

# FOCUS 5

*"A publication series prepared specifically for training summer camp workers in Lake Aurora programs."*

## 6 Basic Needs of Young People

(George Gallup Pole — 1992)

1. The need to believe that life is meaningful and has purpose.
2. The need for a sense of community and deeper relationships.
3. The need to be appreciated and loved.
4. The need to be listened to — to be heard.
5. The need to feel that one is growing in faith.
6. The need for practical help in developing a mature faith.



## SPIRITUAL COUNSELING

### Introducing Spiritual Conversation

The Counselor should take the initiative to introduce spiritual conversation with every camper in his charge. This should be done one on one, and it should be done early in the program. Some lead questions are:

- Where do you attend church?*
- Are you a Christian?*
- What activities are you involved in at church?*
- How did you happen to come to a Christian camp?*
- Do you ever read the Bible?*
- Do you find religion to be kind of confusing?*
- Tell me about your spiritual walk.*

Once you determine where the camper is coming from spiritually, then ask other questions that help the camper know you are interested in them.

**DO NOT BE JUDGMENTAL OF THEM OR THEIR FAMILY.**

Once you have opened a door for dialogue, involve the Scriptures and/or the Chaplain in the conversation.

Refer campers who want to accept Christ to the Chaplain.

**DO NOT PRAY WHAT IS CALLED "THE SINNER'S PRAYER" WITH CAMPERS, AS IT HAS NO BIBLICAL BASIS.** If a camper wants to accept Christ as Savior, he must be shown the role of baptism and the Holy Spirit. (Acts 19)

**BUT,** do pray with the camper. You can pray for God's leading, for continued growth, for commitment, for forgiveness, for all kinds of things.

### Where to Counsel — What to Avoid

#### Rules for Safe Counseling

1. When feasible, counsel in teams.
2. If counseling alone, always be in sight of others. (At a table under a tree, on a bench, on the play structure, sitting in a swing, etc.)
3. Do not counsel alone with a camper in a dorm. (The porch might be okay, if others are within sight.)
4. Always have the camper and yourself fully clothed while counseling. If a need for counseling comes while you are changing clothes, finish dressing before beginning.
5. If you feel the camper has a crush on you, consider having someone else do the counseling.
6. Basically, have a hands off policy while counseling. You may want to hold hands for prayer, give a hug of affirmation at the close, or hold a sobbing camper.
7. Show compassion without it being misunderstood for affection.
8. Do not spend too long with a camper. Most times 5 minutes will be enough. If the session requires more than 15 minutes, it also requires at least two counselors. (A Chaplain in a one-on-one teaching session may require more time.)

### 3 Rules for Effective Counseling

1. Listen.
2. Listen.
3. Listen.

It is not what you know, it is how well you listen.

Ask clarifying questions. Let them find the solution or resolution.

# The Spiritual Counseling Chain

Counselor to  
the Chaplain to  
the Follow-up System



## Role of the Chaplain

*Your helpmate...*

Since the Chaplain will help set the Spiritual temper of the program, he should be a person with considerable field experience — preferably a minister with at least 5 years pastoral experience. This is especially true in programs serving grades 4 and up.

**His jobs will include:**

1. Preaching, probably for the vesper service.
2. Coaching the counselors on how to guide campers toward making spiritual decisions.
3. Interviewing/counseling all campers making decisions to accept Christ.
4. Contacting parents and organizing baptisms.
5. Seeing that all decision cards are properly completed and turned in to the Coordinator's office.
6. Interacting with the campers throughout the day, so they will feel comfortable talking with the Chaplain.
7. Being readily available for counseling.
8. Being a part of the administrative team.
9. Being available to help counselors with their Bible studies or devotions.

*The Chaplain's role should not be doubled up with another administrative or counseling position. He should be on campus full time.*

## Concerning Proof Texting

When one takes isolated verses of Scripture and uses them to prove a point or form a doctrine, it is called proof texting. It is not an accurate way to understand Scripture as it ignores other relevant Scripture or it does not allow for the context.

Proof texting is often used to defend differing views of the plan of salvation and is a popular method used by tract writers.

When it comes to the plan of salvation, a more accurate method of study would be to do case studies of those who were actually accepting Christ. All of those case studies taking place after the establishment of the church, can be found in the book of Acts.



## Doctrinal Tradition

The teachings at camp should fall well within the traditional position of the owner churches as a group. You should teach only that which is held in common by these churches.

Campers should be encouraged to study the Scriptures on their own to determine their own doctrinal position of Biblical issues.

Leaders who cannot agree on doctrine must take care not to draw campers into their disagreement.

The Program Director has the responsibility to keep the teaching program on a sound course--consistent with the traditional position of the Restoration Movement.

The following is *offered as a guide* to a few areas that have surfaced as problems in the past.

- ✝ Not eternal security, but neither eternal insecurity.
- ✝ Not faith only, but neither baptism only.
- ✝ Not speaking in tongues, but not neglecting the role of the Holy Spirit.
- ✝ Teaching on rededication should also include teaching on the Lord's Supper.

## Types of Invitations Offered

The progression matrix on the back of FOCUS #2 summarizes the sequencing of invitations. Basically, three types of public invitations are to be offered:

### **The invitation to accept Christ.**

This is to be coupled with extensive counseling.

**The invitation to commit their life to specialized Christian service.** This decision should be followed up by the home minister as to how to prepare for service.

**The invitation to rededicate their life.** This invitation becomes a little more complicated as one of the purposes of the camp program is to get each camper to rededicate his life. But, some campers have that need to do it in a special way in front of others at a time of worship. This invitation should be followed up with prayer, counseling, and teaching concerning the role of the Lord's Supper.

**Other public responses.** Other public responses may include requests for prayer or help with deep spiritual burdens. These should be handled on a case by case basis.

**Note on Rebaptism.** *The Scriptures do not teach rebaptism into Christ, but in Acts 19 some followers of Jesus who had been baptized into John's Baptism were baptized into the baptism of Jesus.*

*Sometimes a camper will have been baptized early in life for a wrong reason and will come under conviction while at camp to respond anew to Christ. When this happens, care should be taken to make sure the new decision is valid. (Often, the first decision was valid, but it did not carry all the emotional trappings of a baptism at camp, thus the camper thinks the first decision was not valid.) As campers age, they learn more about Christ and sin, so they confuse rebaptism with rededication.*



## The Plan of Salvation

God's plan for redeeming the world is revealed by understanding the entire Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments.

When it comes to "what must I do to be saved," the answer comes primarily from the book of Acts because that is where the question is asked.

Basic to God's plan is communication

— someone must teach and someone must listen. (Acts 8:30,31) Once this takes place and the listener wants to respond, the Scriptures are quite clear.

**The Beginning.** We begin the salvation process when we recognize that we have sinned against God and are hopelessly lost from the presence of God. It starts with a strong desire to surrender your life to the will of God and ask for His forgiveness. (Acts 2:37; 16:29,30)

**Believe.** Not just acknowledge (even the devil acknowledges the presence of God — Jas. 2:19), but believe that God really can save you, believe enough to trust him with your life like a jailer did in Acts 16:31.

**Repent.** Telling someone that God expects them to change what they are doing is often included in the answers given to those asking concerning salvation. Acts 2:38 is a good example. Another example is Paul on the road to Damascus who, when he realized he was working against God, made a decision to change and do what God told him to do. (Acts 8 and 22)

**Baptize.** Every person in the Book of Acts who chose to accept Christ was baptized. It was not a "magic formula," but Peter tells us later it was the answer of a good conscience. (1 Pet. 3:21) Baptism will be in its biblical form of immersion.

*Some mistakenly teach that Paul was saved when he saw the bright light on the road to Damascus, but Paul himself says his sins were not washed away until he was baptized (Acts 22:16).*

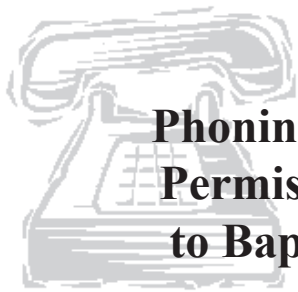
**Serve.** The book of James makes it really clear that no one was saved to sit. If your response to God is real, then you will be active for Him.

**Forgiveness.** When one is forgiven, he should learn to forgive others. Do not neglect the teaching of this truth.

**The Church.** The new Christian needs to assemble with other Christians. Be sure they understand the purpose of the church. The camp will send their name and address to a minister in their home area.

**Note.** *Some teach that one is saved by faith alone and they base it on Romans 1:17. A careful reading of this passage of Scripture will show you that it is not talking about the process of a sinner coming to Christ, but rather of the overall approach Christians are to take toward God — God's ability to save us must simply be accepted on faith.*

*It is true that we are saved by God's grace since He must be willing to forgive us.*



## Phoning for Permission to Baptize

It is best to have the camper present when you phone to ask for permission to baptize. This will allow the parent to talk with the camper to determine his/her sincerity. Parents are wary of cults and brainwashing.

Baptism is always taught in its biblical perspective of being "into Christ." They are not being baptized into the "Christian Church Denomination." What church they attend is a matter to be worked out with the camper and his parents. Knowing this will help parents who do not attend a Restoration Movement church to understand that this baptism is an act of obedience to Christ and not proselyting.

## Who Should Baptize Campers

The Chaplain should organize the baptismal service and designate the person to do the baptizing.

The camper should be asked if he/she has a preference. If no preference is given, the Chaplain should designate the baptizer based on other circumstances. (Is someone already in the water doing baptizing? Who has had great influence on the camper? Perhaps the Chaplain should do it himself?)

Consider the parent as the person doing the baptizing. Most campers know only what they have seen at "church", so they assume the preacher does the baptizing. Maybe their counselor should do the baptizing.

**CAUTION.** On rare occasions, a counselor will put more emphasis on who should do the baptizing than is good. A counselor should not seek to feed his own ego by talking the camper into letting him do the baptizing.

## Baptismal Service

A camper should not be baptized at camp without the expressed consent of the camper's parents or guardian.

Night baptisms in the Lakeside Camp should take place in the swimming area where there is a beach light. Night baptisms in other areas will need to use leader discretion as to safety.

Campers should dress modestly for baptisms. Play clothes, with perhaps a swimsuit beneath, would be appropriate. Those doing the baptizing should plan to wear clothing (vs. a bathing suit), also.


A counselor should be available with a towel following the baptism.


Daytime baptisms can take place anywhere the Chaplain thinks is appropriate.


If parents desire to be present for the camper's baptism, every effort should be made to honor that desire.

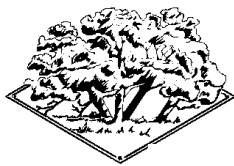
## Problems We Are Not Equipped to Handle

 Some behavioral problems need **consistent, professional** counseling.

 Some spiritual problems need an "at home mentor" and a caring church.

 Some family problems need the involvement of a state agency as well as a caring church.

 Clarify needs on the "camper profile" and consult with the Summer Camp Director for follow up action.



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## What is Success?

An excerpt from "A Survival Guide for Retreat Counselors" by Stan White and Sheri Evans.



...**"RENEWED PERSONAL COMMITMENT:** Spend time with God daily. His Word is where you'll find strength in times of weakness and fuel when you're running on empty. Prayer, for yourself and for each camper, is a vital ingredient in a fruitful ministry. You'll be surprised at the spiritual growth sport you'll experience from this brief episode... if you are disciplined and totally dependent upon Him.

**UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRITUAL SUCCESS:** Often we think of spirituality in terms of big decisions: salvation, rededication, and so on. In reality it is made up of little ones, such as deciding to get along with parents or a sibling, helping at home, remaining sexually pure until marriage, submitting to authority, maintaining personal integrity or spending time daily in God's Word. Yes, salvation is the first step toward spiritual growth, but do not judge your success as a counselor on how many campers you lead to Christ, rather by your faithfulness to Him.

Let God work through you as you imitate Jesus Christ. Watch God work in the lives of your campers, and be prepared for God to work in your life.

Years from now, may your campers say they remember their leader who spoke the word of God to them. May they consider the outcome of your way of life and imitate your faith.

(Hebrews 13:7)"

### HOW TO USE THIS ARTICLE

Program Directors: Make as many copies as you need to distribute to your counselors and administration.

Counselor: Study this "Focus" training material and request the next number in the series from your Program Director.