

Kamp Klondike Handbook

A guide for counsellors and others
ministering at Kamp Klondike

Welcome to Kamp Klondike!

We are delighted to have you here for this unique and vital ministry. Since you are here we know that you share our love for children and our desire to reach them for the Lord. We trust that you will share our enthusiasm and dedication.

Kamp Klondike is an outreach ministry of Dawson Community Chapel, an affiliate of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada. The camp has been in operation for forty years. In the last twenty years the Lord has moved us beyond our ministry to local children, to one that includes two First Nation villages. During these years Kamp Klondike has been blessed by an outpouring of generosity that has allowed us to do a major upgrade of our facilities. More importantly, we have been blessed by the children who return year after year and who demonstrate in a real way that the Lord is working through this ministry.

This handbook contains useful guidelines which will help you better understand your part in Kamp Klondike. You will find it helpful as you begin planning and you will want to return to it to be sure you are helping the program run as smoothly as possible. You will find practical suggestions from previous teams, plus the overriding philosophy of the camp ministry, set up by those with years of experience in working in camp and with children.

Policy Statement

Relationship of Counsellors and Support Staff to Kamp Klondike

Kamp Klondike is an established camp with has a definite philosophy and ministry that is shaped by the church's doctrine, goals and missionary vision. The program reflects our commitment to spreading the gospel to children.

The camp committee, with the blessing of the church body, has developed a strong, well-balanced program that we feel best meets the needs of the children entrusted to us. We ask that those who come to work with us agree *to follow our direction and our program*. Therefore we have set up the following guidelines:

- 1) Those who come to work with us should recognize that they are coming into a unique, fully formed, ongoing program that they will be helping to advance.
- 2) Organizations supplying counsellors and support staff are to instruct their teams that the local body supersedes any other organizational pattern of authority.
- 3) All those at camp will accept the authority of the local camp committee, represented primarily but not exclusively by the camp chair or designate and the appointed camp director.

Abuse Policy

Dawson Community Chapel has a formal abuse policy addressing verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Those working at camp must be vetted and carefully instructed in those portions of the policy applying directly to the camp ministry. After instruction each worker is required to sign our child protection policy to indicate your agreement to adhere to our guidelines.

Verbal abuse: We have every confidence in your desire to love the children unconditionally. We are also realistic: you are going to be stressed out, tired out, and tested. We all have thresholds that can be breached. When this happens, a common reaction is to lash out verbally.

Therefore, carefully monitor your own stress level. There is no shame in admitting that you are coming to the end of your patience. Before you do, get help! Give the child—or yourself—time out. The camp director is available to support you. The local staff may be able to lend a hand. Be sure to report unusually difficult problems with a particular child: we can't always solve the problem, but we may be able to alleviate it.

There is a recognizable difference between correcting a child—even firmly—and verbally abusing the child. There are times when a firm word is not only necessary, but is desirable, particularly if it has do with bullying or harassing

another child. However, a line has been crossed when a child is denigrated, ridiculed or publically humiliated. Even when reproofing a child for bad behavior, it can be done without crossing the line into abusive language.

Physical abuse: If you carefully follow the guidelines for avoiding verbal abuse, physical abuse should never be a problem. Before you lose it, you will have gotten help. Under NO condition strike a child. You may need to restrain him/her from hurting self or someone else, but you must do it in a way that does not cause injury to a child.

Another aspect of physical 'abuse' has to do with injuries sustained while a child is in your care. If there is an injury due to negligence you will be removed from duty while the matter is explored. If medical attention is needed or there is a possibility of later complications, the child will be taken to the hospital for assessment and treatment. A written account of the injury, whether or not it involved negligence, will be made and a follow-up will be done. *Be sure to notify the camp director of any injury!*

Sexual abuse: This is the area that is most open to false accusations and future difficulties. It is very likely that many of the children coming to camp have been sexually abused. Transference is a common way of not dealing with abuse done by a relative or family friend. Therefore be particularly careful not to put yourself in a situation where a child can name YOU as the abuser. Take every precaution to protect yourself!

Some practical guidelines to follow:

- 1) Do not be alone with a child, particularly in the cabins or outhouses. If you take a child aside for private counselling, put yourself where other adults can see you at all times.
- 2) Avoid prolonged suggestive physical contact that might be misconstrued. The children are starved for affection and hugs are certainly appropriate. However, set reasonable boundaries.
- 3) Do not, under any circumstances, take a child into your bunk at night. If a child needs comforting, you may sit beside him/her, but do not sleep with the child.
- 4) Guys: Some of the girls will develop serious and messy crushes on you if you do not set boundaries from the very beginning. It is YOUR responsibility to be circumspect. Do not engage in hugging or physical contact with the girls. If you set the tone immediately, showing you are here for your boys, you will avoid a lot of grief and possible allegations of sexual misconduct.

If there is an allegation made against anyone during camp it is your responsibility to report it immediately to the camp director, whether it involves another person or yourself. All allegations must be taken seriously and given prompt attention. In no way is the child to be made to feel at fault or under duress.

Upon receiving an allegation, the camp director will talk with the child and the alleged abuser separately to determine if there are reasonable grounds for believing that abuse has occurred. If the allegation seems to have foundation, Social Services will be called in for further discussion with the child, and a determination will be made about notifying the RCMP. Social Services will notify the parents as required, and the camp director will notify the pastor/missionary of the child's community and also the camp chair. The camp director will file a written, confidential report of his findings and actions which will be kept on file by Dawson Community Chapel.

If a child tells you that he or she has been abused at home, or if you see evidence that suggests that is the case, you have a responsibility to report this as well. *Be careful not to solicit information from the child (e.g., "Have you ever been abused..." "Did that ever happen to you...")* The child should understand that you are going to have to get help for him/her if you know that abuse has taken place. In that event, report to the camp director who will proceed as in any other allegation.

Be aware of strangers coming into camp. If you see someone loitering about who doesn't seem to belong, notify the camp director or one of the local staff to determine the person's identity. Keep children on property, within sight, especially on the "road side" of the creek.

Evangelism

Our goal at Kamp Klondike is to lead children to the Lord by presenting the gospel in a clear and understandable way, in a loving, non-threatening atmosphere, while modelling Christ by our attitude and behavior. We desire that the children should, during their week with us, learn who Christ is, why they need Him, and how they can come to Him. From these seeds, fruit may be borne, if not immediately, then in years to come. We want the children to leave with a positive attitude and an awareness of how to come to Christ, whether or not they make a commitment.

We believe that the best way to do this is to work toward the development of building a relationship of trust and respect with each child. By providing a nurturing environment, we are better able to lead children into an awareness of both God's love for them and of their own need for Him. In no case do we ever want children placed into a situation of feeling pressured by adults or peers. Nor do we want them to make a decision based on fear of Hell. We feel that such pressures lead to spurious decisions, at best, and at worst prove detrimental to spiritual life.

We ask that the counselors not get involved in presenting anything that is a denominational distinctive (i.e., modes of baptism, gifts, etc.): we encourage children from various denominations to come to camp. We do not want to bring them into a denomination—we want to

bring them to the Lord. Therefore, concentrate on the positive, unambiguous aspects of the faith.

Steps in Leading a Child to the Lord:

- 1) Develop an atmosphere of trust and openness.
- 2) Under no condition use fear, pressure, manipulation or any subtle means to influence child.
- 3) If a child begins to show an interest, be sure you are supportive and encouraging without leading or controlling.
- 4) Bring the child's name to the staff meeting for consideration and prayer.
- 5) Be sure, by gentle questioning and discussion, that the child understands what is involved in making a decision.
- 6) If you sense the child is at all confused or has mixed motives in desiring to make a commitment, suggest he/she wait a little longer before doing so.
- 7) If you are in doubt, consult with the director.
- 8) If the child is sincere, lead him/her to pray and follow up by talking about what he/she has done.

(Remember that you probably have several children in your cabin who have already made commitments.)

Teaching the Gospel

Although the greater portion of your day, time-wise, will be spent in recreation and fun, the most important part of your day will be spent in teaching. Our main purpose of having Kamp is to bring children into a saving knowledge of the Lord. We have definite teaching goals we would like to see accomplished, and we ask you to be actively involved in fulfilling them.

During chapel each morning, the children will be taught lessons covering the theme for the week's emphasis. You may be called upon to help at various points throughout. You need to **jot down the key points** of the lesson so you can use them for discussion in your teaching time after lunch. In the evening, there will be another chapel session followed by a teaching video. Please **jot down key points** to use in your evening devotions.

You, personally, will have three main teaching times: two devotional times, morning and evening, and the main cabin time teaching after lunch. During morning devotions, you may use a Bible verse or story. Try to set a respectful tone in your devotions: you want to impress upon the children the importance you place on God's word and prayer. The evening devotions can provide a review of the day, especially emphasizing points that have been presented at the evening chapel time and in the video.

Your main teaching time will be a half-hour block following lunch. This is an important time slot! You have the children in a smaller group so you have more opportunity for interaction. We will provide basic materials to help you, but you will need to flesh them out with discussion and Bible work.

Some basic guidelines:

- 1) Be prepared.
- 2) Be enthusiastic.
- 3) Be thinking of ways that you can present the concepts to YOUR group effectively.
- 4) BEFORE you go into your first session remind yourself that you will have some non-readers, some FASD children, and some who are just naturally fractious. Have a plan for dealing with them!
- 5) Convey to the children that this is important to YOU!
- 6) Begin by discussing the morning session, using your notes. Spend time clarifying the concepts and words that you jotted down. Be sure the children understand what is being taught. Use the teaching guide provided. If you have extra time, do verse memorization and Bible work.

**Do NOT allow your group out of the cabin
until the bell rings!**

Discipline

The children will test you in every way imaginable. They want your attention and they will get it, either positively or negatively. Here are some tried and true methods of maintaining crowd control—and your sanity, throughout camp.

Before the kids arrive, prepare yourself: know what you are going to be doing each moment of the day. Know the schedule, where you will take the kids for each activity, what your part in that activity is, etc. Know when and what you are going to be teaching. Be up to speed on everything in this handbook and the cabin time booklet. **THIS IS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE!!!** It is your safeguard against every discipline problem you will encounter.

When the kids arrive, take control of the situation immediately: they will take one look at you and assess how much they are going to be able to get by with. If they sense you are insecure or unsure of your role, *they* will take control. Show that you are ready to love them and have lots of fun, but that *you* are going to be in charge.

Be the adult! Be responsible. Set the example for your group: if you want the kids to wash up, you wash up. If you want them to listen, you listen!

Be consistent! Nothing is more conducive to bad behavior than a leader who can't lead. **Keep on top of it!** Head off potential problems before they start: keep

them busy, focused, and profitably occupied. Expect them to do what you say.

Again! Be prepared! Keep at least one step ahead of them. If you are bluffing, insincere, or uncertain, you will have lost both their attention and their respect.

Be there, all the time! By being upbeat, enthusiastic, using basic common sense, you will usually be able to sweep the kids along. If someone is more enthusiastic than you are, you will have anarchy in short order.

What to do when you have done all you can do:

- 1) Remove child from activity after reprimanding him/her twice or whatever is appropriate.
- 2) Take away a privilege—tuck or another special activity.
- 3) GET HELP! Long before you reach the end of your rope, get help. Give the child to the director who will remove the child from the activity and from your immediate proximity until the situation has defused. (Be sure not to abuse this method or the director will have all the kids!)

General Rules, Suggestions, Observations

- 1) **Stick to the schedule!** The more diligent you are in keeping to the schedule, the better your day will be! It may seem rushed at times, but it has been proven to be effective. If we keep things moving smoothly from one thing to the next without lapsing, there will be fewer problems! Three troublesome areas:
 - a) Get up promptly and get to the staff meeting on time. Keep your needs and sharing brief and succinct. Don't monopolize the time.
 - b) Get kids in to breakfast on time, *making sure they have gone to the outhouse* and have washed.
 - c) Don't spend an inordinate amount of time at toothbrushing.

- 2) **Crowd control is vital!**
 - a) Sit *with your group* during chapel times, videos, lunch, etc. Be sure they act appropriately. Set a good example for them!
 - b) Keep children in cabin for the full half hour after lunch. Spend the entire time on teaching.
 - c) Don't clump together with other counselors—you are here for the kids! You will, of course, crave human companionship, but wait until the weekend!

3) Remember you are working with children! That means you will need to apply some parenting skills.

- a)** In cabins, apply basic standards you would use at home: keep muddy runners off mattresses, bunks, walls and ceilings. No writing on bunks or walls. Absolutely NO jumping from one bunk to the other.
- b)** Effective counselors take the initiative in directing and encouraging their cabin groups. Especially for the 7-9s, use good parenting skills: be responsible yourself for keeping track of water bottles, help kids move through the food line, anticipate possible problems and head them off, supervise and be INVOLVED with kids.
- c)** You may have bed-wetters. Try to handle this without drawing attention to it or upsetting anyone. Hang up wet bedding if necessary. Bring wet clothes to the kitchen and report that they need to be washed (and don't forget to pick them up the next day).
- d)** Outhouses: Use the back ones for morning/evening. Use the ones on the activity side when you are there. The ones nearest the dining hall get over-used—try to get your kids to use the others whenever possible. Instruct them in proper use of toilet tissue and in washing.

4) Please insist on these minimum rules of behavior:

- a) No fighting. No bad language. No rock throwing. Leave squirrels, frogs, and any other living thing alone. Don't peel the birch trees.
- b) Stay out of the kitchen.
- c) Treat others with respect, and obey ANY adult.

5) Guidelines for activities:

- a) Accent **ACTIVE**-ity. Plan activities where all are involved as much of the time as possible.
- b) See that your activity/skill group is interested and challenged. PARTICIPATE fully. If you are heading up an activity/skill group, think of new ways to make it interesting each day.

6) Notes on particular activities:

- a) Rope course: NO ONE allowed on rope course without supervision. One ONE person on each section at a time. Monitor closely.
- b) During canoeing, keep all children in sight all the time! Insist on proper safety precautions when using the canoes. If swimming is allowed at the area, someone with lifeguard training must be designated to supervise. No diving off canoes.

- c) Zip line is potentially dangerous, particularly for smaller children. Children are NOT allowed to use zip line without supervision. Be sure that children are complying with basic safety standards before they launch off. Take turns by cabin—do not have a line up waiting.
 - d) Climbing wall: NO ONE allowed on the wall unless it is a planned activity with adult supervision.
 - e) Be sure to help instruct kids in the skill areas—don't leave everything up to the leader! Help the kids gain proficiency. Don't just stand there, or spend your time chatting with another counselor/staff person!
- 7) Emphasize the positives!** We will be asking you to note children who can be commended for special recognition, especially something that
- a) shows the child applying the Christian principles you are teaching
 - b) shows good sportsmanship, thinking of others
 - c) shows improvement in any area
 - d) or someone who just needs a bit of a boost!
- 8) Tuck:** Sometime before noon, in your notebook make a list of what each member of your cabin group wants for tuck. Someone will be designated to fill your “order” and give it to you. Take tuck out to an area you have designated and **STAY WITH YOUR GROUP**. Remember this is not play time—finish, clean up, and be ready for the next activity.

Daily Schedule

- 7:30** Staff wakeup call. Meet in dining hall for devotions, opening
- 8:45** Finish staff meeting. Junior counselors wake up kids, get them started getting ready for breakfast. Senior counselors have 15 minutes for personal needs.
- 9:00** Get cabin group ready for breakfast, washed up
- 9:15** Breakfast
- 9:45** Brush teeth, **Have devotions**, clean cabins
- 10:15** Chapel (**Help with teaching as directed**)
- 11:30** Skill groups (divided into four groups)
- 1:00** Get ready for lunch
- 1:15** Lunch
- 1:45** **CABIN TIME**
- 2:15** Get ready for afternoon
- 2:30** Activity 1
- 3:30** Tuck
- 3:45** Activity 2
- 4:45** Activity 3
- 5:45** Get ready for dinner
- 6:00** Dinner
- 6:30** Begin winding down. Free time
- 7:30** Take it down a notch. Quieter time.
- 8:15** Chapel
- 9:15** Snack, cleanup, washup, toothbrushing
- 9:45** Teaching video
- 10:30** To cabins for **devotions and discussion**
- 11:00** Lights out

Underlined areas are those set up for you to build relationships with your cabin group. These are important parts of the day. The **bold** type indicates your actual teaching time.

At camp we have the peak of our activity time *before* dinner. Keep the children involved and challenged by the activities in the morning skill groups and the three afternoon sessions. These will provide a mixture of children from all the cabins: try to get acquainted with as many children as you can. After dinner we want the children to wind down. It takes at least 2 ½ hours to get over an adrenalin rush. Thus, this slowing down period needs to be before chapel.

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An outreach ministry
of
Dawson Community Chapel

Dawson City, Yukon

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