

Generations Camp Ministries

DISCOVERY WEEKENDS

What is a **Discovery Weekend**? Simply put, it is a vehicle to provide strategic evangelistic ministry for our youth on the district and sub-district levels. These retreat-like gatherings are aimed primarily at Middle School and High School age youth, though they need not exclude other age groups (our experience has shown that 8 year olds, 20 year olds, and even adults fit in and benefit). These weekends are relationally-based and offer quality recreational activities, but make no mistake, their number one purpose is to make Jesus known!

Why Discovery Weekends? The first step of our youth ministry mission is to create an environment in which youth are brought into the presence of Jesus Christ. Coming to a facility where God's creation can be enjoyed, and where a large group of youth are gathered for an extended stay sets the stage for unique things to happen. Then to really stack the deck, we insert a gifted preacher of the gospel and a youth-friendly worship leader. These combination of factors have proved to be very successful and are worth duplicating in the context of all of our US districts.

Our youth ministry mission systematically progresses into discipleship and leadership training, ultimately releasing our youth into ministry. However, this is the long-range vision, and it all starts with discovery of Jesus Christ as personal Savior. We have to concentrate on doing this first step well or we will never see the vision develop.

Where to hold a Discovery Weekend? The three issues to address are affordability, quality, and accessibility. Ask yourself – Am I getting a good bang for my buck? Is it a place I would come back to time and again? Is it a reasonable driving distance for the targeted churches?

IDEAL SCENARIO

Camps or conference centers with the following features:

- ◆ Adequate sleeping quarters (dorms or cabins preferred/ demarcation between boys and girls lodging)
- ◆ Bathing facilities with hot water
- ◆ Suitable dining hall (enough space to seat the full camp)
- ◆ Appropriate meeting room for worship (in some cases, this may mean resetting the dining hall, just be sure there is adequate space with a minor level of distraction)
- ◆ Break out rooms will be needed if various seminars are presented simultaneously
- ◆ Quality recreational facilities on premises or nearby (lake, pool, gym, ball field, ping-pong, putt putt, hiking trails, horseback riding, skiing etc.)

ACCEPTABLE SCENARIO

- ◆ YMCA or Church Hall with sleeping & shower facilities

How to plan and run a Discovery Weekend. Each weekend will be somewhat unique based on the mix of people, the particular district, and the variety of properties utilized, but here are some common denominators that deserve consideration:

(Special Note: Do not be intimidated by the following suggestions. It has taken a process of three years to determine these needs and procedures, and we are still tweaking as we grow through experience.)

- ◆ **PROMOTION** – Three months is an optimum time to allow for advertisement, however, successful camps have been done in six weeks. It is ideal if these weekends can be placed on an annual events calendar for the district. The weekend can be promoted via the Worldwide News, the SEP Website, District Newsletter, fliers, and word of mouth (existing youth groups should be encouraged to invite friends whether in or out of the church). Give an assigned cut off date prior to the event so that housing assignments and meal preparation can be close to accurate.
- ◆ **COST** – Ideally, Discovery Weekends are self-funded through participant fees (fees can range from \$25 to \$100 depending on the scope of the activities). In some instances, the host church may subsidize the camp as part of their local church mission, and participating churches can be encouraged to scholarship their youth. Food service is a major factor that effects cost. Whether meals are prepared by WCG volunteers or the facility staff, wholesome, tasty food at a reasonable cost is the goal. Grocery stores are often happy to donate to youth camps. Mothers of the attending campers are normally willing to send along a dessert. And campers with healthy appetites are encouraged to pack additional snack foods.

Typically, the staff and attending adults are charged a nominal fee to cover food and lodging (\$20-\$25). Due to the workload, the counselors come along free of charge.

- ◆ **STAFFING** – Youth Ministry was meant for organized teams, not individuals wearing multiple hats. The following duties are fundamental to a Discovery Weekend:
 - Director: Typically, this will also be the host for the weekend. This person interfaces with the facility management, is responsible for the scheduling of the weekend, handles registration and collection of fees, paying of bills, and the general oversight of the event.
 - Speaker: This person will handle speaking assignments, counseling matters, and engage the youth in team building/small group activities. He/she is there to be the main spiritual guide and mentor.
 - Worship Director: This role involves the ability to lead appropriate worship music, plus the ability to include others. The Worship Director will coordinate all worship services (this may include the need to set-up sound equipment).
 - Counselors: These young men and women need to be high school graduates who have demonstrated mature conduct and are born-again Christians. Their role for the weekend is to be a big brother or sister to the campers. They will stay in the dorms with their assigned group, see that the group complies with the schedule and any camp rules, watch out for the safety of the group, and enthusiastically

participate in all events. The counselors are the backbone of the program and they need to be prayerfully selected. Ideally, the counselors will have assistants who are being trained for the future.

Activity People: In some cases, the facility may insist that you use their staff for various activities such as a ropes course or even the use of their pool. However, most weekends will require that we assign in-house volunteers. These need to be people who are qualified in their assigned area. They need to be competent, patient teachers who relate well to the youth.

Service People: These are the behind-the-scenes people who make the weekend run. Primarily, this will be the food service staff (the people who plan the menu, purchase food, transport food, prepare and serve the meals, and clean up). The list can also include transportation people, sound crew, etc.

Emergency Protocol: The camp should be prepared for minor medical emergencies, and aware of the most efficient manner of contacting outside help.

- ◆ **LIABILITY** – In the rare case of a medical emergency, it is incumbent on us to be prepared. Each participant must have a signed release form, This form is due at check-in and kept by the Camp Director. Here is a copy of the form we have been using, and take note of the follow up information so we can stay in contact after the event is over.

**DISCOVERY WEEKEND
PERMISSION & REGISTRATION FORM**

_____ has my permission to participate in the DISCOVERY WEEKEND on
(Child's Name & Age)
_ / _ / _ to _ / _ / _ sponsored by _____.

1. As parent/guardian, submit that following special health considerations and instructions are needed for my son/daughter while at the camp (such as medication, information on history of seizures, motion sickness, allergies, etc.)

2. PERSONAL SAFETY INFORMATION: As parent/guardian I certify that my son/daughter is covered by health/accident/medical insurance. YES NO

(Insurance Company)

(Policy Number)

3. EMERGENCY CONTACTS: As parent/guardian, I certify that in the event of an emergency the two individuals listed below will know my whereabouts and / or be able to represent my wishes regarding medical care for my child if I am not reachable.

	-()
(Name)	(Phone Number)
	-()
(Name)	(Phone Number)

- As parent/guardian, I certify that I understand that if my son/daughter has no health/accident/medical insurance coverage (as indicated in paragraph 2 above). My signature on this form assure, that I will be responsible for the payment of all expenses which may occur due to illness or injury.
- As parent/guardian, I give permission to the camp's counselor to request usual and customary medical or legal services for my son/daughter if needed on this outing. I as parent/guardian will be responsible for all such emergency costs not covered by insurance
- I understand and agree to the condition of the camp as described in information provided. I give my permission for my child, named above, to participate in this camp.

Signed _____

Parent/guardian contact information:

Home phone	
Mobile phone	
E-mail address/ Child's E-mail	
Mailing address	

- ◆ SCHEDULE – Being that our goal is to gain a clear hearing of the gospel, it makes good sense to select a theme that can serve to introduce Jesus in a powerful way. It is also very important to rotate spiritual and recreational activities to keep a stimulating balance. Being sensitive to the fact that we have congregations that meet on Saturday, as well as congregations that meet on Sunday, any worship service should simply be called a “chapel” service. Notice the following samples of weekends that were conducted in the Mid-Atlantic District:

SAMPLE: DISCOVERY WEEKEND

Location: FFA CAMP - White Lake, NC

Theme: "GOD, A LAMB?"

FRI March 24th

5:00-7:00 Arrival & Dorm Assignments

6:30-7:30 Dinner in Conference Hall

7:30-9:15 Orientation/Praise Worship/ Opening Message
(Hand out Discovery Tee Shirts)

9:30-10:30 Dessert & Fellowship

10:30-11:00 Dorm Meetings (Counselors with Campers)

11:30 Lights Out

SAT March 25th

7:00-7:30 Devotion at the Dock (for early risers)

7:30-8:30 Breakfast in Conference Hall

8:45-10:30 Block Party (Dizzy Bat, Softball Toss, etc.) Prizes for the
winning team - Christian "Sold Out" Dog Tag

11:00-12:00 Camp Soccer & Volleyball Games

12:00-1:00 Lunch in Conference Hall

1:00-2:00 Fellowship (Worship Team rehearsal)

2:00-3:30 Chapel

4:00-6:00 Water Skiing & Canoeing/ Open Activities

6:30-7:30 Camp Buffet Banquet in Meeting Hall

7:30-8:00 SEP Introduction (Video)

8:00-11:30 70's Retro Dance

12:30 Lights Out

SUN March 26th

8:00-9:00 Breakfast in Conference Hall

9:15-10:45 Chapel with Invitation to Salvation

11:00-12:00 Pack & Clean Camp

12:00-1:00 Lunch & Depart

Cost: \$45 for Campers

\$45 Non-Staff drivers

\$25 Staff Workers

Contact: Michael Best before March 10th

3256 Springdale Rd/ Fayetteville, NC 28301

Send list of names, ages, & a check for full amount

Direct Questions to: Greg.Williams@WCG.org

- ◆ OTHER ITEMS TO INCLUDE: An easy to read map and a list of things to bring, as well as items to leave behind (e.g. Bring: sleeping bag, toiletries, extra towel, old sneakers, bible, notebook, etc. / Do Not Bring: knives, walkman radios, cd, or tape players, tobacco products, any illegal substance, etc.)

**There are thousands of young people out there
who need to discover Jesus, let's get started!**