

PROGRAM
HELPS

What We Hope To Accomplish Through...

RECREATION EXPERIENCES

Fun, yes! Renewal of energy in mind and body, yes! But beyond that as children and youth participate in recreation we want them to feel good about themselves and their physical abilities without having to put others down. We want recreation activities to facilitate a sense of wholeness and oneness in community. We want children and youth to learn about cooperation, leadership, fellowship, mutual respect, inclusion, and teamwork.

Recreation activities should, first of all, be safe for everyone - emotionally as well as physically. They should help participants build trust in each other. Part of the fun of recreation is the challenge activities present and the creative, innovative ways one can respond. Recreation activities should empower participants to control and be responsible for their own actions.

The old ***New Games*** motto says it all: Play hard, play fair, nobody hurt!

ARTS AND CRAFTS AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

One of the ways humans claim "God's image" is in their ability to create. Creativity on our part means taking elements God has provided for us and, with our God-given abilities, using them or putting them together in new, creative, and pleasing ways. Arts and crafts and other creative activities provided for children and youth should respect, encourage and facilitate these elements of our holy humanity. Individuality of expression should be a high priority and valued not only for its creativity but also for the opportunities it provides for decision making and mutual appreciation and support.

Creative activities are a wonderful, hands-on way to reinforce lessons and learnings. Leaders can facilitate this by relating verbally in the process of "creation" how the activity relates to or underscores the theme or learning objective. In camp settings leaders are encouraged to use assets of nature in arts and crafts whenever feasible. Good stewardship, of course, is vitally important in the use of all resources.

WORSHIP EXPERIENCES

The idea is not to recreate in settings away from home what worship is like at home -- although common elements of United Methodist traditions of worship should be readily apparent. Worship experiences for children and youth should be designed for and reflect developmental abilities of the specific age level for which it is intended both in content and concept. Do not expect or press for decisions or commitments that are beyond your group's readiness.

United Methodist forms of worship encourage tapping into not only the emotional/spiritual aspect of our being, but also the intellectual/spiritual aspect. Be aware that emotionally overcharged settings can eventually do more harm than good in encouraging emotional, superficial decisions or commitments that emerge from the feelings of the moment than a realistic sense of calling. Remember that sometimes the Holy Spirit does its work in spite of our efforts rather than because of them!

Active involvement of all worship participants is encouraged -- that is, after all, what "liturgy," the work of the laity, is all about. This can happen through children and youth taking part in leadership roles and through the design of worship that encourages active participation and response. Again, be aware of the developmental appropriateness of your expectations. Music, responsive liturgies, movement, interactive acts of worship (intercessory prayer, passing of the peace, etc.) are all means to accomplish participation.

SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCES

The small group is where event participants build some of their closest relationships. In these settings of seven to fifteen people (appropriate number depends on ages and abilities of participants) members really get to know one another and begin to develop a deep sense of trust and security. Mutual sharing and support can lead small groups into powerful experiences of learning and transformation. Leaders can facilitate an environment that encourages such relationship building by modeling unconditional love, acceptance, openness, respect, and concern for each and every group member. They can also be sensitive to relationships among group members and guide them in the same direction. This is no place for leaders to show favoritism.

Events usually provide curriculum to guide leaders in small group process. There is also typically a recognition that issues may be brought to a small group's attention by group members or current happenings in and around the event locale. Leaders should carefully discern when it is appropriate to address these issues with the group or postpone consideration to another more appropriate situation. Deans or other event leadership may be helpful in this discernment process.

TOTAL GROUP EXPERIENCES

Situations when everyone in the event meets together can generate tremendous energy. It is also a prime time for participants who have difficulty in developing relationships or fitting in to shrink into oblivion. Leaders should be aware of participants who refrain from participation in total group activities and strive to determine the reason for this behavior. Sometimes reasons are legitimate and alternative means of participation may be appropriately suggested. Other times confidence building and encouragement are necessary. Force is rarely acceptable or desirable.

When planning total group activities leaders should be sensitive to the abilities of all the participants to assure everyone can take part in some acceptable manner. The goal of total group activities is to help everyone feel that they have a place in this particular community. The elimination of participants through competition or failure (real or imagined) does not facilitate this sense of oneness.

A WORD ON "BULLYING"

"Bullying" is never appropriate in our children and youth events. Leaders should always directly address complaints of participants and observations they or others may make of bullying incidents. The person who is bullying or teasing or excluding others should be addressed about the inappropriateness of their behavior in these settings -- and as a Christian in general.

Victims of such behaviors should always be encouraged to talk about what is happening and try to discover ways they can address the situation themselves or with the assistance of others. Personal empowerment is a powerful tool.

Situations like these should never be dismissed as something the participants need to "work out for themselves" without adult involvement. Leaders are present at our events to help model and guide the development of "community" that emulates our understanding of the Kingdom of God. This calls for maturity in the ability to understand this concept as well as in skills to facilitate its occurrence. The deans or event leadership are always available to assist in this process. Do not fail to ask for help or guidance when you are unsure about what to do or how to address an issue.

Creative Camp Activities

HIKES

Mention a hike to your campers and they will probably say, "Let's go!" But before you leave, consider the purpose of your hike. When campers hike for a definite purpose it will sustain greater interest and increase their awareness of the many interesting things in the out-of-doors. Don't forget safety rules for hiking!

Here are some suggestions for imaginative hikes:

SCAVENGER HUNTS: While hiking look for leaves, flowers, fossils, rocks, animals, or materials for nature projects

JET PROPELLED HIKE: Select a distant point and go straight to it, over, under, through everything in your path. Don't let anything stand in the way. (Be aware of safety issues and keeping an eye out for snakes!)

TRAILING HIKE: Divide into two groups. One group lays a trail and the other tries to follow.

MAP HIKE: Take paper and pencil and make a map of the area you have hiked over.

BIRD HIKE: How many different birds or birds' nests can you see or bird songs can you hear? Take a bird identification book along to find the names of birds you see.

FLOWER SHOW: Take material to make sketches of flowers you see on your hike. Finish them at camp, then display your work for the camp to see. Try to identify the flowers, too.

FIVE SENSES HIKE: At the end of a hike have each camper tell on thing he/she saw, felt, heard, smelled, and tasted.

NATURE STUDY

Create a group "treasure chest" filled with the most beautiful rocks you can find.

Watch cloud formations during quiet time or when resting on a hike. What do the shapes look like? Create stories about formations you see.

Track an ant or other insect to see where it goes. Track footprints or tracks of animals or insects. Follow a butterfly, bird, or flying insect.

Collect different kinds of twigs, leaves, grasses, seeds, pods, etc. Let campers create pictures or scenes by gluing them on cardboard.

40 Developmental Assets for Elementary Age Children

Search Institute has identified a framework of 40 developmental assets for elementary-age children (ages 6 to 11) that blends Search Institute's research on developmental assets for adolescents with research on healthy child development. These assets can help any worker with children to evaluate their program to gauge whether or not it is building the kind of assets in a young person's life that will lead to success and overall health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSETS, GO TO:

WWW.SEARCH-INSTITUTE.ORG

- 1. Family support** - Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- 2. Positive family communication** - Parents and children communicate positively. Children are willing to seek advice and counsel from their parents.
- 3. Other adult relationships** - Children have support from adults other than their parents.
- 4. Caring neighborhood** - Children experience caring neighbors.
- 5. Caring out-of-home climate** - School and other activities provide caring, encouraging environments for children.
- 6. Parent involvement in out-of-home situations** - Parents are actively involved in helping children succeed in school and in other situations outside the home.
- 7. Community values children** - Children feel that the family and community value and appreciate children.
- 8. Children are given useful roles** - Children are included in age-appropriate family tasks and decisions and are given useful roles at home and in the community.
- 9. Service to others** - Children serve others in the community with their family or in other settings.
- 10. Safety** - Children are safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.
- 11. Family boundaries** - The family has clear rules and consequences and monitors children's activities and whereabouts.
- 12. Out-of-home boundaries** - Schools and other out-of-home environments provide clear rules and consequences.
- 13. Neighborhood boundaries** - Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring children's behavior.
- 14. Adult role models** - Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.

15. Positive peer interaction and influence - Children interact with other children who model responsible behavior and have opportunities to play and interact in safe, well-supervised settings.

16. Appropriate expectations for growth - Adults have realistic expectations for children's development at this age. Parents, caregivers, and other adults encourage children to achieve and develop their unique talents.

17. Creative activities - Children participate in music, art, drama, or other creative activities for at least three hours a week at home and elsewhere.

18. Out-of-home activities - Children spend one hour or more each week in extracurricular school activities or structured community programs.

19. Religious community - The family attends religious programs or services for at least one hour per week.

20. Positive, supervised time at home - Children spend most evenings and weekends at home with their parents in predictable, enjoyable routines.

21. Achievement expectation and motivation - Children are motivated to do well in school and other activities.

22. Children are engaged in learning - Children are responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning.

23. Stimulating activity and homework - Parents and teachers encourage children to explore and engage in stimulating activities. Children do homework when it's assigned.

24. Enjoyment of learning and bonding to school - Children enjoy learning and care about their school.

25. Reading for pleasure - Children and an adult read together for at least 30 minutes a day. Children also enjoy reading or looking at books or magazines on their own.

26. Caring - Children are encouraged to help other people.

27. Equality and social justice - Children begin to show interest in making the community a better place.

28. Integrity - Children begin to act on their convictions and stand up for their beliefs.

29. Honesty - Children begin to value honesty and act accordingly.

30. Responsibility - Children begin to accept and take personal responsibility for age-appropriate tasks.

31. Healthy lifestyle and sexual attitudes - Children begin to value good health habits and learn healthy sexual attitudes and beliefs as well as respect for others.

32. Planning and decision making - Children begin to learn how to plan ahead and make choices at appropriate developmental levels.

- 33. Interpersonal skills** - Children interact with adults and children and can make friends. Children express and articulate feelings in appropriate ways and empathize with others.
- 34. Cultural competence** - Children know about and are comfortable with people of different cultural, racial, and/or ethnic backgrounds.
- 35. Resistance skills** - Children start developing the ability to resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- 36. Peaceful conflict resolution** - Children try to resolve conflicts nonviolently.
- 37. Personal power** - Children begin to feel they have control over things that happen to them. They begin to manage frustrations and challenges in ways that have positive results for themselves and others.
- 38. Self-esteem** - Children report having high self-esteem.
- 39. Sense of purpose** - Children report that their lives have purpose and actively engage their skills.
- 40. Positive view of personal future** - Children are hopeful and positive about their personal future.

40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

Through extensive research, Search Institute has identified the following 40 building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. These assets can help any youth worker evaluate their youth program to gauge whether or not it is building the kind of assets in a young person's life that will lead to success and overall health.

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External Assets

The first 20 developmental assets focus on positive experiences that young people receive from the people and institutions in their lives. Four categories of external assets are included in the framework:

Support-Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families, neighbors, and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments.

Empowerment-Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure.

Boundaries and expectations-Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" and "out of bounds."

Constructive use of time-Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.

Internal Assets

A community's responsibility for its young does not end with the provision of external assets. There needs to be a similar commitment to nurturing the internal qualities that guide choices and create a sense of centeredness, purpose, and focus. Indeed, shaping internal dispositions that encourage wise, responsible, and compassionate judgments is particularly important in a society that prizes individualism. Four categories of internal assets are included in the framework:

Commitment to learning-Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.

Positive values-Youth need to develop strong values that guide their choices.

Social competencies-Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to succeed in life.

Positive identity-Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

Stages of Intellectual Development in Children and Teenagers

This page presents an overview of the development of intellectual abilities. Children are not little adults. Until they reach the age of 15 or so they are not capable of reasoning as an adult. The following information is based on the work of [Jean Piaget](#). He was not a psychologist. He was a developmental biologist who devoted his life to closely observing and recording the intellectual abilities of infants, children and adolescents. The [stages of intellectual development](#) formulated by Piaget appear to be related to major developments in brain growth. The human brain is not fully developed until late adolescence or in the case of males sometimes early adulthood. We often expect children to think like adults when they are not yet capable of doing so. It is important that parents know what to expect from their child as they develop and to be sure that the expectations they may have for their child at a given age are realistic.

Period of Concrete Operations (7-11 years)

Evidence for organized, logical thought. There is the ability to perform multiple classification tasks, order objects in a logical sequence, and comprehend the principle of conservation. Thinking becomes less transductive and less egocentric. The child is capable of concrete problem-solving.

Some reversibility now possible (quantities moved can be restored such as in arithmetic: $3+4 = 7$ and $7-4 = 3$, etc.)

Class logic-finding bases to sort unlike objects into logical groups where previously it was on superficial perceived attribute such as color. Categorical labels such as "number" or "animal" now available.

The concrete operational stage is the third stage in Piaget's theory. This stage typically occurs between the ages of 7 and 12.

During this stage, the child begins to reason logically, and organize thoughts coherently. However, they can only think about actual physical objects, they cannot handle abstract reasoning.

This stage is also characterized by a loss of egocentric thinking.

During this stage, the child has the ability to master most types of conservation experiments, and begins to understand reversibility. The concrete operational stage is also characterized by the child's ability to coordinate two dimensions of an object simultaneously, arrange structures in sequence, and transpose differences between items in a series

Period of Formal Operations (11-15 years)

Thought becomes more abstract, incorporating the principles of formal logic. The ability to generate abstract propositions, multiple hypotheses and their possible outcomes is evident. Thinking becomes less tied to concrete reality.

Formal logical systems can be acquired. Can handle proportions, algebraic manipulation, other purely abstract processes. If $a + b = x$ then $x = a + b$. If $ma/ca = IQ = 1.00$ then $Ma = CA$.

Propositional logic, as-if and if-then steps. Can use aids such as axioms to transcend human limits on comprehension.

The formal operational stage is the fourth and final stage in Piaget's theory. It begins at approximately 11 to 12 years of age, and continues throughout adulthood; although Piaget does point out that some people may never reach this stage of cognitive development.

The formal operational stage is characterized by the ability to formulate hypotheses and systematically test them to arrive at an answer to a problem.

The individual in the formal stage is also able to think abstractly and to understand the form or structure of a mathematical problem.

Another characteristic of the individual is their ability to reason contrary to fact. That is, if they are given a statement and asked to use it as the basis of an argument they are capable of accomplishing the task. For example, they can deal with the statement "what would happen if snow were black".

Stages of Social-Emotional Development in Children and Teenagers

This page presents an overview of the developmental tasks involved in the social and emotional development of children and teenagers which continues into adulthood. The presentation is based on the Eight Stages of Development developed by psychiatrist, Erik Erikson in 1956.

According to Erikson, the socialization process consists of eight phases - the "eight stages of man." His eight stages of man were formulated, not through experimental work, but through wide - ranging experience in psychotherapy, including extensive experience with children and adolescents from low - as well as upper - and middle - social classes. Each stage is regarded by Erikson as a "psychosocial crisis," which arises and demands resolution before the next stage can be satisfactorily negotiated. These stages are conceived in an almost architectural sense: satisfactory learning and resolution of each crisis is necessary if the child is to manage the next and subsequent ones satisfactorily, just as the foundation of a house is essential to the first floor, which in turn must be structurally sound to support and the second story, and so on.

a. Industry versus Inferiority (Competence)

Erikson believes that the fourth psychosocial crisis is handled, for better or worse, during what he calls the "school age," presumably up to and possibly including some of junior high school. Here the child learns to master the more formal skills of life: (1) relating with peers according to rules (2) progressing from free play to play that may be elaborately structured by rules and may demand formal teamwork, such as baseball and (3) mastering social studies, reading, arithmetic. Homework is a necessity, and the need for self-discipline increases yearly. The child who, because of his successive and successful resolutions of earlier psychosocial crisis, is trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative will learn easily enough to be industrious. However, the mistrusting child will doubt the future. The shame - and guilt-filled child will experience defeat and inferiority.

b. Learning Identity versus Identity Diffusion (Fidelity)

During the fifth psychosocial crisis (adolescence, from about 13 or 14 to about 20) the child, now an adolescent, learns how to answer satisfactorily and happily the question of "Who am I?" But even the best - adjusted of adolescents experiences some role identity diffusion: most boys and probably most girls experiment with minor delinquency; rebellion flourishes; self - doubts flood the youngster, and so on.

Erikson believes that during successful early adolescence, mature time perspective is developed; the young person acquires self-certainty as opposed to self-consciousness and self-doubt. He comes to experiment with different - usually constructive - roles rather than adopting a "negative identity" (such as delinquency). He actually anticipates achievement, and achieves, rather than being "paralyzed" by feelings of inferiority or by an inadequate time perspective. In later adolescence, clear sexual identity - manhood or womanhood - is established. The adolescent seeks leadership (someone to inspire him), and gradually develops a set of ideals (socially congruent and desirable, in the case of the successful adolescent). Erikson believes that, in our culture, adolescence affords a "psychosocial moratorium," particularly for middle - and upper-class American children. They do not yet have to "play for keeps," but can experiment, trying various roles, and thus hopefully find the one most suitable for them.