

Camp Strategies & Mechanisms of Ministry

Camps International's
Philosphy & Methods

By David Caldwell



Camp Strategies & Mechanisms of Ministry

© 2019, Camps International

Written by David Caldwell

campsinternational.org

startcamps.com

campduffel.com

Camps International

P.O. Box 1006

Cicero, NY 13039

This booklet was compiled to present Camps International philosophy to individuals interested in partnering with the organization. Please contact us at info@campsinternational.org for more information.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Wheels & Cogs	2
Part 1: Mechanisms of Belief	
Biblically Based	7
Our Philosophy	8
Local Church Emphasis	9
Starting Camps	9
R&D for Growth	10
Part 2: Strategies that Influence the Outpouring of Ministry	
Prayer	12
Volunteer Involvement	12
Advocate Funding	12
Assisting the Local Church	12
Orientation for Camp Counselors	13
Defining Camp and Success	13
Devotions at Camp: 24/7	14
Activities	14
Small Groups	14
Children	14
More Than Camps	15
Here I Am. Send Me.	15

Introduction

Following biblical incentive, Camps International provides resources and perspective to assist others in starting their own camps where there are none.

Christian camps use the most effective means (counselors) to reach the most receptive hearts (kids). We train counselors who love Jesus so they can minister to kids through the authority of their local church in a place removed from distraction.

Camp happens when the right people are found who are willing to invest themselves in sacrificial giving of time to the ministry. We help facilitate a safe, learning environment where the people in charge have the background, resilience and resources to pour into wildly-imaginative, growing children.

Camps International is located virtually in the hearts of people who care about the next generation, thus, our members and support staff work remotely to form a team of like-minded mission-focused individuals who are working to start camps in more places.

The preamble of the Camps International constitution reads:

Recognizing the world trend to urban living and the basic human need to retreat at junctures in life for fun, reflection and enrichment;

Believing that skill-development education and adventure experiences embodied in edifying supervision are formative;

We have gathered to facilitate the formation of Christian-youth-camp settings in the nations of the world, wherein these camp settings provide opportunities for the telling of the Good News.

We expect synergistic results as we seek to creatively engage God's people and God's creation through Christian camping according to God's Word. So help us God.

Wheels & Cogs

Camps International has departments and related partners which act like wheels and cogs to get jobs done.

The first organization in the camp constellation was RYCCA, created in Mexico. Following that, land was purchased for what would become Los Domos. Then Camps International was founded in the USA in 2004. Camp Duffel started sending teams officially in 2012. Other ministries, departments and agencies have been developed since. Furthermore, we have aligned and partnered with organizations that are similar in thought and purposes. Each facet is distinct in location or aperture but alike in ministry philosophy or some significant manner. Most find their purpose revolving around making the Christian camping experience available to more people.



Los Domos (Facility)

Los Domos is primarily a research and development site for Christian camps in Mexico and beyond. Program is developed for all ages. We promote holistic activities that maintain mountain-top experiences through local church participation. Preference is given to training events. When camps are hosted, it is ideally in cooperation with the local church and specialized for children ages 8-17.

The lakeside mountain property that makes up Los Domos is a showplace for demonstrating possibilities to pastors, denominational leaders, camp entrepreneurs, and others, with the intent that they might see and touch concepts they could use to start and develop their own camps.

After years of looking at properties, God provided a perfect place for the amount of funds available (nearly nothing) to implement Camps International's philosophy. Every few years additional forested mountain property has been added to the original site.

Located in the heart of Mexico, Los Domos was started too late. Even though Los Domos seeks to make camp available to more kids for less cost, millions of kids are growing up without the opportunity to know Christ. To catch up, Los Domos focuses on helping others do camp.

Find more about Los Domos at: www.facebook.com/losdomos. Internship or visit Los Domos via Camps International's VOICE program: www.startcamps.com/voice



Camp Duffel (Mission Outreach)

It's not a place, it's a strategy. Camp Duffel is an itinerant strategy that guides local talent to provide camp experiences for kids in under-resourced areas. Camp Duffel strives to assist in the development of Christian camps in places where kids aren't getting the opportunity to go to camp. Camp Duffel staff is comprised of college-aged youth from different cultures and languages. Made up of traveling teams who assist local talent with a three day camp-like event, Camp Duffel takes camp to others and trains the young local leaders so they can continue on once the Camp Duffel team has left.

Visit www.campduffel.com for ways to get involved.

EUREKA CAMPS

Eureka Camps (Educational Program)

It is an unfortunate statistic that the quality of education in certain parts of the world is deplorable.

Eureka Camps solve the world's problems by doing one thing: educating. This, of course, is not true. Math is important but it is not The Answer. So in addition to education (a good thing), we tell about the Good News of Jesus (the essential thing).

Eureka Camps are still in development. The need for a Christian outdoor educational program during the school year has been requested by Christian educators, and we are always looking for ways to implement the Eureka Camps concept.



Cabins for Kids (Fundraising)

Regardless of where they are located, Cabins for Kids is a way for individuals and churches to participate in growing camps.

This funding method started because a couple of young girls wanted to help build a camp cabin. They helped raise funds and then actually helped build it. First, they wanted to get their friends involved, then they wanted lots of people to get involved.

Once, Cabins for Kids was just an idea. Today, it's an idea that has helped create structures that house children while they attend their local church's camp. Camp changes children's lives.

Having a dry, safe place to sleep in makes that possible.

Cabins for Kids has great plans to spread geodesic dome structures across the world, generating secure facilities where children can learn about God.

To get involved, contact us at info@campinternational.org



Retiros Y Campamentos Con Aventura A.C. (RYCCA)

Based in Mexico, RYCCA is a sister organization to Camps International. RYCCA's mission is to provide places where trained leaders allow small groups to experience creation and the Lord of Creation. RYCCA works through the local church to train and equip up and coming leaders.

RYCCA's headquarters is located in the mountains at Los Domos, a research and development campsite.

RYCCA is an organizational covering for Los Domos, Camp Duffel, and Eureka Camps, and focuses on enabling growth in the local churches and their communities.

For more information in Spanish, visit www.rycca.org.mx



PART 1

Mechanisms of Belief

“ Our calling is to provide camp settings for people, especially youth, in which trained leaders facilitate directed learning experiences that relate creation and Christ.

In addition to the diligent efforts of individuals, their personality and abilities, there are principles that influence our organizations in direction and movement.

Biblically Based

Those who make up the administration of the Start Camps organizations, who vote in board meetings, who make management decisions, as individuals and corporately, have declared in writing that we are followers of Christ and adhere to biblical teaching.

Camps International's constitution states in Article II that the first function and activity is *To represent Jesus Christ to the world.*

The guide in representing Christ is declared in Article III, which contains our Confession of Faith.

In essence we of Camps International believe that God gave the Bible, which reveals Jesus Christ as His son. People are created in God's image, though humanity is now corrupt and distanced from God. God's reaction to our self-ambition and mistrust was reconciliation at the cost of a special human blood sacrifice, namely Jesus Christ. This willing Jesus was born perfect, lived a perfect life, died on a Roman cross, came to life again, proved it and ascended to heaven to retake his position as the Son of God. God desires us to come to the knowledge of the truth and to have an eternal relationship with Him. Therefore, repentance, faith, love and obedience are fitting responses to God's initiative of grace towards us. The Holy Spirit's power is demonstrated in and through those who receive the provision of Jesus. We believe that sanctification, holiness and the overcoming life are God's design for His people, the Church. With God's enabling we as Christians are commissioned by Jesus to go and make disciples in all the nations.

The first of the declarations is:

- 1. We believe the Bible (the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments: God's revealed word to man) to be unique, inspired by the Holy Spirit and the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.*

The Scriptures are all-sufficient, trustworthy and the supreme final authority as guide to salvation and for faith, worship, service, and practice. (II Peter 1:20, 21; II Timothy 3:16, 17; I Thessalonians 2:13)

Our Philosophy

We have put our philosophy and core values in writing to be a touchstone for decision-making and a reference for clearly communicating ministry.

Philosophy: We believe that camping can assist church and family and thereby impact societies and cultures. In order to serve church and family we seek to uphold the authority and structure unique to each unit as it conforms to Scripture. We value the giftings and talents given to individuals and the institutions they form. We therefore strive to equip those who are entrusted to us so that they can best use camp as a tool to further their God given calling.

Mission: Our calling is to provide camp settings for people, especially youth, in which trained leaders facilitate directed learning experiences that relate creation and Christ.

Purpose: Our intention is to glorify God by aiding individuals, families, organizations and local churches in presenting the Word of God to the needs of individuals through trained staff within the environment of camping. We are determined to be about facilitating people in ministry, bringing people to Jesus and drawing people toward Christ-like maturity.

Local Church Emphasis

The camp mechanism serves the in-place and on-going system of the local church.

We honor the role and needs of the local pastor and church. Our efforts in using Christian camping are to develop people in the church. We are expecting the probable positive interac-

tion between generations (counselor and camper) to produce a higher level of trust with each other. But more importantly, as a counselor realizes that God is using them for his work, they are transformed from pew-sitters to engaged-warriors. Now tenacious to serve, it is our hope that a percentage who have tasted God's enabling would seek more training in Bible and some of those people would hear and follow a calling to a Christian leadership vocation. Though camping is not for everyone, it can be factored in to become a piece of the ongoing system of the local church.

Starting Camps

In a study done using INEGI materials (circa 1998), in the state of Michoacán, Mexico there were 1,000,000 potential campers ages 8-17 that had never been to camp.

Being that one camp, even the most large, cannot accommodate the populations of children living in urban sprawl, Camps International is about developing lots of camps by helping others start their camps.

To build one camp for all is not likely or practical, nor does it aid the discipleship process.

We believe the world needs more camps. Rather than build a few of our own, we believe that it is a logical and statistical priority, to assist churches, denominations, youth ministries, children's ministries, and others to develop their own camps to better address the magnitude regarding getting kids to camp. It has been our privilege to assist others in Haiti, Hungry, Cuba, the USA (in three states), Mexico (in 10 states), and Colombia.

R&D for Growth

Growth comes from a healthy discontentment of underutilized (and maybe limited) resources that can be put to use to bring

Kingdom results. Los Domos in Mexico acts as a laboratory, an example camp of implemented ideas where events prove theory. We ask, “How can camp be done better and cheaper so that more kids can go to camp and receive even more than the last time?” As training, activities, program and facility designs become practical, we endeavor to document the methods and the reasons behind them. These documents are then shared to a wider audience of people who want to use camp to impact their area and domain.

Engineers, architects, tech people and many more are all part of our volunteer body. They seek to implement solar power, and bring better practices to the foreground regarding water, and design structures that cost less and do more. Similarly, we recruit people from the arts, too. They work at ensuring excellence in value-laden material that is true to scripture, age-appropriate and edifying.

To stop the erosion of young people leaving churches, we believe finding new ways to challenge the next generation is essential.



Part II

Strategies that Influence the Outpouring of Ministry

“ With camp activities, not only do we intend to increase abilities and uphold biblical values, but activities are a catalyst for doing a bigger thing—building relationships.

Prayer

To pray is much, much harder than to give financially, not the other way around. Prayer is two way communication. It is about trusting God, relying on God, believing God, conforming to God's directions about prayer found in the Bible. To us, it is more than saying a prayer. In practice, this means we talk to God more than we talk to people concerning our finances and relationships.

Volunteer Involvement

Camps International believes that if you offer bite-sized volunteer opportunities, rather than big chunks, people get to taste and see if they like what an organization has to offer. Then if they are happy they will come back to help more.

We offer opportunity for others interested in missions to use their skills and giftings to amplify the ministry and make an impact. Ministry Assist, Cabins for Kids and V.O.I.C.E. (Volunteer Opportunities In Camp Experiences) are formal avenues to partner and get involved.

Advocate Funding

Money, the flexible resource. Third party Advocates are raised up, taught and trained; they come to understand the philosophy of Camps International and the Start Camps constellation. Ideally, they are located in each supporting church and the supporting regions of each supporting country. Advocates advocate for the ministry, recruit, give, and pray. They are the individuals who speak up and reach out, so the individuals on the field can continue doing what they do best.

Assisting the Local Church

The Los Domos campsite is a place to show others what

camp looks like. We gladly give tours and present the Camps International model of philosophy.

We are intent about facilitating camp counselors by giving them ministry tools they can take away and use in other places, like the local church. We challenge the counselor with opportunity, orientation, training, and experience. We provide sites with program manuals, activities and, on occasion, camp developing finances. Camp Duffel partners our staff with novice staff at new location sites so that the new location is able to become autonomous.

On occasion, we supply funds, such as in the case of Chiapas, where we partnered with a heavy machine company who leveled a soccer field and cabin pads for a camp.

Orientation for Camp Counselors

The job of the counselor is to be with the campers. Discipleship. Mentorship. Follow-ship. Pointing by example to Jesus. Being that, by design, the counselors are from the same church/neighborhood that the campers are from, followup is built-in.

The reality of discipleship is possible when there is presence (one with another). A humble verse in the Bible, Matthew 1:23, declares this idea of presence, in this case, the beginning of Christianity, Emmanuel (God with us).

Defining Camp and Success

Camp is a relationship building tool. Success is measured by the frequency of encounters between counselors and campers after camp. The goal is to build and deepen relationships at camp so that after camp the campers will want to be with each other and their counselors. For the counselor, the commitment to the camper is not just for the duration of the event but for a year.

Devotions at Camp: 24/7

We program life at camp so that spiritual things are an integral part of everything (meal time, bed time, activity time, down time). We do not compartmentalize fun and spiritual happenings.

Campers are to read the Word when they get up and the counselor helps point out all day long how the Scripture is applicable to life and living. Scripture thematic events and the use of Proverbs lend themselves to being especially relevant.

Activities

Activities are an attraction to engage people in purposeful play, recreation, and education. Skills such as nature craft and lore, music, sports, archery, swimming, juggling, water crafts, and woodworking are beneficial in their own right, but we also build in opportunities to do evangelism or teach social justice. Meal time is an activity because it is at the table time where etiquette, gratefulness, servanthood, and humility are demonstrated and encouraged as values of character. Not only do we intend to increase abilities and uphold biblical values, but activities are a catalyst for doing a bigger thing—building relationships.

Small Groups

Camp is a disguise for the small group, a stratagem for change, support, and unified community.

Children

Kids come ready to believe. At no other time in life, statistically speaking, does one so easily grasp what God so freely gives as when they are a child.

More Than Camps

Camps International has equipped camps on 3 continents using practical and repeatable methods.

And yet, even with all these open doors, it's never been about camps.

Camp provides the opportunity for discipleship dynamics, but it is the leadership development of a camp counselor that swings wide the door of Christ-centered discipleship.

Our focus on small groups and intentionality ensures that both kid and counselor burn brighter within the local church after the campfire coals have lost their heat.

The seed is planted at camp, but it flourishes within the Body of Christ.

Here I am. Send me.

Where do you fit in all of this?

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.”

Consider your opportunities to impact this world for God.

What is your next step with CI?

Inquiries: info@startcamps.com

Leave a message: USA 518-444-CAMP (2267)

Donations can be sent to: Camps International,
P. O. Box 1006, Cicero, NY 13039

campsinternational.org

startcamps.com

campduffel.com