



2023 Middle School & Combined Sessions

## **Groups Preview Packet**

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# A Message to Youth Workers

Dear Group Leaders & Youth Workers,

We probably don't tell you enough about how much we admire you and your work with middle school and high school students. As the world continues to deal with the impacts of the global pandemic, we recognize that this season of youth ministry continues to be one of great challenge and stress, and so we applaud you for your work!

We believe camp plays a vital role (but not the only role) in the spiritual formation of students. Our hope is that what we do at camp will amplify the rhythms and practices your group creates throughout the rest of the year. Our aim is to assist you as you help youth grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Here are a few things to note in preparation for camp this summer:

## Volunteer Cabin Leaders

If you are bringing more than seven boys and/or seven girls to camp, we require you to provide volunteer male and/or female cabin leaders to stay with your students during your week at camp. You are responsible for providing another volunteer for every 16 additional campers of either gender: 8 - 23 kids (1 vcl); 24 - 39 kids (2 vcl's); 40 - 55 kids (3 vcl's); etc. These volunteers will stay in the cabin leader room along with the Summer Staff cabin leader. If you have questions about our volunteer cabin leader policies, please contact **Katie Smith Mussat**, our Program Coordinator for Cabin Leaders & Volunteers. Katie or one of our Cabin Leader Supervisors will contact you a few weeks before your session at camp to finalize your volunteers for the week. If you have questions about volunteers, contact Katie Smith Mussat at [kmussat@youthfront.com](mailto:kmussat@youthfront.com)

# Hype Themes

On the first day, campers are split up into teams to compete in events throughout the week. Each night has a different theme, and staff and campers will dress in costumes for all out craziness. Each theme has an event/competition attached to it as well. You are encouraged to participate in whatever way you want – whether that is bringing costumes and joining in the fun or just hanging out while it all happens. Here are some ideas of what you could do for each night:

**KC Sports Jam:** Let's celebrate some of the sports teams of Kansas City! From teams that we know and treasure like the Chiefs to Kansas City's rugby team that you have probably never heard of, "The Kansas City Blues". This first hype is a great time to spend time getting to know your cabin and participate in a variety of cabin based challenges.

- **Costume ideas:** Dress up in your favorite sports gear! Whether that be Kansas City or not!

**Night Strike:** The beloved Youthfront tradition is back! Campers will sneak their way through the Night Strike field, seeking out the elusive Agents and Zones and delivering their team's precious tickets to the Tower of Power all while evading the formidable Strikers. Will you be sneaky and stealthy enough to complete your mission?

- **Costume ideas:** camo, dark clothing, close-toed shoes are a must! No face paint or scary costumes.

**Castaway Catastrophe:** Are you ready to test your survival skills and make a splash at the same time? Join us at Castaway Catastrophe, where your team must pass the dreaded island's challenges before jumping into the pool for our epic bellyflop contest. With a variety of exciting games and obstacles to overcome, you'll need to rely on your instincts and strategy to outwit and outlast the competition. Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or a first-time competitor, Castaway Catastrophe is the ultimate test of endurance and courage. So gather your friends and get ready to make a big splash at this unforgettable event!

- **Costume ideas:** swimsuits, bandanas, cut-off t-shirts, Hawaiian shirts gone-wrong, survival tools like water jugs and ponchos (please no weapons of any kind), buffs, any clothes cut off into survival clothes, shark costumes, sun hats.

**Jukebox Jive:** On this night, campers will travel back in time to the 1950s! The most popular dance event for teens in this era was a "Sock Hop", where teens would dance in their socks to protect the school gym floor. Campers will eat popular foods of the 50s at our very own "Circle C Diner." The night will be rockin' with jukebox music as we dance, watch a drive-in movie, go bowling, and eat ice cream floats at the soda shop!

- **Costume ideas:** Jeans, white t-shirts, leather jackets, varsity jackets, cat-eye sunglasses, poodle skirts, converse or keds tennis shoes, scarves for hair or neck. And of course, don't forget your socks!

**Youthfront's Got Talent:** Showcase your zany talent and improv skills along with your cabin mates! Earlier in the week, cabins will draw random elements that must be included in your act: a song, a costume/prop, a type of talent, and genre. Cabins will have time throughout the week to prepare their off-the-wall performance, which will be highlighted in our final HYPE of middle school and combined sessions. Will you impress the judges, or will your act get X'ed?

- **Costume ideas:** tacky/fancy clothes, silly accessories. Some random costumes/accessories will be provided, but campers are encouraged to bring their own!

If you have any questions about our HYPE themes, reach out to Amanda Shepherd, our Program Coordinator at Youthfront Camp West: [ashepherd@youthfront.com](mailto:ashepherd@youthfront.com)

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We are looking forward to your group's time with us at camp. If you have any questions about camp, feel free to contact our Senior Director of Camps, Matt Saunders at [msaunders@youthfront.com](mailto:msaunders@youthfront.com).

Grace and Peace,  
Youthfront Camp Staff

## Youthfront Camps: Learning Theory and Practice

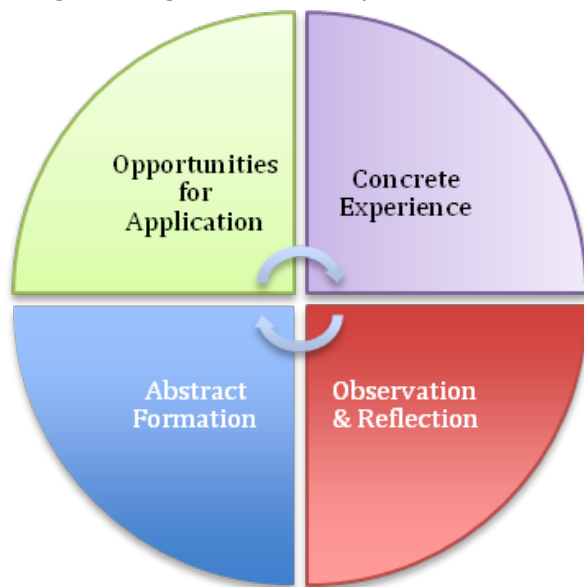
Learning takes place in all types of environments. The most effective learning, however, takes place within an environment that is intentional, authentic, transformative, and communal.

At Youthfront, we are **intentional** about the method of learning that we employ in order to maximize the **authentic** discovery, growth, and learning of each camper. Every activity we facilitate—from worship gatherings to games during free time—is carefully constructed for **transformative** learning in a **communal** context.

We are committed to creating environments for experiential learning. Experiential learning is simply learning by the process of making meaning from direct experiences. Therefore, we construct environments of learning through:

1. Concrete Experience
2. Observation and Reflection
3. Formation of Abstract Thought
4. Opportunities for Application

By intentionally crafting learning experiences using the four elements above, we are able to accommodate the learner's preferred method of learning, whether it be the **converger**, who learns by taking abstract ideas and actively experimenting with them, or the **diverger**, who prefers a concrete experience in which to observe and reflect. Experiential learning also accommodates the **assimilator**, who is able to take abstract concepts and make observations through inductive reasoning, or the **accommodator**, who learns best by *doing*, through concrete experiences and the active outworking of the concepts presented.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>

Youthfront is passionate about bringing youth into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. While there are many effective theories of learning, we believe that the experiential learning theory we practice is best suited for a camp environment where we can facilitate experiences for campers to engage God's story in an intentional, authentic, and transformative way.

## **How is Youthfront different than other camps?**

**Youthfront is built around the fixed hours of prayer, also known as the Daily Office or the Divine Office.**

Instead of building Youthfront's sessions around chapel, free time, cabin times, the snack shop, etc., we think it best to center all of the campers' experiences on the practice of prayer. Youthfront Camp practices morning, midday, and compline prayer. Each of these prayer times consists of the reading of the Scriptures, music, silence, corporate and private prayer, and confessing the creeds.

**Youthfront is interested in helping adolescents ask questions that lead to ongoing engagement.**

Youthfront works hard to spark the imaginations of all campers. Our content has been developed to help adolescents think, wonder, and feel. We believe we are most successful when we allow the Holy Spirit to work and do ministry without deliberately manufacturing or manipulating the insights of humanity. If adolescents walk away from Youthfront with more questions about God and the Bible than answers, we believe it is a great thing for their ongoing learning and formation.

### **What does this approach look like?**

Below is a simple table illustrating how Youthfront Camp is distinctly different in our approach to engaging adolescents in learning. The table found on the following page is not intended to be an either/or list of values; rather, it reflects a continuum of moving beyond a teacher-centered approach toward a learner-centered approach.

<b>Moving from...</b>	<b>Moving to...</b>
<b>Preferences of the teacher.</b> Most information that adolescents get is filtered through the skills and preferences of the one disseminating the information.	<b>Needs of the adolescent.</b> Youthfront's content takes into consideration the needs, styles, and habits of the adolescent and creates learning opportunities with the learner in mind first.
<b>Static in nature.</b> Typically, most learning environments are predictable and fixed.	<b>Always evolving.</b> Youthfront's content is always looking for ways to create dynamic, unpredictable, and mobile learning opportunities.
<b>Breadth.</b> How much information can we teach?	<b>Depth.</b> How deep can we help learners go in any given topic?
<b>Rote.</b> Memorization is good. However, memorization alone doesn't produce a lasting effect on a learner.	<b>Experiential.</b> Youthfront's content provides learners with the opportunity to learn through practice and ongoing application.
<b>Solo.</b> Typically, learners left on their own don't have the necessary influence of the learning of others to help push them to think about new insights and directions.	<b>Peer to Peer.</b> Youthfront's content is about learning in community—sharing common opportunities. Often in peer-to-peer models, learning is owned with greater passion and learners are pushed to think more deeply as a result of the interaction with their peers.
<b>Product.</b> Most learners are pushed to be complete, leaving no room for trial, error, self-discovery, etc.	<b>Process.</b> Youthfront's content is about the process of learning. It recognizes that learners learn at different paces and that the passion to own something takes some longer to acquire than others.

Adapted from *A New Kind of Youth Ministry*, by Chris Folmsbee. Zondervan, 2006. Used with permission.

# Middle School Session Daily Schedule

(Monday - Friday Sessions 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10\*)

<p><b>Monday</b></p> <p>9:00am Registration Begins            10:00am Camp Kickoff            11:15am Cabin Time            12:30pm Lunch            1:00pm Free Time            6:00pm Dinner            6:45pm HYPE - KC Sports Jam            8:45pm Evening Gathering  <b>"God's Dream Surprises"</b>            9:45pm Cabin Reflection            10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p><b>Tuesday</b></p> <p>7:30am Wake Up            8:00am Morning Prayer            8:15am Breakfast            9:15am Morning Gathering  <b>"God's Dream Surprises"</b>            10:00am Reflection            10:30am Cabin Experiences            12:00pm Midday            12:30pm Lunch            1:00pm Free Time            6:00pm Dinner            7:00pm Evening Gathering  <b>"God's Dream Notices"</b>            8:00pm Cabin Reflection            8:45pm HYPE - Night Strike            10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p><b>Wednesday</b></p> <p>7:30am Wake Up            8:00am Morning Prayer            8:15am Breakfast            9:15am Morning Gathering  <b>"God's Dream Notices"</b>            10:00am Reflection            10:30am Cabin Experiences            12:00pm Midday            12:30pm Lunch            1:00pm Free Time            6:00pm Dinner            7:00pm Evening Gathering  <b>"God's Dream Values All"</b>            8:00pm Cabin Reflection            8:45pm HYPE -            Castaway Catastrophe            10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p> <p>7:30am Wake Up            8:00am Morning Prayer            8:15am Breakfast            9:15am Morning Gathering  <b>"God's Dream Values All"</b>            10:00am Reflection            10:30am Cabin Experiences            12:00pm Midday            12:30pm Lunch            1:00pm Free Time            6:00pm Dinner            6:45pm HYPE - Jukebox Jive            8:45pm Evening Gathering  <b>"God's Dream is Generous"</b>            9:45pm Cabin Reflection            10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p><b>Friday</b></p> <p>7:30am Wake Up            8:00am Morning Prayer            8:15am Breakfast            9:15am Morning Gathering  <b>"God's Dream is Generous"</b>            10:00am Reflection            10:30am Cabin Experiences            12:00pm Midday            12:30pm Lunch            1:00pm Free Time            3:30pm HYPE - Youthfront's Got Talent            5:00pm Dinner            5:30pm Final Gathering  <b>"God's Dream Lives On"</b>            6:15pm Open Time            7:00pm Close Camp</p>	

\*Session 10 is a Combined Session that will provide alternative programming for High School campers in the mornings.



# Session 1 Schedule: MS/HS Combined Session

(Tuesday - Friday)

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00am Registration Begins 10:00am Camp Kickoff 11:15am Cabin Time 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm HYPE - KC Sports Jam 8:45pm Evening Gathering <b>"God's Dream Surprises"</b> 9:45pm Cabin Reflection 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out	7:30am Wake Up 8:00am Morning Prayer 8:15am Breakfast 9:15am Morning Gathering <b>"God's Dream Notices"</b> 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 7:00pm Evening Gathering <b>"God's Dream Values All"</b> 8:00pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Night Strike 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out	7:30am Wake Up 8:00am Morning Prayer 8:15am Breakfast 9:15am Morning Gathering <b>"God's Dream Values All"</b> 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 7:00pm Evening Gathering <b>"God's Dream is Generous"</b> 8:00pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Castaway Catastrophe 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out
<b>Friday</b> 7:30am Wake Up 8:00am Morning Prayer 8:15am Breakfast 9:15am Morning Gathering <b>"God's Dream is Generous"</b> 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 3:30pm HYPE - Youthfront's Got Talent 5:00pm Dinner 5:30pm Final Gathering <b>"God's Dream Lives On"</b> 6:15pm Open Time 7:00pm Close Camp	<p><b>Note:</b> Because this session is one day shorter than usual, the first two themes, "God's Dream Surprises" and "God's Dream Notices" will only have one gathering each instead of two. Use the first night to introduce the theme of the week and then introduce the mustard seed parable. There will not be a cabin experience or activity planned for after this evening gathering.</p> <p>For the next morning, the parable of the rich fool will need to be somewhat abbreviated. We will have a cabin experience planned for the Middle School campers following this morning gathering.</p>	

# Seeking God's Dream

## 2023 MS / HS Content Preview

### Introduction:

Youth today understand the world is not what it could or should be. From the senseless violence and hate displayed on the news of their social media feed to the suffering caused by anxiety and depression rising among their generation, youth see what is not right and they care about making things right. Jesus cared about this too. Jesus entered a world not dissimilar from our own. To a world full of fear and division, Jesus told a different story, a hope-filled story of what could be: God's dream.

Have you ever found yourself listening to a story on the "edge of your seat" so to speak? Whether hearing someone tell a suspenseful story, reading a thrilling book, or watching a movie, a good story captures our attention, draws us in, and causes us to think and reflect on its meaning and implications. Jesus's stories had this kind of impact - both then and now. He gathered the crowds, his followers, and anyone in earshot to hear his stories. Jesus challenged listeners to consider a world where everything is flipped upside down and not what one would expect. These short stories, called "parables," were about a new reality, which he called: "The Kingdom of God." The word "parable" comes from two Greek words: "para," meaning to put something side by side, and "balo," meaning to cast or to throw. Thus, Jesus's parables cast two stories side by side: Jesus's story and the story of our own lives.<sup>2</sup>

This week at camp, students will be invited to collectively listen to Jesus's stories anew. They will imagine themselves sitting with Jesus and listening to Him speak. They will meet the characters and picture the scenery and setting of each story. In doing so, students will consider what Jesus might want to teach them, perhaps something new and unexpected.

On night one, we want to "plant the seed" and get students imagining a world under God's reality. If the world was actually how it should be, what would it look like? How would people view one another? How would people treat one another? We believe the Kingdom of God is God's dream for his creation, and God's dream is unexpected and surprising (Monday). God's dream is for all to be seen and resources shared (Tuesday), for all to be valued and everyone to be counted (Wednesday), and for there to be equity/generosity over scarcity/exploitation (Thursday). Finally, God's dream lives on through our very lives (Friday).

Ultimately, this week of camp will connect campers to God's heart. Our hope is that youth will be challenged, as Jesus's first followers once were, to completely alter their perspectives and understanding of how they think and see themselves and one another in the world. By exploring the Kingdom of God from the creativity of Jesus's parables, campers will discover their stories are a part of God's Dream too.

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<sup>2</sup> Amy Jill Levine, "Who Is My Neighbor?"

## Monday Night - Tuesday Morning

### “God’s Dream Surprises”

**Key Scripture(s):** Mark 4:30-34, The Parable of the Mustard Seed

**Big Idea:** We want campers to catch a glimpse of God’s dream through Jesus’s story of the surprising mustard seed. God’s dream (the Kingdom of God), like a mustard seed that grows into a tall and strong tree, is unimaginable and unlike what anyone would expect. **God’s dream for the world is surprising.**

**Memory Verse:** Mark 4:30-32: *Jesus said, “How can I describe the Kingdom of God? What story should I use to illustrate it? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of all garden plants; it grows long branches, and birds can make nests in its shade.”*

#### **Evening Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The edge of the stage will be covered with blank books. Each with the different parables we will learn for the week written on them with an image.<sup>3</sup>*

*“I had always felt life first as a story: and if there is a story there is a story-teller.”*  
- GK Chesterton

This first evening gathering will introduce Jesus as the storyteller for the week (“He was never without a story when he spoke.” Mark 4:33 Msg). The term parable will be defined and students will get a sense that two stories are colliding this week: Jesus’s stories and our own.

The evening will begin with lights off in the chapel, then with a spotlight on a few cabin leaders on the stage as they bounce back and forth telling a story about what this week could be in the life of a camper.

Example: *“Once upon a time... at youthfront camp west, there was a camper... this camper came for fun and this camper came for friends... this camper loved camp... But, this year, something surprising happened. The camper noticed the blob, the camper noticed the pool, the camper noticed the ice cream at the snack shop, the camper noticed the zipline, the camper even - in a stroke of luck and determination - noticed a hype monkey... But something unexpected happened amidst all this “noticing.” The camper noticed Jesus. The camper listened to Jesus’s stories being told each day. There were stories about God’s dream for the world and stories about God’s dream for the camper. The camper didn’t expect to notice God’s love. The*

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[https://www.amazon.com/Hardcovers-Ashley-Productions-Original-Version/dp/B00EPFYD9A/ref=sr\\_1\\_10?crd=6WIMNLHFWZJC&keywords=large+blank+books&qid=1675870811&s=office-products&sprefix=large+blank+books%2Coffice-products%2C116&sr=1-10](https://www.amazon.com/Hardcovers-Ashley-Productions-Original-Version/dp/B00EPFYD9A/ref=sr_1_10?crd=6WIMNLHFWZJC&keywords=large+blank+books&qid=1675870811&s=office-products&sprefix=large+blank+books%2Coffice-products%2C116&sr=1-10)

*camper didn't expect to notice God's inclusion and compassion. The camper didn't expect to feel significant, cared for, and valued. The camper didn't expect to be challenged to share that love and care with other campers. The camper came to get away - for fun and for friends. The camper received all of those things. But, to the camper's surprise, the camper left camp with so much more... In fact, we think this camper's life might forever be changed.*

As the story ends, the worship leader will play "Open Our Eyes" by Sandra McCracken (Rain for Roots), inviting campers to join in on what is going to be an incredible week.

After singing songs, the storyteller will introduce the theme of "Seeking God's Dream." When Jesus told stories about "The Kingdom of God," he was opening up the ears, eyes, and hearts of people to see the world and their lives in a new way. The storyteller will introduce the first parable of the week: "The Parable of the Mustard Seed." Through the parable of the mustard seed, we see a small and seemingly insignificant seed being planted and nurtured. Then, surprisingly, this seed grows into a magnificent tree so significant that birds flock to nest in its branches. God has a big and surprising dream for the world, a dream so big it involves heaven coming down and meeting earth.

During the reflection time at the end of worship, students will open their journals. They will receive tape and mustard seeds from their cabin leaders to tape their seeds inside their journal and take time to do the reflection in their journals while the worship band closes in a few songs. Students will leave this first night with a sense of "wonder" and "expectation" for the God-sized dream we will be exploring this week.

During cabin reflection time, students will have an opportunity to share about their reflections in their journals. In their journals they will have reflected upon the question: "What work/miracle/growth/new thing would you like to ask God to do this week in you/for you/in your life?" Essentially, campers will consider this: "What do you want out of this week? What do you need from Jesus?" Cabin leaders will then close the night in a time of prayer over their campers.

### **Morning Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The edge of the stage will be covered in plants/potted trees (artificial &/or real).*

The morning session will begin with a game on screen where campers see an image zoomed in and have to guess what the object is. The point: the images are often an object we did not expect. Today will continue our story of how the dream and vision God has for us and the world is surprising and what we do not expect.<sup>4</sup>

After singing songs for worship, the gathering will continue with a "storytime" skit by summer staff. The narrator will be a character of their choice (ex: mother goose or a princess bride style grandparent in rocking or wingback chair. The narrator reads: "The Marvelous Mustard Seed" story while summer staff act it out (ex: summer staff will form a "mustard tree" either in a human pyramid or holding the yoga tree pose).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.downloadyouthministry.com/p/robes-or-noses/games-2967.html>

The storyteller will then continue to unpack the idea of “liminal space,” of heaven meeting earth (the inbreaking, the impossible, the unimaginable). God is in the business of making all things new, of bringing about new creation. The storyteller could point back to creation when God looked at everything and called it “good” and “very good.” When sin entered the world, brokenness entered God’s perfect creation. Since that time, God has been putting things back together again. This is what it means when we pray the Lord’s prayer, saying “Let Your Kingdom come, let Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We are praying with hope that God’s dream will happen on earth, that creation will be made new and things will be made right again. Today, we want to open our eyes and ears to look and listen for ways we are seeing God at work around us. Students will leave with a challenge to seek, pay attention, and intentionally notice their surroundings, asking themselves: “Where am I seeing God at work around me today?”

The worship band will close the gathering with “Open our Eyes” by Sandra McCracken.

### **Journal Ideas:**

Journals look like a storybook. Author: campers name Published: date of camp.

- *Front image is a circle representing an image of each parable: mustard tree, barn, sheep/coin, vineyard, bread.*
- Space for each end of day reflection: “How did God surprise you today?”

Psalm 90:14 (Msg)

*Surprise us with love at daybreak;  
then we’ll skip and dance all the day long.*

### **Journal Reflection:**

**Silence & Stillness.** Cabin leaders will gather students and have them get a towel or blanket, something to sit on. Gather outside and sit in a circle. Cabin leader will read aloud Elijah’s story of God meeting him in silence - 1 Kings 19:11-13. Students will then be instructed to take their towel or blanket and spread out, making space to be distant from others in the cabin. Students will sit in silence and solitude with a guided reflection. Silence and stillness are two practices we do not often practice at home. Why does silence make us feel uncomfortable? Why do we avoid silence? When we are silent, the feelings begin to bubble up and our thoughts arise. We begin to reflect on our lives. We begin to notice things we may not want to notice or deal with. Today, we are challenging one another to step into this uncomfortable practice. As they listen and observe their surroundings, students will be encouraged to journal: what do you hear? Smell? Feel? What do you notice? – birds chirping, the hot sun on my face, the sound of the rain, the smell of chlorine, the smell of the lake, the feel of the wind. After noticing creation around them, students will be guided through questions about how they are feeling and doing as they enter camp this week.

### **Cabin Experience:**

### The Surprising Truth Game (To Tell the Truth/Four On A Couch)

- 4 campers will be chosen to sit on a “couch”
- They each will write on a slip of paper, a fact most people won't know about them and put them in a bowl.
- The leader will draw one slip of paper out of the bowl and read it aloud to the group.
- Each member of the group is allowed one question to ask
- The group will try to guess who is true to the fact.

## Tuesday Night - Wednesday Morning

### “God’s Dream Notices”

**Key Scripture(s):** Luke 12:13-31, The Parable of the Rich Fool

**Big Idea:** We want campers to be challenged to *notice others* through Jesus’s Parable of the Parable of the Rich Fool. Students will reflect on what it looks like to be a good steward of what God has given them. Students will ask questions of themselves like: *Do I notice the lives and needs of those around me? Do I have eyes to see?*

**Memory Verse:** *Luke 12:18-19: Then he said, “This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, “self, you have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.”*

**Evening Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The stage will be covered in big blocks (cardboard kids blocks).*<sup>5</sup>

The evening gathering will begin with an upfront game on stage: “How much can you hold?” A bucket of random objects: stuffed animals, balls, bags of chips, etc. Four volunteers will be chosen from the crowd (2 guys and 2 girls). One partner is the helper and the other the holder. The two teams will compete to see how much stuff the holder can hold. The crowd will cheer them on. Items will be counted in the end. A giveaway will be awarded to the winning team. (Potentially zeroing out two scales and making it a competition of weight - “How much can you hold?”)

The worship team will then lead campers in a time of worship. After the worship band leads the group in songs, and just before the storyteller begins, a video will be shown made by a dozen summer staff sharing a short 15 second testimony about a time they chose intentionally not to see “the other.” Examples of different times we avoid looking at something: trying not to make eye contact when you pass a homeless person with a sign, not doing anything when someone is getting made fun of or treated poorly, hiding behind a screen or phone to avoid being present with someone. At the end of the video, one of the summer staff will reflect on the lesson: “the truth is, sometimes we avoid seeing and noticing others because it is uncomfortable. Seeing others may mean we will have to sacrifice something of ourselves in order to help.”

After the video, the storyteller will introduce the “Parable of the Rich Fool.”

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[https://www.amazon.com/Bankers-Box-Cardboard-Building-Blocks/dp/B096TN6W4D/ref=asc\\_df\\_B096TN6W4D/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=532475848935&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=14732112445922367846&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9023886&hvtargid=pla-1391719391446&region\\_id=972485&th=1](https://www.amazon.com/Bankers-Box-Cardboard-Building-Blocks/dp/B096TN6W4D/ref=asc_df_B096TN6W4D/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=532475848935&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=14732112445922367846&hvpon=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9023886&hvtargid=pla-1391719391446&region_id=972485&th=1)

The parable of the rich fool is about a man who was afraid and anxious. Anxiety can cause us to do funny things (ex: stockpiling toilet paper in the pandemic!). In tonight's story, this man's crop did very well and he was very successful. Due to his prosperity, he encountered a problem: he ran out of space. To figure out ways to store all of the food he successfully grew, he decided to tear down his barns and build bigger barns. What this man did not recognize is that everything he owned was a gift from God. God had provided him "extra", but what he did with his "extra" was keep it all for himself. You might think, like this man did, that stockpiling is harmless. However, while this man built more and more barns to store all of his stuff, what he was really doing was looking out for himself. His barn building project blocked the view of his neighbors next door. He thought his problem was the lack of space for his stuff, but the real problem was the lack of space he created for anyone else. Fear can often cause us to look inward, to make decisions and behave in a way that protects ourselves. Psalm 24 says, "The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it." Everything we have and hold onto in this life is actually God's and God's gifts to us. God's dream is for us to be good stewards of our stuff. When we trust and believe God is going to care for us, we can look outward and notice the needs of those around us. Storytellers may point out that just after this parable, Jesus talks about how much God cares for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. He then asks, if God cares for these, how much more do you think God cares for you? When we trust and believe God takes good care of us, we learn to take care of others.

At the conclusion of the gathering, the worship leader or storyteller will introduce the prayer posture of "clenched fists" for the final song (concept taken from Henri Nouwen's book "Open Hands"). Students will be instructed to make clenched fists with both hands.

*"When we hold onto stuff, we clench our fists. This posture is closed. This is a posture of "taking" and "getting", an anxious posture, and a posture to defend/protect yourself.*

**Let's pray a prayer of clenched fists by Henri Nouwen:** *(prayer will be on the screen and everyone will read aloud)*

*Dear God,  
I am so afraid to open my clenched fists!  
Who will I be when I have nothing left to hold on to?  
Who will I be when I stand before you with empty hands?  
Please help me to gradually open my hands  
and to discover that I am not what I own,  
but what you want to give me."*

— Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life*

Students will then be instructed to slowly open their hands with your palms facing up. The leader will say: "With open hands, you are relaxed. With open hands, your hands are now in an extending posture of vulnerability, ready to give and receive. This is an ancient prayer posture Christians have practiced as a way to surrender themselves to God, to let go. Let's end worship with one more song, holding this open hand posture."



With hands open and extended out in front of each person, the worship team will conclude with this song:

**Song: “All I have is Yours” by Sojourn Music**

**Lyrics:**

*Creator, giver of all things:*

*All I have is Yours*

*Accept my humble offering:*

*All I have is Yours*

*When I was chained to greed and pride*

*Tight-fisted, destined just to die*

*You paid my debt and bought my life --*

*All I have is Yours*

*All I have. All I have. All I have is yours*

*This offering is a means of grace*

*All I have is Yours*

*You show me this to grow my faith:*

*All I have is Yours*

*The more I give, the less I need*

*I learn that You'll provide for me*

*'twas blind to this but now I see --*

*All I have is Yours*

*Your kingdom come, Your will be done*

*All I have is Yours*

*You'll finish all that You've begun*

*All I have is Yours*

*That You would use the gifts I bring*

*In service of the coming King*

*Is reason now to praise and sing:*

*All I have is Yours*

**Morning Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The stage will be covered in big blocks (cardboard kids blocks).*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.amazon.com/Bankers-Box-Cardboard-Building-Blocks/dp/B096TN6W4D/ref=asc\\_df\\_B096TN6W4D/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=532475848935&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=14732112445922367846&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9023886&hvtargid=pla-1391719391446&region\\_id=972485&th=1](https://www.amazon.com/Bankers-Box-Cardboard-Building-Blocks/dp/B096TN6W4D/ref=asc_df_B096TN6W4D/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=532475848935&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=14732112445922367846&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9023886&hvtargid=pla-1391719391446&region_id=972485&th=1)

The morning gathering will further unpack the story of the rich fool and what it means for us today. The worship gathering will begin with “some good news” instagram videos of people loving and caring sacrificially for others.<sup>7</sup> The storyteller will connect these to introduce the day: *This instagram account was created during the pandemic by John Krasinski. He created this during a time when everyone was struggling to see the “good” in the world. Why do you think these videos resonate with us? What emotions arise from you as you watch these videos? Do they inspire you to do good?*

The conversation will then segway into “some good news” Camp West Edition! A video will play that Summer staff recorded during training week highlighting the “good news” they saw displayed at camp.

The storyteller will then segway into connecting the videos on the good news to the parable of the Rich Fool. These “good news” stories help us see the good in ordinary people and everyday things. These stories invite us to intentionally “notice” others and the simple joys before us with each new day. Finally, these stories inspire us to spread love and kindness, to become generous people.

Last night we began reflecting on Jesus’s parable of the rich fool. Eugene Peterson (author of The Message translation of the Bible) tells us why this man is called a “fool.”

*“Jesus called this man ‘fool’ because he remembered the wrong thing: He remembered himself. There never was a soliloquy so full of the first-person singular pronoun as this speech of the rich fool. Besides remembering the wrong thing, he forgot the essential things. He forgot his neighbors. If his barns were too small, there must have been others who would have been only too glad to share in his surplus....”*

Essentially, what Eugene Peterson is saying is this is a parable of personal pronouns. Consider how often this story says “I” and “my”:

“He thought to himself, “what shall **I** do? **I** have no place to store **my** crops.” Then he said, “This is what **I’ll** do. **I** will tear down **my** barns and build bigger ones, and there **I** will store **my** surplus grain. And **I’ll** say to **myself**, “self, you have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.”

The man’s self-talk reveals his selfishness and intention to take care of only himself. The notion that anyone else exists around him never once crosses his mind in his entire monologue. At the end of the parable, the parable describes the man as “storing up things for himself, but not being rich toward God.” The rich man was not a fool because he was rich, but because he was not rich toward God. To be rich toward someone is to be generous and hospitable. Throughout the Bible, our behavior to God is connected to our behavior toward others. If we love God, we love neighbor. If we are hospitable toward the least of these, Jesus says we are hospitable to him. If we hate a brother or sister, then we cannot say we love God. So, to be rich, to be generous toward God, meant the farmer would in turn be generous toward others. Jesus urges us to cling to a Kingdom, God’s dream, which is not self-centered but other-centered. Jesus

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/somegoodnews/>

challenges us to tear down the barns of self, and not so we can build up bigger ones, but so that we can see our neighbors in need in the next pasture. Storytellers may land by asking the question, "How has God made you rich?" Help campers consider that they can be rich with more than just money or possessions. Most importantly, how can they live generously towards others with the ways God has blessed them?

### **Journal Ideas:**

Philippians 2:3-4

*3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*

### **Cabin Experiences:**

**Playing Mantis Noticing Game<sup>8</sup>:** Ask all the participants to pair up. Tell them to observe each other. Then tell them to turn around and change 3 things about their appearance. For example roll up one sleeve or take off an earring. Let them turn back to one another and try identifying everything that the partner has changed. You can repeat the game a few rounds, every time increasing the amount of changes.

**Who is Missing game** - Each round one camper is chosen to close their eyes while one camper leaves the room. Using a stopwatch the cabin times how long it takes from when the camper opens their eyes until they can name the person who is missing from the group.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.playingmantis.net/change-3-things/>

## Wednesday Night - Thursday Morning

### “God’s Dream Values All”

**Key Scripture(s):** Luke 15:1-10, The Parables of the Lost Sheep & Lost Coin

**Big Idea:** We want campers to be challenged to consider their worth and value by exploring Jesus’s parables of the lost sheep & coin. Each of these parables challenges listeners to consider the value of the one among the many. In God’s dream, everyONE counts.

**Memory Verse:** Luke 15:6; Luke 15:9 ‘Celebrate with me! I’ve found my lost sheep!’ ; ‘Celebrate with me! I found my lost coin!’

#### **Evening Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The stage will have party decorations. Balloons, streamers, hats*

Tonight's worship service will begin as a big celebration. As students enter, they will know something is different. There is a party going on and the students will be unsure why. The disco ball will be going, summer staff will be dancing to party music, there will be noise makers & excitement, and balloons will be tossed in the air.

As the hype settles down, students will gather in circles with their cabins and leaders (they may even split the cabin in two smaller circles with 1 leader per circle. Summer staff will pass out party plates and small cups. Each circle gets a pitcher of lemonade and Teresa’s homemade chocolate chip cookies. Campers will spend a few minutes in intentional conversation around topics of celebration using table topics questions on the screen.<sup>9</sup>

After circle celebrations, worship will begin with a responsive reading Psalm 136: a psalm of celebration. (Students will read the section “his love endures forever”).

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

**His love endures forever.**

Give thanks to the God of gods.

**His love endures forever.**

Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

**His love endures forever.**

to him who alone does great wonders,

**His love endures forever.**

who by his understanding made the heavens,

**His love endures forever.**

who spread out the earth upon the waters,

**His love endures forever.**

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<sup>9</sup> <https://tabletopics.com/collections/all-conversation-starters/products/celebrate>

who made the great lights—  
**His love endures forever.**  
the sun to govern the day,  
**His love endures forever.**  
the moon and stars to govern the night;  
**His love endures forever.**

Songs included in worship: I Thank God (Maverick City Music), I Am Loved (Maverick City Music), Jireh (Maverick City), Who You Say I Am (Hillsong), “God Really Loves Us” (David Crowder & Dante Bowe), Reckless Love

The storyteller will transition from the time of singing and begin to connect the celebration to the parables for the evening. Students may have wondered what we are celebrating and why. The storyteller will explain that tonight is a celebration of God’s great love for us.

In the lost parables, the man who owned the sheep and the woman who owned the coins both overlooked one of their prized possessions. Have you ever lost something that was important to you? Can you feel the anxiety as you think about it?

What about you? Have you ever felt lost? Maybe you have felt overlooked or invisible. Maybe you have wondered if you are worthy to be celebrated. The storyteller will introduce a poem by Scott the Painter about feelings of lostness.

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Poem

By Scott the Painter:

God

*I feel so lost.  
And it is the most devastating feeling  
To be lost.*

*From You.  
From me.  
From everybody and everything.*

*Thankfully You knew we would all come to this moment...  
So you gave us the gift of Lost Stories....*

*The shepherd leaves the 99 to find the one lost sheep.  
The woman cleans her entire house looking for the lost coin.  
The father throws a party when the lost son  
is finally returned to his seat at the family table.*

*I am lost  
But not to You.*



*I'm lost to me,  
Lost to the self that doesn't work anymore.*

*May I see my lost-ness not as sign of being forgotten,  
But a necessary preamble to the celebration of my belonging.<sup>10</sup>*

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God knows we struggle with feelings of lostness. The parables we are exploring tonight speak to these feelings.

The man could have given up, leaving the one sheep and thinking to himself, "Oh well, I still have the 99." Likewise, the woman could have thought, "Oh well, I still have 9 coins." Instead, they both search high and low for the one sheep and the one coin. They do this because the "one" matters. The one sheep is in danger when it's away from the shepherd and the herd. Likewise, the collection of coins is not complete unless all coins are accounted for. Have you ever found a lost thing you had been diligently searching for? Can you feel the relief and joy as you think about it? This same joy overwhelmed this man and the woman after the sheep and coin were found. In both instances, they invite their friends over to celebrate with them. Their precious possession has been found and this good news is worth celebrating.

The parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin challenge us not to lose count. In God's dream, everyone has value and worth. In God's dream, counting is important. Making sure everyone feels counted is important. God does not overlook or lose his creation. God does not lose us because we are God's prized possession. In tonight's worship, we began with a party and celebration of this truth. Like the two parties in the parables, we can celebrate God's delight and love for each and every one of us. Zephaniah 3:16 says: "The Lord takes great delight in us, quiets us with His love, AND rejoices over us with singing." God knows where we are and God celebrates us. Students will leave worship reflecting on the beautiful truth: "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so."

Worship could conclude with a blessing from Psalm 23 & sheep image from Porter's Gate:

**PSALM 23**

*1-3 God, my shepherd!*

*I don't need a thing.*

*You have bedded me down in lush meadows,  
you find me quiet pools to drink from.*

*True to your word,*

*you let me catch my breath  
and send me in the right direction.*

*4 Even when the way goes through*

*Death Valley,*

*I'm not afraid*

*when you walk at my side.*

*Your trusty shepherd's crook*



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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/p/CoC8G-Wpy8F/?igshid=Zjc2ZTc4Nzk%3D>

*makes me feel secure.*  
 5 *You serve me a six-course dinner*  
*right in front of my enemies.*  
*You revive my drooping head;*  
*my cup brims with blessing.*  
 6 *Your beauty and love chase after me*  
*every day of my life.*  
*I'm back home in the house of God*  
*for the rest of my life.*

### **Morning Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The stage will have small white boards or chalk boards with "counting" - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, ...*

The morning gathering will begin with an Improv skit using lost and found items. Summer staff will follow a story line with breaks in the story where they will pull out an item from lost and found and incorporate it into the skit story.

Story: "My bag is lost and did not make it to camp. So, I was given this lovely gift [box of camp lost and found] to get me through the week. Let's explore if I have what I need for camp this week.

- for when I go swimming, I'll wear, \_\_\_\_\_
- For nightstrike, I'm definitely going to need, \_\_\_\_\_
- For the Sock hop dance, I think I'm gonna need \_\_\_\_\_

The worship team will lead in songs.

The storyteller will transition us from the skit to the continued theme for the morning gathering. Last night we explored two "lost parables." Both the shepherd and the woman lost something that was important to them. Sometimes when we have a lot of something, we do not always pay attention or cherish each thing. When Jesus told this story, there were many in the crowd who probably could not relate to owning a bunch of sheep or having expensive and precious coins. However, the point of Jesus's story relates to everyone - even us today. We may not feel like we have a lot of money or a lot of "stuff," but we may have a lot of responsibilities or a lot of activities that are taking up our time. We may have a lot on our minds that is distracting us. Jesus is asking us to take into account what is in front of us, and consider if we may be missing anything or anyone. When we have a lot that's on our minds or a lot that is on our plate of responsibility, we can fail to see the people and important things that may be missing or lost.

The storyteller will then transition to a video of the sheep "Baarack." This video illustrates something lost that was found and taken care of:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWf\\_S\\_LhV34](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWf_S_LhV34)

The storyteller will then help campers reflect on the video and conclude. What might have happened to Baarack if that hiker had not noticed he was lost? In many ways, Jesus is

describing through these parables what a community living out God's dream looks like. A community of Jesus followers includes everyONE - no one is left behind, no one is left alone, everyone is accounted for, and everyone is cared for. Last night we celebrated God's great love for us. Like the sheep and the coin in the parables, we believe God celebrates and values us as his prized possessions. And once we grasp the delight and love God has for us, we begin to let this love overflow to others. Jesus is challenging us to make sure we don't leave anyone out, but share God's love with everyone. The person sitting next to us is also God's beloved creation and prized possession.

Campers will leave the worship gathering considering questions such as: Who or what might they be missing? What is missing in their life? What have they lost? Who may be feeling lost and alone around them?

**Worship Song ideas:** Jireh, Reckless Love, God really loves us

**Journal Ideas:**

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is with you,  
the Mighty Warrior who saves.  
He will take great delight in you;  
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,  
but will rejoice over you with singing."

**Journal Reflection:**

Writing Compassion Letters<sup>11</sup>: Students will be guided through writing self compassion letters as a practice to understanding the unconditional love God has for us.

*Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them." Matthew 22:39 (Msg)*

**Cabin Experience:**

**Treasure Hunt (connected to the "Castaway Catastrophe" HYPE this night):**

Students would search for legendary lost treasure with old school maps and clues around camp. If they are successful, they'll find resources they can use for the Hype challenge this evening.

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<sup>11</sup>

<https://healthy.iu.edu/campus-programs-services/university/creative-self-care/write-a-letter-to-yourself.html>



## Thursday Night - Friday Morning

# God's Dream is Generous

**Key Scripture(s):** Matthew 20:1-16, The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

**Big Idea:** Campers will learn that God's dream extends God's goodness and grace to all no matter how much one produces or thinks they deserve. Campers will learn that judging and making comparisons with others will keep them from recognizing and participating in God's generosity.

**Memory Verse:** Matthew 20:14-15 (Msg): *So take it and go. I decided to give to the one who came last the same as you. Can't I do what I want with my own money? Are you going to get stingy because I am generous?*

### **Evening Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The stage will be set with white boards and chalkboards on easels displaying scores. Or score counters (flip displays used for sports) and trophies.*

After campers enter the chapel, the HYPE Crew enter the stage. As they are about to lead in an activity, the "points music" begins to play, and the HYPE Crew switch into points-announcement mode. Before they start announcing the current points total, the Program Coordinator (or Program Supervisor) comes on stage and tells the HYPE Crew that prizes are going to be awarded early this year. She then hands them different sized envelopes and they are told that the teams will all receive an award based on their points. As the last teams are announced, a volunteer from that team will run up and receive the award for their team - the smallest envelope. The prize: a free ice cream float from the Snack Shop. Then the next teams are called up, and those volunteers representing the group are given a bigger envelope, but win the same prize. All teams are eventually called up leading to the teams with the most points - the envelopes get bigger but the prize stays the same. The Hype crew (or storyteller) will then connect the moment to tonight's teaching - the concept of "keeping score." We are often measuring ourselves up and against others to determine who is ahead or has more worth than another based on our production. This is contrary to God's dream. God sees differently than we see. In 1 Samuel chapter 16, scripture says people look toward outward appearances, but the Lord looks at the heart. Our human tendency is to compare and judge ourselves and others based on outward performance. God challenges us to see people differently.

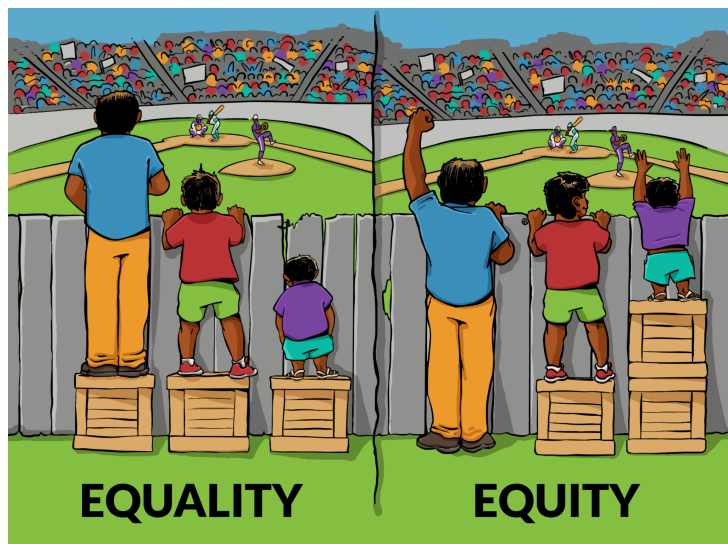
The worship team will then lead songs that celebrate God's generosity. (Song idea: Goodness of God, I Thank God, Good Good Father)

After singing, the Storyteller will introduce Jesus' parable found in Matthew 20 about the landowner who generously gave full-days pay to all workers regardless of when they were hired.

More than any other, this parable tends to set off alarms about our ideas of “fairness.” We have a tendency to compare ourselves to others and “keep score.”

In this parable, Jesus doesn’t classify the quality of the workers, and he doesn’t explain why others kept getting hired throughout the day. If we focus too much on the comparisons between the workers, we miss the generosity that is present in the story. Jesus points to the reality that God is generous with love and acceptance because of who we are and not what we do. God is not keeping score and measuring us against others to determine who is worthy of God’s generosity. God wants all of His children to get good things!

Unfortunately, life circumstances are different for everyone. We all have different families, different neighborhoods, different schools, different opportunities, and different struggles. Some of us may feel like life is easy, while the person sitting next to us might feel like life is really hard. This is not fair or right and it is a part of the brokenness existing in our world today. God’s dream is to make this right, like this picture below. The man who hired the workers in the story today was treating them with equity. He gave the same wage to the worker hired at the end of the day to the one who started at the beginning. All of the workers hired were in need of a living wage. They all needed to feed and take care of their families, some of them were just given an opportunity earlier in the day than others. In the end, they all received something good because of the man’s generosity.



This parable is countercultural to how we think and how our world operates. Comparison is a huge issue for us, just look at how we feel when we get on social media! Storytellers will land by illustrating how hard it is to be generous when we constantly feel we need to compare ourselves with one another. Participating in God’s Dream for the world is to act like this generous landowner who takes care of everybody regardless of how much they “produce.”

**Illustration Idea:**

Social media and how comparisons impact our mental health.

**Morning Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor:** *The front of the stage is covered in boxes wrapped with gift wrap and bows - presents.*

The gathering will begin with reviewing the “Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard” from the previous night. Storytellers will then connect the challenge of the parable to the theology of God’s grace. Once we begin to understand how generously God treats us, we begin to imitate God’s generosity to others.

Storytellers can use the illustration of Santa Claus to illustrate the ways we often view God like Santa - a God who makes comparisons and keeps score. Take for instance the song “**Santa Claus is Coming to Town.**”

*Santa Claus  
Is coming to town  
He's making a list  
He's checking it twice  
He's gonna find out  
Who's naughty or nice  
Santa Claus  
Is coming to town  
He sees you when you're sleeping  
He knows when you're awake  
He knows if you've been bad  
Or good  
So be good  
For goodness sake  
Oh you better watch out  
You better not cry  
You better not pout  
I'm telling you why  
Santa Claus  
Is coming to town*

Whether intentionally or not, we can often view God as this kind of “cosmic Santa.” Our value and blessings from God are dependent on our behavior. If we produce good things, we get good things. If we don’t produce enough good things, we shouldn’t get good things. This is only fair, right? Why would someone get the same present for not being as good or productive as another?

Like the generosity we see in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, God’s generosity is a gift. God’s goodness toward us is not based on our goodness. In Christian teaching, we refer to this as God’s grace. Grace is defined in Christianity as: “the spontaneous unmerited gift of the Divine.” This means God’s generosity is shocking and surprising because God freely gives it to us without us earning it. Just like the landowner in the parable gives generously to his workers,

God is ready to give good things to His children. Notice the actions of the landowner in the parable. The man continuously goes out looking for more workers he can hire. At multiple times in the day, the man is persistent and generously offers work to those in need of it. None of the workers deserved the job they were offered, but the landowner offered them work anyway. They did not deserve the same pay for different amounts of work, but they received it anyway. We don't deserve God's grace, but God freely gives it anyway. Our God is good. Our God is generous.

Storytellers will challenge students to consider if it's possible for us to flip our idea of "fairness" upside down. God's dream is free of comparisons and full of compassion. Campers will leave the morning gathering pondering how God's goodness, generosity, and grace toward us might impact how we view and treat others.

#### **Illustration idea:**

Video to unpack the reality of God's grace and generosity as seen throughout all of Scripture: The Bible Project: "Grace": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABPVVw\\_aw44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABPVVw_aw44)

#### **Journal Ideas:**

##### ***Proverbs 11:24 (Msg)***

*The world of the generous gets larger and larger;  
the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller.*

##### ***Psalms 103:8***

*God is sheer mercy and grace;  
not easily angered, he's rich in love.*

#### **Cabin Experience:**

**Gratitude Journaling Activity:** One way to develop a generous spirit toward others is to consider all the ways God has been generous to us. Campers will use their journals to individually work through the "gratitude journaling" exercise. After they are finished the group will come together and share, making a list on their poster board of the common responses.

\*Posters will later be hung in the worship gathering.

**Random Acts of Kindness:** After completing the journaling activity, the cabin should brainstorm together one way they can express generosity at camp. A box of supplies is given to each cabin that will spark creative ideas. Students will brainstorm a plan to care for someone else or another cabin in a meaningful way. Ideas: offer to clean something for Teresa or Operations Staff (staff will be ready with ideas), write encouraging notes for teen staff thanking them for serving all week, pool snack shop money together to buy a treat for teen staff or operations staff (snack shop host will be ready in case), cover another cabin in encouraging sticky notes, create a song to encourage someone or another cabin & go serenade them (maybe invite their cabin to the "jukebox jive dance" with an encouraging gesture).

## Friday Night

# God's Dream Lives On

**Key Scripture(s): Matthew 13:33-35**

**Big Idea:** We want students to reflect on what they have learned this week about God's Dream. When Jesus speaks, he says, "those who have ears, let them hear." We have ears, are we listening? We have eyes, are we seeing? Are we beginning to see what Jesus meant about the Kingdom of God (God's Dream)? Can we see it and imagine it? On this final evening, campers will be inspired to understand their lives as a part of God's dream through the "Parable of the Yeast." As we partner with God in God's work of new creation, God's dream lives on in us.

**Memory Verse: 33**

*Another story. "God's kingdom is like yeast that a woman works into the dough for dozens of loaves of barley bread—and waits while the dough rises."*

**Evening Gathering General Direction:**

**Stage Decor: Table with mixer, bowls, flour, bread**

The evening gathering will feature a clip from the tv show "I Love Lucy." The short clip is from the episode: "Too Much Yeast."<sup>12</sup>

The storyteller will introduce the parable for the final gathering: The Parable of the Yeast. While this is a funny video about yeast and bread, it is actually quite similar to the next parable Jesus told. Yeast is this small substance that makes a big impact. Over time, bread will rise if it has yeast hidden inside. The NIV translation of this parable says the woman "mixed" the yeast in the dough. However, the Greek text is actually translated as "hidden." Jesus says the Kingdom of God (God's Dream) is like this small thing that causes huge growth, but it's hidden. It's working and incredible things are happening, but you can't always see it. It isn't always obvious. God's dream is coming about all around us, even when we do not see it. At the same time, God's dream lives on in us. God invites us to be partners in bringing heaven to earth, in making God's dream come true here and now. Just like an oven provides the space for the dough to rise and bake, we can be incubators for God's dream. Every little thing we do and say has the opportunity to bring about God's dream in the world. Mother Teresa said: "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." And Vincent Van Gogh said: "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."

It may be hard for us to imagine ourselves doing great things, but we can do small things with great love. We can partner with God to bring about God's dream here and now - on earth as it is in heaven. We bring about God's dream when: we notice the surprising ways God is present

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA3hc4P3qe8>

and working around us (Monday), we look around us for those who are in need and share resources with them (Tuesday), when we recognize how valuable and loved we are to God and extend this love to others (Wednesday), when we stop keeping score and pushing others down so we can get ahead, and instead, raise others up and extend generosity (Thursday), and when we let the dream live on through our story (Friday).

This final night will explore “the already AND not yet” of God’s dream. The Kingdom is coming, the bread is rising, can you see it? Can you smell it? Tune your ears, eyes, and hearts to look for it and participate in bringing it about.

Campers will be given cards that allow them time to reflect on one way they want to bring about God’s dream when they come home. As worship concludes, they will have time to write down their one thing.

Worship will conclude with a benediction. Summer staff will gather around the worship center in a circle, looking on toward the students who are in the middle of the room. A handful of summer staff will read a benediction over the students from Colossians 3, spoken word style.

*As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

### **Illustration Idea:**

- Storytellers may consider using the story of St. Therese of Liseuex as an illustration. As a young teenager, Therese dedicated her life to Jesus. She is best known for developing a Christian concept called “The Little Way.” The little way is the understanding that maybe all the little things we say and do have more significance than we actually think. Therese has inspired Christians since the 1800s to ponder: “What if we considered all the little things we do throughout the day, and at the end of the day, stacked them up and reflected on them all in light of the bigger picture of what God is doing in the world?”