

Youth Volunteers

Hire * Train * Support

Introduction

Youth volunteers are a brilliant piece of Day Camp. However, youth volunteers are not all created equal. Many youth volunteers are great role models and leaders. However, some youth volunteers end up being big campers or spend more time talking with their friends than helping out. Sometimes Youth Volunteers can begin to outnumber campers as well.

This packet will equip you, the congregational coordinator, to “hire”, train and support Youth Volunteers.

Take a look at the material. You may use the material or not. This curriculum is designed for your use. Our summer counselors will certainly affirm and encourage youth volunteers, but there is not time in the schedule for our counselors to lead the youth volunteers through this curriculum.

Program Description

A Youth Volunteer is a youth between 7th and 12th grade who wants to work at day camp. Youth Volunteers are **at least three grades older** than the group they work with. Youth Volunteers are not part of the 1:8 Adult to Youth ratio. Youth Volunteers should be limited to 1-2 per every 10 campers.

The Youth Volunteer program gives youth a defined role and defined responsibilities. The program promotes leadership and eliminates the youth’s tendency to “just hang out.” The program strives to boost the confidence of the youth, encourage their participation in year-round programs within the congregation and provide them with a meaningful experience.

The program has three elements: **application, training, and day camp**. The **application** process is simple, but essential. Youth complete an application. The Congregational Day Camp Coordinator selects and places the youth with an age group. Youth Volunteers should be assigned based on their gifts and age. Often one middle school youth and one high school youth will be assigned to the same classroom. Youth Volunteers must be at least three grades older than the group they work with.

Prior to the week of Day Camp, the Youth Volunteers attend a **training session** organized by the Congregational Day Camp Coordinator or Youth Director or Pastor. While training the Youth Volunteers identify their roles and teach them what is expected of them.

Once trained each Youth Volunteer is ready to work alongside the teacher or counselor with an age group at **Day Camp**. During Day Camp, the Youth Volunteer attends both the general morning meeting and the end of the day meeting. The check-in time at the end of the day with the Congregational Day Camp Coordinator is an opportunity for the Youth Volunteers to ask questions or express concerns or frustrations. It is also an opportunity for the congregational coordinator to affirm them and highlight special efforts.

An optional aspect of the Youth Volunteer program is to provide an opportunity for the youth to hang out with the Crossways counselors one night. This social time is a great reward for the youths’ week of hard work. The social time is best if it is structured and lasts about 1 1/2 hours. Some good examples include bowling, an ice cream social, a swimming party, mini-golf or a BBQ.

At the end of the Day Camp week, each teacher or counselor is encouraged to fill out an evaluation form on the Youth Volunteer as well as an evaluation of the Youth Volunteer Program. The application, training, check-in meetings and evaluation are all important to the success of the program.

Day Camp Youth Volunteer Application

The role of a Youth Volunteer is important to the overall Day Camp experience. As a Youth Volunteer you will be with an age group during the entire Day Camp week. You will act as helper to the teacher or counselor. You will get to know the children of the classroom, play with them, focus them and direct them. This is a fun job, but it is a job to take seriously.

Please complete the application and return to: _____

Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade entering in Fall: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Parents Names: _____

Why do you want to be a Youth Volunteer?

What do you expect to do as a Youth Volunteer?

Thank you for applying!

Day Camp Youth Volunteer Training Outline

Open in prayer and introductions (5-10 min.)

Go around the room. Ask each person to introduce themselves and what grade they are in and share their favorite ice cream.

Name Game / Ice breaker (10 min.)

Option 1: Group Juggling. Everyone stands in a circle. Each person throws the ball to someone, saying, "Here Beth." Then Beth replies, "Thanks Steve". The ball continues until everyone has received the ball once...the last person throws it back to you, the first person. That was the introductory piece. In the second round, everyone throws the ball to the same person, saying the same things...but this time there will be more than one ball or object flying through the air...this is group juggling.

Option 2: Play a rousing game of 'What do you like about your neighbor?' Each person, minus one, needs a chair or a place in the circle. There is one IT. IT stands in the middle and asks a person in the circle "What do you like about your neighbor?" The person in the circle responds with an attribute or quality about people in the circle. For example, "they are wearing red" OR "they like football." Then everyone that falls in that category needs to get up and find a new seat around the circle. In the meantime IT also tries to get a chair. The new IT is the person remaining without a chair or spot in the circle.

Option 3: Play Metamorphosis. Explain the metamorphosis (the movement from one character to another) and accompanying gestures. 1) Chicken – flap wings and make chicken noises. 2) Hawk – spread wings and fly. 3) Superman – arms extended in front of you, fly like superman. 4) Cool Dude – snap your fingers and act cool. Everyone begins as a chicken. Like characters need to find like characters. Once two like characters find each other they introduce themselves and play Rock, Paper, Scissors. The winner of Rock, Paper, Scissors moves up a character and the loser stays the same character. One exception: if they are cool dudes, the loser goes back to being a chicken.

Devotion and summary of the summer Bible study theme (20 min.)

- Choose an Activity from the Bible study to do.
- Read the accompanying Bible verse
- Finish your devotion time with a prayer of thanksgiving for how strong God is.

Day Camp Discussion (20 min.)

Use a white board or easel paper. Write down the shared ideas. Let the youth generate the conversation, but do be sure that they hit the important points included here. Try to let them come up with the points, and then you can highlight, affirm and emphasize their answers.

- 1) What is Day Camp?
- 2) What is fun about Day Camp?
 - Day Camp is fun.
 - Youth Volunteers **make** the fun.
 - Day Campers **have** the fun.
- 3) What things might you do as a Youth Volunteer?
 - Youth Volunteers will help the younger kids experience DC.
 - Be a friend and role model to the campers.
 - Be an assistant to the teacher.
- 4) What things won't you do as a Youth Volunteer?
 - Youth Volunteers are not campers.
 - Hang out with friends.

A successful Youth Volunteer (5 min.)

Hand out this half sheet to each youth. Go over the points listed.

Youth Volunteer Covenant (10 min.)

Hand out two commitment sheets to each youth. Highlight each point. Ask them to take them home – pray about the commitment – and then sign one and return it to you. Have them keep the second copy.

Schedule (5 min.)

Tell them where to be and when. They should attend the Sunday night meeting with Crossways counselors and adult volunteers. They should also arrive early to each day of Day Camp with the counselors and adults for prayer/devotion and preparation time.

End in Prayer

Day Camp Youth Volunteer Covenant

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1. I will stay at the Day Camp activities during the entire Day Camp, unless I have written permission from my parents.
2. I will stay in the area and with the age group to which I am assigned.
3. I will remember that recreation time is for the campers. I will help facilitate the games and participate when appropriate.
4. I will sit with my class during opening, lunchtime, closing and field trips. This allows me to help the teacher or counselor and also to continue to get to know the campers.
5. I will remember that campers look up to me. My actions will be appropriate.
6. I will be available to attend a training for Youth Volunteers.
Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____
7. I will be available to attend the Sunday night meeting with Crossways counselors.
Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____
8. I will show up for each day of Day Camp at _____ a.m.
9. I will have FUN!

I _____ have read and agreed to follow the volunteer covenant. For my safety and the safety of the campers, I understand that these rules are important and that if I disobey, I may be asked to leave.

Youth Volunteer's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Day Camp Youth Volunteer Evaluation

Dear Day Camp Adult Volunteer/Counselor -

Thank you for taking a few minutes to evaluate the Youth Volunteer Program. Your feedback is important to the success of the program. A few questions that follow are focused on the **youth** and their skills and a few questions focus on the **program** itself. Please return the form to the congregational coordinator. Thank you!

1. The youth I worked with was well trained.

Strongly Agree Agree So-So No Not at all

2. The youth I worked with had specific tasks to do.

Strongly Agree Agree So-So No Not at all

3. The youth I worked with enjoyed themselves.

Strongly Agree Agree So-So No Not at all

4. The children liked the Youth Volunteer.

Strongly Agree Agree So-So No Not at all

5. The Youth Volunteer *program* worked well.

Strongly Agree Agree So-So No Not at all

6. My job was easier because the Youth Volunteer was with me.

Strongly Agree Agree So-So No Not at al

7. I would like to work with a Youth Volunteer again.

Strongly Agree Agree So-So No Not at all

Additional Comments:

Signed _____
(optional)

A Successful Youth Volunteer is....

WITH the children – always!

FOCUSED on the children. (Not distracted by friends or boyfriends/girlfriends.)

HELPFUL to the teachers and counselors in all activities

SUPPORTIVE of the teachers and counselors, both in the classroom and in large group management.

MOTIVATED to work and play. (Always asking “what can I do to help?”)

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