

Ten Ways to Energize Your Ministry through Camping

Are the children and youth you know fired up about God and excited to participate in worship? Are there adults in your church stuck in a spiritual rut? Your Michigan Area United Methodist Camps offer an immersion experience in a Christian community that nurtures faith, while exploring the outdoors, making friends and growing as individuals. Camp offers a unique way to grow disciples of Jesus Christ.

Consider these ideas for growing your local ministries. We'd love to hear your ideas, too!

1. **Target a Sunday School Class or Youth Group.** Meet with teachers, children's/youth ministry leaders. They'll want to help when they understand that campers bring their spiritual growth and excitement home to their church! Together encourage the children to make a year-long goal to go to camp. Help them pick a camp to attend together, bring the parents in early so it gets on their calendars.
2. **Have a Camp Sunday.** Show our video to the congregation. Sing camp songs. Have past campers give a short testimonial about how their faith and confidence grew at camp. Serve camp-like snacks (who doesn't love s'mores?). Use our bulletin insert to give more information. Ask for contributions to a camp scholarship or sponsor a specific need a camp. Donate to the Changing Lives Scholarship fund online at www.umcamping.org.
3. **Involve potential campers in a fundraiser.** Pancake breakfast, quarter drive, talent show, chili cook-off, rake-a-thon, get creative! While younger campers might not be able to organize big events, use their helping hands to pull it off. Their reward is a full or partial camp scholarship!
4. **Offer camp scholarship incentives.** Once camp is established as a common goal in your church, give scholarship credit for participation, such as Sunday School and worship attendance, volunteering and doing community service.
5. **Look to the community.** We're called to be in relationship with others. Are you connected to a local school, youth club or other organization? Invite them to camp and offer to sponsor them.
6. **Gather Grandparents.** Reach out to grandparents in your church and tell them about Grand Camp. It's a fun and memorable way to share their faith with their grandchildren.
7. **Create family traditions together.** Camp as a family at Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat (RV/tent/cabins). Or take your grandchildren to Grand Camp at Wesley Woods. Or use one of our facilities for a family reunion.
8. **Organize your own Family Camp experience.** Use our traditional RV/tent/cabin campgrounds (Lake Michigan) or rent space at any of our camps and use their cabins. Bring your own programming or ask us for help.

9. **Bring a friend discount.** First-time campers get a \$50 rebate. For every first-time friend, classmate, neighbor, sibling that a returning camper recruits, both the first-timer and the returning camper get a \$50 instant rebate (up to the cost of camp). There is no church relationship requirement. Everyone is welcome at camp!
10. **Volunteer!** Be a camp counselor for a week. Consider adopting one of our sites for a mini mission trip in the spring and fall or see if you can make items they need like curtains or a small construction project.