

Why Go To A Christian Camp?

While a week of camp in the summer can not replace the need for faithful service to the Lord on a year round basis, there is ample proof that the camp experience can certainly help to change the direction of a young person's life. It is this change of direction that can help a child to come home to the local congregation and work in the Lord's kingdom with greater faith. What brings this greater faith? The same thing That has always brought greater faith; hearing and obeying the word of God. A friend, Bro. Ed Smith, said that including Bible classes, devotionals, singing classes, and evening worship a child will have more Bible study in one week of camp than in an entire year of Sunday morning Bible classes. It is not surprising that there is noticeable growth in faith after a week at camp. "Faith" still comes "by hearing and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Brother Ed has encouraged his own grandson to attend camp for the past several years and has seen him experience great spiritual growth. Ask Bro. Ed if he still believes that camp will help a child grow in faith and you will hear his answer, a resounding "Yes!"

Another powerful aspect of camp involvement is the friends which are made and often kept for a life time. Christian associations, which are in a higher concentration than normal at camp, can cause a child to see the hope and joy of someday living with such friends through out eternity. It is this great hope that helps to drive all of us who seek heaven.

A man once told me he did not believe in sending a child to camp for one week in the summer because it was "...not the real world, and a child must live in the real world the rest of the year...". I strongly disagree, because in truth, this "real world" of which he spoke will only last for a single life time but heaven will last forever. Because of the many spiritual blessings that can be found at camp, it will be more like heaven than what this man called "the real world". Of course, heaven will not have the extreme heat , the red bugs , and the mosquitoes but it will have some of the same wonderful spiritual blessings, Christian friends and more.

One young man attending I.C.Y.C. (a wonderful Christian camp near Jasper, Alabama) found no joy in the camp activities on his first day there. He just wanted to go home. A faithful Christian couple, who were counselors, took interest in him and encouraged him in every way they could. By Wednesday he loved camp, and on Thursday he was baptized into Christ. Within minutes after he arrived home on Friday he was struck by lightning and lost his life, but his soul lives on. Can camp make a difference? Oh yes!

I have seen young people who had little or no faith come away from camp with the beginnings of faith. I have seen young people of faith come away with more faith. I have seen children who had no Christian friends come away with at least one and often many Christian friends. I have seen kids who were angry and rebellious come away with a different view. I have seen adult leaders come away equally blessed. I have seen many young men come away from camp with a desire to become ministers of the gospel. In the end the difference that is made comes from God's Word turned into faith.

"So the faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)

John L. Rice