IX. Maximizing the Impact of Your Week with Campers

This section is not required, but is a helpful guide for Brand New Volunteers, and a useful tool for Experienced Volunteers!

Royal Family KIDS has so many opportunities for YOU to connect with campers all through the week. This optional section was designed for first year volunteers to highlight those opportunities. Seeking these opportunities will help prepare you to make life-changing moments in the lives of campers!

This section is designed to help you understand the underlying principles and strategies that support a successful RFK camp where campers are positively impacted in an environment that is safe, fun, engaging, challenging and deeply relational.

In this chapter you will become familiar with the key terms and concepts that make RFK unique. Some of these include volunteer assignments, familial titles, ‘royal treatment,’ ‘royal mail’ and heart notes, activity centers, a non-competitive atmosphere and 30-30 time. You will become acquainted with the ways in which the design of camp emphasizes teachable moments and your critical role in positively impacting campers.

Step-by-step, interaction-by-interaction, from your preparations for camp to your very first meeting with campers, until your final good-bye, each volunteer through care, concentrated attention and guidance can instill new values in campers that point them to a brighter future.

The previous chapters of this manual help us appreciate the challenges these young campers have experienced in the weeks, months and/or years before arriving at camp. Campers may have lived in households with parents who were cold, critical, cruel or remote. From their earliest
memories, campers have lived through unimaginable tragedies and separations from the ones they love. Where they deserved to have their innocence protected, they may have been exposed to the abusive behaviors of parents, spouses, lovers or relatives. They may have been humiliated for pleasure, ego or financial gain. For some, courts have compounded their agony and placed them into the foster care system that while well meaning, shuffles them around to new households, schools and counselors. Statistically, in the next decade of these young lives, campers may become prisoners of anger, sex, drugs, homelessness and gangs. Campers who have been victims, may grow up to victimize others.

These children have not caused their problems and cannot solve the challenges of their life situations alone. These are the campers Royal Family KIDS Camp willingly embraces for roughly 100 golden hours each year at camp. Our urgent cause is to change the trajectory of the lives of our campers and future generations. It is the reason why RFK is different from other camps you may have attended.

As campers begin to experience the wonder of camp, emotional walls reluctantly but gradually breakdown, campers will begin to see themselves as different people. Some campers may take only small steps in their development during their week at camp. Others may experience enormous breakthroughs.

We must see ourselves as being one small part in the entire process that God is using to rebuild hope in these children. Our task is to simply provide Christian care that begins to soften the encrusted shell that these children have developed to survive in life. Beyond care, there may be opportunities to sow seeds. Remember what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3:6, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.”

*It is in this environment that God orchestrates a life-changing experience for both campers and volunteers. Every volunteer plays a vital role and will have opportunities to communicate the hope He offers to those with broken lives.*

Keep in mind that most campers have never had a positive, wholesome experience at camp or in churches. Therefore, they will not understand the Christianese that we tend to use in our daily vocabularies. This creates a barrier in our communications, so we must deliberately make
an effort to meet them where they’re at in order to impact their lives spiritually.

**The Goal for the Camp Week**

This is our urgent work: to employ the love of God that flows through us to care for and repair these young campers who have been so incredibly challenged at such a young age.

Every aspect of Royal Family KIDS Camp is specifically designed so that volunteers can wisely incorporate hundreds of teachable moments during the week to help each camper get mentally, emotionally, academically, socially and spiritually unstuck from their current circumstances. Camp is a place where camper spirits are fed, confidence is built and a new hope for their future can begin to grow.

*If we do not anticipate or have the discipline to see these opportunities because of the rush of the day, these moments will inadvertently just slip away and wonderful windows for healing will be missed.*

The following truths have been learned over the course of thousands of RFK Camps. Applying them will help you to begin to maximize your impact on campers:

1. **Prepare Yourself to Positively Impact Campers in the Weeks Before Camp**

   The most important decision of the week for volunteers is one they make before camp. Will I prepare myself spiritually to impact the campers God is going to put before me?

   For campers and volunteers alike, camp is a divine appointment week. As volunteers actively depend upon Jesus to help campers recognize God in their lives through guidance, challenging experiences and fun activities, He can impact campers. *Experienced camp veterans can attest to the truth that preparing yourself for an effective camp does not happen on the bus on the way up to camp. Utilizing your personal devotional time before camp for aligning your heart to purposely hear and rely upon God will prepare you for the work He has uniquely created for you.*

   You are the answer to camper prayers and their desperate need to be for cared for and about. The impact of camp does not primarily come from
scheduled activities; it comes from selfless volunteers willing to rely upon
God and give of themselves. Campers yearn for the experience of being
loved. Our method is to use the unconditional and uncontainable love
that we have gained from our relationship with Christ to touch the hearts
of the campers.

To be like Jesus is to relate to those in need with a deep sense of
connection. Compassion is God’s gift and is cultivated by an ability to
imagine how someone else views their circumstances. Compassion
compels and allows us to care. Paul says: “Put on a heart of compassion.
Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe
yourselves with compassion” (Col. 3:12.)

Henri Nouwen captures the thought well when he writes, “Here we see
what compassion means. It is not a bending toward the underprivileged
from a privileged position; it is not reaching out from on high to those
below; it is not a gesture of pity for those unable to make the upward
pull, on the contrary, compassion means going directly to those people or
places where suffering is most acute and ‘building a home there.’ God’s
compassion is total, absolute, and unconditional, without reservation.”

Compassion is our method. Being compassionate is challenging,
especially within the new environment of being at camp! We need God’s
help. And God invites us to rely on Him, to make ourselves available to go
deeper in our faith. Compassion at camp means:

- Meeting campers in their world, but not leaving them there.
- Relinquishing your agenda and seeking God’s.
- Loving campers, not managing them.
- Being compelled by God and becoming conduits of His love.
- Being able to see past your pain to step into the pains of others.

The table below provides a variety of ways that volunteers can relate to
campers. The way we view campers and our week at camp, to a great
degree determines how effective we can be at camp. As our purposes,
commitments and actions move down the chart, our effectiveness at
meeting the deep needs of campers increases:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At Camp, if You Often Focus on...</th>
<th>The Question You will Often Ask Yourself is...</th>
<th>What You will Become at Camp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camper Behavior</td>
<td>“How Do I Get Campers to...”</td>
<td>Camper Sitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Activities</td>
<td>“What are We Going to Do Next?...”</td>
<td>Camper Concierge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camper Emotional Needs</td>
<td>“How Can I Build Up Campers?...”</td>
<td>Camper Champion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camper Spiritual Beliefs</td>
<td>“How Can I Show that God Is Real?...”</td>
<td>Camper Spiritual Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camper’s Core Identity In God</td>
<td>“How can I Work Alongside God as He Works in this Camper’s Life?...”</td>
<td>Camper Compassionate Advocate</td>
</tr>
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Unless you purpose to give your compassion to campers, you will not know how to speak to them effectively. With a heart of compassion, campers will not only hear your words, they will experience what it is like to feel like they have a friend.

Unless you purpose to look past camper behavior challenges and scheduled camp activities, you will not appreciate the camper’s deepest needs. With a heart of compassion, campers will not only feel your care, they will know they are lovable.

Unless you purpose to seek God in prayer, you will not know how to be a camper’s advocate. With a heart of compassion, campers will not only feel that they are loved, you will touch their souls.

‘Clothing yourself with compassion’ is a spiritual decision. As you prepare for camp, ask God to soften your heart and give you the courage to stretch your capacity for being compassionate.
2. **Pre-camp Devotions and Prayer Partners**

Camp is, in many ways, a spiritual battle. Therefore, no one succeeds at camp without prayer. Many will say that camp is their most difficult week during the year. Without a connection to God, we lose focus and determination. The following are some sample pre-camp prayers and activities:

- Pray that you will challenge yourself to cultivate the depth of relationship with Jesus that will keep His love, presence, and power in your life and compel you to share it with others.
- Pray that you will be able to speak the language of truth in a way that contemporary young children will understand.
- Pray for your flexibility adaptableness, patience and energy. Pray that you will so tangibly represent God’s love that the campers will recognize Him in you and be transformed.
- Pray that you will be genuine and authentic. As you shed your mask, others will too.
- Pray that you will be able to listen to campers and others without distraction.
- Memorize the verses that will be taught to the campers. You respect campers, when your heart is attuned to what will be communicated during the camp.
- Get to know as many names of volunteers and campers as you are able to.

Many camps have prayer partners who support volunteers in prayer, but do not attend camp. Personally connect before camp and ask them to pray for you each day. Talk to them in advance about what you anticipate will be your greatest challenges. Reconnect after camp, share your experiences during the week and thank them for participating alongside you.

3. **Titles, Roles and Responsibilities at Camp**

Each camper comes to camp with deep hurts and yearns to be part of a well-functioning family. Every volunteer accepted at Royal Family KIDS Camp is assigned by the Camp Director to be in one of two roles: ‘Staff’ or ‘Counselors.’
Some staff will have the roles of Grandma, Grandpa, Aunt and Uncle for the purpose of modeling supportive, intact family relationships to campers. In total, staff serves as the public “stars” of camp and has responsibilities for being on stage, directing, planning, organizing, teaching, playing music, taking photographs, nursing and overseeing activities. Every staff member, no matter their age or responsibility, will have many opportunities for camper teachable moments. Some campers’ greatest needs will be for an older sister or brother with whom they can share their hearts. For others, it is a nurturing Grandparent or Aunt and Uncle, or for still others, it is for a teacher or an activity where someone who does not know them will deliberately see through their background to soothe their hurting heart or challenge them with new hopes.

Counselors are the volunteers with the potential to have the greatest impact on the campers. Many campers’ greatest needs are to experience caring volunteers in a semi-parental role to provide one-to-one guidance through both the intense fun and challenging circumstances of the camp week. As teams are stronger than individuals, these counselor teams will ideally consist of 4 campers and 2 adults. The team of 6 will sleep, eat and participate in most activities as a group.

Counselors will get to know their team of 6 in depth, while staff will impact many different campers. Like most children, campers are attracted to the security found with their counselors, but have an innate desire to be stars. This tension creates many opportunities for everyone to impact campers. As counselors build up staff in the eyes of the campers and staff build up counselors to the campers, relationships are super-charged and the impact of everything positive done at camp multiplies.

The more we live the truth that each volunteer is an extension of God’s love uniquely displayed in their gifts, the bigger we see God and the more amazing He becomes. Placed in this environment, campers can begin to gain an understanding of relational wholeness.

4. **Royal Treatment/Greeting Campers/ Room Decorations/ Variety Show/Everyone’s Birthday**

Campers come to camp feeling like outsiders in most all aspects of life. Each desperately desires to feel like an insider. Despite the challenging experiences campers have endured, campers are kids with the normal desires and at least some of the innocence of other kids their age. What
campers want is not different than what we all want: to be noticed and acknowledged for their own value, to be called by name in the hallways, on the trails and at the pool. To experience genuine generosity expressed towards them. Campers want people to like them, to show them a way to participate in something bigger than themselves, to learn new skills, to have someone truly listen to what they say, to miss them when they are gone and to pray with them when they are challenged.

This is what Royal Family KIDS Camp calls ‘royal treatment.’ We strive to provide ‘royal treatment’ not only to the campers, but to fellow volunteers as well. Here are some concrete examples of how this happens:

- Camper buses are greeted with raucous applause and shouting, with signs proudly displaying camper names and each camper’s name loudly announced when they step out of the vehicles upon arriving at camp.
- Everyone applauds and cheers after each variety show event.
- Great effort and planning surrounds the birthday celebration.
- Worn-out clothing items are quietly replaced with new.
- Volunteers warm up stark camp rooms with posters, balloons, crepe paper, glow in the dark stars and themed decorations. While the decorations may not be intact after the first night, the seed of well-meaning generosity and care will last far longer.

Generously giving ‘royal treatment’ to campers confers dignity to lives that are desperately short of it. Campers remember what important people in their lives do, what they say and how they say it. They remember special care exhibited just for them. Every opportunity to interact with a caring volunteer can be memorable to the camper. Honoring campers magnifies their importance as people individually created and loved by God.

5. **Chapel/Drama / Breakfast Club**

During Chapel, Drama and Breakfast Club times the staff creates spiritual and emotional bridges beginning where the campers are and attempting to help each camper get to a place where they can recognize God in their lives. These daily, large group communication times collectively present Biblical truths that are portrayed and reinforced through teaching, a play and puppets. There are 5 themes designed by RFK that are used in annual
rotation so that campers will always be presented with fresh truth when they come to camp.

Chapel is a creative teaching venue where all campers learn Bible truths. The drama presents a Biblical story that resonates with the experiences of campers and daily builds to a conclusion as the week progresses. The drama is designed to help campers empathize with the challenges of the characters and see positive resolutions in challenging life circumstances. Breakfast Club reinforces the same truths using a more interactive method with the campers.

These daily group times are challenging for the staff presenters as RFK is not a camp for church kids who hear a reinforcing similar message weekly at church. The kids have an extraordinarily wide range of exposure levels in spiritual matters. Some have a faith that, due to their situation, has made them extraordinarily dependent upon God at a very young age. Others have experienced evil so intimately that they have no concept of a good God.

The abuse that many campers have experienced has scarred them so intensely that they experience arrested emotional development. They do not recognize ‘good,’ much less a good God. For example, when we say “God is love,” “He is our heavenly Father and He loves you.” It may be misinterpreted by a child of abuse or neglect because of a father who supposedly “loved” them also abused, molested or neglected them.

The design of the spiritual truths we communicate is targeted to the lives campers are experiencing the other 51 weeks of the year. Therefore, campers need to know God, not just know about Him. This means, for example, that campers need to:

- Deeply know and experience that God loves each of them, in addition to being told that a particular Biblical character was loved by God.
- Identify with God’s moral character that’s being demonstrated in the stories.
- Personally identify with the characters in the stories to appreciate for themselves that the Biblical character is deeply loved by God despite their faults.
- Understand that the love of God changes the Biblical character’s way of understanding and accepting themselves.
• Realize that God’s love allows the character to change their way of seeing others in their lives.
• Comprehend that when the Bible character trusts in God, that God will always be there even when life is difficult.

This is the hope each camper needs for the future.

Many campers have never seen a Bible, much less owned one, and can easily lose interest unless their counselor provides enough information and on-going context so that the camper gains respect and appreciation for what is being communicated. Counselors need to gauge camper interest and explain the story.

In a large group of campers with many levels of comprehension, the counselor must then reinforce the key truths and help to apply them to each camper’s life. This may occur over a meal, or while walking, or just as the camper wakes up or before they go to sleep.

One approach to help campers relate to the characters and stories is by asking a question such as, “Have you ever felt that your problems were so large that no one could solve them?” “There is a person in the Bible who lived long ago and felt the same way, his name was …… and this is how he solved his problem, and this is what did not work for him…” This provides Biblical truth in a way that connects to camper’s emotions, spirits and minds.

The stories offer great springboards to talk to campers more broadly about: temptation, prayer, God’s care for people, right and wrong decisions and their consequences, forgiveness and hope in a future. The goal for all is to provide them enough insight to give them eyes to recognize and trust God in their life circumstances after camp so that they know that they can connect with God at any time.

6. Worship and Singing Songs

Worship is the single most powerful force in restoring the soul. It is what we will be doing throughout eternity. Music has the ability to cut through the poor messages we carry in our heads and be a healing salve in a wounded soul. Teaching and singing a new song to a troubled child can change their countenance and give hope.

The music learned at camp can also be a lasting gift that we give the children to take home to enjoy throughout the whole year. Camp music provided to the campers can also be played in the campers’ rooms to
help them learn and understand the words. Music played quietly can have a calming effect on a camper who feels distraught. Explaining the words to Christian songs can help the camper understand the meaning as he/she sings the song. These become ‘teachable moments.’

In large group singing, energetic adult participation with the motions that go with some songs not only provides the campers freedom to participate, they become yet another remembrance that campers will take away from camp.

7. **Royal Mail and Heart Notes**

You probably still have a cherished note you received many years ago tucked away in a safe place. Campers rarely receive notes of encouragement or thanks. Often they have only a small space to keep their most prized possessions and they value the few they receive for many years.

‘Royal Mail’ is intra camp mail that allows any volunteer to send a note to a camper. A 'heart note' sent through royal mail can capture in a few words an uplifting message of encouragement or gratitude. Often they capture a moment of camp life that describes a camper’s character, value, success, good choices and hopes for the future.

Heart notes can become a permanent memory of positive camp experiences that campers can recall for many years. What do you write about? Just be yourself, be genuine, be warm, be personal, and call campers by name. Recall great camp successes and fun events. Encourage them in their skills and recall other volunteers who had a great impact on their time at camp.

Providing campers with a permanent reminder of both the wonderful times at camp, as well as public respect of those at camp can begin to heal a hurting heart.

8. **Changing Campers View of Themselves**

A favorite song sung at camp is “I Will Change Your Name.” The words are:

I will change your name.  
You shall no longer be called,  
Wounded, outcast, lonely or afraid.
I will change your name.
Your new name shall be,
Confidence, joyfulness, overcoming one,
Faithfulness, friend of God,
One who seeks My face.
(written by D.J. Butler)

Campers who’ve been robbed of a childhood, often rob themselves of an adulthood. At a young age campers have been called, useless, lazy, selfish and stupid. They have been told they are good for nothing or scarred by statements such as, “I wish you had never been born.” Campers innately believe what those in authority tell them and then live out what their abusers have labeled them.

When volunteers observe, recognize and publicly communicate positive character traits like those noted below, a camper ‘can change their name.’ You can deliberately fan this ember and change the camper’s self-concept. These traits can be memorialized and presented to campers in a small or large ceremony and will become new character goals which they can strive to integrate into their lives.

Helpful
Generous
Caring
Adventurous
Imaginative
Optimistic
Hopeful
Inspiring
Brave
Loyal
Bold
Leader
Integrity
Tenacious
Honesty
Trustworthy
Truthful
Peacemaker
Considerate
Compassionate
Problem Solver
Responsible
Resourceful
Modest
Humility
Hard working
Respectful
Dependable
Persevering
Polite
Determined

Through consistent love and guidance, counselors communicate that a camper’s identity can be changed from outcast to greatly loved by God.
9. **Prayer Before Meal Times**
Modeling gratitude in prayer for the food God provides at meal times is a non-threatening way to acknowledge God’s generosity to all of us. We thank Him and rely on Him for His abundance, while asking Him for help with our daily challenges. This can be done in various ways. Group prayer can be led by a camper using a microphone, each team or table can assign a prayer leader, or campers may want to pray silently by themselves. Knowing that God watches over us soothes a troubled soul.

10. **First Experiences at Camp**
First successes remain as positive milestones throughout our lives. These experiences will be permanent reminders of personal worth and uplifting memories that instill a deep sense of personal accomplishment and pride.

First experiences include things like shooting a basket, serving a volleyball, hitting a tetherball, throwing a Frisbee, scoring a touchdown, reading a Bible, catching a fish, being publicly applauded for a stage talent, swimming in a pool, skipping a stone, attending a tea party, throwing a horseshoe, pounding a nail, painting, using an electric drill, riding a bike, feeding a horse, shooting an arrow, painting your fingernails, talking into a microphone, attending a birthday party, praying like God is really there, finding a new passion in an activity center and finding a new friend with a similar background.

Campers will long remember the kindness of Christians who loved them enough to share these times and communicate that they were valuable enough to be showered with care and attention.

11. **The Cathedral of the Great Outdoors**
God speaks loudly through His creation, complexity and beauty displayed in nature. Having a conversation about God’s nature unlocks the reality that He is real and there and cares about His creation. It expands our experience to include the enormity of God. Paradoxically, He becomes both more tangible and transcendent.

For example, a squirrel scurrying around the tree looking for a place to hide a nut can be explained as the wisdom of a God who created a
creature that instinctively knows to bury nuts in the summer so he will have food stored up for the winter.

Pointing these things out to a camper are ‘teachable moments’ that can be stretched into longer conversations about God and His creativity. Even short conversations can sow seeds that can sprout later. Individuals either live in awe and wonder or in doubt. Teach campers awe and wonder for God’s unmistakable goodness in creation.

12. **30/30 Cabin Time /Camper Activity Books**

Many campers become more reflective when they are quiet and restful. This is a time during each day when the campers can lay on their bed and read, work on their camper activity books, memorize their Bible verses or do another quiet activity.

Campers often ‘open up’ and want to talk more during this time than at other times of the day. Counselors can use this time to make sure the ideas presented in Chapel/Drama/Breakfast Club are clear and to reinforce Biblical principles as they relate to the successes and challenges of the day. Giving them your full attention honors the person that God is developing.

Counselors can use the power of questions to ignite thoughts about the hopes campers have for the future or learn more about a camper’s character. Recognize that this time is a wonderful opportunity to relate to your campers on a deeper level and be a mentor. Often, campers are not only missing common childhood experiences, they are missing thousands of practical points of advice about how life works.

Relationships with campers deepen when you see their strengths and compliment them, listen to and respect their opinions (even if you disagree), are playful and verbally affectionate, respect their boundaries, are fun to be with, honestly share and embrace the total person (good, bad, struggles, successes) in love.

13. **Activity Centers/Non-competitive Environment**

Activity Centers are spread out throughout the camp to encourage quiet walking and talking along the way. They are intended to expose campers to experiences not found in other parts of their lives. They may be fun
physical activities like archery or games, or creating something from wood or other materials.

One of the significant ways of teaching the children a trust in God is to ‘walk and talk’ throughout the day and evening at camp. When we do this, we creatively weave God’s presence into our daily lives and the life of the camper, making him/her aware of the God we know, love and serve.

Gentleness and reassurance are our methods. Activities focus on the process of doing the project versus the end product. Interactions between campers and counselor and/or staff members are more important. A constant stream of positive affirmation on their project will go a long way in creating an environment where campers are valued.

Other moments may arise while sitting at an Activity Center working on a project, reinforcing the camper’s creative abilities and observing how God gave us our abilities to create a beautiful world for ourselves and others. Campers may view sports or activities as a mental and emotional escape for their challenging lives. Helping them find their giftedness provides great blessing and hope for the future.

Royal Family KIDS Camps operate with a policy of non-competiveness throughout camp. In every competitive situation there is both a winner and a loser. While helping a camper win something may be uplifting to them, campers who lose feel the reinforced negative stereotypes that devalue a person. Instead of keeping score, being first and creating champions, we model playing games and doing activities for the fun of participating. Being first in anything at camp does not mean being more important or more superior in God’s economy.

14. Camp Schedule

Children generally thrive with a schedule. A well-planned schedule will help everyone be more successful at camp. The schedule should not be so tight that it drives everyone crazy. There must be scheduled downtime and there must be built in flexibility for the things we cannot anticipate. The campers may come from a life-style completely devoid of anything scheduled and may feel hampered by it at first. The scheduled should bring comfort to the campers who need to see that eating three times a day is already on the schedule. You may want to
post a copy of the schedule and/or the camp rules in the cabins and use it to plan ahead and give comfort to campers who need to know what’s coming during the week.

15. **Morning and Evening Devotions**

More than any other times of the day, most children instinctively become more open and willing to share when they awaken and before bedtime. These can be an excellent time to ask questions about the day ahead or the one just ending.

Good habits of having God bookend our days can be established where we ask God to go before us in our day and be our constant companion. Praying with each camper quietly when they are in their beds brings a blessing of individualized attention and a word of personalized encouragement that may be impressed on a young soul. In the evenings, some campers for good reason will fear the dark. Prayer may help to reduce the anxiety in a camper’s soul. This is a teachable moment that the child can take home from camp and begin to practice in his/her daily life after camp.

Reading Scripture or reinforcing the materials taught in Chapel will help campers both begin the day and end it well. Previewing the day’s activities and reviewing the day’s accomplishments will help campers appreciate the blessings they have experienced, and allow them to tell stories where they are the hero. These are the stories that they will take from camp.

16. **Bible Reading/Verse Memorization**

Reading God’s Word, explaining the meaning of the verse and customizing the meaning of the words to their situation are invaluable ‘teachable moments.’

17. **Saying Goodbye to Campers**

Once campers have returned to where they will be picked up, leaving them can be quite emotional for both you and them. You have just gone through a tremendously emotional and exhausting week. Grieving deeply means that you have loved deeply. Part of entering their pain during the week is also entering the hope that they have that God will be with them in life’s future challenges.
They are in a place you cannot continue to reach, but God can and does. Our God is a God of miracles. You can take solace in that you contributed as much as you were able in the time you had together. Prayer is God’s method of staying close to another when you cannot interact with them. Take time to journal about your experiences you are committed to pray for; it will keep your memories fresh and accurate and allow you to continue to impact campers.

_What you cannot change you have to accept. We take comfort in knowing that God puts all things right in the end._ —Bonheoffer

### 18. Extending the Impact of Camp

Once you have completed your week with the campers, it is easy to bemoan that you were only able to impact them for a short time. But remember that RFK is specifically designed to extend the positive impact on the camper through many tangible and intangible ways.

These ways include, in part, the ideas, conversations and commitments you made to your camper. The Bible they received allows God to reach out to them and them to reach back. The songs they sang will stick in their heads, the love you shared in conversations and actions will have imprinted them with an understanding of true love and care. The habits of prayer in the morning and evening will provide them with an outlet during frustrating times ahead. The many ‘firsts’ they experienced will create long lasting memories and take them to a place of emotional escape when life gets challenging. Camp gifts with the RFK logo will immediately take them back to their wonderful camp experience.

Campers often lack any photos of themselves; instead they only have manila folders that mark their lives. Memory books can be the most powerful and tangible reminder of their activities, fun, Bible verses they learned and most of all, your devotion to them. Every time memory books are shared with others, campers will also relive all of the positive feelings that camp represented. They also provide a sense of pride with admiring comments or impacting Royal mail inserted. In other words, memory books come with built in self-esteem.

When your church is ready, Royal Family KIDS Club and Mentoring program is a great way to meet with the kids from camp every month through the school year. The Camp Director can find out more by contacting the National office.
Conclusion

We need a vision of compassion before we interact with campers that can break the chain of abuse not only with these campers, but the generations that follow. When we focus on our personal goals, dreams or ambitions for our week at camp, we fail. When we focus on God, we can accomplish more than we could ever dream.

Though your week will be challenging, don’t give up until campers are not only taught new ways to look at life, but are able to begin to do it themselves. With God, their world becomes a safe place even though it is fraught with challenges. God’s kingdom design is that your great fulfillment meets His great need for you. The fruit of Jesus’ kingdom is to make a positive difference in the lives of campers.

The following are examples of critically important truths for campers. They can be taught formally in groups, discussed in teams and/or communicated in brief conversations.

Themes to Explain and Teach RFKC Campers throughout the Week

- God is a ‘Father To the Fatherless’
- With Hope a Camper’s Future can be Transformed From Doubt to a Future of Purpose
- A Camper’s Idea of Being Abused Property Can be Transformed to being Infinitely Valuable
- A Camper’s Self Image of Being an Outcast Can be Transformed to Being Unique and Precious
- A Camper’s Perception of Being Alone can be Transformed to Being Watched Over by God
- A Camper’s Self Image of Being Defined by Others can be Transformed to be Defined by God
- Trusting God with their Lives is a Choice Everyone Makes
- A Camper’s Sense of Present Hurt can be Transformed to a Sense of On-going Hope
- The Sure Knowledge that They Belong to God First and He has a Purpose for Them
- Asking for Help from Trusted People is O.K.
- Just Because Someone Says Something About You Does Not Make it True

CLOS

What are your personal take-a-ways from this section?