

Worship Resources for Camp Sundays 2019

“Peace Works”

Camp worship is often quite different from local church Sunday morning worship. For this reason it is great to involve different music and musical instruments, more voices, younger voices, higher energy acts of worship and worship that invites creative responses to God’s Word and work in our lives. Using decorations or visuals that highlight the unique ministry that is camping and retreat ministry can also be a blessing.

Yet, a word of warning: Camp Sunday can turn into the circus coming to town and that is a big turn-off to those whom have not yet experienced camps or retreats and could be blessed by an experience at one of our many camps and retreats.

So, how do we find the right balance for your Camp Sunday in your church? First, take an honest look at how worship is normally done in your congregation. If there are times when youth have led the service or there have been special services, what changes were welcomed and what “normal” things were kept because they are so important to the worshippers? Camping ministry is an extension of the ministry of the local church, so “Camp Sunday,” can be done well without changing the structure of your service, and if your congregation will shut down to the message of what is possible at camp, meet them where they are. Camping ministry, especially this year’s curriculum, works well with all parts of traditional worship, including communion, baptisms, keeping with the themes of the church calendar, and formal prayers.

All that being said, those who know what camp worship can be like would love to see some of that energy and excitement for what God is doing in a Camp Sunday service. Many congregations have a history of youth-led services or Camp Sundays with crazy decorations and music with actions. The final deciding factor that really hits home why you are invited to help with a Camp Sunday, is God in Christ is doing great things at home, in the local church, and at our beautiful camp sites, let that be seen in your worship of God. Use what parts you like from below and work with your worship leaders or pastors to make it your own. Thank you for our support and attention, your United Methodist Camps are better because of you.

Hint: Greeters and Ushers should be people who have been campers and/or have passion for camping ministry when possible.

Welcome: (You may want to make your welcome like a welcome to camp with intentional “mixer” questions for the people to get to know their “new friends.”)

Gathering Music: (see “Song Ideas” below)

Call to Worship: (Responsive) As written this uses a young adult, child/youth, parent, and pastor reading part of the leader’s lines or it can be done with one leader and congregation reading bold.

Young Adult: A young preacher once gathered on a grassy hillside and spoke the words, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”

Congregation: This may not be a hillside, but we gather to be with Jesus again.

Young Adult: We look around and see a world longing for real peace.

Congregation: We open ourselves to be changed by the Prince of Peace.

Child/Youth: We might need to look at new places and people for the next steps toward peace.

Congregation: We will work for peace with all of God’s Children.

Parent: We will search for answers from all over the world.

Congregation: Getting outside our doors, our towns, and our normal is uncomfortable. We search with Christ as our comforter.

Parent: Today we worship God who not only calls us to action, but also provides us space and opportunity to learn and grow as well as focus on our own relationship with God in Christ.

Congregation: Our voices join together in prayer and song as we praise the One radical enough to show that peace is possible.

Pastor/Worship Leader: Let our worship today spill out into our Conference Camps and Retreats, into our homes, workplaces, and schools, and into a life rich with the hope for peace.

ALL VOICES: Blessed are the peacemakers, for WE shall be called Children of God.

Music: (see “Song Ideas” below)

Opening Prayer: Amazing God, speak to us today of your ways of peace. Celebrate with us the possibilities that camps and retreats offer for us to develop as peacemakers. Work in us and through us to enrich the lives of disciples working for Your Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. Help us to extend the worship, service, and witness we have here in this community to transform the lives of people we may never meet as we entrust some of our own community to go and grow in You, our loving Savior and guide. Amen.

Music: (see “Song Ideas” below)

Time Mostly for the Children:

Has it ever been so loud and crazy in your house that you wanted to go play or read in your room alone?
(Turn around and face the congregation) Has it ever been so loud and crazy in your house ...?

Sometimes there is so much going on that we want to take a break. Jesus did that. Jesus would go to a place apart to pray and refocus. He would encourage his friends to do the same thing. It is important to take time away from all the noise and things you have to do, like chores, and homework. I hope that Jesus would know that we have places here in (Minnesota/the Dakotas) to do this. Our camp sites are beautiful places where we can find this kind of peace and quiet. Sometimes at camp, you are able to just sit around a campfire and hear the crackles and pops and be quiet with God. Sometimes, if you have just the right timing you can sit by the water and hear the trickle of a creek or the lapping of the waves on the shore and be at peace with God. Jesus could have really relaxed and refocused in that kind of situation.

Other times at camp there is lots of noise and excitement, splashing of water, laughter and singing. Sometimes you can hear the cheering of friends as you try something new like climbing a rock wall or playing a new game, or even attempting to steer a canoe to somewhere other than the cat-tails. This is loud and sometimes even obnoxious (in a good way), yet it is also a way of being at peace. At these times the peace comes from being yourself with a bunch of people also able to be themselves and growing closer through struggles and accomplishments.

Peace comes from the quiet places apart and the joy of knowing that there are people who might be very different from you that are also learning about Jesus and the way Jesus loves us. Real peace can come as you get to know others who do things differently yet when you work together great things can happen.

I hope you know that we want peace for you, peace and quiet from the noises and chores and homework of your “normal” days, and peace that comes from finding new friends that have different chores and noises, yet you can work for peace together.

Let's pray- (Repeating prayers work great at this time)

Dear God,
We know that we have noisy lives
We know that we have chores to do
We know that the work has to get done
Yet we thank you for times to rest
We thank you for times to play
We thank you for places away
Be with us always
And help us to make Peace
And all of God's Children Say ...
AMEN!

Music: (see “Song Ideas” below)

Scripture/Sermon: The Curriculum lends itself to a few good paths for Scripture/Sermon. If a youth will be sharing the sermon the Day 2 scripture and theme is 1 Corinthians 12:1-27 (Community) and this would be a good theme for most youth to share the Good News and relate it to their experiences at camp.

- Outline
 - Share a story (from your life/camp life if possible) concerning being an important part of a group and how that feels when the group succeeds.
 - Corinthian Church was struggling, especially with who was valuable and invited to be a part.
 - At camp we have small groups, cabin groups, and teams that often have struggles like this.
 - It has become so normal for all of us to pick out people who are important to “Our Group” and those who do not belong.
 - The Apostle Paul knew that reality, remember he was a persecutor of the followers of Christ before his conversion (Acts 8-9) then fought for gentile inclusion in the Church.
 - Paul uses human anatomy to explain the need for community (especially one with diverse gifts).
 - At camp this summer, campers will explore this through another concept, one that comes from God’s Children in Africa – Umbuntu.
 - This concept draws us into the connection between Peace and Community.
 - Find a version of the story (Umbuntu Children Story) and a great explanation of the concept by Bishop Desmond Tutu online.
 - Paul knew that for the peaceful kingdom to be fulfilled, Christ’s Church must work together
 - At camp we learn about ourselves and our gifts, and we learn about others whose gifts compliment ours.
 - May God’s Church find community in the diversity that God inspires in us and may we be and develop peacemakers through such Umbuntu.

AMEN!

- Other great scripture/themes to explore
 - Genesis 27:1-26 (Shalom; a response to conflict)
 - John 13:1-17 (Agape; God’s love, reconciling love, Sacrificing love)
 - Aloha as a theme using Luke 14:15-24 and John 14:25-27 (Gathering in and Going out)

Offering: *We recommend speaking to how healthy and faithful congregations support camping ministry in many ways already. Apportionments, Sending campers, supplying paid and volunteer staff, encouraging your pastor to volunteer and to go and find respite at our sites, holding meetings and retreats at our sites, etc. Remind them to give faithfully to such a great church first. It is also appropriate to invite a special offering to build a local camp scholarship fund, support a camp site’s programming budget, support conference camp scholarships, support a special project at a site, or sponsor a staff person by paying all or part of their compensation. Camping is an extension of your ministry and all kinds of support are helpful and appreciated.*

Offering Prayer: Giver of all Good Gifts, we offer you these gifts today; Gifts of people gathered who dedicate themselves to You again; Gifts of passion for your work in our lives and communities and hearts willing to work with you for Peace; Gifts of these resources you have entrusted to us that Your love might be experienced through us, through our local ministries and through all the ministries we support including our United Methodist Camps. Use all of these gifts, they are and will always be Yours. AMEN

Music: (see “Song Ideas” below)

Blessing and Challenge: (It is powerful and helpful to tie this back into the same theme as the sermon so adapt this in whatever ways makes that work)

Jesus said to his first followers as he was preparing them for lives of ministry, and it is a blessing for each of us today, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." God has blessed you that you might bring hope to a world longing for peace. Go now, but not away. Go now to find ways to reconnect with your God and to bring people to the wholeness that comes from knowing Christ.

Song Ideas: Page 207-208 in Curriculum

- Also
 - (Prince of Peace) You are Holy
 - Build Your Kingdom Here
 - Grace Like Rain
 - Hole in the World *by The Eagles*
 - In the Secret (I Want to Know You)
 - My Lighthouse
 - One Tin Soldier (Highlighting the Opposite of peace)
 - Romans 16:19
 - Word of God Speak
 - It is Well with my Soul
 - Peace in the Valley (Elvis or others)
 - Many Great Christmas Songs fit.

Extra Worship ideas

Call to Worship:

Leader: God calls you to Shalom, an experience of wholeness and harmony

People: We come from our division and distrust to lift our praises to God

Leader: God has promised a time where the weapons of war are turned to farming tools and we do not need to learn war anymore

People: We come unsure yet hopeful that the Prince of Peace can do this

Leader: Lay down your fears and reach out in joy for God's love endures forever

ALL: With faith and thanksgiving we come

Suggested Responsive Psalm- Psalm 85 (especially 8-13) UMH 806 or Psalm 46 UMH 780

Invocation-(Prayer welcoming God's presence)

Loving Parent, come and celebrate with us. We rejoice in the ways we have seen you this week and the nudges that have guided us here. Even as we recognize your presence in all places, at all times, we invite You into this space. Use this time of worship to comfort and encourage us as well as challenge and change us. Work peace into our lives. Work peace into our thoughts. Work peace into our hearts, that we may turn our attention, our passions, our skills, our stories, and our resources toward your work in ministries here, in our conference, at our camps, and in our world. AMEN

Alternative Children's time: (maybe too extensive for most worship services)

Peace is about Relationships - Game

Separate kids into two groups and have an older youth or adult help each group. Have them talk within their group as you talk to the congregation.

Group 1 – Hoppers

Group 2 – Sliders

To the Congregation – Observers

Have each group discuss why they move the way they do, have a good story ready for each leader if their group is not talkative. Then have the leader talk with worry and fear about people who don't move like that and how people who move in the other way might be bad. Slip in some suggestions that people who just sit and watch are part of the problem.

Example Hopper "Story"

We are the hoppers. We love to hop because we spent time outside with the frogs and toads and bunnies and they always seemed so happy. We tried moving like them for a couple days and we became happy, too; often laughing and giggling if we fell or got off course. Life is about the journey so we should really enjoy getting from here to there. People who don't hop are lazy and don't know anything about the fun of life. If your feet never leave the ground how can you ever reach your highest heights? And what about those people who don't move at all, how weird!

Example Slider "Story"

We are the sliders. We didn't always slide when we walked, but now we love it. We started sliding when we recognized how much fun it was to go down a slide at the park, but then hated falling off the slide at the end. We noticed that sometimes people would trip and fall because they forgot to tie their shoes or were not watching and tripped on something. Now we slide our feet when we walk, both because it feels a little like skating, but also to avoid falling. After a long time of sliding we noticed that we were enjoying more sunrises, sunsets, and rainbows. We see more of our friends on the street and funny signs on the side of the road. Sliding is the best. Did you know that some people haven't learned about the dangers of running and jumping? They put themselves and others at risk and don't even know it. I don't even like being around them when they are being so crazy. And what about those people who just sit there? I don't know about them, they are probably runners in disguise.

Once they have had a chance to get their backstory, give them a small task to accomplish. Example: Get your whole team onto this blanket. OR Line up everyone in order of birthday, OR Get your whole team down the center aisle to the back of the sanctuary, say, hello to each other and come back. REMIND them before they move, remember WHO YOU ARE and move correctly.

When they are done ask them about how their team did. Let the chaos happen if it does and maybe even have your leaders add in some things about how great their team was and that the others were wrong to do it the way they did. After they have shared ask them about what they think about the other team, and about the people who just sat in their chairs. Finally, invite a member of each team to come to you and introduce themselves and why they move the way they move. After each person does this, explain that the whole team did a great job and in fact both groups were on the same team. Talk about how great it is that they now know each other and because of that they can work together better. God's family is really big and has hoppers and sliders and singers and dancers and quiet ones and loud ones. Sometimes it is hard to go to new places like camp because there might be people who are different from you or may think you are a little strange. God loves all of us and camp is a great place to meet people who are not from the same place as you and are still a part of God's family. We hope that you will go to camp and tell them all about how great you are and how great the people of (your town) are.

Invite them to pray with you by repeating after you.

Dear God

Sometimes we are a little silly

We hop

We slide

Yet you say we are all on one team.

Help us to get along

Help us to be great together.

And ALL of God's Children say ...

AMEN