





SUNDAY

YOUTH GROUP DEVO

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: It's been a long day, but we're here! You've had a chance to meet your crews, and you've learned where, who, and how you'll be serving this week. Now that you have a moment to stop and reflect on the day... What has been your favorite part of the day? (Allow time for sharing.)

Now that we have settled in and met our work crews, let's look ahead at our week of serving. (Allow time for sharing.)

ASK: What is going through your mind about tomorrow? What are you excited about? What are you worried about?

SAY: Who would like to open us in prayer?

FOCUS

The theme for this year's mission trip is **GO SERVE**. We'll explore all the different ways to serve, what motivates us to serve, and what it means to be people who serve.

There are many ways we can serve this week.

Let's take 60 seconds and list all the ways we can serve people this week. I'll start the timer (or have somebody else do it if you don't have a phone/watch), **and everybody call out ways we can serve. Ready? Go!**

(Share ideas for 60 seconds.)

Serving isn't just about tools and lumber and paint. God has equipped us all with skills and abilities to serve. All the ways we serve are equally important. You may have physical strength, a brain for problem-solving, or social skills off the charts. Maybe you notice when somebody is struggling and provide support. Maybe you are gifted with joy or patience — things we definitely need this week.

SAY: At the program, we talked about the different reasons people serve. What motivated YOU to come to camp?

(Allow time for sharing.)

Now that you know something about the project you're facing and have met your work crew, how are you feeling about tomorrow morning? Score your motivation on a scale of 1 (Not motivated) to 10 (Hold me back! I'm ready to go!).

(Go around the circle and share your ratings.)

SAY: Throughout the week, your motivation will fluctuate. That's a guarantee. What can you do when you're faced with frustration about serving? What if you struggle with your work project, crew relationships, or feeling exhausted or overwhelmed?

You can find encouragement from the word of God. Isaiah 41:10 says:

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*So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

ASK: How can this Scripture help when you're feeling unmotivated? (Allow time for sharing.)

SAY: Every day, make sure you turn to God when your energy dips or your motivation drops.

This whole week will be an awesome opportunity to lean on God.

Philippians 4:6-7 says this:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

SAY: As we get ready to head to our work sites for the first time, let's share our hearts with God. We'll go around the circle and each say a one-sentence prayer, filling in the blanks below. After we've each prayed, I'll close the prayer.

Lord, I'm excited about _____

and I'm worried about _____

PRAY: Lord, thank you for listening. We know you will be with us as we SERVE. We are grateful that you have equipped us for the journey ahead. We want your goodness to shine through us. Amen.

SAY: Here is some important information you need to know for tomorrow:

Grab your Mission Handbook and turn to page 23, to the section titled "Your Emotional Safety Matters." Will someone please read that section aloud while we follow along?

(Pause for reading.)

We want everyone to have a great week, and that can happen only if we understand and live out those words. If anything or anyone makes you uncomfortable this week, please talk to an adult right away.

Everyone needs to know about these four important camp locations:

- 1. The cafeteria**
- 2. The tool room**
- 3. The main entrance and check-in table area**
- 4. The emergency meeting place (usually out front or in the largest parking lot)**

If anyone has not yet become familiar with these locations, we'll go on a brief group tour of the facility right after tonight's devotions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Make sure everyone knows how to get their tools, supplies, and lunches in the morning.
- Lights out tonight is at 11 p.m. Tomorrow is a big day!
- In your rooms tonight, an adult should point out the fire exits.
- Make sure to check the GO SERVE WALL for opportunities to serve around the school.
- Share announcements related specifically to your group.



MONDAY

YOUTH GROUP DEVO

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: We made it through our first day at our work sites. I'm sure you have stories to share. Let's hear about your day. (Allow time for sharing.)

Let's pray, giving thanks for today and asking God to give us open hearts and minds as we face challenges this week.

Ask for a volunteer to open with a brief prayer

FOCUS

SAY: Our theme today is **GO SERVE IN FREEDOM.**

Knowing Jesus means knowing that he loves you because you're the unique person he created you to be. That's the way God works. He created us with specific skills and qualities that make us who we are.

Some people are great athletes. Not everybody. Some people have artistic ability. Not everybody. Some people are musically talented. Not everybody. Some people are good communicators. Not everybody. Some people understand computers. Not everybody. Some people are great with kids and animals. Not everybody.

When you realize you aren't expected to do any more than be the person God created you to be, that FREES you.

It FREES you from one of the toxic habits that human beings suffer from: COMPARING OURSELVES TO OTHERS.

When you understand that God designed us each to be unique, then you can see that it doesn't really make sense to compare one human being to another.

SAY: The "comparison game" is destructive. When we spend our energy wishing we were different, we lose sight of the miraculous people we already are.

You can choose to be FREE from the comparison game.

Let's try shifting our perspective. Let's go around the circle, each saying something we like about ourselves. It can be anything. Be honest! It might feel strange or awkward. That's OK. This isn't about bragging; it's about appreciating the way God created you.

Who would like to start? (Wait for a volunteer to start. Then go around the circle sharing things you like about yourselves.)

SAY: In tonight's program, we met a girl named Chelsea, who was struggling with a decision that involved online bullying.

Chelsea was trapped because she worried about three things:

- 1. Pleasing people**
- 2. Outward appearances**
- 3. Fitting in**

DISCUSS

1. In which of the three areas do you feel the most pressure? Explain.

2. Have you ever made a bad decision, knowing that you weren't being true to yourself — the YOU God created you to be? Explain.

SAY: When we feel trapped by all the voices and worries we carry inside us, we can't move forward. We're stuck in our thinking, and it becomes difficult to grow into the people God designed us to be.

Living in FREEDOM means not only that you are free FROM things, like comparison and toxic pressures. It also means you are free FOR things, like serving God by serving people.

Matthew wrote this:

Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.
Matthew 5:48 (The Message)

SAY: Let's all live generously and graciously toward others this week, and always.

Remember that you are free because God loves you and has chosen you. Nothing pleases God more than you being you.

PRAY: *God, we're grateful for this day and for the freedom to serve. Help us stay true to ourselves and faithful to you. Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Variety Show audition forms must be signed by an adult in your group who has seen and approved the act. Forms are available in the camp office and are due back there by 5 p.m. tomorrow. Auditions will be after tomorrow night's program.
- Continue adding to the camp's community gift.
- Stop by and check out the GO SERVE WALL. Feel free to grab one of the cards and spend a little time serving around camp. If you take a card, stop by the camp office to officially volunteer and to get more information.
- Add any announcements specific to your group.
- Make sure to write Care Cards all week, and don't forget about your resident.
- Lights out is at 11 p.m.



TUESDAY

YOUTH GROUP DEVO

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: Another day of work is behind us. How did things go at your work site today? Let's share our joys and struggles. What were your best and toughest moments of the day? (Go around the circle and share.)

FOCUS

Our theme today is GO SERVE WITH PURPOSE.

God created us all with a purpose. One thing Jesus says about our purpose is that we are to love God and love our neighbors. Let's talk about what that means.

SAY: Let's have an open discussion. Jump in with your responses.

- 1. Do you know the people in your neighborhood back home?**
- 2. When Jesus talks about neighbors, he means everybody. We are supposed to "love" everybody. What makes some people difficult to love?**
- 3. What does Jesus mean by LOVE your neighbors? Is that different than LIKING them?**

SAY: Your purpose is to love God and love people (including yourself). If you use that as the standard for everything you do, everything you say, and everything you value ... then you will be true to your purpose, to yourself, and to God.

SAY: Think again about the command to "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."

Underneath that command is the idea that God wants you to love yourself. I'm not talking about feeling like you're better than other people. God wants you to see yourself the way he sees you. He wants you to treat yourself with kindness and understanding.

Who would like to read the 1 John 4:20-21?

(Wait for a volunteer.)

If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.

ASK: Is it possible to love others if we don't really love ourselves?

Why do some people find it difficult to love themselves?

Let's pray: *Jesus, we are grateful for your blunt command. Help us make loving you and loving our neighbor our greatest goal. Help us be kind to ourselves and listen to who YOU say we are. We want to serve people with purpose, and that means serving them with the kind of love you taught us. Amen.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Review tomorrow's free-time plans. Remember, you'll need to be back by 7 p.m. for the program at 7:30. It starts with the Variety Show. If someone in your group is in the Variety Show, make sure you're back by 7 p.m. or earlier.
- Stop by and check out the GO SERVE WALL. Feel free to grab one of the cards and spend a little time serving around camp. If you take a card, stop by the camp office to officially volunteer and to get more information.
- Keep writing Care Cards! The Care Card rack will come down at midnight on Friday.
- Share announcements related specifically to your group.



WEDNESDAY

YOUTH GROUP DEVO

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: How's everybody doing tonight? It was great having a half-day to do something together. Do you feel energized for tomorrow? How is your motivation doing?

FOCUS

Today's theme is **GO SERVE WITH HUMILITY.**

What is humility?

(Allow time for answers.)

SAY: Humble people share certain qualities:

They listen.

They look people in the eyes.

They are generous with their time.

They are able to be truly present.

In the program tonight, a drama illustrated something called ACTIVE LISTENING.

In a world where we spend a lot of time inside our own heads, looking at our phones, and distracted by everything happening around us, active listening is rare. Just for fun, scream out loud if you or someone you know takes at least 5 pictures of themselves most days. GO!

It's no wonder we don't have time to REALLY listen, but we can become better active listeners. We can practice.

Listening is an exercise in HUMILITY.

To be an active listener means you put the other person first and really tune in. Don't look away or look down at your phone. Be generous with your time. Be present. Look your friend in the eyes. Listen.

SAY: I need 2 people to volunteer right now. One of you will be the "speaker" and the other the "active listener."

(Wait for volunteers.)

OK, now sit in the middle of our circle, directly across from each other. (Allow time for the volunteers to move into the middle of the circle.)

Who would like to be the active listener? (Let them decide who will be the active listener.)

Here's what you'll do:

Use words and body language to practice active listening. Have a conversation that starts with this idea: What has been a tough part about this week for you?

Start your conversation by reading this prompt:

LISTENER: Hey, how'd it go today?

SPEAKER: Good, I guess. Well, mostly OK.

LISTENER: (continue the conversation...practicing active listening)

ASK THE GROUP:

How could you tell the LISTENER was actively listening?

ASK the VOLUNTEERS:

How did it feel to practice active listening?

Did it feel natural for you? Awkward? Difficult? Why?

SAY: Let's all try practicing active listening. Remember, it's an exercise in HUMILITY.

Put the other person first and really tune in. Don't worry about yourself, or if you're doing it right. Just try. Be generous with your time. Be present. Listen.

Everybody find a partner and use the same prompt that the volunteers did to start a conversation.

I'll give you enough time so that you can practice being the speaker and being the listener. In other words, do the exercise, then switch roles and do it again.

Go ahead and spread out now. I'll call you back in a few minutes, and we'll finish up devotions with prayer.

(Pay attention to how the exercise is going. When everybody seems done, call the group back together. Wrap it up after 10 minutes.)

PRAY: God, give us humble hearts so we can serve people the way you want us to. Help us think of others more often and ourselves less often. At times we need to be heard, and at times we need to listen. Help us recognize when our friends need us to show our love for them by humbly listening. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- You have only two more days to write Care Cards!
- In tonight's program, we heard from the summer staff crew that runs this camp. If you're interested in being a summer staffer for Group Mission Trips, attend tonight's informal Q&A session. (The time and place should have been announced at the program.) To apply for the summer of 2023, you must be at least one year out of high school. In other words, you'll need to have graduated this past spring.
- If any adult wants more information about serving at a Workcamp or Week of Hope as a volunteer, worship leader, director, or MC, stop by the camp office any time this week for more information.
- Stop by and check out the GO SERVE WALL. Feel free to grab one of the cards and spend a little time serving around camp. If you take a card, stop by the camp office to officially volunteer and to get more information.
- Share any announcements related to your group.



THURSDAY

YOUTH GROUP DEVO

CHECK IN: STORIES FROM TODAY

SAY: You all know the routine by now. Let's share some stories from our day. We want to hear about your joys...and support you in your struggles. Who wants to go first?

(Allow time for sharing, celebration, and support.)

FOCUS

SAY: Today's theme is **GO SERVE WITH GRATITUDE**. One thing we talked about is how our gratitude should be overflowing. We heard a story about a Workcamp resident named Granny, whose gratitude overflowed after a meaningful week with a crew serving at her home.

Granny's overflowing gratitude prompted her to give away something she treasured. Who would like to read tonight's Scripture from Mark 12? (Wait for a volunteer.)

VOLUNTEER READS:

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

ASK:

- 1. What do the poor widow and Granny have in common?**
- 2. Have you ever been so grateful that you felt like you needed to do something in return? Share stories.**
- 3. Where have you seen people expressing gratitude here at camp? What has made you feel grateful this week?**

SAY: Another thing we talked about in tonight's program is that gratitude is something you can actually practice. We talked about exercising our gratitude muscles.

Right now, we're going to do just that, practice being grateful. All you will need is this devotion book and a pen/pencil. Get those out now.

Turn to page 19, "Gratitude Journal." We will spend 10 minutes working on the journal. Just relax and enjoy going through the steps. Go ahead and spread out and silently work. I'll let you know when time is up. (Set a timer for 10 minutes.)

SAY: (after 10 minutes) **OK, everybody gather back around.**

This is probably more time than you normally devote to practicing gratitude. How did it go? (Allow time to share.)

Let's pray.

Good and loving God, we are deeply grateful for everything you have given to us. Help us notice all the blessings in our lives. When we remember that you are the source of everything, we are filled with overflowing gratitude. Make our lives a response to your goodness. Help us remember that we serve as a way to say, "Thank you, God." Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Because tomorrow is the last day at our work sites, remember to return any borrowed tools to the tool room or to the person who loaned them to you.
- Quartermasters need to return ladders to the tool room, or talk to your site coach about picking them up from your site.
- Remember to pick up your group's ladders from the tool room tomorrow night.
- Organizers must turn in your first-aid kit tomorrow when you return from working.
- Tonight is your last chance to stop by and check out the GO SERVE WALL. Remember, if you take a card, stop by the camp office to officially volunteer and to get more information. All GO SERVE projects need to be completed by Friday at 5 p.m.
- Share announcements about packing up tomorrow night. Get a plan in place, because tomorrow night things will be a little crazy!
- Don't forget to turn in your Home Repair Guide.
- Make sure you write Care Cards for your residents.

STEP 1: GRATITUDE JOURNAL

People I'm grateful for

Things I'm grateful for

Experiences I'm grateful for

Places I'm grateful for

I'm grateful that I am ...

I'm grateful that I know...

I'm grateful that today I could...

My gratefulness overflows for...

STEP 2: GRATITUDE JOURNAL

GO DEEPER

Go back to what you wrote in STEP 1. Review your lists. Did you forget anything?

The practice of gratitude has four main steps:

1. **NOTICE** what you're grateful for. (That's what you did in STEP 1.)
2. **THINK** about why you have received those things. (Pause to think.)
3. **FEEL** a deep sense of humility, knowing that God has provided everything simply because he loves you. (Sit back and feel gratitude for God's goodness.)
4. **DO** something to express appreciation for those gifts. (Think about what you could do to express appreciation. Make a mental promise to follow through with a simple plan.)



FRIDAY

YOUTH GROUP DEVO

Today we finished our projects (or came as close as we could to completion) and said goodbye to our crews and residents.

What's next? Many of us are still writing our Care Cards. We want to hang out with the new friends we met here at camp. It's a great idea to pack some things in the vehicles tonight, like our tools. We have A LOT to do!

Before we get wrapped up in the wrapping up, let's unpack what happened here this week.

FOCUS

This week's theme was **GO SERVE**. Each day, we looked at different tools and attitudes that are required to **SERVE** people and to serve God. And at tonight's program, we focused on the word "**GO**."

That's what comes next. We are **GOING** home tomorrow. How can we make sure that we're returning home ready to continue serving?

