CBF Blog2

Since I was \_\_\_\_, Camp ministries have been a large part of my life. At \_\_\_\_, I first felt my call to ministry while I was at Passport youth camp with my church. I went on to work at Passport as a summer staffer in college and seminary.

 It was there I was able to hone my teaching skills, leading Bible Study, Rec Parties and crafts. It was there I witnessed the power of student leadership and saw the impact that meaningful conversations can have on a young person’s life. It was there, in the midst of the beautiful camp chaos, where I felt my call defined.

After working in the local church for several years, I came to work for Passport, Inc. full time and for the last nine years, I have had the honor to help to shape a program in which I believe in strongly. So while I may not be the most unbiased perspective, I believe that camp ministry, while certainly not the centerpiece of youth ministry, should play an essential role in your church.

I love camp ministry. I am a product of the ministry as I first felt my call to ministry while I was at church youth camp. I spent my summers in college and seminary working for camps. As a student working for camp, it is where I felt my call defined. I got to hone my skills on teaching a Bible Study, crafting and leading worship, leading games, and having meaningful conversations with students. After working in the local church for several years, I came to work for Passport, Inc. full time 9 years ago. I have spent 9 years helping to shape a program in which I believe in strongly. I believe camp ministry, while certainly not the centerpiece of youth ministry, should play an essential role. With this said, I’d like to offer 4 reasons why I value camp ministry.

1. Camp is a part of holistic youth ministry.

There are many aspects to a youth ministry - discipleship, evangelism, faith formation, and fun. At camp youth can experience all of these during the same week, all while being removed from the everyday distractions and settings. It is one week where they spend time immersed in a Christian community and hopefully get a glimpse of what the kingdom of heaven could look like.

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1. Camp develops future Christian leaders.

Campers get to try new things – praying in public, painting a house for someone who needs some care and love, playing a game with a child in a back yard Bible club, leading a song in worship, and much more. I believe these opportunities, along with many others, are the beginnings of helping a student express themselves, their faith, and their calling. Passport is also committed to hiring college and graduate school students to lead our camps. Our staffers learn gifts of organization, communication, facilitation, and much more. These skills and more are why Passport, Inc. hires students each summer to serve in ministry for our camps, as we believe we are helping the next generation of ministers find their voice.

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Camp offers valuable Christian mentorship

I believe that camp is place where students should see what a lived faith can look like from staffers close to their own age. At Passport, we are committed to hiring college and graduate school students to lead our camps. Our staffers learn gifts of organization, communication, facilitation, and much more. Not only are we helping the next generation of ministers find their voice, but we are showing our campers that you don’t have to a million-dollar book deal to preach the Gospel or be a chart-toping lead worship at camp. The student-staffing model allows them to see young role-models leaving campers with a “I could do this too” mentality.

1. Camp cultivates space for youth to learn, grow, and question.

Camp ministry allows youth to feel free as they are away from their parents and siblings, free from the pressures at home, free from the stereotypes placed on them at home, and free from their technology that keeps them connected to everything and everybody 24/7. This same freedom gives them the opportunity to be free to invest, dive in, be someone they want to be, free to share openly, free to connect with God in an authentic and real way, and free to experience Christian community. Camp can be the opportunity a youth has been looking for to ask a burning question. Camp can be the place a student finally feels at home and camp can be the place a student hears God’s voice for the first time.

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1. Camp is fun!

Games, silly songs, dancing, snacks, late nights, and more. Camp is just fun. Youth bond over snacks at night. Youth ministers get the opportunity to be silly on stage. Everyone gets to go a little wild at a dance party. Camp is the chance to let inhibitions go and be wild….in a safe environment. ☺ Campers and leaders have the opportunity to experience a gospel that is lively, welcoming and dynamic and makes all want to jump in and follow Jesus.

For me, the value of camp is deeply meaningful. Yes, it is my fulltime job, to spend my days crafting an experience for students to hear the voice of Jesus…but it is so much more. Our office takes seriously our calling to create a space that is centered around the gospel and challenges students to follow the teachings of Jesus to help their neighbors, tell others their faith, and make this world a better place.

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