

Camp Ministry Research

What we know and how it can help our ministries

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ECRP Supporters: Gronlund • Sayther • Brunkow

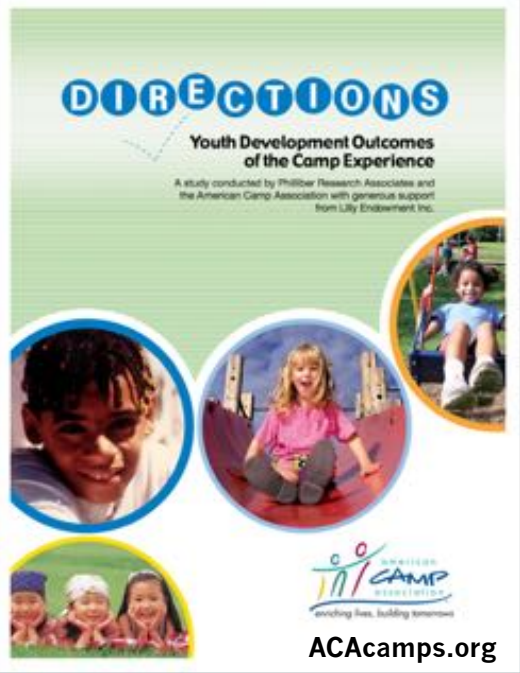


Jeff Bluhm: Lutherdale
Penny Christenson: LOMO
Dave Coker: NLOM
Margie Feilder: Flathead
Jerry Fritsch: L. Lakeside
David Holtz: Luthercrest
Layne Nelson: LO
Marv Nysetvold: Shetek

Jim Schmidt: Onomia
Don Shunkwiler: Sugar Creek
Russ Senti: LOMC
Brent Seaks: Badlands
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Dr. Roland Marinson
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Common Perceptions

- Camp is theologically shallow.
- Camp is all fun and games.
- Camp ruins kids for church.
- Camp is a *Mountaintop Experience*.
- Any benefits fade quickly after the experience.



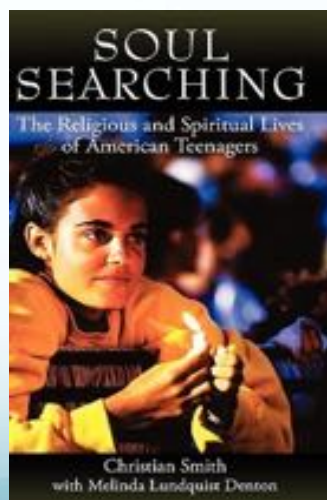
DIRECTIONS
Youth Development Outcomes of the Camp Experience
 A study conducted by Philbar Research Associates and the American Camp Association with generous support from Lilly Endowment, Inc.

ACAcamps.org

- Peer Relationships
- Independence
- Social Comfort
- Friendship Skills
- Environmental Awareness
- Leadership
- Self Esteem
- Adventure and Exploration
- Values and Decision Making
- Spirituality

National Study of Youth and Religion 2003-2008

- 39% of all American teenagers have been to a religious summer camp at least once
- 53% of Mainline Protestants



National Study of Youth and Religion 2003-2008

- Those who attended camp as youth were significantly more likely to participate in communal religious practices as young adults, including church attendance.
- Those who attended camp as youth were over 3 times more likely to remain religious 5 years later than those who did not attend.

Source: Sorenson, "The Summer Camp Experience," *Journal of Youth Ministry* 13 (2014).

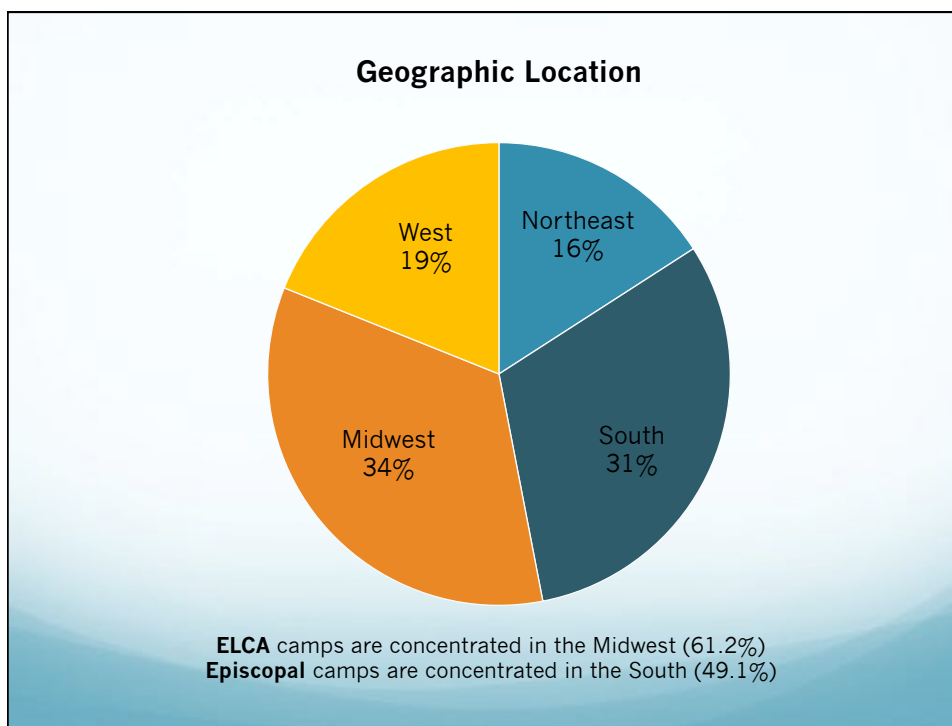


www.theconfirmationproject.com



Fall 2014 Camp Survey Summary

- 332 individual camps representing 50 states
- 16% Episcopal Church
- 22% Presbyterian Church (USA)
- 26% Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- 34% United Methodist Church
- 4% Other (American Baptist, UCC, Mennonite, LCMS, Brethren, Non-Denominational)



Other Details

- 99% are co-educational
- 51% are ACA accredited
- Average cost of 1 week summer camp: **\$383**
- Average summer staff salary: **\$223**
- 2/3 report 10% or less minority campers (only 2% report more than 50%)
- 84% report at least 10% of campers receive \$ aid
- 1/4 of camps report having 1 full time staff member or none at all

LOM Camps in 2014

- More than 80% of responding directors were male
- Least diverse campers and staff members
- Much more focus on outdoors, in general
- Noticeably higher rates of offering travelling day camp, family camp, and confirmation camp
- Highest, on average, in measures of faith formation and connection to congregational ministries

Camp is a place to unplug
from technology (no cell
phones, computers).

93% “agree” or “strongly agree”

40% do not use or see multi-media/technology even weekly

“Unplug” does not necessarily mean “no multi-media”

2014 Camp Director Survey

Faith formation/practices
should be incorporated into
all aspects of camp life.

92% “agree” or “strongly agree”

2014 Camp Director Survey

Top 6 Priorities of Camp

Fall 2014 Survey of 332 Mainline Camps

1. Participant safety
2. Fellowship/community building
3. Self esteem/character building
4. Facilitating participants' experiences of or encounters with God
5. Individual faith formation
6. FUN for all participants

6 Big Ideas from Research

1. Camp is more than FUN and GAMES
2. Christian camp experiences lead to greater engagement in congregations and Christian community.
3. Camps are effective because they take Christian community seriously.
4. Camps are effective because they are places to UNPLUG.
5. Camps are effective because they take young people seriously.
6. Camps are effective because they take experience seriously.

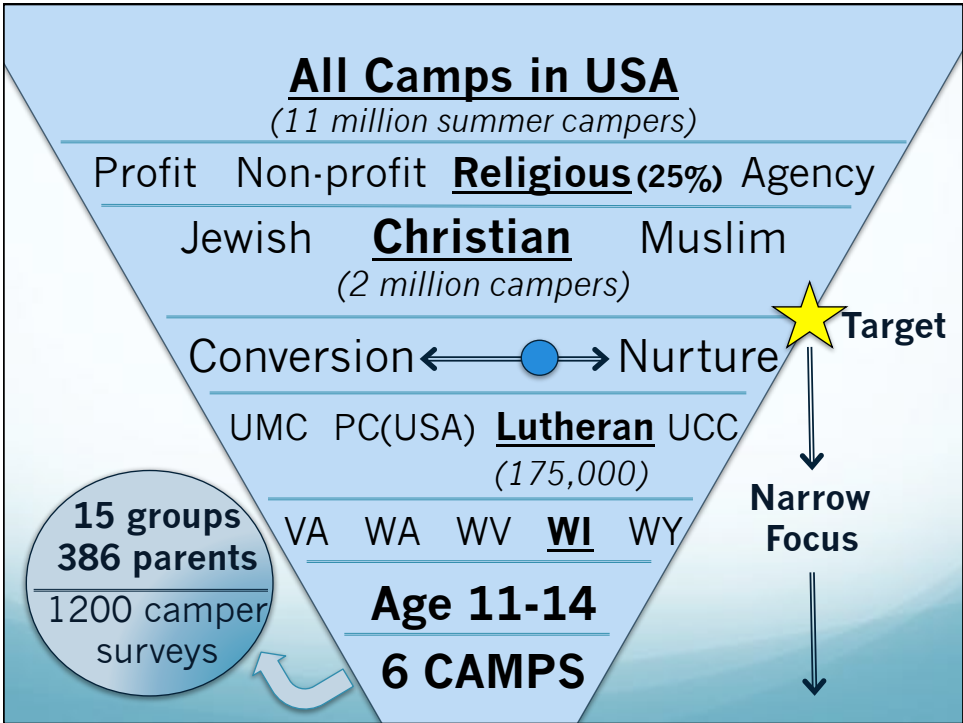


www.effectivecamp.com

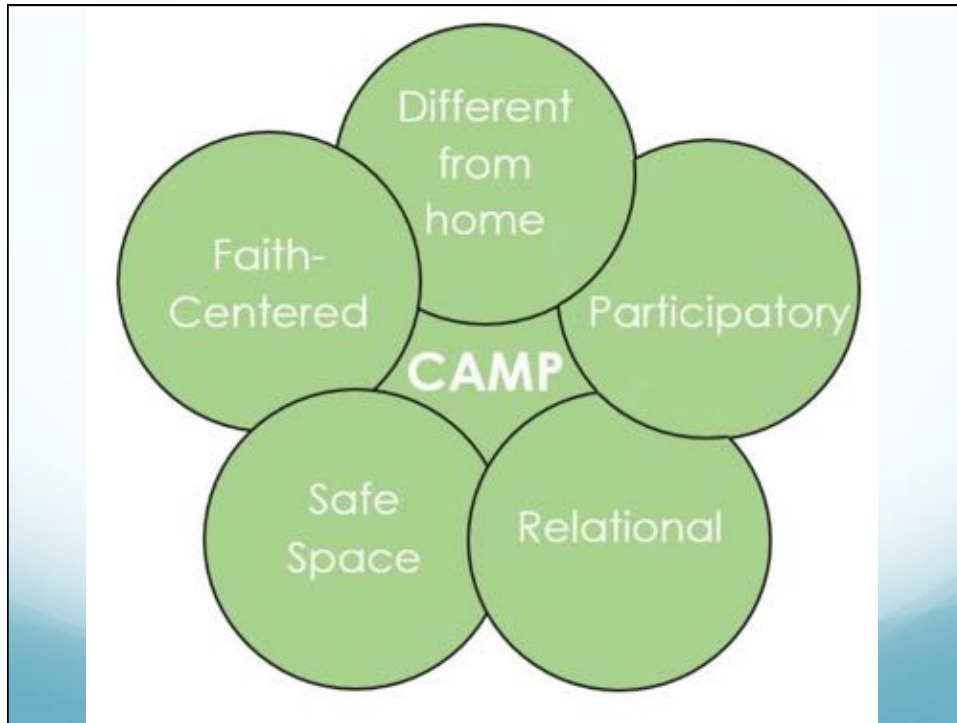
	Day Camp	Adult retreats
★	Residential Camp	Service-Learning
	Family Camp	Conferences
	Adventure trips	Church retreats

What is Christian camp?

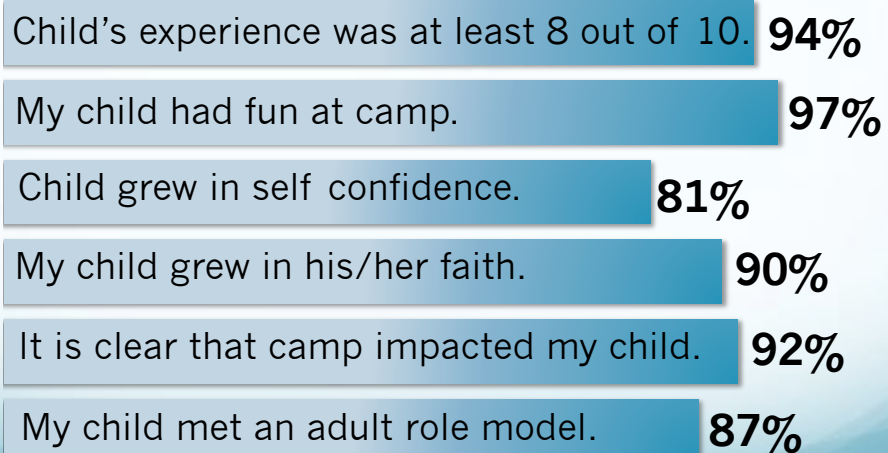
Theologically shallow?
All fun and games?
Mountaintop experience?
Life-changing?







% of surveyed parents agreeing with statement (out of 386).



He has been more self-confident and wants to be more in charge of himself. He also talked about his faith and questions he had raised there. Interestingly, he held back on something they talked about because he felt it was personal to the individual having shared it. He seemed on the edge of a big change.

(Lutherdale parent)

She always comes back saying "please and thank you." She reminds us all to use kind words and she tries much harder to help out and be pleasant. She also reads her Bible a lot.

(Sugar Creek parent)

She is excited and happier, more willing to connect with others. She is more considerate and she adds in things when we are talking like, "I wonder if Jesus did this?" and she is a little more willing to help others. She is listening better, too. It's not extreme changes, but I notice them.

(Camp Wapo parent)

Major finding:

The Christian summer camp experience impacted the participants in positive and recognizable ways, and these impacts extended to their families, churches, and others in their supporting networks.

Last day survey

Based on 1,134 Camper Respondents

	% somewhat agree	% strongly agree
I learned more about God.	19%	76%
I tried something new at camp.	16%	80%
I was strengthened in my faith.	19%	74%
I had a lot of fun.	10%	87%
My questions concerning faith were taken seriously.	20%	72%
I plan to attend this camp in the future.	12%	74%

Campers increased most in:

1. Worship services are usually boring. ↓
2. Being in nature helps me feel closer to God.
3. I like going out of my comfort zone and trying new things.
4. I know that I can make friends.
5. I have important things to offer the church and the world.
6. Faith in God helps me in my daily life.

2-3 Month Follow-up

Based on 278 Camper Respondents

■ Strongly agree ■ Moderately agree

I want to spend more time in nature.



Camp helped me grow in independence.



I feel more confident in myself since camp.



Camp had a significant impact on my life.



Camp is Safe



Camp is Relational



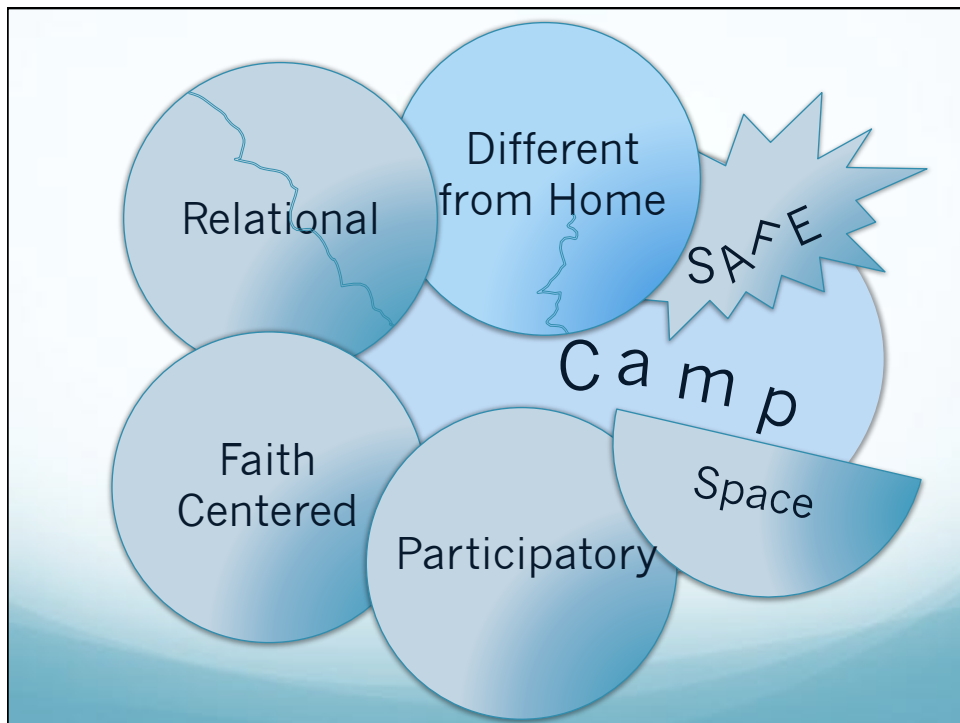
Camp is Faith Centered

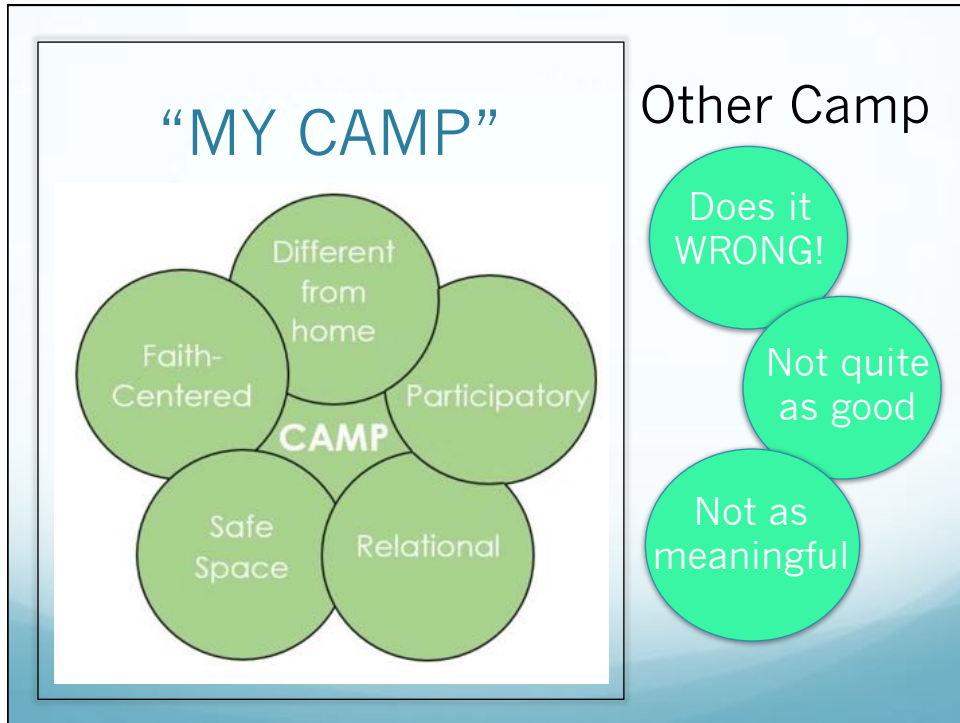


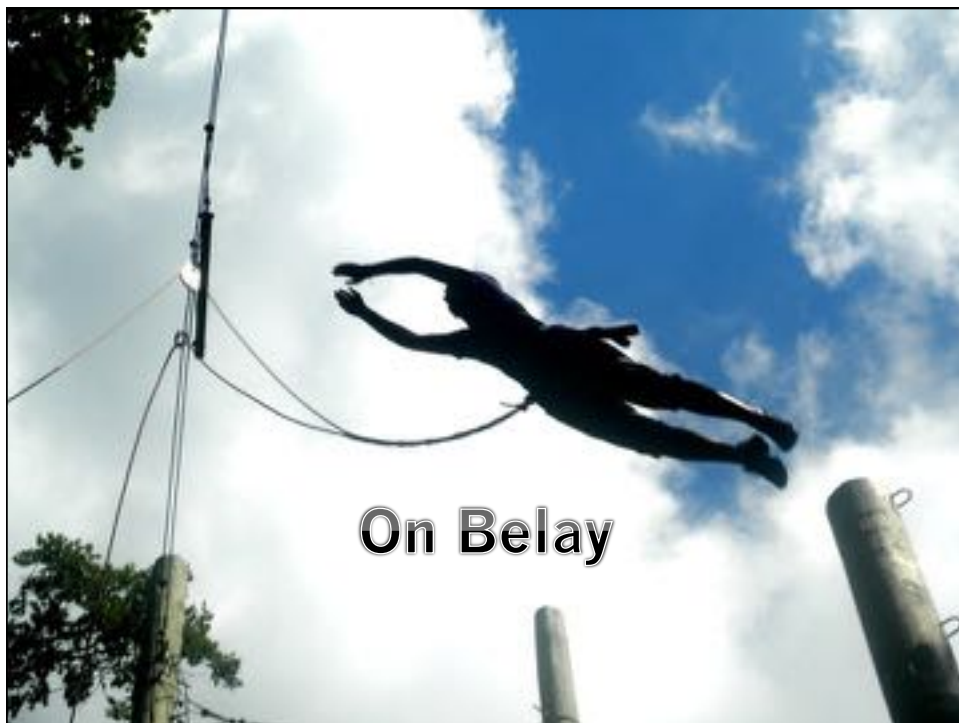
Camp is Participatory



Camp is Different from Home









Theological Playground



Questions and Discussion