

CHRIS & CARRIE KALLAL'S

STEALTHS

IDEAS FOR
STAFF
TRAINING GREATNESS



THE KALLAL'S



Chris Kallal is the Executive Director at Southeastern Baptist Youth Camp in Greensburg, Indiana. Chris, an Illinois native, has been a camping professional since 2001. He started off at Camp Manitoumi, in Illinois, serving as their program director for 10 years while also teaching 6th grade at Washburn Middle School. Then he spent 3 years learning to be a boy scout as the Camp Director of Ingersoll Scout Reservation. The next 10 years, Chris served as the Executive Director of Camp Good News in Illinois.

Carrie has been working at Camps longer than Chris! Starting as a CIT at Camp Manitoumi in 2000, then moving onto Girl's Leader, Dining Room Hostess, Counselor, Craft Person, Camp Store Director, Canteen Manager, Bookkeeper, Food Service Director, Assistant Director, and now Guest Services Director at SBYCamp! In her free time, she loves to craft, test out new recipes, and talk camp!

When they find time, Chris and Carrie love to search online for the newest, unique ideas to implement into their Camp as well as visiting multiple camps over the years to "steal" ideas from them!

The Kallals love camp so much that they spend a lot of their free time teaching others about camp! They have taught camping classes at different conferences around the world and written a ton of books about the various aspects of camp life. As well, Chris co-hosts a podcast, Scamp Life - The Programming Side, where he talks all things Camp Programming.

They have a total of 4 children, Rowan, Emmalina, Autumn, and Aurora, as well as a couple dogs, cat, some hissing cockroaches, bearded dragon, leopard gecko, frog, turtle, and a pet skunk, named Stinkerbell!

Email: christopherkallal@yahoo.com
Download Packet: StealThisStuff.com

Table of Contents

First Day Feels

Brain Breaks.....	2
Walk the Map.....	3
Expert Teachers.....	4
Your Favorite Game.....	5
Table Coloring.....	6
Challenge List.....	7
History Trail.....	8
Treasure Chest.....	12
Legacy Tours.....	13
Camp Videos.....	14
Summer Autopsy.....	15

From Strangers to Squad

Staff Camp Out.....	18
Conflict Communication.....	19
Pico Park.....	20
Encouragement Boxes.....	21
Legacy Project.....	22
Be the Missing Link.....	23
Cabin Contract.....	24
Lost Together.....	25
Escape Room.....	26
Just a Puzzle.....	27
Blindfold Building.....	28
Ultimate Flying Octopus.....	29
Naming Ceremony.....	30
Meal Time Placemats.....	32
Speed Dating.....	33
Dessertapalooza.....	34
Dinner with the Director.....	35

The Stuff You Actually Have to Know

Scary Stories.....	38
Campers for a Day.....	39
Carnival Questions.....	40
The Great Setup Race.....	41
Emergency Envelope.....	42
Dollar Store Duel.....	43
Snowball Fight.....	44
Training Conference.....	45
Boring Badges.....	46
Decision Speed Drills.....	47
Picture Prompts.....	48
Competency Passport.....	49

Lead Like You Mean it

Temperament Bingo.....	52
Tomorrow You Teach it.....	53
Remembered Counselor.....	54
Real World Problems.....	55
Movie Night.....	56
Camp on Trial.....	57
Missing Puppet.....	58
Shared Solutions.....	59

Why We Do What We Do

Good Qualities Reminder.....	62
Ideal Staffer.....	63
Quiet Hour.....	64
Campfire Confessions.....	65
What I Wish I Knew.....	66
Parent Panel.....	67
Campfire Ashes.....	68
Photo Booth.....	69

Photos.....	71
-------------	----

FIRST DAY FEELS

CAMPFESSION

I WELCOMED A NEW STAFFER AND
SAID WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE
WHILE IMMEDIATELY FORGETTING
THEIR NAME

Brain Breaks

What

A Short Break to reset your Brain

Why

- Brain Breaks have been proven to help people actually learn more and retain better because they are giving their brain a quick break to reset.

How

- Get my Book: Steal This Ideas of Time Fillers and Brain Breakiness or find another Time Filler book.
- Print a copy for each staffer
- During Training Week, between each session, (or halfway between serious sessions) stop and lead one of the Brain breaks.
- Be sure to point out where that is in the book so Staffers can find it again and do with their own campers

Walk the Map

Turn "where am I?" into "I've got this."

What

A purposeful walk through camp focused on confidence, not trivia.

Why

- Reduces stress immediately
- Helps staff feel capable quickly
- Connects spaces to responsibility

How

- Walk only key locations.
- Explain why each place matters
- Share one staff expectation per space.

Pro Tip

Save deep history for later.

Expert Teachers

What

Bringing in as many "experts in the field" as possible

Why

- Brings new speakers to keep boredom down
- Provides a deeper level of training than what you could do on your own.

How

- Call various Experts and ask them to come lead specific classes:
- Local Chief of the Fire Department to go over first-aid and CPR training.
- School Counselor to model ways to start conversations with campers
- Social Worker to teach awareness in terms of what we are required to report when campers share.
- Local Forester to introduce staff to the natural environment.
- A Parent to share about the anxiety parents feel when leaving their child at camp for the first time

Your Favorite Game

What

Staff take turns leading games during training.

Why

- Builds confidence
- Expands activity toolbox
- Encourages leadership

How

- Have Staff come to the Training prepared to lead a game that they love
- In between training sessions, especially serious ones, call on a staffer and have them run their game
- By the end of training, all the staff will have learned several new games!l

Table Coloring

What

Providing a Doodle space

Why

- Some people need to doodle to keep ADHD under control
- Helps with boredom

How

- Buy rolls of table-size white paper and put on tables as a type of tablecloth
- Then spread out markers or colored pencils
- While sitting in classes, the staff now have a fun doodle pad.
- After training, this can be saved and hung up in a staff-only space!

Pro Tip

I had to chat with one group who were trying to make it "art" more than a doodle. They put their complete focus on the drawings instead of what they were supposed to be learning.

Challenge List

What

A fun way for new staff to get to know the Camp and how it's ran

Why

- Helps to learn the Camp Procedures in a fun way

How

- Create a Challenge List of things, specific to your camp, that Staff must complete during Staff Training
- To complete these tasks, they must do 1 of 2 things:
 - Learn from a previous staffer where/how/why
 - Teach a new staffer where/how/why
- These things are stuff that they will need to know throughout the summer, but not important enough to have an entire class session on them

Examples:

- Find the Laundry Room & do a load of laundry
- Put your dishes away correctly
- Hike out to Prayer Point
- Participate in Flagpole Time
- Get a lifejacket and go on a boat ride

History Trail

What

A Scavenger Hunt to learn about the History of Camp.

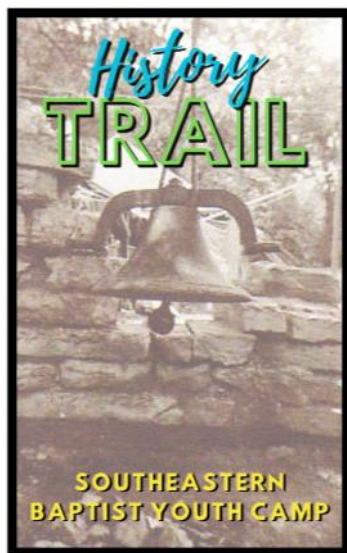
Why

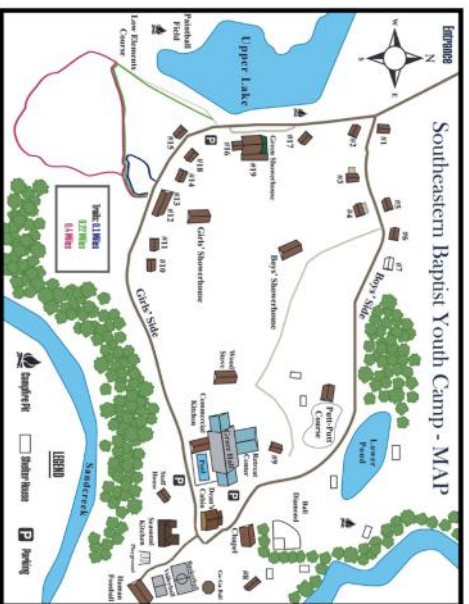
- A Fun way to learn about Camp

How

- Players will run around camp answering questions in the booklet to try and reveal the hidden message.
- Be sure to include important parts of your camp as well as historical parts
- Have a prize for the first team to complete it

See My Camp on the next several pages





This History Trail will take you on a hour-long walking tour around camp to see all the sites as well as learn some of the awesome history of this place that God has provided!

Instructions:

1. From left to right, follow the directions on the next pages in order.
2. Answer the "Clue" questions. (The answers are words or numbers that you will discover along the way).
3. Write that answer in the correct grid on the back page.
4. Some of the boxes are shaded in color. Cross out the corresponding letter or number in the "Combination Box".
5. After you have finished, you will have 4 numbers/letters that have not been crossed off. That will be your "Secret Code".
6. Don't give away the secret code or clue answers, but DO tell everyone about how awesome SBYCamp is!!!

YOUR MISSION
Work out the deactivation code. This trail starts and ends at the Camp Office.

Make your way to the outside front of Grace Hall

Plans for Grace Hall started to come together in the 1980s. Since this was a stone quarry, there was a lot of limestone that had to be removed using dynamite!
What is the date Grace Hall was completed?

Go to the front of the Retreat Center.
The first year of camping was in tents! There was a huge storm that knocked down all the tents (camping, dining, etc). The campers were sent to Westport to be housed

and cleaned up for the night. Now we have this awesome retreat center for groups to use!

Look through the doors to see if you can find out the date the Retreat Center was finished.

Go to Cabin #9 This building is being used for Program Equipment on the left and extra mattresses on the right.
What is the last name of the person this cabin is in memory of?

Head over to the Mini Golf course. The course was paid for by an anonymous donor. The last hole is the craziest because you have to go up through a hole!
What color is Hole #11?

Across the road is the Pond (Chris is trying to get everyone to call it Lake Kalia). You can still see the hills the old slip-n-slides were on when campers used to swim in this pond. The old diving board and dock have

been torn down, but you can see where they once stood on the opposite side.
How many crosses are on the edge of the pond?

Take the road up the hill and stop at the white cabin.

Cabin #7 is what all of the cabins used to look like before the remodel. Also, behind this cabin across the ravine was one of the original log cabins. (There's still pieces of it in the woods!) It was quite a hike to get

to this cabin, so the plan was to build a swinging bridge across the ravine to get to it, but the cabin burnt down in the 1970s before that could happen!
How many windows does Cabin #7 have?

Continue up the road and stop at the fork where all the location arrows are

SBV Camp was purchased in 1946. At that time it was only 29 acres and we paid \$2,000.

Which brotherhood association donated this sign?

Head over to the Lake. In 1966, 20 more acres were donated to the camp that included this lake. (currently, we have 65 acres).

What type of fishing is allowed at this lake?

PHOTOFILE



The lake is now named after an animal.

Looking at the overhead picture of the lake, can you tell what animal that is?

Across the road from the lake is the future Lakeside Lodge. The middle section will serve as a lobby/meeting area overlooking the lake!

What color is the shower house attached to it?

Behind the staff cabin is the Old Dining Hall. It was the first building built on property and built from the same building the chapel came from! It hasn't been used as a dining hall for several years. Currently, this

building houses our Escape Room, Ballroom, Craft Room, and Outdoor Education Classroom!

The sign on the front says this:
Step Down

Around the side of the Old Dining Hall is the swing set.

How many swings are there on it?

Down past the swing set is the playground. This area is a favorite spot during Family Camps! You can either take the stairs or the slide down!

How many monkey bars are there?

Follow the sand path on the backside. The Camp property was originally a stone quarry and you can see the limestone rock walls on the other side of the creek

Take the stairs back up out of the playground. The blue building to the right is the Hooman Football Court. This building started as 2 bathhouses that they put a roof over to use as the original chapel at camp.

Continue following the road down towards the Wrong Way signs.

Keep following the road. Next to where Cabin #15 is was the very 1st cabin on camp property!

Follow the road until you come to a light pole and road on the left. Walk up until you come to one of the newer camp activities.

Which Baptist Church sponsors Cabin #15?

What is this range called?

Inside, you can see the hooman football on one side. Campers strap in so they can only move so far to play.

You will see signs on both ends, the one closest to the entrance says what?

Next to the basketball court is our Gaga Ball pit. The plans were copied from a pit at a local park. Normally Gaga has 8 sides, but ours is definitely much bigger. How many sides does our gaga ball have?

Next is Cabin #8. The day before Teen Camp in 2021, there was a major flood that filled Hooman Football, the Old Dining Hall, The Staff House and even moved Cabin #8 about 12 feet away. That's the highest flood

Go back to the main road and continue down until you come to what looks like an old west town on the left.

Continue following the road past the kitchen, past the pool, and take the road to the right that will lead you down to a small cabin.

This building is our current staff house but at one time it was the nurses station.

waters have come up in the history of Camp. We had many volunteers come help clean everything and only had to delay Teen Camp by 1 day!

Head to the front of the Chapel. This building was the old Napoleon Baptist Church & donated in 1950. We used the materials to build this chapel and the Old Dining Hall. Before it was remodeled in 1994, every

few years the chapel needed fresh paint. It changed between brown & white. Campers never knew what color it would be until they arrived!

What is the name of this range?

What famous cartoon character is painted on the front?

What type of "Rock" sponsors Cabin #8?

What is the last name of the person the chapel is named after?

Treasure Chest

What

A Box of "prizes" that staff win during Training Week

Why

- Makes learning more fun
- Rewards correct answers

How

- Go get a big box (Treasure Chest if you can)
- Fill it full of prizes (candy, stickers, camp swag, gag gifts, mystery boxes, etc. I even had a fridge of crazy flavored soda like Pickle Soda, Ranch Soda, Butter Soda)
- Award Prizes for as many things as you can (First one in their seat, correct answers, Saw you being kind, loudest singer, etc - Mix it up)

Legacy Tours

What

A tour of Camp given by past Staff

Why

- Helps Newbies know why camp is so special

How

- Before Staff arrive, ask all returning staff to think of a place on camp that is special for them, either because of the place itself or because of a memory that happened there
- Collect all those and choose ones that are particularly poignant
- On the tour, Call out those staff to share why they love this place so much

Camp Videos

What

Silly Videos to watch between sessions

Why

- Brain Break

How

- Plan to have a short brain break between sessions where you show a funny video or read a funny letter from Camp
- Funny Letters can be found in these books on Amazon: PS I Hate It here and PS I Still Hate It Here
- Playlist of Funny Videos:
<https://tinyurl.com/5zc92tfh>

Summer Autopsy

What

Staff imagine the summer went badly and make a list why

Why

- Prevents problems instead of reacting to them

How

- Start with the prompt "It's August and Summer failed. What happened?"
- Write down answers on large post-its under the categories: Communication, Burnout, Safety, Culture
- Now turn each into a preventive behavior. Discuss how you can make sure that doesn't happen.

CAMPFESSION

I WAS SHOWING SOMEONE HOW
TO GET TO THEIR CABIN WHEN I
REALIZED HALFWAY THERE I
ACTUALLY DIDN'T KNOW

CAMPFESSION

I GAVE A NEW STAFF DIRECTIONS
USING LANDMARKS AT CAMP
THAT NO LONGER EXISTED.
"TURN RIGHT AT THE OLD
SNACK SHACK AND THEN GO
LEFT WHERE THE MUD PIT WAS"

FROM STRANGERS TO SQUAD

CAMPFESSION

I CATEGORIZED FELLOW STAFF
INTO SAFE, INTIMIDATING,
AND GOING TO BE MY BEST
FRIEND FOREVER

Staff Camp Out

What

Staff leave the comfort of camp and work together to set up, cook, and sleep outdoors.

Why

- Requires cooperation
- Builds shared ownership
- Strengthens relationships

How

- This needs to be done early because it will build quick camaraderie
- Travel together to a campsite.
- Have them do all the work. Assign setup and cooking roles.
- Share a campfire and debrief.
- As a leader, you get to watch and see who are your leaders and who are the followers

Pro Tip

The staff will bond really quick during this. It's even better if it rains or something happens that they have to figure out Plan B

Conflict Communication

What

This fun game teaches communication skills, using description words, accurate instructions, and how what one person says can be interpreted differently by another.

Why

- Help staff do a better job at communicating.

How

- Get 1 file folder for every player
- Get kits filled with 20 objects for every player. The kit includes:
 - Sandwich size Ziploc bag to be the kit container, Paper clip, rubber band, eraser, pipe cleaner, googly eye, a few inches of string, a small circle of paper, a pencil, a zip tie, a bread twist, and a safety pin
- Give everyone a kit and a file folder
- Have them pair off and then sit back to back
- Choose 1 player from each team to go first. That player then arranges their entire 20 items on the file folder in front of them
- Once finished, their partner must arrange their items in the same way, but only through verbal communication from the first person.
- After player 2 is done, they compare and see how off they are.

Pico Park

What

Hilarious Computer Game

Why

- Build Teambuilding

How

- Go to Steampowered.com
- Create an account and then search and buy/download Pico Park
 - There are several options and they are all very similar. The Classic Edition can get up to 10 players where the others max out at 8. But only Pico Park 2 works on a Mac. Choose the best for you!
- Have the staff get their phones on the same wifi as whatever computer is running the game
- They will need to download the app:
TecoGamePad This will give them a controller on their phone. (It's very important they do NOT let their phone go into standby mode while playing or it will disconnect their controller from the game)
- Start on the easiest level and work your way up. The games are easy to figure out, but difficult to complete as a team!

Optional:

- picopark.com had downloadable papercrafts of the avatars. Staff will TOTALLY want these to keep!

Encouragement Boxes

What

Encouragement notes that the staff write for each other

Why

- A great way to encourage each other and build relationships

How

- Get a Mail Organizer Compartment that has a spot for every staffer
- Label each space with each staffers name
- Put a big sign on it called "Encouragement Box"
- Teach the staff to write encouraging notes/thank yous to each other and anonymously put in each others mail

Legacy Project

What

Staff will build or paint something that stays at camp.

Why

- Creates Buy-in with the camp
- Makes fun new things that the staff are proud to show off

How

- Plan this ahead of time
- This will be something that they do as a group and will then talk about for years to come!
- Some ideas:
 - Paint a mural
 - Make a Picnic Table
 - Create a Prayer Trail
 - Make Signposts

Be the Missing Link

What

A standing circle game where staff link together based on shared traits, interests, or experiences.

Why

- Builds immediate connection
- Highlights shared experiences
- Low-risk, high-energy participation

How

- Form a large circle.
- One person shares a like or trait.
- Anyone who relates links arms.
- The first person linked shares next.
- Continue until the group is connected.

Cabin Contract

What

Staff create a short contract for how they'll function as a team

Why

- Ownership beats compliance
- This sets the expectations and creates shared language before problems happen

How

- Groups of 4-5 staff working together
- Prompt them with 3 questions:
 - When stress hits, how do we want to treat each other?
 - What kills team morale fast?
 - What do we promise to do when conflict shows up?
- Groups write 5-7 short statements
- Gather back together as a group to share and then write down the best of the best on a big piece of paper
- All staff sign it
- Post in staff Space all summer

Lost Together

What It Is

A group hike where getting a little lost is part of the experience.

Why

- Builds reliance on each other
- Encourages problem-solving
- Creates shared memory

How

- Choose a safe trail system.
- Allow the group to navigate.
- Debrief choices and teamwork.

Escape Room

What

A fun event to do with small groups of staff

Why

- Amazing Teambuilding
- Problem Solving
- Learning Staff temperaments

How

- Take your staff to an escape room (to save on costs, work out with the owner an opportunity for him to bring his staff to you for high ropes or another activity)
- Let them work together to escape while you watch and learn how they are going to work this summer

Just a Puzzle

What

Literally just a puzzle left out during downtime that staff complete together.

Why

- Encourages casual teamwork
- Creates shared ownership
- Builds connection organically

How

- Set up a communal puzzle.
- Invite participation during breaks.
- Celebrate completion together.

Blindfold Building

What

One staff member is blindfolded and relies on teammates to complete a task.

Why

- Highlights communication styles
- Builds trust quickly
- Encourages patience

How

- Blindfold one participant.
- Assign a simple building task with legos
- Teammates give verbal instructions only.
- Debrief the experience.

Ultimate Flying Octopus

What

Playing Ultimate Frisbee with a real (dead) Octopus

Why

- Fun
- The gross part of it encourages unity

How

- Great for first day
- Play normal Ultimate Frisbee
- Then switch out the Frisbee for a dead octopus
- As you do this year after year, you will see returning staff encourage newbies that it's not that bad

Naming Ceremony

What

Choosing fun Nicknames for the summer

Why

- Makes Camp a bit more magical
- Helps Counselors stay somewhat anonymous on social media

How

- The Staff will choose nicknames following the rules below
- At the end of Training week, Hold a Ceremony where they present your name. Go big on this! Have Tribal music, torches, robes, etc. Think Finding Nemo when they name him Sharkbait!
- Rules:
 - The namee must like their name (believe me, sometimes that's a hard first step!).
 - The Director gets final say.
 - Potential camp names should be tested with a few staff members just to make sure they sound appropriate to everyone.
 - The camp name mustn't be a proper name (Bill or Jennie).

- The name must be original to the camp - no repeats
- The name must pass the Dirt Test. (Check and see if there is a way that kids could make it dirty)
- The name could make reference to your skills but not your physical appearance.
- Camp names should bolster people's self esteem and make them feel part of the Camp.
- The name must not scare parents away - no Killer, no Psycho, no LovesToHug.
- Camp names are an honor and are earned by your commitment to the Camp.

Name Ideas:

<http://www.summercamppro.com/over-350-camp-names/>

Meal Time Placemats

What

Creating Placemats for each staffer and moving them around at meals

Why

- Get to know people other than their friends
- Spark good conversations at meals

How

- Early on, have Staff create nametags. Make sure their name is big and easy to read, but otherwise they can decorate it however they want
- For the first meal, they can sit wherever, but make sure they leave their nametag at the end of the meal
- After staff have left the dining hall, move the nametags around so they can get to know each other.
- Do this for every meal except breakfasts. (people are crabby in the morning so let them sit by their friends then)

Speed Dating

What

Speed Dating, but a get to know each other instead of date each other

Why

- Fun Way to get to know other staff
- Drops the awkwardness of staff trying to do this on their own

How

- Set up tables so that 2 people can sit across from each other (Go big with this by putting on tablecloths, candles, sparkling grape juice, etc)
- Give staff some suggested get-to-know-you questions
- Set a timer for about 2-3 minutes
- When timer goes off, only 1 side moves and everyone else stays. Now they have a new staffer to get to know
- Start again

Dessertapalooza

What

Celebration with camp staff and board

Why

- Chance for Staff to meet the board
- Chance for Board to celebrate the staff

How

- At the end of one of the last days (not the very last day though), have a Dessertapalooza
- Invite all the board members to come and meet the staff, encourage them, pray for them, etc
- Have them each stand up and tell who they are, how long they've been serving on the board, their hope and desire for the summer, etc
- Then have a bunch of dessert for everyone to enjoy and mingle about

Dinner with the Director

What

Campfire Meal at the Director's House

Why

- Bonding and Relaxing

How

- One night, everyone goes to the Director's House for a meal over the campfire (Foil Packets are great for this)
- It's a time to hang out and relax and get to know the Director as well
- End the night with everyone sharing Roses, Buds, and Thorns.
 - Roses: Something Good that happened
 - Buds: Something they're looking forward to
 - Thorns: Something not going well

CAMPFESSION

I'VE LEARNED MORE ABOUT MY
CO-COUNSELOR THAN FRIENDS
I'VE HAD FOR YEARS

CAMPFESSION

I LEARNED ON DAY 1
THAT MY CO-
COUNSELOR AND I HAVE
VERY DIFFERENT
DEFINITIONS OF THE
WORD CLEAN

THE STUFF YOU
ACTUALLY HAVE TO KNOW

CAMPFESSION
APPARENTLY RADIOS ARE
USELESS IF YOU DON'T
ACTUALLY PLUG IN THE
CHARGER

Scary Stories

What

Telling stories of scary camp scenarios.

Why

- Builds quick thinking
- Reduces fear
- Improves response time

How

- Collect stories all throughout the summer so it can then be used at staff trainings the next several years
- Document any funny incidents or any incidents that are learning experiences
- You can also get several scenarios from the book: *What Do I Do Now?* By Jerome Beker
- Towards the end of staff training go out and sit by the fire to tell "Scary Stories"
- These stories however are the different scenarios that you've collected. Actually tell them like a scary story (hold the flashlight to your face and over dramatize it)
- Then have the staff share how they would deal with each of these situations

Campers for a Day

What

A great way to show new staff what camp is like.

Why

- Allows them to see Camp from the campers POV and be a bit more patient with them
- Help newbies learn from their peers
- Helps Admin know which returning staff are better leaders

How

- Tell all your new staff they are now campers
- Your returning staff are their leaders
- Use about half of an actual day to do a quick run through of a normal camp day (rise and shine, getting ready, meals, games, etc)
- Debrief after to discuss issues that came up and how to fix them.

Carnival Questions

What

Just a fun way to review what has been learned during Staff Training

Why

- Make Review more exciting

How

- Get a kiddie pool filled with water
- Drop in those plastic carnival ducks that have numbers on the bottom
- Have those numbers correspond to a question on an index card, taped backwards against a wall in the room (numbers showing out). These questions are about all the topics you've covered. (Behavior management, Health and Safety, etc)
- Staff then go in groups, pick a duck and go answer the question together and discuss.

Pro Tip

- You may want to keep an eye on groups to prevent one person from doing all the work.
- A great fix is to let that staff member keep the duck for the question they answered. They will quickly desire to get more ducks!

The Great Setup Race

What

A Game to test how quickly they can setup activity Stations

Why

- Fun way to test knowledge
- Shows Admin how much the staffers actually know

How

- Divide into teams
- Have teams race to setup various activity stations (Archery, Slingshots, Slip n slide, etc)
- When 1 team finishes, they both must stop.
- Grade according to who got the most done
CORRECTLY

Emergency Envelope

What

Sealed envelopes contain emergency scenarios that staff must respond to on the spot.

Why

- Builds readiness
- Encourages calm responses
- Reinforces procedures

How

- Prepare scenario envelopes.
- Open one unexpectedly.
- Have staff explain how to handle this situation as if it were real (quickness and calmness is expected)
- Clarify correct response.

Dollar Store Duel

What

Staff get to create something for Camp on a budget

Why

- Show that you don't have to spend a lot to get cool camp stuff
- Chance to be creative

How

- Staff are divided into teams of 4-5 and given \$5.
- They must go to dollar stores (or cheap stuff at Walmart) and use only that money to create something for Camp.
- These can be teambuilding activities, games, organizational stuff, etc
- The big rule is that they can't just buy a toy and say they are done. They must combine all their money and create an entire thing.

Snowball Fight

What

Staff write questions on paper, crumple it, and throw it around the room

Why

- Answer embarrassing questions

How

- Give everyone a piece of paper (or more if needed)
- They then have to write a question they have, but are maybe too embarrassed to ask.
- They crumple it and then have an actual snowball fight (so the papers get thoroughly mixed)
- Collect all the papers and then read aloud and answer

Training Conference

What

Allow staff to choose their sessions conference style

Why

- Mix it up and help staff feel in control

How

- Each day offer a Choose Your Own Session time where staff can pick a workshop to go to and learn about a topic they are interested in or want more info on
- These are topics that aren't required like first aid or behavior management, but more fluff topics
 - Rainy day Games
 - Skits
 - How to Build a Campfire
 - Nature Hike
 - Cabin Crafts
 - Kubb
 - Juggling

Boring Badges

What

Collectible stickers for passing micro tests on policies and other boring training topics

Why

- Gamification improves learning

How

- Create stickers that can be collectible for some of the boring classes
- Once staff pass quizzes or micro-tests, they receive a sticker
- You could even sell a water bottle with all the sticker spots on it so staff can show off their collection
- Ideas:
 - Radio Rockstar
 - Safety Superstar
 - Homesick Hero
 - Transition Wizard
 - Rainy Day Rockstar
 - Dress Code Champ

Decision Speed Drills

What

Rapid Fire Decisions with a Countdown Clock

Why

- Real camp decisions happen fast, not in discussion circles

How

- Come up with a list of scenarios
- Have a Countdown timer with 10 seconds to choose a response
- Focus on Clarity and Escalation, not perfection.
- Discuss after

Picture Prompts

What

Using pictures to review what you've learned

Why

- Adds visual connection to help with memory

How

- Throughout the year collect various random pictures from magazines and laminate them
- Lay pictures out on table and ask staff to choose a picture that identifies with a class topic from the day
- Have them share why they chose that picture and to QUICKLY review what we learned about that topic
- Depending on time this could be done by everyone, or just draw names each day so that only a few go each day until everyone has gone

Competency Passport

What

A passport book with required skill checkoffs.

Why

- Staff training often assumes that sitting through training equal readiness. This would make staff prove it

How

- Create a small booklet or checklist with required skills and space for initials or stamp
- List the essentials. Focus on must know skills like:
 - Radio Communication
 - Headcounts and Supervision positioning
 - Incident Reporting
- Practice before sign-off. Staff must demonstrate each skill during training
- Certain responsibilities are unlocked as skills are signed off. (Can't run the zipline until you get the zipline Stamp)

CAMPFESSION

I THOUGHT HEADCOUNTS WERE
SIMPLE UNTIL I HAD MOVING
CAMPERS

CAMPFESSION

I CONFIDENTLY SKIPPED A
SECTION OF TRAINING
BECAUSE I DIDN'T THINK
IT WOULD COME UP. IT
CAME UP

LEAD LIKE
YOU MEAN IT

CAMPFESSION
I WANTED TO MATCH MY
CAMPERS ENERGY AND
EXCITEMENT. APPARENTLY, I'M
WAY TOO OLD FOR THAT!

Temperament Bingo

What

Game to learn the different Temperament Styles

Why

- Makes learning a boring topic more exciting

How

- Get the book: *I Said This, You Heard That*, by Kathleen Edelman.
- Ahead of Time, Create Bingo Cards, but instead of numbers, have different traits of each temperament on the card. So, instead of B 3 or G 52, you would have Red, Yellow, Green, and Blue at the Top and then different temperaments in the boxes. (Red, sometimes bossy or Yellow, exaggerated stories)
- As you go through the lessons on the temperaments, staff are playing along and marking off things on their cards
- Have a prize for the winner

Tomorrow You Teach It

What

Staff will teach topics they've already learned

Why

- Help drive the point home better
- Learn how staff do at teaching things

How

- For specific classes that you really want to drive the point home, begin the class with the phrase: "Pay attention, because tomorrow you are going to teach this to someone else"
- Go through the class and be sure to emphasize key points that you will be looking for tomorrow
- When tomorrow arrives, assign staffers to teams and have each team teach certain subjects. (They don't all have to teach homesickness. Only 1 will teach to others, then a different staff will teach behavior management, and so on. They don't know what class they are teaching until that day)

Remembered Counselor

What

Staff reflect on adults who impacted them and identify common leadership traits.

Why

- Anchors leadership in personal experience
- Builds emotional buy-in
- Encourages intentional behavior

How

- Ask staff to recall a meaningful adult.
- List qualities that staff can remember.
- Connect those traits to camp roles
- Make it into a printable paper and give to all

Real World Problems

What

Bring Full-Time Staff's children in as examples

Why

- Gives Summer Staff live examples
- Helps them practice and feel more comfortable

How

- If any admin staff have willing kids, have them come down to training and be actual real live scenarios for the training
- Be sure to prep the kids ahead of time what you want them to do or say because most camp kids know the ropes and will actually behave pretty well.

Movie Night

What

Judge a movie based on what you've learned during Staff Training

Why

- Fun way to see if staff can point out the right and wrong way to be a camp staff

How

- Find the Movie: *Camp Manna* and Rent it (this movie pokes fun at the Christian Camps of the 90s)
- Get popcorn and everything else you would have for a full-blown movie night
- Watch the movie, but encourage staff to point out right or wrong things the Camp Staff are doing in this movie

Camp on Trial

What

Reenactment of actual court case where a camper lost their life

Why

- Eye opening experience for staff on due diligence and liability

How

- Get Transcripts from a court case called "Camp Maple Rock on Trial"
- Get Adult friends (preferably real lawyers) to reenact the trial
- The staff are the jury and must determine who is at fault and what percentage of the blame goes to the camp or parent for negligence.

Missing Puppet

What

Staff Create paper bag puppets that become their campers

Why

- Teaches importance of supervision
- Teaches what to do in case of missing camper

How

- One of the first activities they do during Training is make a paper bag puppet. They can be as creative as possible
- After they're done, they will take a few moments to introduce their camper, tell the group what the camper is most hoping to do, their likes and dislikes, what they are afraid of at camp, etc
- The staff now have to be accountable for that camper at all times. If they go to the bathroom, they must have another staff watch their camper, etc
- If a camper goes missing (or gets taken if the staff are too diligent) we use this as an opportunity to do a missing camper drill.

Shared Solutions

What

Staff help each other out by offering solutions to questions/problems

Why

- Gives staff a time to shine

How

- Every Staffer will fill out a post it note with an area of frustration. (working with other staff, rainy day programming, organizing their day, etc)
- Admin will then copy those onto large post it notes and hang them around the room.
- All staff will get a chance to go around and write tips or ideas to help with those frustrations.
- All are shared as a group

CAMPFESSION

I INCORPORATE DIZZY
BAT INTO AS MANY
GAMES AS I POSSIBLY
CAN JUST TO SEE
CAMPERS FALL DOWN

CAMPFESSION

I PREFER THE OLDER CAMPERS
WHO GET MY SARCASM

WHY WE DO
WHAT WE DO

CAMPFESSION
EACH YEAR I'M NERVOUS THAT
THIS YEAR WON'T BE AS GOOD AS
THE LAST AND IT'S ALWAYS
BETTER

Good Qualities Reminder

What

A great way to create a little cheatsheet of what makes a good counselor

Why

- Helps keep the good qualities all summer

How

- Give everyone a bright neon sheet of paper
- Working as a group, come up with several qualities of what they think makes a good counselor.
- Everyone writes those down on their paper.
- Have them tape these on their clipboards, or the back cover of their staff notebook, or wherever they would often see it
- Throughout the summer, remind them to check back and see if they are living up to their own standards

Ideal Staffer

Similar to the Good Qualities Reminder, but in a bigger, more fun way

What

Groups design a visual representation of an ideal staff member and identify key qualities.

Why

- Creates shared expectations
- Encourages accountability
- Builds ownership

How

- Divide into small groups.
- Using a large roll of white butcher paper, roll out and cut several sheets (about 1 sheet per every 4-5 staffers)
- Have the groups trace one person and then start drawing clothes/accessories/other things that turn their tracing into a Typical Camp Staffer.
- Now have them write qualities of a good counselor around their tracing. Let them design and have fun making this pretty
- Allow each group to share with everyone in case they want to steal ideas from each other and add to their own
- Hang these around your Staff-only spaces for the summer

Quiet Hour

What

A time of reflection and prayer

Why

- Reflect on why they are here
- Start the summer off right, spiritually

How

- Schedule an hour at the end of Staff Training that Staff are expected to be completely silent with no music either
- They can go anywhere, but it is not a time for sleeping
- During this hour, they can go and reflect on the week and pray for the summer and the campers.

Campfire Confessions

What

A fun way to show that not everyone is perfect and to learn from others mistakes

Why

- Points out that mistakes are OK
- Stops past problems from coming up again

How

- Have a campfire on one of the final nights of staff training
- Have past staff return and tell their "most epic fail" stories in a fun and humorous way
- This will help your new staff feel more comfortable and also hopefully help with repeat mistakes!

What I Wish I Knew

What

Asking previous staff to share things they wish they knew before their summer started

Why

- Prep current staff for unanswered questions
- Help Admin teach and know what to teach

How

- At the end of the summer, have staff write a letter to next year's staff all about what they wish they knew before summer started
- You may have to suggest ideas like, I wish I knew how hard it would be to say goodbye, or I wish I paid better attention during the behavior management class
- Read through these letters early on in Staff Training Each year

Parent Panel

What

Ask returning camper parents to come in to share and answer questions of staff

Why

- Reinforces that camp is more than just fun

How

- Get good returning parents (not new camper parents that are scared to send their kids)
- Tell them they will share a few minutes each about what Camp means to them, to their child, how they expect counselors to care for and interact with their kid, qualities of counselors that impress or frustrate them, things to remember when working with children, etc
- Then open it up for questions from the staff

Campfire Ashes

What

Saving Ash year after year

Why

- Creates a special memory of Camp

How

- At the end of the summer, collect dry, cool, ash from the main campfire area and save it
- During Training week, at the first campfire of the season, add this ash back into the fire and explain to the staff that you have been collecting and recycling this ash year after year.
- Talk about all the years camp has been around and all the memories around this fire pit. Make it very sentimental and heart-felt
- At the closing Staff Party at the end of the summer, give the staff a very small jar of that ash to take home with them and remember all the memories

Photo Booth

What

Staff take pictures of themselves representing what they bring to Camp

Why

- Makes them think about what makes them unique and needed this summer

How

- Set up a Selfie Station with lots of props
- Staff come here during any free time and put on props that represent what they bring to camp and what makes them unique and then take their picture
- Admin will compile all the pics into a presentation and when each pic comes up, that staffer will get up and explain
- Pictures are then printed and hung up on twine in our Dining Hall

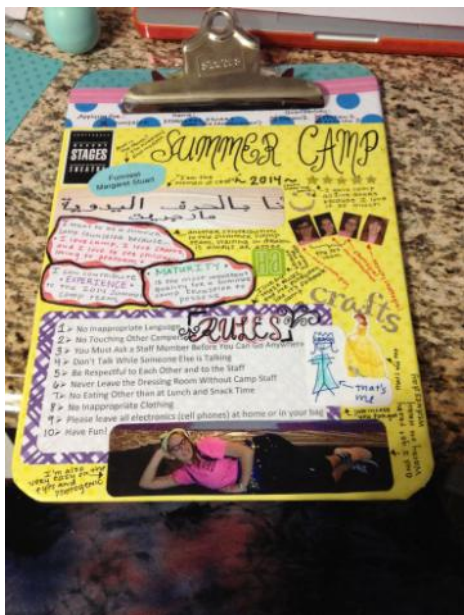
CAMPFESSION
THE MOMENT YOU GET HOME
AND IMMEDIATELY MISS CAMP
AND THE PEOPLE THERE

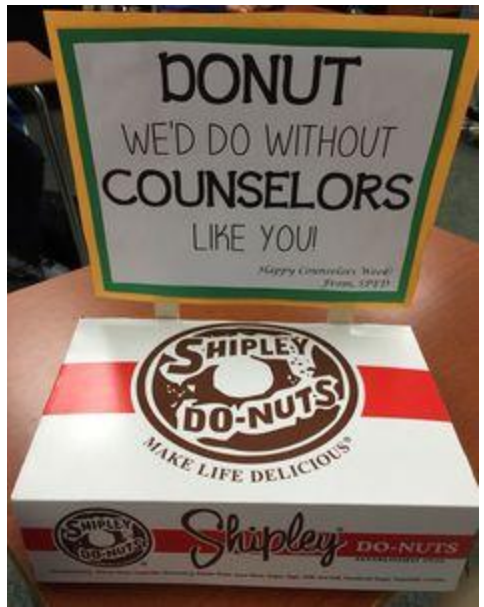
CAMPFESSION
IF I DIDN'T HAVE CAMP, I
WOULD HAVE MORE MONEY,
A VOICE, VACATION TIME,
SLEEP, AND AIR
CONDITIONING. I WOULD
ALSO BE MISERABLE

PHOTOS

CAMPFESSION

I HAVE USED DUCT TAPE TO
SOLVE A PROBLEM THAT
PROBABLY NEEDED MORE
DUCT TAPE





Other Books by Chris & Carrie

Steal This: Ideas of Awesomeness

(Updated: December 2018)

ST: Ideas for Outdoor Ed & STEMiness

(Updated: October 2019)

ST: 50 Ways to Be Awesome

(Updated: November 2019)

ST: Ideas of Portableness

(Updated: October 2019)

ST: Ideas of Contemporary Craftiness

(Updated: February 2020)

ST: Ideas of Virtualness

(Updated: May 2020)

ST: Ideas for Time Fillers & Brain Breakiness

(Updated: August 2020)

ST: Ideas of Camp Boxiness

(Updated: April 2021)

ST: Ideas During Covidness

(Updated: April 2021)

ST: Ideas of Social Distancedness

(Updated: May 2021)

ST: Ideas for Escape Rooms & Puzzleness

(Updated: October 2021)

ST: Ideas of Teambuildingness

(Updated: October 2022)

ST: The BIG Book of Awesomeness

(Updated: February 2023)

ST: Ideas of Games & Funness

(Updated: October 2023)

ST: Ideas of CAFÉ Bagginess

(Updated: October 2023)

ST: 25 Rules for Unparalleled Hospitalityness

(Updated: February 2025)

ST: Ideas for Camp Board Greatness

(Updated: July 2025)

ST: Ideas of Parenting Awesomeness

(Updated: August 2025)

ST: 50 Ideas for Retreat Awesomeness

(Updated: December 2025)

ST: Ideas of Staff Training Greatness

(Updated: January 2026)

Princess Diary: Devos for Girls

(Updated: October 2021)

Man Book: Devos for Boys

(Updated: October 2021)

Church Notes Vol 1-4

(Updated: October 2022)

Coming Soon (whenever they get time to write)

Steal This: Ideas for Fun Fundraisingness

Steal This: Ideas of Successful Marketingness

Steal This: Ideas for Waterfront Awesomeness

Steal This: Ideas for Nighttime Funness

Steal This: Ideas of Rainy-Day Campiness



STEALTHISSTUFF.COM