



Dakotas United Methodist Camps

Dakotas Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Minnesota

Annual Conference

of the United Methodist Church

Camping & Retreats Ministries

Camp Ambassador Guide



WHAT IS A CAMP AMBASSADOR?

The role of a camp ambassador is to share camp and retreat opportunities with children, youth, adults and families in your local churches and communities and provide information about how to become involved in this life-changing ministry. More specifically, as a camp ambassador, you act as the spokesperson within your churches for the United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministry. You are the conduit for information to flow between camps and individual congregations. Ambassadors work closely with your pastor(s), Christian education staff, church families, and Dakotas-Minnesota Area United Methodist Camps (DK-MN Camps) staff to help make sure families are aware of camp opportunities throughout the year, but primarily in the spring, when registration for summer camps is busiest.

CAMP AMBASSADORS ARE ASKED TO:

- Work with your church leaders to plan a Camp Sunday celebration—a day for people to learn about United Methodist Camps during worship, Sunday school, and fellowship times.
- Help to pick out camp weeks for various age groups to attend.
- Work with church leaders to set a goal for camp participation and find ways to financially support campers.
- Promote DK-MN Camps through announcements, bulletins, social media, and newsletters.
- Discuss Dakotas-Minnesota Area United Methodist Camps in worship, in Sunday school, and with youth groups.
- Inform your congregation about **how, when, and where** to register for camp.
- Answer questions and encourage people to register for camp!

DAKOTAS-MINNESOTA AREA UNITED METHODIST CAMPS

Mission

Helping campers to experience Christ, Creation, and Community through camp and retreat ministries

Core Values

We do this as we:

- Provide sacred places apart
- Nurture Christian faith and discipleship
- Teach creation care and appreciation
- Partner with United Methodist churches and agencies
- Extend Christian hospitality and community
- Develop principled spiritual leaders
- Inspire and equip lives for love and justice

Outcomes

Disciples and leaders who hear and respond to God's call to:

- Share faith
- Love and accept everyone
- Serve others
- Trust God



WHY CAMP?

For generations, countless people's lives and hearts have been changed after time spent at one of your six Dakotas-Minnesota area campsites. Many share that it was during a time at camp when they first truly connected with God in a personal and meaningful way. Encounters such as these still positively impact the lives of today's campers and today's churches.

Time at camp provides children, youth, adults, and families with life-changing and faith-shaping opportunities to experience Christ, Creation, and Community in a truly unique way. Campers learn new activities; make new friends; spend time in nature; grow in skill, confidence, and leadership; and have fun doing it in a carefully supervised environment.

Each location provides an unforgettable camp experience through which camper's lives can be changed forever. DK-MN camps are open to everyone!



GET READY!

MAKE A PLAN FOR YOUR CHURCH

1. SET A DATE FOR CAMP SUNDAY

Work with your pastor(s) and education staff to find a date that works best for you. Get it on your church calendar and start promoting! Some churches make the whole service (scripture, children's message, message, hymns) about changed lives and opportunities at camp. That is ideal, but your church may choose instead to simply make announcements, pass out information, and extend invitations. Whatever the case, be sure to choose a Sunday when you anticipate a strong turnout.

If you would like, a camp representative may be available to visit your church to assist with your Camp Sunday celebration. Camp representatives may be able to provide the message/sermon, lead a time of children's worship, lead Sunday school activities, share camp opportunities during a fellowship hour, provide a display in a common area, bring handouts and giveaways, or simply be present to cheer you and your church leaders on! If you are interested in a camp representative visiting your church, please contact your closest campsite or the camping central office.

2. SET A GOAL FOR PARTICIPATION

Set a realistic and achievable goal. Take into consideration how many people went to camp last year, the number of new families in the church, and your congregation's financial capacity to support campers. To find out how many people from your church attended camp in past years, contact the central camping office.

3. PLAN THE BUDGET & ARRANGE FUNDRAISERS

Find out how much money is set aside or available to support campers from your church. Talk to your church leaders about whether your church can contribute a portion of the cost for each child who signs up for camp. Many churches contribute 50-100% of the total cost, while others contribute a set amount per camper. Consider helping your church arrange a fundraiser to support your campers. Camp Sunday may be a great day for it! Fundraisers could involve: a dinner prepared by youth, car washes, bake sales, and any other fun opportunities you can think of.

There are also conference camp scholarships (camperships) available; to learn more about them, please see our websites:

Dakotas: <https://www.dakotasumc.org/camping/forms/campership-form>

Minnesota: <https://www.campminnesota.org/camperships>

4. REQUEST MATERIALS FROM DK-MN CAMPS

A box of brochures and promotional posters will be sent to each church in January. For your Camp Sunday, plan to have enough brochures available for each child in your church community to receive one (plus have extras to keep on hand to pass out throughout the spring). Contact the central camping office (855) 622-1973 (toll-free) to request more brochures.

5. ENLIST HELPERS

Find a few “camp friends” within your church who might be willing to help with tasks, speak about their camping experiences, and answer questions.

6. START GETTING THE WORD OUT

Contact (via e-mail, social media, or postal mail) every family in your congregation to let them know the date for Camp Sunday, related fundraisers, and any other opportunities to learn about DK-MN Camps.

Create a display in a common area where families come and go. The display should include a poster and brochures.

Check the Camp Ambassador section of our websites for the following tools and information:

Short video clips:

1-minute promo: Play this during announcement times at worship or at other church gatherings.

3-minute promo: Play this as an extended announcement during Camp Sunday and show it to Sunday school groups.

Camp Sunday worship resources: Use these scriptures, prayers, and hymn suggestions when you discuss DK-MN Camps opportunities with your congregation.

A PDF version of this camp ambassador’s guide is also on our websites.

Find all this at <https://www.dakotasumc.org> and <https://www.campminnesota.org>

GET SET!

WHILE IT IS CRITICAL TO REMIND FAMILIES THROUGHOUT THE SPRING TO REGISTER FOR CAMP, CAMP SUNDAY IS WHEN MOST PEOPLE WILL HEAR (OFTEN FOR THE FIRST TIME) ABOUT CAMP AND RETREAT OPPORTUNITIES!

4-6 WEEKS BEFORE CAMP SUNDAY

Familiarize yourself with what is happening at DK-MN Camps this summer so you’re ready to share with children, youth, and families! For example, did you know that campers today get to water ski, paddle kayaks, sleep in tree houses, ride horses, climb mountains, learn archery, travel to water parks, explore the Boundary Waters, swing from zip lines, and climb ropes high in the air as part of their camping experience?

- Look through a copy of the camp brochure to see a list of all events offered this summer.
- Feel free to contact DK-MN Camps staff or staff at a specific campsite (contact numbers on back of this guide) to ask questions or learn more about camp opportunities.
- Choose to target 3-4 events you feel would be a good fit for your congregation; events that you know would be of interest, are held at a close campsite, or perhaps an event someone from your congregation is leading. Targeting a handful of events can allow for churches to arrange transportation more easily, ensures that kids will be going with at least a few friends, and makes the brochure a bit less overwhelming for new campers and families.

4-6 WEEKS BEFORE CAMP SUNDAY (CONT.)

Promote Camp Sunday in these ways:

- Make announcements about Camp Sunday during worship.
- Create an article for church newsletter that talks about Camp Sunday
- Put information about Camp Sunday in the church bulletin and/or on screens during worship.
- Share fun camp tidbits and photos through your church's social media platforms.

Here's the information to share in your Camp Sunday promotions:

- Camp Sunday date.
- Need for prayers for families to become involved.
- Need for financial support for campers from your church.
- The opportunity to wear comfortable "camp" clothes to worship on Camp Sunday: jeans or shorts, camp T-shirt or sweatshirts from a previous summer, hats, etc.

2-4 WEEKS BEFORE CAMP SUNDAY

Work with your pastor(s) and other worship leaders. Share with them how you would like to incorporate DK-MN Camps into worship on Camp Sunday through related scriptures, readings, children's message, prayers, hymns, and songs. (See the Camp Ambassador portion of our websites for Camp Sunday ideas and suggestions.)

Enlist youth to read scripture or lead worship in other ways on Camp Sunday. Recruit past campers to share their experiences with the congregation (highlights, what they learned, how they grew in their faith, and what they're looking forward to this summer).

Decorate the church in a camping/outdoor theme. A few ideas: set up a tent in the fellowship hall, create a mock fire with a ring of rocks by the main door into the sanctuary, place a crude wooden cross on the altar, or place camp-themed centerpieces in the fellowship hall. The possibilities are endless!

Plan a camp related snack or activity. S'more fixings, granola, trail mix, gummy worms, etc.

Consider holding a fundraiser of some type to raise money to help support campers from your church.

Continue promoting Camp Sunday through announcements, newsletter, social media, bulletin, or on screens. Remind people to wear camp clothes.

CAMP SUNDAY: THE BIG DAY

Worship and Sunday school: Follow the plans you have made for Camp Sunday, including incorporating it into worship, involving youth, showing a camp video, and making verbal announcements. See the Worship section later in this guide for outlines and suggestions about how to address each group.

ONE WEEK AFTER CAMP SUNDAY

Worship: Let people know that if they missed Camp Sunday last week, they can still get information and register for camp. Let them know how to do that and remind them about the financial assistance your church is providing.

Sunday school: Pass out catalogs and brochures to any children who weren't at church last week. Continue to use provided videos during worship, Sunday school, and with youth groups.

2-6 WEEKS AFTER CAMP SUNDAY...AND BEYOND

Continue to spread the word during announcement times, in church newsletters, on social media, at Sunday school, and to youth groups.

Call youth, children, and families in the church to encourage them to register for camp and to answer their questions.

Use the promo videos during worship and Sunday school and with youth groups.

Arrange rides to camp as needed. Find out when families from your church are attending camp, and try to arrange carpooling.

Follow up with all campers. Often, children's camp experiences provide their first exposure to Christ in nature. It is not uncommon, after camp, for new campers and their families to begin attending their local United Methodist Church. Make sure to follow up with all campers after camp—and create a time for them to share their experiences during worship. Invite them to join in your church's fall activities.

GO!

TALKING POINTS FOR AMBASSADORS

WORSHIP

Before Camp Sunday worship begins, make sure:

- You've had a chance to visit with the pastor(s) and/or church education staff.
- You know how much the church will help to pay for each camper to attend camp.
- You know when in the service you'll be speaking.
- You know how long you have to speak.
- You make it a fun day and presentation: Wear camp clothes, set up a tent and pretend campfire, serve camping food, etc.
- You have a copy of the Dakotas-Minnesota Area United Methodist Camps catalog to hold up during your presentation.

1. Introduce yourself.

"Good morning, my name is _____." Include your connection to DK-MN Camps—as an ambassador and camper, etc.

2. Tell congregation about Camp Sunday.

"Today is Camp Sunday, which means we'll be talking in worship and Sunday school about opportunities available through our United Methodist camps."

3. Share why camp is important to you.

"Camp is important to me because..."

"I've always enjoyed camp because..."

"I can't wait to get back to camp because..."

"One of the most important things I learned at camp was..."

4. Tell the group that all campers get to:

- Make new friends by meeting and having fun with lots of other kids from all over.
- Engage in activities like swimming, canoeing, archery, high ropes courses, horseback riding, and more.
- Learn that God is always with them and loves them no matter what.

Note that:

- Every family will receive a camp brochure (they'll be distributed to all children in Sunday school that same day).

- If they know of others who would like to attend camp (grandchildren, children's classmates or friends, neighbors, coworkers with children, etc.), they can pick up additional materials after worship.
- Camping opportunities are offered through The Dakotas and Minnesota Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church. The camping team is always listening, adding events, and responding to the needs of today's children, youth, adults, and families.
- Camp changes lives by helping people see and experience God in new ways!

5. Hold up a catalog. Tell the congregation that:

- There are six campsite locations in the Dakotas-Minnesota Area:
 - » In Minnesota: Northern Pines Camp in Park Rapids, Koronis Ministries in Paynesville, and Kowakan Adventures near Ely.
 - » In the Dakotas: Lake Poinsett Camp in Arlington, SD; Storm Mountain Center in Rapid City, SD; and Wesley Acres Camp in Dazey, ND.
- There are lots of different camping events throughout the summer, and each event offers fun activities and an opportunity to learn about God and grow in faith!
- There are camping events for all age levels, pre-kindergarten through high school. There are family camps, grandparent camps, and even events for older adults.
- There are specialty camps that focus on waterskiing, horseback riding, music, drama, art, rock climbing, hiking, basketball, wilderness survival, archery, lacrosse, and sailing!
- Five of our six Dakotas-Minnesota Area United Methodist Camps are accredited by the American Camp Association, meaning that they meet standards for operation, quality, health, and safety.

One in five camps nationwide achieves this distinction. Storm Mountain Center will be seeking accreditation in 2019.

- Make sure that you have a Dakotas-Minnesota Area United Methodist Camps catalog and brochure before you leave church today.
- Let people know you'll be available after the service to answer questions, pass out brochures, and help with registration.

6. Funding is available for camp.

(Be sure to have talked to your pastor(s) and other church leaders about this in advance.)
"The church understands that attending camp is important—so important that the church has funds available to help everyone go to camp. This year, each child can receive \$_____ to go towards camp fees. And if families need additional financial assistance for the remaining cost, talk to me or the pastor and we'll come up with a solution."

Camperships: Money is also available through the DK-MN Camps office for those who can't afford to go to camp. Interested families, or their churches, should contact the central camping office to learn more. **We believe that every child should have a Christian camping experience, and no camper will be turned away due to a personal lack of funds.**



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Before Sunday school begins, make sure:

- You've had a chance to visit with the pastor(s) and/or church education staff.
- You know how much the church will help to pay for each camper to attend camp.
- You have a plan for visits with Sunday school classes (i.e. travel to each classroom, address as one large group, etc.)
- You know how long you have to speak.
- You have enough copies of the brochure to hand one to EVERY child!

1. Introduce yourself.

"Good morning, my name is _____."

Include your relationship to the church, your connection to DK-MN Camps—as an ambassador and camper, etc.

2. Tell kids about Camp Sunday.

"Today is Camp Sunday, and that means we get to talk about camp! What is your favorite thing to do in the summer?" (Wait for kids to share things like swimming, boating, camping, staying up late, sleepovers with friends, etc.)

"Well, there is a place where you can do ALL of those things...at camp! Who has been to camp before?"

Ask kids who have been to camp to share with the group: *"What were your favorite things about camp? What did you learn at camp? What are you most looking forward to next summer at camp?"*

3. Share why camp is important to you.

"Camp is important to me because..."

"What I enjoy most about camp is..."

"I can't wait to get back to camp because..."

"One of the things I learned at camp was..."

Share some specific things campers get to experience: where they sleep, activities available, the great food, the camp counselors, etc.

Tell the group that campers get to:

- Make new friends by meeting and having fun with lots of other kids from all over.
- Engage in activities like swimming, canoeing, archery, high ropes courses, horseback riding, and more.
- Make s'mores over a campfire and sing camp songs.
- Learn that God is always with you and loves you no matter what.

4. Pass out catalogs and brochures.

Tell the group that:

- There are six campsite locations for Dakotas-Minnesota Area:
 - » In Minnesota: Northern Pines Camp in Park Rapids, Koronis Ministries in Paynesville, and Kowakan Adventures near Ely.
 - » In the Dakotas: Lake Poinsett Camp in Arlington, SD; Storm Mountain Center in Rapid City, SD; and Wesley Acres Camp in Dazey, ND.
- There are lots of different camping events throughout the summer; each event offers fun activities and an opportunity to learn about God and grow in faith!
- There are camping events for all age levels, pre-kindergarten through high school. There are family camps, grandparent camps, and even events for older adults.
- There are specialty camps that focus on waterskiing, horseback riding, music, drama, art, rock climbing, hiking, basketball, wilderness survival, archery, lacrosse, and sailing!
- Invite a friend or classmate to come to camp with you.

5. Highlight some camps available next summer.

- Read through a selection of camp events for the age of the Sunday school group you're with; share what makes those events unique.
- Let them know which 2-3 camps the church suggests they attend.
- Make sure children know that ALL events include swimming, crafts, great food, s'mores, Bible study, campfires, and music.

6. Funding is available for camp. (Be sure to have talked to your pastor(s) and other church leaders about this in advance.) Let the kids know that their church understands that attending camp is important—so important that the church has funds available to help everyone go to camp. *"This year, each child can receive \$___ to go towards camp fees. If the amount left is still too much for your family to pay, let your Sunday School teacher, pastor, or someone else at church know. We'll make sure ALL kids can go to camp."*

Camperships: Money is also available through the DK-MN Camps office for those who need assistance. Interested families, or their churches, should contact the central camping office to learn more.

7. Answer questions that kids have. If pre-planned, pass out your camp related snack, such as S'mores fixings, granola, trail mix, gummy worms, etc.

8. Remind children to take their camping information home to show their parents. Encourage them to go to through the catalog with their families.

"See you this summer at camp!"

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer: If you have the desire to help through service and missions, DK-MN Camps needs you! There are a variety of volunteer opportunities available for all skill levels and group sizes, and every pair of hands counts. This is a great opportunity for youth groups, men's or women's groups, and families! Overnight accommodations are available, and lunch, materials, and supervision of projects is provided. Call your closest camp site or the the central camping office to learn more and reserve space.

Church retreat or meeting: Bring the whole congregation, or a specific group or committee, to camp for a tour, fun activities, and great food. Stay for one day or several.

Team-building retreat: DK-MN Camps are the perfect place for a one-day or weekend retreat to help build relationships and team spirit within any group. Consider bringing a confirmation class, a youth group, church staff, couple's retreats, UMW groups, and more!



"I have come to this camp for two summers now and have learned so much about basketball and relationships, and I truly love coming to camp. I'm even thinking of helping at camp when I get older."

**-Wesley Acres Junior High
Basketball Camper**

"It was our son's first overnight camp, and I was a bit nervous. But the staff was great and he had such an amazing time that he cried when we had to leave! Awesome job, Camp Koronis staff!"

-Koronis Mini Horse Camper Parent

"I didn't realize before I went to camp that God was capable of so many amazing things. Now I see that he is everywhere and lives in me."

-Koronis Pathways Camper



"My son absolutely loved camp and the first thing he said when he got home was that he is going back next year! I loved Methodist camps when I was a kid and I am so glad that my son does too!"

**-Lake Poinsett Summer's
Last Blast Camper Parent**



"I learned that God is bigger than everything and nothing is impossible for God."

**-Wesley Acres
SonSeekers Camper**



"God's creation was incredible during my week at camp. Northern Pines is taking action to be good stewards of the creation in and around camp."

**-Northern Pines Junior High
Christian Youth Camper**



"I had an incredible time at camp with my grandchildren. Everything was top notch! I felt like I was at a resort! It offered time to strengthen my relationship with the kids, and grow in our faith. It was a blast and I will treasure the memories!"

**-Lake Poinsett Grandparents
& Me Camper**

"One special thing I will remember is climbing Storm Mountain to watch the sunrise"

**-Storm Mountain Rock
That Doesn't Roll Camper**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dakotas-Minnesota Area United Methodist
Camps - Central Camping Office
122 W. Franklin Ave., Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55404
(855) 622-1973 (toll-free)

Dakotas
E-mail: info@dakcamps.org
Website: www.dakcamps.org

Minnesota
E-mail: camps@campminnesota.org
Website: www.campminnesota.org



@CampMinnesota
@DakotasUMCamps

CAMP LOCATION INFORMATION

Lake Poinsett Camp
40 South Lake Dr.
Arlington, SD 57212
(605) 983-5547
lpc@dakcamps.org

Storm Mountain Center
23740 Storm Mountain Rd.
Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 343-4391
smc@dakcamps.org

Wesley Acres Camp
1821 115th Ave. SE
Dazey, ND 58429
(701) 733-2413
wac@dakcamps.org

Northern Pines Camp
20033 Co. Rd. 1
Park Rapids, MN 56470
(218) 732-4713
northernpinescamp@campminnesota.org

Koronis Ministries
15752 Lake Ave.
Paynesville, MN 56362
(320) 243-4544
koronisministries@campminnesota.org

Kowakan Adventures
2402 Old County Road 18
Ely, MN 55731
(240) 394-3956
kowakan@campminnesota.org



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