



# Camp Ambassador's GUIDE



## WHAT IS A CAMP AMBASSADOR?

Camp ambassadors share camp and retreat opportunities with children, youth, and families in their local churches and communities and provide information about how to become involved in this life-changing ministry. More specifically, camp ambassadors act as the Dakotas camping spokesperson within their churches. They are the conduit for information to flow between camps and individual congregations. Ambassadors work closely with their pastor(s), Christian education staff, church families, and the Dakotas Camp staff to help make sure families are aware of camping opportunities throughout the year, but primarily in the spring, when registration for summer camps opens.



# GET READY!!!

## WHY CAMP?

Generations of people have grown in their faith through Dakotas camping experiences. Dakotas Camping provides an opportunity for children, youth, and adults to share and learn about Christ and creation. Camp activities and opportunities will stick with campers for the rest of their lives. Through Dakotas UM Camping's three sites—Lake Poinsett at Arlington, SD, Storm Mountain Center in the beautiful Black Hills of SD, and Wesley Acres Camp near Dazey, ND—Christ is shared in song, word, worship, and by example. All campers experience radical hospitality, explore scripture, have opportunities to care for creation, practice principles of Christian community, are challenged to live a Christ-like life, make new friends, and participate in a variety of fun activities. Dakotas UM Camps provide an unforgettable summer experience through which campers' lives are changed forever. Dakotas Camps are open to everyone—not just United Methodists.

The Dakotas UM camping mission is to provide quality camp, retreat, and conference experiences in which Christ is offered to as many as possible to raise up faithful disciples so the world is transformed.

## Camp ambassadors are asked to:

- Work with other church leaders to plan a Camp Sunday celebration—a day designed to provide multiple opportunities for people to hear about Dakotas UM Camps, including in worship.
- Work with church leaders to set a goal for camp participation and find ways to financially support campers.
- Promote Dakotas UM Camps through announcements, bulletins, and newsletters.
- Discuss Dakotas UM Camps in Sunday School and with youth groups.

## FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH CAMP AMBASSADOR MATERIALS

- 🕒 **Go to [www.dakcamps.org](http://www.dakcamps.org)**  
Click on the "Camp Ambassadors" button on the homepage.
- 🕒 **Video clips**
  - Quick promo video (about 1 minute): Play this during announcement times at worship or at other church gatherings.
  - Short promo video (3-4 minutes): Play this as an extended announcement during Camp Sunday or at other times and show it to youth and Sunday School groups.
- 🕒 **Forms**  
Go to [www.dakcamps.org](http://www.dakcamps.org) and click on "Camp Ambassadors" to **access the following forms:**
  - Registration form
  - Health history & authorization form
  - Release of liability form
  - Camper scholarship application form.
- 🕒 **Camp Sunday worship resources:**  
Use these scriptures, prayers, hymn suggestions, etc., when you discuss Dakotas Camping opportunities with your congregation.



- 🕒 **Digital copy of camp ambassador's guide:**  
Open the same way you opened your forms.





# GET SET!!!

## MAKE A PLAN FOR YOUR CHURCH

### 🕒 **Set a date for a Camp Sunday celebration.**

Work with your pastor and education staff to find a date that works. 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.

### 🕒 **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, call the Dakotas Camping office (605) 996-6552.

### 🕒 **Plan the budget and arrange fundraisers.**

Find out how much money is set aside or available to support campers from your church. Talk to your pastor(s) and other leaders about whether your church can contribute a portion of the cost for each child who signs up for camp. Some churches contribute up to half of the total cost, and others contribute a specific dollar amount per camper. Consider helping your church arrange a fundraiser to support your campers (and consider doing one on Camp Sunday); 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 camperships (camp scholarships) available; to learn more about them, call the Dakotas Camping office (605) 996-6552.

### 🕒 **Request materials from Dakotas Camping Office.**

There are enough brochures for each child in your church community to receive one (plus extras to keep on hand to pass out throughout the spring). You'll receive posters for common areas and along with the brochures.

### 🕒 **Enlist helpers.**

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

### 🕒 **Start getting the word out.**

- Contact (via e-mail 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 Dakotas UM Camps.
- Create a display in a common area where families come and go. The display should include a poster and brochures.



# GO!!!

While it is critical to remind families throughout the summer, most people will hear (often for the first time) about Camp Sunday

"Our 9-year-old son had his first camp this year, and he cannot stop talking about how wonderful it was!! He tells anyone he gets a chance to tell, and he is chomping at the bit to go back next year."  
-Camper Mom



"I hear and see God in the world much more easily when I separate myself from the hustle and bustle, slow down, and listen/watch for him. I learned that at camp."  
-Camper

"I'll always remember the sound of the wind through the pines, the blue color and clear water of the lake, all the friends!" -Camper

"I'm new to the Christianity thing. But I really felt close to God this year. I decided to devote my life to God, and that was my favorite memory." - High school camper

## 4-6 WEEKS BEFORE CAMP SUNDAY

- 🕒 **Familiarize yourself with what is happening at your Dakotas Camps THIS summer so you're ready to share with children, youth, and families!** For example, did you know that campers today have the opportunity to canoe, go rock climbing, hike, travel by bike, and swing from 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 Dakotas UM Camp staff or a specific campsites (contact numbers on back of this guide) to ask questions or learn more about camp opportunities.

- 🕒 **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 bulletin and/or on screens during worship.
- 🕒 **Here's the information to share in your Camp Sunday promotions:**
  - Camp Sunday date.
  - Need for prayer 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, T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, etc.

## 2-4 WEEKS BEFORE CAMP SUNDAY

- 🕒 **Work with your pastor(s) and other worship leaders.** Share with them ideas for how to incorporate Dakotas camping into worship on Camp Sunday (through related scriptures, readings, children's message, prayers, hymns, and songs).
- 🕒 **Enlist some youth to read scripture or lead worship in other ways on Camp Sunday.** Recruit some 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.
- 🕒 **Continue sharing with the congregation (through announcements, newsletter, and bulletin or on screens) that Camp Sunday is coming!** Remind people to wear camp clothes.



Bring to register for camp, Camp Sunday is when life-changing camping and retreat opportunities!

"I can be myself at camp!" –Camper

### CAMP SUNDAY: THE BIG DAY

- 🕒 **Worship and Sunday School:** Follow the plans you previously made for Camp Sunday, including incorporating it into worship, involving youth, showing a camp video, and making verbal announcements. See talking points section later in this guide for outlines and suggestions about how to address each group.
- 🕒 **Hold a fundraiser after church to raise money to help support campers from your church.**

### 1 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 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, 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.**
- 🕒 **Continue to use the 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.**
- 🕒 **Often, children's camp experiences provide their first exposure to Christ. 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.**



"I learned that, no matter what, God loves me—and that to Him, I am always beautiful and perfect. I learned that He will always be there for me when times get tough, even if I don't think anyone is there for me." –Camper

"When I arrived to pick [my son] up, the first thing out of his mouth after 'hi' was, 'When can we sign up for next year?'" –Camper Mom



"Camp is always the highlight of my summer!" –Camper



# WORSHIP

## Talking points for ambassadors

### Before Camp Sunday worship begins, make sure:

- You've had a chance to visit with the pastor 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/pretend campfire, serve camping food, etc.
- You have a copy of the Dakotas Camping brochure to hold up during your presentation.

### 1. Introduce yourself.

"Good morning, my name is \_\_\_\_\_."  
(Include your connection to church camp--as an ambassador and camper, etc.)

### 2. Tell congregation about Camp Sunday.

Say: "Today is Camp Sunday, which means we'll be talking in worship and Sunday School about opportunities available through our Dakotas 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..."

Tell the group that all campers get to:

- Meet and have fun with lots of other kids from all over.
- Engage in activities like swimming, canoeing, archery, high ropes courses, and more.
- Spend time with adults who really care about them.
- 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 Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The camping team is always listening, adding events, and responding to needs of today's children, youth, and families! Camp is changing lives by helping people see and experience God in new ways!

### 4. Hold up a brochure.

Tell the congregation that:

- There are three campsites for kids: Lake Poinsett Camp, Storm Mountain Center and Wesley Acres Camp.

- 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, and there are even family and grandparents' camps!
- Camps involve staying overnight for up to five nights.
- There are a variety of specialty camps that have a unique focus such as photography, hiking, backpacking, fishing and rock climbing!
- All Dakotas campsites are working toward accreditation by the American Camp Association. Accredited camps meet specific standards for operation, quality, health, and safety. One in five camps nationwide achieves this distinction.
- Make sure that you have a Dakotas Camping brochure before you leave church today.

Let people know you'll be available after the service to answer questions and pass out catalogs and brochures.

### 6. Funding is available for camp.

(Be sure to have talked to your pastor and other church leaders about this in advance.)

If your church offers a discount code, print it in the bulletin or on cards to hand out. Be specific as to what the discount covers: for example, 50% off a camp fee or up to \$200 per camper etc. Indicate if the discount can be used for just one camp or multiple camps per camper. Be clear as to whether the discount works for the early bird rate only or throughout the camping season. Also, state whether your discount can go towards bus or shepherd fees. If your church had a discount code last year it will remain the same unless you contact the camping office. There's still time to set up a discount code if you haven't had one before.

**\*Camp Scholarships:** Money is also available through the Dakotas Camping office for those who can't afford to go to camp. Interested families or their churches should contact the Dakotas Camp office (605) 996-6552.



# SUNDAY SCHOOL

## Talking points for ambassadors

### Before Sunday School begins, make sure:

- You've had a chance to visit with the pastor 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 classrooms, address one large group, etc.).
- You know how long you have to share with children.
- You have enough copies of the Dakotas Camping brochure to hand one to EVERY child!

### 1. Introduce yourself.

Say: "Good morning, my name is \_\_\_\_\_."  
(Include your relationship to the church, your connection to church camp—as an ambassador and camper, etc.)

### 2. Tell kids about Camp Sunday.

Say: "Today is Camp Sunday, and that means we get to talk about camp!"

Ask: "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.)

Say: "Well, there is a place where you can do ALL of these things...at camp!"

Ask whole group: "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:

- Meet and have fun with lots of other kids from all over.
- Engage in activities like swimming, canoeing, archery, high ropes courses, and more.
- Spend time with fun adults who really care about you.
- Learn that God is always with you and loves you no matter what.

### 4. Pass out brochures.

Tell the group that:

- There are three campsites for kids: Lake Poinsett Camp, Storm Mountain Center and Wesley Acres Camp.
- 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 your faith!

- There are a variety of specialty camps that have a unique focus such as photography, hiking, backpacking, fishing and rock climbing!
- There are camping events for all age levels, pre-kindergarten through high school, and there are even family and grandparents' camps! Invite a friend or classmate to come to camp with you.
- Camps involve staying overnight up to five nights.

### 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 special or unique.
- Make sure that 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 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 money to help everyone go to camp.

Say: "This year, each child can receive \$\_\_\_\_\_ to go to camp. If the amount left is still too much for the 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."

\***Camp Scholarships:** Money is also available through the Dakotas Camping office for those who can't afford to go to camp. Interested families or their churches should contact the Dakotas Camping office (605) 996-6552.

### 7. Answer questions that kids have.

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

See you this summer at camp!



# OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

**Volunteer:** If you have the desire to help through service and missions...Dakotas Camping 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 the Camp office (605) 996-6552 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:** Dakotas UM Camping is 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, and other groups!

# CONTACT

## CAMP CONTACT INFORMATION

Dakotas UM Camp Office  
1331 W. University Ave.  
P.O. Box 460  
Mitchell, SD 57301

Phone: (605) 996-6552  
E-mail: [info@dakcamps.org](mailto:info@dakcamps.org)  
Website: [www.dakcamps.org](http://www.dakcamps.org)

## CAMPSITE INFORMATION

### LAKE POINSETT CAMP

20 South Lake Dr.  
Arlington, SD 57212  
Phone: (605) 983-5547  
E-mail: [lpc@dakcamps.org](mailto:lpc@dakcamps.org)

### STORM MOUNTAIN CENTER

23740 Storm Mountain Road  
Rapid City, SD 57702  
Phone: (605) 343-4391  
E-mail: [smc@dakcamps.org](mailto:smc@dakcamps.org)

### WESLEY ACRES CAMP

1821 115th Ave SE  
Dazey, ND 58429  
Phone: (701) 733-2413  
E-mail: [wac@dakcamps.org](mailto:wac@dakcamps.org)

## CONNECT WITH CAMP MINNESOTA!



[www.dakcamps.org](http://www.dakcamps.org)



Lake Poinsett



Storm Mountain



Wesley Acres

[www.dakcamps.org](http://www.dakcamps.org)