

GIFTS + CALLINGS

A SUMMER CAMP CURRICULUM FOR SENIOR HIGH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Introduction

We are often told that we have “A Calling (singular).” God has “A Plan (singular)” for us. Young people are then led to think, “Oh, that ONE thing has to be BIG.” As they grow older, they might feel that “BIG” thing is not happening and start to believe they have no purpose. The truth is, God has many callings for us. Some callings might be vocation through a job or career, while others are found elsewhere. Some callings can be big, but most are not. Some callings are the length of a lifetime, and some are just for a moment.

Moses is a wonderful example of a biblical figure with a multitude of callings. He listened to God and allowed God to speak through him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. We too need to listen when God speaks. This is crucial as we discern what our gifts are so that we can use them to serve where God leads.

The goal of this curriculum is to help older campers discern what God has in store for them through scripture, listening to God, self-reflection, service, working as a community, and learning from others. At the end of their time at camp, the hope is that campers will be able to recognize some of the gifts they have been given (whatever those may be) and explore ways they can use those gifts to live out God’s many callings throughout their lives.

How to use this curriculum

Summer camp looks different at every site. Some camps offer week-long programs and others have programs that span the entire summer. You are invited to use the four sections of each day in ways that make sense for your group. They can be done all at once or scattered throughout the day. You can find additional resources as well as handouts in the appendix. So, if one activity does not feel quite right for your group, you can switch it out. Most of these activities and practices can be done just about anywhere and with very few supplies. While most of them are designed to be used together in a group setting, many also lend themselves to solo practice. There are different methods of expression included throughout the curriculum. Hopefully at least one or two will resonate with each camper helping them now and throughout their lives to discern the callings God has for them. Encourage your campers to take what works for them and use it in their lives beyond camp.

Bible Study

Ideally, you will start your day with the Bible study. Each day includes a passage or two to reflect on and a short activity to do either during or after the reading and discussion. In addition to these activities, you might consider including a Bible study sensory box with pens, paper, clay, marbles, or pieces of fabric. Some people find it easier to engage if they have something to do with their hands while reading, writing, or participating in a discussion.

Journal Reflections

Journaling is a wonderful tool to help campers interact with the theme for the day outside of structured activity time. It can allow them to reflect independently on the topic for the day. If you are able, provide each camper with their own journal (it can be as simple as a \$0.99 composition book). You could print your own journals with questions for each day with room to write and draw. Another option is to simply print out the journal questions and put them in the notebook. As with everything at camp, challenge by choice is the name of the game. Not everyone will be excited to have a place to write out their thoughts, but it is worth it to challenge your campers to at least give each prompt a try. After Bible study each morning, ask campers to share what they wrote the night before. Following God's call often requires a great deal of self-reflection and journaling can be a wonderful tool. If journaling doesn't work for your group, try using these questions for further group discussion.

Spiritual Practices

There are many ways that one can commune with God. Different practices work well with different people. As these campers are learning how to make sense of what God has in store for them, it will be helpful to find a way to tune into what God has to say. These practices can be done in conjunction with your Bible study or during another time throughout the day. The goal is to introduce campers to the various ways a person can calm their mind and connect with God. All practices can be done individually or communally.

Activities

All the activities listed can be flexible based on group size and ability. Certain days, there are additional activities listed in the appendix. You will notice that some of the debriefs have popcorn questions. This means that the facilitator should pose the question to the group and allow people to share at random as they feel comfortable. Individual questions are ideally answered by everyone in the group.

LOOKING AHEAD

There are several activities in this curriculum for which planning ahead would be helpful.

- **Day One, Activity Section:** There is an invitation for campers to bring a picture from home. There is also a second option listed to print pictures at camp from which they can choose. If you would like to have campers bring a picture, alert campers ahead of arrival.
- **Day Five, Bible Study Section:** There is the suggestion of a video to watch with the campers. Checking the link and securing a way to view the video would be helpful.
- **Day Five, Activity Section:** The Stranger No More! activity offers the option for the campers to connect with someone at camp they do not know (every day of camp or just on day five). If you would like this to be an on-going activity which is discussed as part of day five, you should introduce this activity at the beginning of the week
- **Day Six, Activity Section:** There is a suggestion on the final day of the curriculum to invite a guest speaker. The suggested questions for this guest speaker are found in the appendix section. This activity is one of the culminating activities of the week and choosing the best guest for your group is something to plan in advance.

DAY 1: MADE IN GOD'S OWN IMAGE | PSALM 139

Today's goal is for campers to discover the beauty of what it means to be known and loved by God. They will learn to appreciate themselves and their fellow humans for the special people God has created them to be.

Bible Study

What you need: Bibles, clay (or play dough)

Share with campers that Psalm 139 is a beautiful reminder that we are not alone in this world. It reminds us that we matter. Every single part of our being matters to God because God purposefully and intricately made us. Sometimes in this life, it feels like no one understands us, we may not even fully understand ourselves. But there is comfort to be found during those times in Psalm 139. Have you ever heard someone say that you give your attention to the things that matter to you? Well, according to this Psalm, God took great care and attention to bring you into being. God knows each of us in a way that surpasses all understanding.

Instructions:

Hand each camper some clay or play dough. Instruct each camper to make it into a round ball. Explain that you'll be reading through Psalm 139, split into a few sections, and that during each one they should use the clay to mold a representation of some part of the reading. Read slowly and be sure to pause in between each section. Before you begin reading again, ask campers to return their piece of clay to a ball.

- 1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
- 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
- 3 You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 4 Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.
- 5 You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
- 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Pause a moment for reflection. Then invite campers to return their piece of clay to a ball and mold a representation from the following scripture passage.

- 7 Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
- 8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
- 9 If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,"
12 even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

Pause a moment for reflection. Then invite campers to return their piece of clay to a ball and mold a representation from the following scripture passage.

13 For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
16 Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.
17 How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
18 I try to count them — they are more than the sand;
I come to the end — I am still with you.

Pause a moment for reflection. Then invite campers to return their piece of clay to a ball and mold a representation from the following scripture passage.

19 O that you would kill the wicked, O God,
and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me—
20 those who speak of you maliciously,
and lift themselves up against you for evil!
21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
22 I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.
23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.
24 See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting"
-Psalm 139 (NRSV)

Pause a moment for reflection.

When you have finished going through all the sections, invite some conversation about the molding and unmolding process:

- How did the process of molding clay during the Scripture readings feel? (Comfortable? Uncomfortable? Distracting? Meaningful?)
- What did it feel like to squish each thing you had just created?
- Did anything surprise you over the course of all this molding and unmolding?
- Would anyone like to share about something you made in one of the sections? (This question could also be asked under each section in the discussion questions below.)

Ask for a volunteer to re-read aloud verses 1-6.

- What does it mean to be known? How does it feel to be known?
- Can you describe a time when you felt known or seen by someone in your life?

Ask for a volunteer to read verses 7-12.

- How do we know that God is always with us? What does it feel like?

Ask for a volunteer to read verses 13-18.

- What does it mean to be fearfully and wonderfully made?
- If we believe that God carefully stitched every part of us together, what does that tell us about the value of our lives?

Ask for a volunteer to read verses 19-24.

- How does God keep us safe?
- How does that play in to living out what we have been called to do with our lives?

Journal Reflections:

What are your favorite things about yourself?

Where have you noticed growth in your life over this past year?

What are your biggest hopes and dreams? What do you hope to have accomplished 5 years from now? 10? 30?

Spiritual Practice

Pray in Color

What you need: Paper and Markers (crayons or colored pencils)

Instructions:

Remind campers that we are all made in God's own image, beautifully and wonderfully. Art is an expression of that beauty and one way that we can intentionally connect with God.

In the center of the page, write or draw something to represent God. As you begin your prayer, doodle around your representation. Do what feels right. Make whatever marks on the page come naturally to you. For some it might be words or phrases, for others it might be lines and squiggles. When you are ready, write the name of the person you want to pray for. It could be someone going through a hard time, someone you know (or not), or someone you are thankful for. Focus on that person (or group of people). As you pray for them, draw a connector from them to the image of God you created. As you connect them on the page, connect them in your heart and mind as well. Continue to doodle until you have finished praying for that person. Repeat this process until you have expressed all the prayers in your heart onto the page. When you finish, take a deep breath and say, "Amen."

You can learn more about praying color at www.prayingincolor.com.

Activities + Debriefs

We are all special and unique in our own ways. Acknowledging and celebrating what makes them special can help campers discern their gifts and the different calls God has placed in their hearts. Take time during your first days together to have campers share what is special and unique about themselves and learn what makes their fellow campers special and unique as well.

Instructions:

Have a Show and Tell

Email campers (and their parents) before camp and ask them to bring a picture of one item from home that represents something they are proud of. Alternatively, ask campers for a type of item that represents something they're proud of and print the selected image for them. Some examples: a trophy from a sporting event, an academic or service award, a picture of something they built, a recipe they created or executed well, an example of a hobby or skill they learned, or maybe a musical instrument.

Have everyone share the item they brought and the story behind it. Why are they proud of this particular item or accomplishment?

Other "get to know you" and group activities can be found in the appendix.

DAY TWO: IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD | PSALM 23

Today's goal is for campers to reflect on what a relationship with God can look like and the ways in which that relationship can change throughout their lives. The activities and reflections are aimed at helping campers to find ways to connect with God that feel personal and meaningful for them and to think outside the traditional models we are given to foster that connection.

Bible Study

- “1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
3 he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.”
-Psalm 23 (NRSV)

What you need: (optional) whiteboard or newsprint and markers

Instructions:

Read Psalm 23 together as a group. Together rewrite the Psalm to make it more personal for your campers. Verse by verse, work to write a new Psalm 23. It would probably be helpful to use a white board or newsprint here. Ask campers to get to the heart of each verse. The goal of this activity is to make scripture (and therefore God) feel more relatable and personal. Once you have prepared your new Psalm (with input from the whole group), pray it together. After you have prayed your new Psalm, open a discussion about the process and what this passage says to the campers.

Discussion Questions:

- How was this process for you? (Easy? Difficult?)
- What emotions did rewriting this Psalm bring up for you?

- How might we take this activity of re-imagining scripture into our everyday lives?
- Do you feel more connected to the scripture after completing this activity?

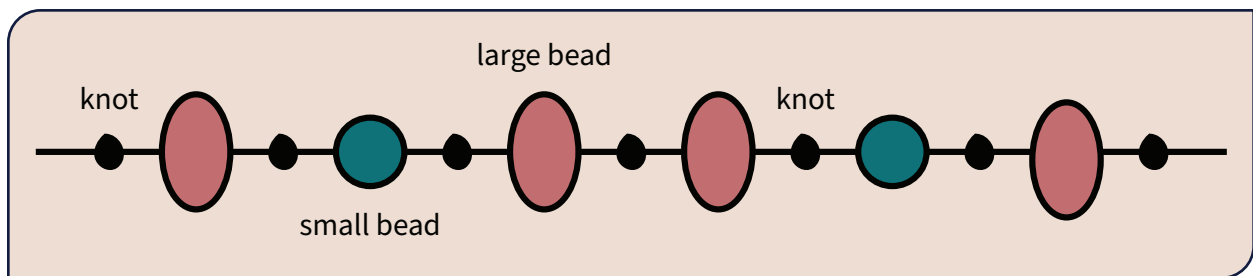
Journal Reflections:

How can fostering our relationship with God, help us to better understand ourselves?

What does a relationship with God look like (list three things)?

What does a relationship with God feel like (list three things)?

Spiritual Practice



Prayer Beads

What you need: string (or ribbon), scissors, beads (Try to include different colors, shapes, and textures, but make sure the string or ribbon goes through the hole in the beads. It is ideal if you have at least two sizes of beads.), and copies of the handout which is found in the appendix.

Instructions:

Pre-cut enough ribbon or string for each camper (around 8-10 inches). Allow campers to sort through the beads and pick out as many as they want (at least 4 larger beads). Have campers tie a knot at the end of the string and then place the first large bead. After the first bead have campers tie at least one knot before adding another bead. Repeat this process until the string is full. Be sure to end with a large bead.

How to use them:

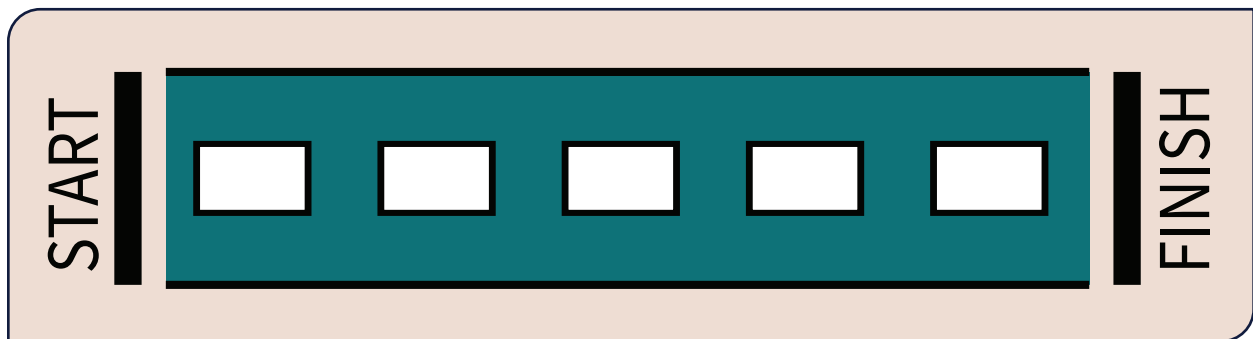
- Each bead/knot invites campers to pray the Lord's Prayer as well as the prayers of their heart as they slowly run the strand through their fingers.
- Each large bead represents a portion of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:10-13).
- Bead 1 is verse 10, bead 2 is verse 11, bead 3 is verse 12 and bead four is verse 13.
- Each knot between the beads invites a pause and a deep breath.
- Smaller beads represent the prayers of the heart (i.e., safety for family and friends, healing for our planet, peace for our brothers and sisters fleeing war and instability, patience within ourselves, etc.).

Activities + Debrief

Marshmallow River (but make it a challenge).

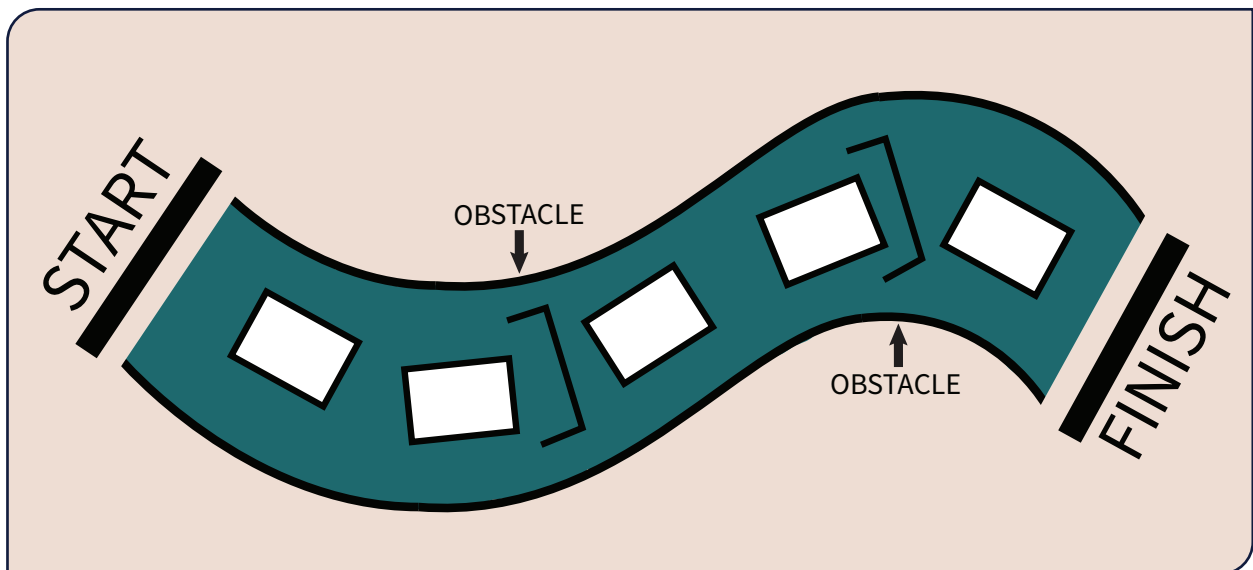
The goal is for campers to have to rethink strategy. Throughout our lives it is important to check in with ourselves and reevaluate our needs because they can and will change. So too are the ways we feel connected to God throughout our lives. Just because the old ways do not resonate anymore does not mean the connection is not there, it just means we need to pivot. Be sure to incrementally add challenges along the way

What you need: carpet squares, poly spots, or something to serve as steppingstones (one for each participant) and tape for boundaries



Basic Marshmallow River Instructions:

Start by creating a start and end point (use chalk, tape, landmarks, etc.) Have the group line up and hand the leader one poly spot or carpet square per person (10 people = 10 spots, etc.) Instruct campers to get from one side of the “river” to the other using the spots or “marshmallows” while staying connected the whole time. Marshmallows will float away if a foot is not touching it.



Advanced Marshmallow River Options:

- Use less marshmallows.

- Require campers to sing loudly while completing the activity.
- Make the river extra curvy.
- Take away their ability to communicate verbally or only allow one camper to use spoken words.
- Have every other camper face the opposite direction.
- Give a time limit.

Options for groups with campers who have mobility challenges:

- Use extra-large marshmallows to allow for individuals whose balance or stance might require a larger surface area to stand on.
- Use yarn, webbing, or short pieces of rope in place of marshmallows. In this case, campers step into place and then form the marshmallow circle on the ground around their feet. They can also assist one another in creating the circle around someone else's feet. For an extra challenge, you can require campers to set the rope around their neighbor's feet and disallow them from creating the circle around their own feet.

Debrief:

Ask campers to share their experience with the activity. What was challenging? What did they do well? What did they see? What did they feel? What was learned? How can that lesson be applied at camp this week and then when they go home?

Remind campers that this activity mimics our relationship with God throughout our lives; it won't always look the same as your life evolves. Sometimes, it will be challenging and sometimes you might feel like the connection has been broken. However, like your fellow campers were always connected to you, you are always connected to God. Even if you temporarily pull away, God is always there with you - ready to grab your hand.

DAY THREE: FOLLOWER OF JESUS | MATTHEW 4:18-22 AND LUKE 19:1-10

Today's goal is for campers to begin to recognize various calls they have felt in their lives and to look to others who have followed their call. Campers will examine the challenges and rewards of what it looks like to follow Jesus and how doing so will ultimately lead them towards living out their callings.

Bible Study

“18 As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.” – Matthew 4:18-22 (NRSV)

“1 He (Jesus) entered Jericho and was passing through it. 2 A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” 6 So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. 7 All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” 8 Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” 9 Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.” – Luke 19:1-10 (NRSV)

Read the two scripture passages above and then complete the exercise below. Following a call is not usually as cut and dry as the Bible depicts in these stories. It involves a lot of questioning, consideration, and weighing of options. The questions provided below are to help campers begin to think through what it looks like to wrestle with following their call and some of the questions and emotions that may arise during the process.

What you need: paper and a bowl (or bucket)

To dive deeper, break your campers up into smaller groups (2-4 people). Have them write or draw their answer to one of the scenarios provided below. Give groups time to talk about it and then share with the larger group. Consider doing two rounds of this exercise to give everyone a chance to examine each question.

Scenarios to choose from:

- Would you rather have four million dollars right now or \$10,000 a month every month for the rest of your life? Is it better to have instant gratification or something seemingly smaller that is potentially more sustaining? Why?
- Zebedee probably was not too thrilled to be left to pick up his sons' slack. How would you handle a situation where you felt you were doing the right thing, but your parents did not approve?
- It's pretty wild that these men just up and went with Jesus, with very little information on him. How might you have reacted if you were in their sandals?
- Jesus clearly offered a compelling pitch for these men to leave everything they knew for a life of uncertainty, but one with great reward. Explain how you might encourage someone to give of their time or resources to a cause that you feel passionate about. How would you approach them? What would you say?

Journal Reflections:

Have you ever felt called to do something? This can be anything from joining a club, taking on a leadership role, making a new friend, or maybe volunteering outside of school.

How did you know this was what you should do?

Describe how it felt after you followed the call.

Spiritual Practice

Breath Prayer

What you need: yourselves and a quiet space

The leader should instruct participants to do the following:

- Get comfy and close your eyes.
- Place your hands, palms facing up in your lap.
- Focus in on your breathing and try to tune everything else out.
- Take three deep breaths, slowly.
- Resume your normal pace of breathing.
- Once your mind is still, on an inhale say to yourself, "God is with me,"
- Then, on the exhale say, "Every step of the way."
- Repeat the two phrases, inhaling and exhaling for five to ten minutes.
- When time is up, slowly come back to the group. Wiggle your hands and feet.
- Open your eyes when you are ready.
- Take this prayer with you throughout the rest of your day. It is there for you if need it.

Activities + Debrief

Plan a service project or activity with younger campers. This activity might be one that you talk about at the beginning of the week and put into action on the third day. Service project examples include: deep clean the dining hall, build a wheelchair ramp or find a way to make your space more accessible, build bird feeders, or plant a garden. Some examples of activities for younger campers might look like creating a new age-appropriate game, an epic scavenger hunt, lead a daytime camp out (teach them how to make a fire and set up a tent), or plan out a nature hike with activities along the way.

Instructions:

Being a follower of Jesus requires action. Having campers work together to plan and execute a project will help them to better understand where their strengths lie. It will also help them recognize strengths that their fellow campers have which they can encourage along the way. Based on your camp setting, plan a service project or an activity with younger campers so that leadership campers have an opportunity to use their gifts.

Service Project

- Collect several options for service projects that can be completed at camp before the session starts.
- Present options to campers and have them select which one they want to take on. Then ask them to come up with roles like project manager, health and safety supervisor, or lead hole digger.
- Have the group come up with a plan to accomplish their collective goal.

Activity

- Similar to the service project, come up with several options beforehand.
- Present options to campers and have them select which one they want to take on. Then then ask them to come up with roles like supply gatherer, lead instruction giver, sideline buddy, or logistics coordinator.
- Have the group come up with a plan to accomplish their collective goal.

Debrief

After the project or activity has been completed ask the following:

- Popcorn: What went well? What would you have done differently? Who stood out to you and why?
- Individual: Do you felt like your gifts were utilized during this process? Did you enjoy the job you ended up with? Was there a role you might have liked to try but didn't get to?

DAY FOUR: DISCOVERING YOUR OWN GIFTS | 1 COR. 12:4-11

Today's goal is to help campers discern their own gifts and recognize the importance of acknowledging the multitude of gifts that others possess.

Bible Study

“4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.”

-1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NRSV)

What you need: whiteboard (or newsprint), markers, pens/pencils, and a spiritual gift assessment (one for each participant)

After reading the passage ask the following:

- Why is it important to discover what our gifts are and what they are not?
- Why do you think God gave us all different gifts?
- How can we benefit from seeing strengths in others?
- How might our communities, or the world, benefit from honoring each other's strengths?

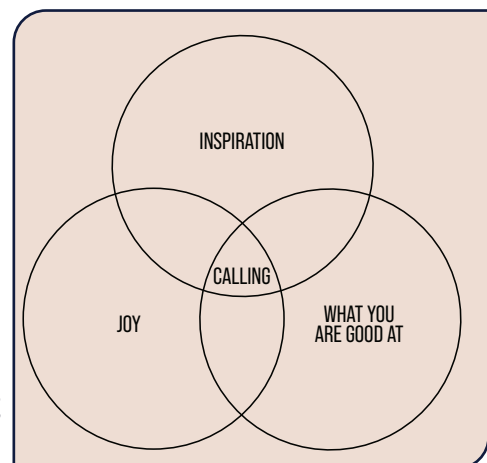
Use one of the spiritual gift assessment links located in the appendix. You could also do another form of self-evaluation profile like the Enneagram, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or True Colors (links to resources for these assessments are also included in the appendix).

Once everyone is finished taking and scoring their assessments, read through the types of spiritual gifts (or other personality assessment) and have campers share their results. Use butcher paper or a white board to write out everyone's gifts.

Journal Reflections:

Draw a Venn diagram and list three things that bring you joy, three things that you are good at, and three things that motivate you.

In the middle section, do you find that there is something (or multiple things) that include all three?



Spiritual Practice

Lectio Divina

Try it together – but remind campers that this practice is also great for solo devotion.

What you need: Bibles, pen, and paper

“4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.” – Romans 12: 4-8 (NRSV)

Instructions:

Ask a different volunteer to read the passage above for each of these three sections: Lectio, Meditatio, and Oratio. The facilitator should read for Contemplatio.

Lectio : Reading or Listening to the Word of God

Read the scripture passage aloud (slowly). Then ask the following questions.

- Was there a word or phrase that stuck out or spoke to you during this first reading?
- Offer a moment of silence for reflection after the discussion.

Meditatio: Reflecting on the Word of God

Read the scripture passage aloud (slowly). Then ask the following questions.

- Were there any new words or phrases that struck you this time? Perhaps the words or phrases from the last reading have taken on a new meaning?
- Offer a moment of silence for reflection after the discussion.

Oratio: Responding to the Word of God

Read the scripture passage aloud (slowly).

Invite the group to take time to acknowledge any prayers that might have come up during this third reading. Give time to pray individually. Then ask if anyone would like to share.

Contemplatio: Resting in the Word of God

Ask your campers to simply listen this round. Read the scripture passage aloud (slowly).

After you finish, offer a moment of silence. Ask that the group move to the next activity in silence to let the Word of God fully sink in.

Activities + Debrief

Gift Portrait

Instructions:

Write each camper's name on a sheet of paper and place them around the room. Have the campers select the paper with their name and draw a "self-portrait" with attributes that represent their own gifts. The goal is for campers to connect with their own gifts, tap into gifts that others see in them, and to recognize the gifts of those around them. For example, a large heart if they feel they are very kind; big muscles if they do the heavy lifting and work hard; open hands for generosity; etc. Then flip the paper over and have campers take turns going around the room to do the same for their fellow campers. Debrief by having each camper share the strengths they see in themselves as well as what others noticed. Were there any surprises? Any they did not agree with? How can they use their gifts to serve others? Encourage group input here.

The DUCK activity in the appendix will also work here.

DAY FIVE: FISHERS OF PEOPLE | JOHN 13:34 AND PHIL. 2:1-4

Today's goal is for campers to learn how to put their unique gifts into action in order to make a positive impact on the world we all live in.

Bible Study

“34 I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” – John 13:34 (NRSV)

“If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”
– Philippians 2: 1-4, NRSV

What you need: Bibles and a computer (or TV) to watch the video

Instructions:

Read both verses out loud with campers.

- Say: There are many ways that we can show love to our fellow humans, big and small.
- Ask: What are some different ways that we can show love to one another (at camp, at home, in our community, in the world, etc.)?

Watch [this video](#) (link is also found in appendix) about “America’s Government Teacher,” Sharon McMahan.

Sharon is an amazing example of someone who uses her gifts to educate all kinds of people. Her platform covers all political, socio-economic, racial, religious and age spectrums. First, she has created a community where people are genuinely interested in getting to know people who do not think like them and who want to find peace through understanding. Second, this community cares deeply about helping others. In the video, she talks about raising money to erase medical debt. Medical debt or any type of debt makes it difficult for individuals to plan for the future. To collectively reach (and exceed their goal), people sent sums of money ranging from just cents to hundreds of dollars. By helping people to understand their neighbor, she has created a vast community of radical compassion.

After watching the video discuss with the group:

- How is Sharon living out her calling? Do you think she feels she has more than one calling in life? Why do you think so many people online connected with Sharon? Why do you think these strangers were compelled to give so freely to people they did not even know?

- We can't all have blue check marks by our names on Instagram. But what are some ways that we emulate her ability to connect and help others in our own lives? Are there small contributions that we can make, that will have a large impact?

Journal Reflections:

Describe a time when you felt deeply loved.

List three people in your life that love you. How do they show it?

What is one thing you can do today to show love to someone else? It can be something concrete like letting someone have the last roll at dinner or it can be more abstract like asking about someone's day. Give campers a few minutes to consider and settle on their idea. Let them know you will check in with them at the end of the day to talk about how it felt to show love to someone else.

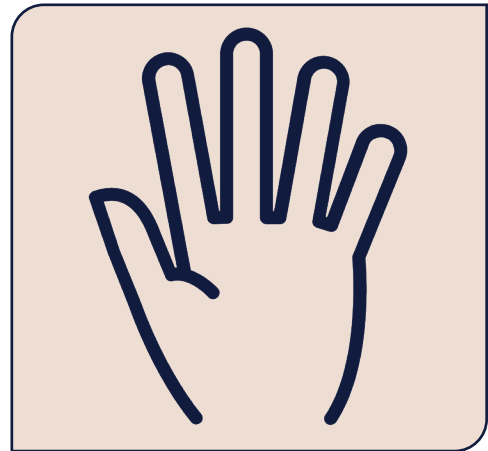
Spiritual Practice

Five-Finger Prayer

What you need: newsprint (or white board) and markers

Instructions:

Explain to your campers what the five-finger prayer is and what each finger represents. (Note: Be aware of any campers with limb differences in your group. This activity could easily be adapted by using five different colors of yarn for each participant. You could tie them together and assign a different intention to each color.)



The five-finger prayer is a method of prayer developed by Pope Francis where each finger stands for a different intention. This is a great prayer practice to keep in your back pocket to use with younger campers. You can find other spiritual practices for this day in the appendix.

Thumb: The thumb is always the finger closest to you. It reminds us to pray for those closest to us, like friends and family.

Pointer: The pointer finger invites us to pray for those who “point” us in the right direction. This can be teachers at school, pastors, coaches, or other mentors.

Middle: Our middle finger is usually the tallest. It reminds us to pray for those in positions of authority such as government officials, international leaders, bosses, maybe even the camp director!

Ring: The ring finger is the weakest of the five and reminds us to pray for those among us who are suffering.

Pinky: After praying for those around us, our littlest finger reminds us to pray for ourselves.

Grab some newsprint or use a white board to write out the five intentions. Ask campers to give examples (broad or specific) of each and write them down. Once you finish, invite campers to pray on their own, either using the examples provided by the group or any specific to the participants. Instruct campers to start with their thumb and use their hand (or string) to pray these intentions in order. When it appears that everyone has finished, offer a collective "Amen!"

Activities + Debrief

Stranger No More!

This activity can be done organically through the week and is intended to help campers build a relationship with someone new. You may allow them to choose their own person, or you could assign a person to each of your campers. The latter might be especially helpful if you want them to connect with a staff member. Connecting with others helps us to better understand ourselves, the world around us, and the needs of the world that we may not have considered.

Instructions:

Have your campers sit somewhere different at a meal and find a staff person (maybe in the kitchen or on maintenance staff) or a younger camper. Get to know them. Give them examples of conversation starters. Ask: where do you live? Do you have siblings? Are you a dog or cat person? Then try to see what you may have in common. Invite campers to keep talking throughout the week(s) and maybe even beyond camp (when appropriate).

Debrief Questions:

Ask each camper who they chose to get to know better. Why did they choose this person? What did they talk about? Did they learn anything surprising? Did they find this task difficult or easy? Why?

Popcorn Group questions:

How can getting to know someone be an act of God's love for them? Why is it important for effective leaders to know how to connect with others?

DAY SIX: LISTENING TO GOD | LUKE 1:26-38

Today's goal is for campers to explore what it means to listen to God. Through the activity and Bible study they will hear about others who have listened to God and they will reflect on what that experience feels like for them through the journaling questions and spiritual practice.

Bible Study

“26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” 34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.”

– Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV)

What you need: Bibles, pen, paper, and copies of “José y Maria” by Everett Patterson

Instructions:

After everyone has finished reading the passage, ask the group:

- What you think Mary was feeling and thinking in the moments immediately following the angel giving her the news (verses 26-29)?
- Can you think of an example from our world today (or in recent history), where God has called someone to do something terrifying and they followed that call?

Invite each camper to find a partner, and share Everett Patterson's illustration titled “José y Maria” (available at <http://www.everettpatterson.com/?p=1835>). In pairs, ask:

- How many references to the Christmas story can you find in the illustration?
- What feelings come up when you look at this image? What parts of the image do you like? What parts of it are challenging?

Invite pairs to pair up, so campers are in groups of four, and ask them to share their reactions to the image with their group of four. If time allows, have an opportunity to share with the whole group any parts of their smaller conversations that stood out.

Repeat the process of discussing in pairs, fours, and the big group, discussing: Even though she was scared when the angel first appeared and even though Mary questioned what the angel was telling her, ultimately her response was (according to the retelling of the story in *The Message*) “Yes, I see it all now: I’m the Lord’s maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say.” Whether or not you can relate to Mary or Joseph’s specific experience, what does their story tell us about listening to God?

Journal Reflections:

What spiritual practice resonated with you this week?

How can you incorporate that into your life on a regular basis?

How might that benefit you?

Spiritual Practice

Meditation

Instructions:

Remind campers that it is not always easy to hear God due to school, friends, family, or the state of the world. It can be hard to quiet our hearts and minds to “hear” what God may be trying to tell us. Meditating can quiet and still your mind and body to help you better tune in to what God has for you. It is also wonderful to simply be with God.

Find a comfy spot to sit or lie down outside. Quiet your mind. Pick something to focus on for just five minutes. If there are clouds in the sky, focus on them. Can you make out any shapes? Are they moving fast or seemingly still? Maybe find a tree to focus on. How many different colors can you see in the leaves? Or maybe close your eyes and just listen. Is there wind? Birds chirping? Cars in the distance? Whatever you choose, focus on it for five minutes or more. Quieting the mind is the first part of a meditation practice, but the more important piece is being open to the thoughts and leanings that come in that time. As your mind relaxes, thoughts and feelings will drift in. Instead of dismissing them, acknowledge them and let them be. They will come and go but be aware of them so you might be open to what God is telling you.

Activities + Debrief

Invite a speaker to come and share with the group the ways in which they have taken on God’s various calls throughout their life. This could be someone from inside camp or a member of the community. Think about asking someone who is not a member of the clergy. God’s call does not always lead to ministry in the church. You might think of someone who is in their second or third career, someone who is involved with a service organization, or maybe just someone with an inspiring life story. You could send the pre-interview questions (located in the appendix) to the speaker to help them frame their talk.

APPENDIX ITEMS

Everyday Journal Questions:

- What made me smile today?
- What was something I did well today?
- Leadership Moment: Did any staff members (or fellow campers) stand out to you today? Why?
- Did I learn anything new about myself, someone else, or even a random fact?

Activities:

Get to know us

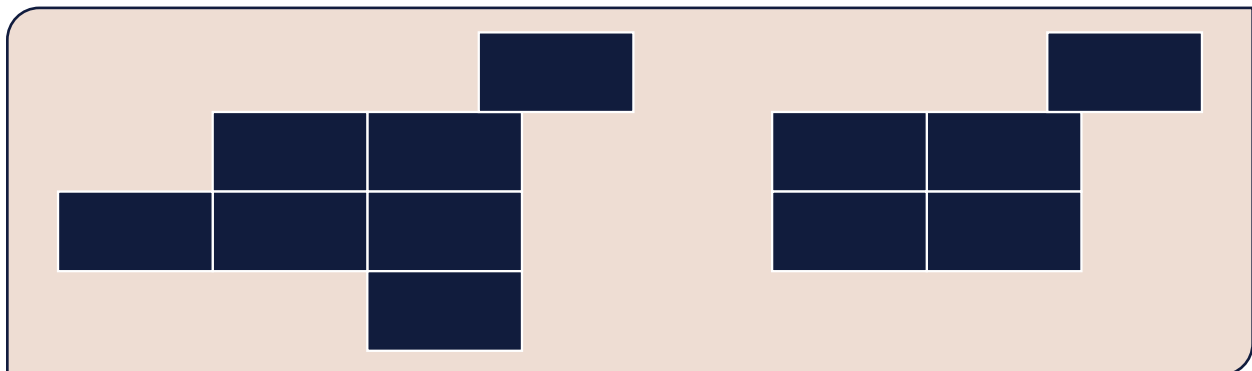
What you need: nature, a large blank banner, and glue (or mod podge)

Create a collage to hang on the front of your cabin or shared space as a reminder of the connection your group shares with one another and with God. On a poster board or other large canvas draw your group name in bubble letters (or if you're especially talented an outline of your cabin). Have campers find objects in nature (a tangible representation of God's beauty and love for us) that represent them. Once everyone has their objects use mod-podge to create your collage.

Duck Activity

Break campers up into small groups and instruct them to build a duck out of seven Legos and then have them explain what makes it a duck. You could also use sticks, rocks, or blocks.

After everyone has shared what makes their duck a duck, remove two of the objects and ask them to again explain why the duck is still a duck.



Give campers double the amount of objects and instruct them to create a representation of a potential career, then share with the group as a whole about what they built.

Add three more blocks and instruct campers to transform it into a different career.

Debrief by inviting campers to examine the many forms living out our call can take throughout our lives.

Tangled Rope Activity

What you will need: a piece of rope (about an arm and a half length) for each camper

Instruct everyone to grab a piece of rope. Then grab the end of someone else's rope with their other hand. Be sure that it is not the person standing next to them. The goal is to untangle the rope, with the group ending in one large circle. Campers must remain holding both pieces of rope the entire time.

Debrief – Your campers have learned a lot about themselves and each other this week. They share a bond that will remain in spite of time and distance. Relate the experience to our forever connection with God.

Get to Know You Games

- <https://campminder.com/go/11-fresh-and-fun-icebreakers-to-welcome-summer-campers/>
- <https://youthgroupgames.com.au/collection/top-ten-get-to-know-you-games/>
- https://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf
- <https://www.acacamps.org/news-publications/blogs/counselors-corner/break-ice>

Meditation and Prayer Resources:

Some apps to try at home: Calm, Aura, InScape

Low Tech Ways to Meditate or Pray:

- Do a body scan. Lie down, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths. Then bring awareness to your feet. Acknowledge any tension you may feel, take a breath, and release it. Continue this as you bring awareness to every part of your body. Feet, calves, thighs, hands, arms, shoulders chest, and finally your head.
- Take a mindfulness walk (around the block, around camp, in your backyard, etc.). Search for everything red or green or purple, thank God for every person you pass, or stop every two minutes to look at your new perspective.
- Take a God walk. While you are walking, talk to God (out loud or in your head). Start small. Tell God about what you had for lunch, what your plans are for the weekend, that funny thing you saw on Tik Tok, etc. Then you might chat about what has made you feel anxious, scared, or frustrated (like an upcoming test, applying for college, a disagreement with a friend, etc.). Let it out. Then, mention something that made you happy that day or something for which you are grateful. When you have nothing left to say, take a deep breath in and out and say “Amen.”

Sharon McMahon

Video link: <https://youtu.be/5UrK46oCoVM>

If link does not work, you can search for “Good Morning America Meet America’s Government Teacher”. You can learn more about Sharon on her website (www.sharonmcmahon.com/), podcast: (www.sharonmcmahon.com/podcast), Instagram (@sharonsaysso), or Twitter (@sharonsaysso).

Personality Assessments: Spiritual Gifts Assessments

- <https://spiritualgiftstest.com/>

Sign up to create a free account that includes in depth descriptions of spiritual gifts as well as a free printable Spiritual Gifts Assessment pdf for youth.

Enneagram Resources

- <https://www.enneagraminstitute.com/>
- The Essential Enneagram Book
- The Road Back to You
- <https://www.youenneagramcoach.com/free-resources>

True Colors

- <https://www.truecolorsintl.com/what-is-true-colors>
- <https://www.ira.esc14.net/upload/page/0255/True%20Colors.pdf>

Myers Briggs

- <https://wedgworthleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Myers-Briggs-Personality-Test.pdf>
- <https://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/understanding-mbti-type-dynamics/>

Spiritual Practices:

Walk a labyrinth.

If your site doesn’t have one already in place, you can easily make your own out of rocks, blocks or rope. You can learn more about labyrinths at <https://labyrinthociety.org/about-labyrinths>.

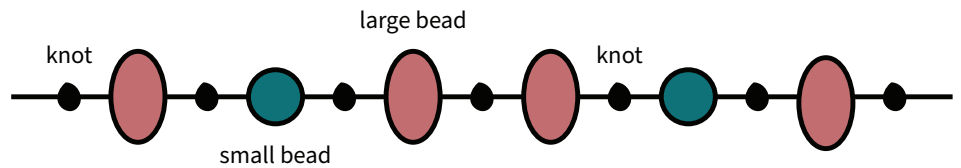
Guest Speaker Pre-Interview Questions

Tell your speaker about the topic for that day and make sure they understand how this curriculum is defining the word, call.

- Tell us about who you are and what you do for a living?
- How did you get to where you are today? Be sure to include people and experiences who have helped to shape your journey.
- What challenges have you faced and how have they shaped who you are today?
- Where do you find fulfillment in your life? How have work and extracurriculars melded together to help you fully live out God's many callings on your life?
- How have these things changed over time?
- What kinds of things do you do outside of work to live out God's call(s) on your life? Maybe you feel you are called to multiple things; how do you incorporate them all?
- Looking back on your life, can you pinpoint any experiences you had as a young adult that gave a glimpse into what your callings are? Did you recognize that at the time?
- How can our campers live into what God is calling them to do, right now as teens and young adults?
- What advice would you give your 17-year-old self?

PRAYER BEAD HANDOUT

Use your personalized prayer beads to pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:10-13, NRSV) and lift yourself and others up to God. Remember that each of the large beads stands for



a portion of the Lord's Prayer, the knots invite you to pause and take a deep breath, and the smaller beads represent the prayers of your heart. Use the space between the verses of the Lord's Prayer to write in where you placed your knots and what your personal prayer beads stand for.

1st Large Bead: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

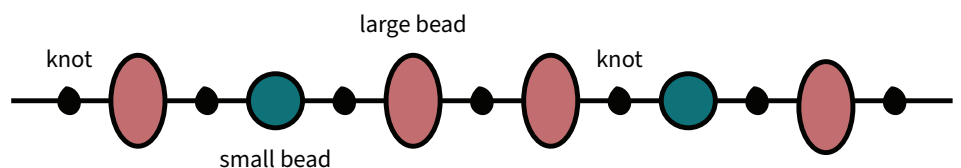
2nd Large Bead: Give us this day our daily bread.

3rd Large Bead: And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

4th Large Bead: And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

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About the Author

Elizabeth Owen is Memphis born and raised. She graduated from the University of Memphis in 2015 and has worked in several non-profit roles since then. Having spent a majority of her life attending and working at Camp Hopewell in Oxford, MS, she is passionate about camping and creating meaningful experiences for children and youth in that space. In her free time, Elizabeth loves to cook, travel, and spend time with her cats, Frank and Louise.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CAMP
AND CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION



Presbyterian Mission
**Office of Christian
Formation**

This curriculum was developed by the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association and UKirk Collegiate Ministries in collaboration with the Office of Christian Formation in the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The task force for this project was Kristi Button, Theresa McDonald-Lee, Gini Norris-Lane, Matt Shick, Allison Wehrung, Jeremy Wilhelmi, and Joel Winchip. John Reiter did the layout for this resource.

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