

Mega Days 2022 HS Servant Team - Training 2

Read through these three pages at least three times. Read in a way in which you will remember these things – you are not reading for speed but for comprehension. Highlight or circle a few things on each page which you think are important.

As a servant team member at Mega Days, you play a very important role in the success of our camp. You will be the person whom students spend the most time with, learn from, talk to, and connect with while at camp. The parents of our campers have entrusted you, and the rest of our staff, with the care of their children during Mega Days — a responsibility that none of us take lightly. They expect you to provide a **SAFE, POSITIVE, CARING, ENCOURAGING, AND SPIRITUALLY NURTURING** environment for their child. Anything less is not acceptable to these parents or to our youth ministry.

This packet contains a lot of information to help you prepare to be the best counselor you can be. Before we get into some of the details, here are some things to think about...

Be ready to come to camp to be a servant and a leader. Don't come to camp to be your camper's friend. Be their leader first—friendship will follow. Do not be tricked into thinking you are a good leader if you let your kids "get away" with breaking rules or with acting in ways they shouldn't act. Make it clear to your campers that they will all have a better week if camp rules are followed.

Be ready to come to camp with the attitude that you are there for the kids. Camp is all about the kids. Your comfort, pleasure, sleep, etc., comes last. If you will do this, you'll leave exhausted but will have gotten more out of camp than the kids. And you'll be living out the call of Jesus when He tells us to serve others.

Be ready to come to camp with an openness to God's leading. Prepare in advance through much prayer for an openness to God's will at camp. Pray for the strength and energy you'll need at camp, and for open hearts and minds to Christ's love. There can never be too many eyes watching out for all the kids' welfare, both physical and spiritual. Don't limit your view to include only your group. Help each other out. Help the kids stay focused—especially in the Bible lessons.

One more thing...your attitude as you prepare for camp and come to camp is very important. It makes a huge difference in the success of the camp and in the way the students will view you as a leader. The weather will be hot. There will be times when your patience is tested. There are adjustments which will be made throughout the week that will require flexibility. Your attitude toward these things (and all other aspects of camp) will help determine the attitudes of those around you. If your attitude is positive, you will be reflecting the love of Jesus and you'll add to the overall spirit of camp.

A Mega Days servant team member should...

- Be Christ-like at all times and in everything you do.
- Make the kids the #1 priority. This is a week for us to serve the 3rd-6th grade students of our church. There will be time for you to hang-out with the other HSers before and after camp, but during camp, your purpose is to be with them.
- Know where each of his/her kids are at all times.
- Look after the well-being of each kid during MEGA DAYS. This means you...
 - Care for them
 - Watch out for their physical and emotional safety (no jumping off the top bunk, no name calling, etc.)
 - Help them keep up with their things
 - Make sure they put on sunscreen each day
 - Make sure they eat/drink
 - Make sure they treat others with kindness

...In other words, you're going to be busy because in some ways you will be acting as their mom or dad during MEGA DAYS – and instead of 1 or 2 kids, you're going to have a whole group.
- Help all of your kids to be included – don't let anyone get left behind at any time.
- Be a constant encourager to the kids (not only your specific kids, but all students).
- Stay away from other HSers as much as possible. Activity time is not time to hang out with friends. Be with students at meals, swim time, worship time, class time... Use every opportunity to spend time with your kids.
- Treat all kids equally – no favorites.
- You are responsible for the actions of your kids (as much as reasonably possible)
- Make sure all kids are following the rules of MEGA DAYS. If they are not, talk to them about this – if they continue not to follow the rules, come talk to Monty or Heather or Jenni.
- Build personal relationships and continue them past MEGA DAYS.
- Be really tired at the end of each day.
- Know this: What you do in moderation, those under you do in excess.

Understanding the Campers at Mega Days

Who are they? What will the campers be like? What does it mean to you? How do you use your understanding of them so you can be an effective camp staff member?

Ages 9 to 12

What are they like?

- They are anything but still and quiet
- They have no fear
- They do not like to stay confined and do one thing for a long period of time
- Some are still concrete thinkers; others are beginning to think logically and symbolically, beginning to understand abstract ideas
- They have a desire for acceptance from their own age group. They have a need for close friendships with those they play with
- They have strong identification with their own gender and age group
- They have a growing desire for better performance in skills. They look to counselors for approval and follow rules primarily out of respect for the counselor
- They have a strong need to feel accepted and worthwhile
- They enjoy being mischievous and daring

What that means to you:

- Activities should encourage physical involvement. However, guide them to appropriate and safe activities (i.e. jumping off of a cliff would be neat, but it would not be a safe challenge)
- Hands-on involvement with objects is very helpful. They will pay more attention if they are seeing and doing things
- As they consider an idea, they think it is either right or wrong, great or disgusting, fun or boring. There is very little middle ground
- This is the age of the “joiners.” They like to be in organized groups of others similar to themselves
- Small group work is best done in same-sex groups
- Encouragement from the counselor can have remarkable results. They want to know how much they have improved and what they should do to be better next time
- Comparison with the success of others is difficult for them—it erodes their self-confidence
- They respond enthusiastically to counselors who can understand and guide their tremendous energy and mischievousness; they tend to idolize the counselor if they measure up to this task

CASE STUDIES – WHAT DO YOU DO?

Case study 1: You have a student who seems to want a lot of attention. They are always answering questions before anyone else can answer them. Now everyone in the group has stopped talking because of them.

Case study 2: You have a student who draws pictures on their paper and on their leg instead of being involved in any of the lessons. What do you do?

Case study 3: One of your students is picking on another student. How do you handle this?

Case study 4: You have two different groups of people in your counseling group. The cool kids and the not so cool kids. It is now the 3rd day of camp and the problem has gotten to be a bigger issue each day. What do you do?

Case study 5: You are standing beside the pool with 3 other counselors talking, while your campers are swimming.

Case study 6: One of your students is only eating dessert.

Case study 7: You have a few students with a bad attitude in your group. They do not want to do any of the games or participate in anything that is happening. They are having a negative effect on your group.

Some Things to Keep In Mind About Being An Extraordinary Leader

1. ALWAYS be a positive role model for the campers.

- Follow the rules created by the camp
- Encourage all campers—show no favoritism
- Use appropriate language and touching
- Guide campers in events and activities
- Possess a positive, cheerful attitude
- Be prompt for meetings and activities
- Respect each other
- Show interest in all activities
- Put the happiness, needs, and pleasures of others above your own

2. Create an environment of fun and fellowship in your group.

- Include all campers in your group in camp activities
- Get to know the names of all campers
- Relate to campers in topic of conversation and activities that are of interest to them
- Participate with campers in all activities
- Discover the talents of each camper
- Creatively keep campers entertained and busy
- Enjoy the outdoors and relay this attitude to the campers
- Be ready to lead a conversation at any time

3. Provide encouragement to your group.

- Verbally praise each camper for their efforts
- Pray often with and for your campers
- Get your entire group to try a new activity
- Do not tolerate “bad mouthing” and explain why
- Listen to the campers
- Show respect for and appreciation to the campers
- Ask questions instead of telling campers what to do
- Teach the campers to value their own opinions
- Encourage students to focus on their personal walk with Christ

4. Get your group to work together.

- Participate in activities together
- Campers should know each other by name
- Participate in group building activities
- Give campers the freedom to select activities and to express opinions

Potential Problems

It's true that camp is a wonderful place and somewhat a world of its own. It's the perfect environment to grow spiritually and to build strong friendships. However, because camp involves people – and people are imperfect – camp can have a few potential problems. These can range from homesickness to personal fighting to bed-wetting. Be prepared for how to react when a problem occurs.

Homesickness

Our goal is to make Mega Days a positive experience that will bless each child for the rest of his/her life. We cannot work with them if they do not stay. We pray that all campers that come will be able to make it through the week in a positive manner and will feel good about that accomplishment. However, if their staying will not be positive for them or the other campers in their group, we will make a decision about them leaving camp and going home. Here is our approach to dealing with homesickness:

A. LOVE & ATTENTION: If a student in your group is showing signs of homesickness, be sure they are given individual attention by one of your counselors.

B. COUNSELING APPROACH:

1. LIST the positives and negatives of camp on a piece of paper.
2. ASK, "What would you be doing if you were at home?"
3. CONTRACT an agreement about when you will talk about the problem again and what you will do in the meantime. Find out their favorite activity coming up and schedule a check-up right before the activity. Set an exact time for that check-up and make the camper responsible for locating you and talking to you. If they do not come, that's great! If they try to talk to you before that time, remind them of the agreement and assure them that you will be happy to talk with them about it at that time.

C. COUNSELORS/DA's FIRST – THEN MONTY/HEATHER/JENNI: You will likely be the first person to notice signs of homesickness – or you will likely be the first person a child talks to about being homesick. Be willing to talk to them and encourage them, and then let Monty or Heather or Jenni know about this situation. Please keep Monty/Heather/Jenni aware of any homesick students in your group. By working together, we can hopefully help all students feel great about being at Mega Days. (Note: Under no circumstance should campers be allowed to use a phone to call home without the permission of Monty or Heather or Jenni.)

D. PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE:

1. Hugs, pats on the back, encouraging notes.
2. Look for the loner and include them.
3. Call your kids by name.

Stealing

When students live in tight quarters sometimes personal things get misplaced and others are accused of "taking their belongings". We hope we do not have any real incidents of theft (if there are, those should be reported to Monty or Heather). Many times students lose things on accident, and those things are thought to be "stolen" by the person who is missing those things. Please help this by making sure your campers pick up their belongings and the areas around their bunk.

Inappropriate Talk

Inappropriate language should not be tolerated. This includes profanity, hurtful words, inappropriate humor, questionable words, etc. When this happens the first time, talk to the student and tell them to not use those kinds of words. If it happens a second time, take the student to the side and talk to them one-on-one. Be very clear about why those words/comments are not tolerated, and work together to come up with a consequence if it happens again. If it happens a third time, it is time to involve Monty or Heather. Remember we are to say only “encouraging” and “uplifting” things to each other.

Fatigue

Busy camp can wear campers and staff out. Rest when it's rest time. Sleep when it's evening. Fatigue brings on irritability and spreads among the group. Lights out should be enforced to make the most of each camper's experience.

Bed- Wetting

Some children and adults suffer from this affliction for a number of reasons. If you have a student who has an accident in the night, talk to Monty or Heather or one of the other adults as soon as possible. We will have extra bedding available, and we'll have a plan to get their bedding cleaned up. As camp approaches, we'll figure out the details of our plan and share those details with you as counselors.

Here are two things to keep in mind:

- 1) Try to limit a child's fluid intake in the evenings.
- 2) Do your best to not add to the embarrassment to a student if the situation occurs.

Illness & Injury

Students who experience illness at camp need to see one of the members of our camp medical staff.

All injuries must be reported.

NO COUNSELOR has permission to administer medication to campers. You should not keep any medication accessible in your cabin.

Sleep Walking

If a student is a known sleepwalker they should be assigned a bottom bunk. Do not wake them or yell at them. Quietly direct them back to their bunks.

Personal Hygiene Care

Sometimes students feel embarrassed or uncomfortable in public showers, so they choose not to shower or brush their teeth, etc. These situations become obvious to us as the camp week goes along. Gently encourage students to care for themselves. Allow them private time to shower without embarrassing them. If they have limited clothing, and it needs cleaned, talk to Monty or Heather and we'll work to help get their clothing cleaned.

Campers should keep their areas picked up to help with personal hygiene issues.

Dealing with Discipline Problems

As a servant team member, you are in a place of authority. The safety of the students at Mega Days is your responsibility. Not only is physical safety part of your responsibility, but also the emotional well-being of each child. Rules will be in place to protect the physical and emotional safety of each child, but there are times when those rules will be broken. There are also times when the behavior of some children will not be what is normally considered common, acceptable behavior. When this happens, it is important to deal with the student appropriately.

Punishments of a camper or campers must be handled very carefully. It is a good idea to involve an adult when it comes to disciplining your campers. At no time is it appropriate for a counselor to strike or yell at campers. However, when mild punishment is needed to get the campers attention or control a situation, make sure you do it fairly and not out of anger. Once you commit yourself, then keep your word regarding the punishment.

Set clear boundaries. Camp rules are made to keep all concerned safe and to make camp a fun and safe environment for everyone. Respect that. Be honest and up front with your campers, tell them you expect them to follow the rules, and that their “fun” will not be less because of the rules of camp. Rules are intended to make sure everyone has a better week, not a worse one. Be fair and even keeled when dealing with difficult situations.

TECHNIQUE FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIOR

Discipline involves teaching internal self-control. Punishment is demeaning and is an imposing of power. ALWAYS separate the behavior from the person and help a child to re-direct his/her actions to behavior that is appropriate.

A. One minute Counselor Discipline

1. Set goals for yourself and your campers.
2. 1-minute praise.
3. 1-minute reprimand.

B. Natural consequences—allow to experience results of behavior

C. Incentives—give specific goals to shoot for

1. Plan together for reward for targeted behavior.
2. Keep track (notice) progress.
3. Spend time together with the camper as a positive incentive.

D. Time Out—remove from situation, give time to cool down (short term)

E. “Planned ignoring”

1. All behavior has a purpose, when purpose is to get attention, may be best to not notice.
2. Best to communicate plan first, then follow through (camper needs to know if he/she is being ignored on purpose because behavior won't be rewarded with notice.)
3. Give clear alternative of how can get positive attention
4. Never compromise safety

F. Restructuring—change something (activity, teaching style, way to walk to the cafeteria, etc.) to allow for a new opportunity

1. Do not fear losing control.
2. If goal is success, be willing to try something new to allow need to be met.
3. Ask: What do you think? What do you need right now?

G. HUMOR—a smile at the right time can defuse a tough situation

1. Offset intensity: remain objective in the intensity of a crisis.
2. Will not work without relationship, use with sensitivity.
3. Allow child/staff to laugh at self; teach to enjoy life. Must be modeled by staff.

A few more tips in dealing with a difficult camper:

Encourage responsibility. Provide opportunities for campers to have input and make some decisions. Everyone grows from having increased responsibility. Camp provides a natural environment for learning new skills and developing responsible behavior.

Avoid ultimatums. Use thinking words vs. fighting words. Put responsibility on the camper for the solution. Avoid power struggles—they require a winner and loser. We don't want any losers. Therefore with any request you have for your camper, help them meet the request honorably.

Provide information as requested by the camper. A rational question deserves a rational response. When the question moves beyond the immediate situation, campers are no longer interested in information, they are challenging authority and structure. Staff response needs to be clear, specific, and have enforceable limits.

Modeling is the single most effective teaching tool. Children mirror adult behavior. Therefore be a Christ like mentor.

The gift of our words has a tremendous impact on a camper's life and behavior. During biblical times, receiving a blessing was a moment of high treasure. We can share the essential aspects of a blessing with our campers by:

- Calling them by name
- Be proud: Express pride verbally and non-verbally (gentle squeeze on the shoulder).
- Reinforce their value and intrinsic good qualities.

Protecting Yourself and the Campers

Part of the requirement for being a camp counselor at Mega Days is that you go through the state-mandated child protection training. Here are some additional things you need to know to protect yourself and your campers.

The basic guiding principle at camp is this: *We never physically, mentally, emotionally or spiritually harm a camper.*

1. Do not put yourself in one-on-one situations with a camper out of the sight of others. Counsel in pairs. Counsel in public.
2. Practice appropriate touching. The human touch is an important need for people; it should be warm, sincere and with consideration of the individual. High-fives, pats on the shoulder, fist bumps... etc.
3. Control "horseplay". Pillow fights and rough housing are not allowed. We never physically put a camper in danger. There are some group games we cannot play because they may violate this principle.
4. Avoid using "negative" nicknames. Call your camper by name. Do not tolerate put-downs by other campers in your group. Encourage "encouraging words" by everyone. Negative comments are also out-of-place during Mega Days. Make sure you do not say anything bad about church, other individuals at Mega Days, another counselor, a student's family, etc.
5. Shower with discretion. Change clothes with discretion. You should not be in a situation where students ever see you without clothing... or they see you. Model modesty in your dress at ALL TIMES.
6. Absolutely avoid conversations about things that have "sexual overtones", "coarse joking", or "racial joking". Make sure that conversations are following Colossians 3 and are focused on "*things above*".
7. Report any suspected child abuse which may come out in counseling or observation. (You must report it by law.)
8. Understand that even though you are at "church camp" students come from all different situations. The standard of conduct and dress for some students may be very different than those we stand for. Always lead by example, and uphold Godly principles.

Read through the previous 3 pages, at least 3 times before Sunday, May 29. When you have finished reading through these three pages, write down the date and time here:

Date and Time #1: _____

Date and Time #2: _____

Date and Time #3: _____