation. Since we are created in God's image, (remember what we talked about on Tuesday) what behavioral cues do we take from what we see of God in this story?

MORNING DEVOTIONS

MONDAY -- Morning Devotions

Read Matthew 14:22-33

Here are some ways to look at this passage:

- Jesus says be still and calms the storm
- Jesus says do not be afraid...did you know that "do not be afraid" is the most frequent command in the Bible? It appears over 350 times.
- Peter has faith...at least for a period of time...and it does return!
- There is fear and doubt present in this passage but Peter also exhibited a huge leap of faith.

QUESTION OF THE DAY:

What do you fear or doubt about welcoming someone?
What would your leap of faith be regarding welcoming others?

Use this space to write or
draw your thoughts to the devotion!

TUESDAY -- Morning Devotions

Read Matthew 14:22-33

QUESTION OF THE DAY:

What do you fear or doubt about your body image?
What would your leap of faith be regarding your body image?

Use this space to write or
draw your thoughts to the devotion!

WEDNESDAY -- Morning Devotions

Read Matthew 14:22-33

QUESTION OF THE DAY:

What do you fear or doubt about the stuff you gather?
What would your leap of faith be regarding the stuff you gather?

Use this space to write or
draw your thoughts to the devotion!

THURSDAY -- Morning Devotions

Read Matthew 14:22-33

QUESTION OF THE DAY:

What do you fear or doubt about grief and loss?
What would your leap of faith be regarding grief and loss?

Use this space to write or
draw your thoughts to the devotion!

FRIDAY -- Morning Devotions

Read Matthew 14:22-33

QUESTION OF THE DAY:

What do you fear or doubt about taking time?
What would your leap of faith be regarding taking time?

Use this space to write or
draw your thoughts to the devotion!