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# **Introduction to Young Women Camp**

"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32).

"A fountain of pure water" and "a thicket of small trees" (Mosiah 18:5)—Mormon used these words to describe the place where Alma hid after fleeing from King Noah. Those trees and that water became "beautiful . . . to the eyes" of the people who joined Alma there. Why? Because in that place, Alma and his people "came to the knowledge of their Redeemer" (Mosiah 18:30).

The location of your Young Women camp—whether it is in a forest, in a park, on a beach, or in a meetinghouse—can become beautiful to the eyes of all who gather there. Like Alma and his people, young women need a place where they can gather together, separate from worldly influences, feel the Spirit of the Lord, grow in unity and love, and strengthen their faith and testimonies of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

The Church encourages camp for young women. Under the direction of priesthood leaders and with consideration of the needs of families, ward and stake Young Women presidencies determine the frequency and extent of the camp program. A multiday camp is generally held each year on a ward or stake level. Other day or overnight camps may be held at the discretion of priesthood leaders to meet local needs and interests. The principles in this book should be applied in all planning.

Camp is for all young women eligible to participate in the Young Women program. Nonmembers who are willing to abide by Church standards may also be included. Leaders should determine which young women will be old enough by the date of the camp and invite them to participate. Parents and leaders may counsel together on any exceptions to the age guideline with consideration of maturity and peer relationships. (See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 10.8.6.)

Young Women presidencies, camp leaders, and youth camp leaders should use the principles in this guide to plan and organize camp. These principles will help adult and youth camp leaders plan a camp experience for the young women in each Church unit, regardless of location and circumstances. A camp that is planned and organized according to these inspired principles will help the young women grow in the gospel of Jesus Christ, develop friendships, and increase in self-reliance and outdoor skills.

Alma and his people did not stay at the Waters of Mormon, but their experiences at the Waters of Mormon stayed with them. Likewise, as the young women return to their homes, their experiences at camp will stay with and strengthen them because they have come to a greater knowledge of their Redeemer.





# Principles of Camp Leadership

"Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (D&C 112:10).

Youth and adults can become successful camp leaders as they follow the leadership principles found in *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*: prepare spiritually, participate in councils, minister to others, and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ (see *Handbook 2, 3.2* and the class presidency leadership lessons found at youngwomen.lds.org).

#### **Prepare Spiritually**

As a leader, you can receive inspiration as you pray, study the scriptures, and fast while keeping the young women in mind. Consider attending the temple, where possible. Your spiritual preparation will guide your efforts as you plan and prepare for camp.

#### Participate in Councils

Young Women presidencies, adult camp leaders, and youth camp leaders meet to counsel together about camp. Counseling together in this way invites inspiration from the Holy Ghost and will help you discover effective ways to meet the needs of the young women and their families through camp. All those who participate in these councils should feel that their comments and ideas are valued (see D&C 88:122 and *Handbook 2*, 3.3.2).

#### **Priesthood Leaders**

Ward and stake priesthood leaders have the primary responsibility for the young women and need to approve all plans for camp. Young Women presidencies should complete the Event and Activity Plan and counsel with and receive guidance from priesthood leaders about the purpose, goals, location, activity details, and schedule of camp. The priesthood leaders should also approve the budget guidelines and the plans for camp safety and security, which include selecting appropriate chaperones and determining camp standards for behavior and dress.

Priesthood leaders can call women from the ward and stake to help plan and administer camp (if the camp includes young women from only the ward, then adult leaders should be called from that ward and not from the stake). They should also plan for a sufficient number of priesthood leaders to attend and visit camp. Two or more Melchizedek Priesthood brethren need to be present at all times during the camp to provide support and



protection (see *Handbook 2*, <u>13.6.12</u>). For overnight activities, these priesthood leaders should stay in facilities that are separate from the young women and the adult women leaders. Priesthood leaders should avoid one-on-one situations with any female leader or young woman unless clearly visible to others.

#### Young Women Camp Leaders

Women in the ward or stake must be called by their priesthood leaders to be Young Women camp leaders. These camp leaders work with youth camp leaders to organize and conduct the camp under the direction of the Young Women presidency.

#### Youth Camp Leaders

Camp is an opportunity for the young women to develop and practice leadership skills as they plan for and lead at camp. Young women ages 16 and 17 can be called as youth camp leaders. These youth camp leaders should have the primary responsibility for planning, directing, and evaluating camp. They counsel with the Young Women presidency, ward and stake camp leaders, and priesthood leaders. If a ward or stake does not have young women this age, young women of other ages can fulfill these roles. Class presidencies may also have leadership responsibilities at camp. For resources to help the young women prepare for these leadership roles, see *Handbook 2*, section 3.3 and the class presidency leadership lessons under the "Leader Resources" link at youngwomen.lds.org.

Typical youth camp leader responsibilities include conducting the planning meetings, choosing and planning the activities, directing and conducting specific activities, and evaluating camp.

#### Minister to Others

"And they taught, and did minister one to another" (3 Nephi 26:19).

When we minister, we serve and teach others. Through ministering, all leaders have the opportunity at camp to strengthen relationships with and develop trust among the young women. Ministering requires love, sincere friendship, and a desire to

strengthen others. Camp provides an environment where young women can become more like the Savior as they learn to minister to one another. As a leader, you can be an example of ministering as you lift others, build confidence through words and actions, choose to be patient, act as a peacemaker, avoid complaining, share testimony, and reach out to include all.

If you are a youth camp leader, you have an even greater opportunity to minister to the young women at camp because you are more closely involved in their experiences. As a youth camp leader, you can minister to the young women at camp in the following ways:



- Meet with each young woman individually. Get to know her and help her understand what to expect at camp.
- Pray for each young woman by name before camp and each day during camp. Make sure each young woman is included and feels loved.
- Perform simple acts of kindness and service.
- Teach the young women about ministering. Invite them to minister to one another. At the end of each day share your experiences with one another.

#### Teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ

All camp leaders are teachers by example and testimony. Camp should be rich with both spiritual and temporal learning. As you plan what to teach at camp, pray and ponder about each young woman. Provide each young woman with opportunities to feel the Spirit. Help her apply the doctrines of the gospel to daily experiences. Teach her skills that will prepare her for her future and protect her and her family in an emergency. Whatever principles you choose to teach, keep in mind that everything you do at camp should help each young woman accomplish the following outcomes (see also *Handbook 2*, 10.1.1):

- Strengthen her faith in and testimony of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- Understand her identity as a daughter of God.



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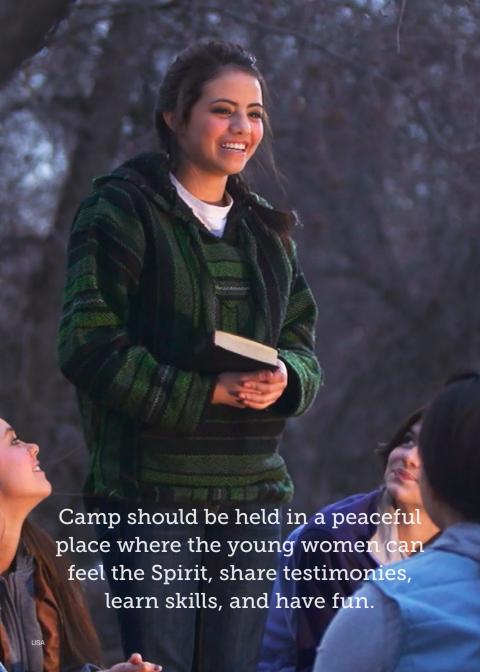




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- Live a worthy life as she obeys the commandments and lives gospel standards.
- Receive, recognize, and rely on the promptings of the Holy Ghost.
- Prepare for her divine roles as a leader, wife, and mother.
- Understand and keep the covenants she has made.
- Develop friendships and have fun.





## Plan Camp

"Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing" (D&C 109:8).

Camp should be simple and allow young women time to experience God's creations and "be still" (D&C 101:16). Camp should not be elaborate or include staging, events, or decorations that distract from the purpose of camp. Also avoid experiences in which the young women may mistake strong emotional feelings such as sadness or surprise for feeling the Spirit. Appropriate activities, wholesome fun, and genuine interactions will invite the Holy Ghost.

It is the responsibility of adult and youth leaders to carefully consider and anticipate every detail of camp and the needs and safety of every participant. As you plan, study and keep in mind the guidelines at <u>safety.lds.org</u>, in the annual First Presidency <u>safety letter</u>, and the following sections of *Handbook 2*:

- 10.8.6 Young Women Camp
- 10.8.9 Funding for Activities and Events

- 13.2.4 Standards
- 13.6.8 Fund-Raising Activities
- 13.6.9 Insurance
- 13.6.12 Overnight Activities
- 13.6.13 Parental Permission
- 13.6.17 Renting Non-Church Facilities for Activities
- 13.6.20 Safety Precautions and Accident Response and Reporting
- 13.6.24 Travel

Involve all the young women in the responsibilities and assignments of camp (see *Handbook 2*, 3.3.4). As the young women have opportunities to serve, cook, clean, organize, and lead, they will learn organizational and management skills that will continue to bless their families and the Church. Make sure to apply the principles of spiritual preparation and Christlike leadership and ministry in all stages of planning.

#### Choose a Camp Location and Date

The location of Young Women camp will vary according to your area and needs. Usually, camps are held in an outdoor setting at a safe place away from home. Regardless of the location, the camp should be held in a peaceful place where the young women can feel the Spirit, share testimonies, learn skills, and have fun. In areas where overnight camping is difficult or prohibited, planning

a day camp can be a good alternative. Day camps can be held at a location near the young women's homes, such as a park, picnic area, or backyard.

Camps can include just the young women from your ward, or they can include all the young women in the stake. You can plan a camp for any time of the year, but be sure to consider the climate, season, and the type of camping you and the young women would like to experience. In ideal circumstances, Young Women camp takes place once a year, but it may need to occur less frequently to meet local needs. The typical camp lasts no longer than five days, should not be held on the Sabbath day, and is generally not held on a Monday. Make sure that your camp follows all the local regulations for overnight camps for youth.

#### **Determine Camp Goals**

As you counsel with others and choose goals for your camp, prayerfully ask yourself this question: What does Heavenly Father

want to have happen in the lives of the young women as a result of this camp? The answer to this question should become your camp goal. This goal will guide all other decisions that you make about camp.

#### Choose a Camp Theme

A camp theme will help you stay focused on the camp goals. The theme should be



spiritual in nature, remind the young women of a gospel principle, and inspire them to live the Young Women values. Your priesthood leaders should approve this theme before you make plans to use it at camp.

A theme may be inspired by:

- The annual Mutual theme.
- A scripture.
- A statement from a prophet or apostle.
- A <u>hymn</u>.
- The For the Strength of Youth booklet.

#### **Choose Activities**

"I give unto you a commandment, that when ye are assembled together ye shall instruct and edify each other, that ye may know how to act" (D&C 43:8).

Counsel together with the Young Women presidency and adult and youth camp leaders to plan safe, meaningful activities that will accomplish your goals for camp. The best camp activities are tailored to the needs and abilities of all the young women and allow them to feel and recognize the Spirit as they develop friendships, practice leadership skills, increase their talents, improve their health through physical activity, or learn about and prepare for emergencies.

Some ideas for activities that meet these criteria are listed in

the "Ideas for Camp Activities" section of this guide. Choose a balance of spiritual, social, physical, and intellectual activities. The following questions may help you evaluate your planned activities:

- 1. How does this activity fulfill our goals for camp?
- 2. What important lessons will the young women learn from this activity?
- 3. What skills will this activity help the young women to develop?
- 4. How will this activity strengthen the young women, their homes, and their families?
- 5. Does this activity have a greater than average risk of illness or injury? Have we made sufficient plans to minimize those risks?



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In areas where the young women have been participating in camp for many years, there may be some activities, songs, and customs that have been repeated each year and have become traditions. Carefully review these traditions to ensure that they are appropriate and meet the purpose and needs of camp.

Following is a sample of a typical day at a Young Women camp. Some of the activities listed below may not be possible in your area. Follow the Spirit as you create a schedule for your own camp that is tailored to your young women and your environment.

#### Sample Schedule for a Typical Day at Camp

7:00-7:30	Travel to camp, or wake up at camp.
7:30–9:00	Prepare and serve breakfast. Clean up after the meal.
9:00–9:15	Have a morning devotional, which includes a hymn, a scripture, and a prayer.
9:15–9:30	Make announcements for the activities and discuss assignments and safety.
9:30–12:00	Participate in activities: learn about water purification, first aid, and emergency shelters.
12:00–1:30	Prepare and serve lunch. Clean up after the meal.
1:30-2:30	Have quiet time for scripture study, meditation, and journaling on a specific topic or theme.
2:30-5:00	Participate in activities: group games, swimming races, and a nature hike.
5:00-6:30	Prepare and serve dinner. Clean up after the meal, and clean the camp.
6:30-7:30	Present a talent show.
7:30–9:00	Hold an evening devotional and testimony meeting.
9:00-9:30	Give time for personal prayers and study.
9:30–10:00	Get ready for bed. Adult and youth camp leaders meet to evaluate the events of the day and to prepare for the next day.





#### Inform and Include Parents

What a young woman learns at camp should strengthen her and bless her family. As you prepare for camp, you may invite the parents to share what spiritual needs and hopes they have for their daughter and also contribute ideas for the activities and skills that would benefit their families. Some parents may have expertise and skills to contribute. Inform parents of the dates, location, cost, theme, and activities that you have planned for the camp. Explain to the parents and the young women the standards of dress and behavior that are required (see 1 Timothy 4:12).

Before camp, ask each parent to fill out and turn in a <u>Parental</u> or <u>Guardian Permission and Medical Release Form</u> for each young woman. The form can be found at safety.lds.org. You should provide detailed information about the camp and the activities so that the parents can give informed permission for their daughter's participation (see *Handbook 2*, 13.6.13).

#### Plan for Safety and Emergency Preparedness

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:21).

One of your most important responsibilities at camp is to keep the young women spiritually, morally, emotionally, and physically safe while they are away from their families. All conduct and interactions should comply with Church standards (see *For the Strength of Youth* and the annual First Presidency safety letter) and exemplify Christlike behavior. In addition, leaders may set specific standards and guidelines for camp to ensure safety and create the environment necessary to accomplish the goals of camp. Youth should understand that participation in an activity is not a right but a privilege that can be revoked if they behave inappropriately or if they pose a risk to themselves or others. Leaders should communicate these expectations to parents and participants and counsel together on how to address concerns that may arise.



A sufficient number of adult leaders are required to attend camp. At least two adult supervisors should be present for each activity. Larger activities may require additional adult leaders. Two or more Melchizedek Priesthood brethren need to be present at all times during the camp to provide support and protection (see *Handbook 2*, 13.6.12). All leaders, male and female, should avoid one-on-one situations with a youth unless clearly visible to nearby adult leaders.

Immediately report to priesthood leaders any accident or serious injury requiring more than basic first aid. All who attend camp, especially adult leaders, are encouraged to be alert to





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any signs of abuse and neglect. Those who become aware of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse should report the matter to appropriate legal authorities and contact the bishop immediately.

Young women and leaders should be prepared for the physical demands of the camp. Minimize danger by obeying all the local rules and laws of your area. Make sure that transportation and communication are available at all times. If possible, invite a nurse, doctor, or other individual with significant first aid experience to attend the camp. Bring first aid supplies. Keep a list of addresses and phone numbers on hand for nearby medical facilities and emergency contacts, such as local law enforcement, fire, or ambulance services.

Before camp, visit with the parents of the young women and get to know each young woman's unique needs—including dietary, medical, and emotional needs. Actively monitor youth behavior and intervene when necessary. Hazing, pranks, and other unkind, immoral, or disrespectful conversation and behavior are unacceptable. Understand and accept the responsibility to plan for the safety and well-being of the youth in your care. Identify, communicate about, and prepare ways to reduce the risks you expect at camp. Review the *Handbook 2* sections listed on pages 13–14 of this guide, the annual First Presidency safety letter, and safety.lds.org for more information.





## **Evaluate Camp**

"That every man may give an account unto me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him" (D&C 104:12).

As you meet to evaluate camp, you will be guided by the Spirit to improve on and learn from your experiences. Both adult and youth camp leaders should meet together each day and at the conclusion of camp to evaluate the camp activities. The daily evaluations should be short and help improve the quality of the experience.

As you evaluate your camp experience, consider the following questions:

- Did our activities go as planned? Why or why not?
- What could have made today better?
- What worked well?
- What principles did we teach, and what lessons did the young women learn?
- Are there any problems that we need to resolve?
- Did the young women feel the Spirit today? If not, what can we do differently tomorrow?

During your post-camp evaluation meeting, ask these questions and others to determine what went well and how you can improve next year:

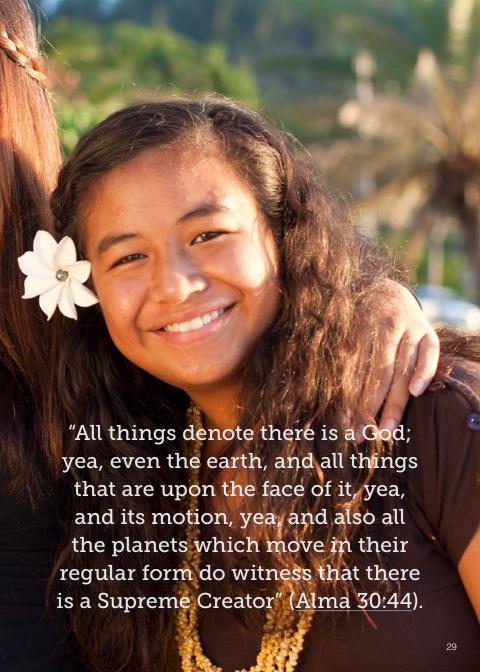
- Did we achieve our goals? Why or why not?
- How well did we spiritually prepare?
- How well did we counsel together?
- What did the young women learn about ministering to each other?
- How did the youth camp leaders fulfill their responsibilities?
- How were the young women's families strengthened?
- Where and when did the young women feel the Spirit at camp?
- What can we do to help the young women continue to recognize and follow the Spirit?
- What has happened in the lives of our young women as a result of camp?
- What ideas do we have for our next Young Women camp?

Your camp experiences will continue to improve as you keep careful records. These records should include a summary of activities, a report on the budget, transportation and lodging information, menus, the number of participants, photographs, and, if possible, testimonials. These records are a valuable resource for those who plan camp in the following years.

Invite the young women to reflect on their camp experiences. Encourage them to share what they learned with their family and friends. Through Mutual activities, you could continue to add to the skills the young women learned at camp. You could also discuss the doctrines taught at camp in Sunday lessons. If your activities were successful, consider sharing them with others.







# **Ideas for Camp Activities**

Following is a list of possible spiritual, social, physical, and intellectual activity ideas to consider as you plan camp. Additional activity ideas can be found at the Youth Activities site (Ids.org/youth/activities). The ideas that are highlighted in this section have activity cards on the Youth Activities site.

#### **Preparatory Activities**

Activities for camp may begin before you depart for camp and continue after camp is over. Consider planning activities that will enhance preparedness, increase learning, and build anticipation for camp.

- Hold a preparatory activity for the young women and their families. Share the theme and details of camp.
- Have a planning activity where you develop a schedule of assignments. Some of these assignments could include cooking, cleaning, setup, and trash disposal.
- Create a camp menu within budget that includes nutritious recipes.
- Learn ways to protect the environment, such as avoiding waste, keeping water pure, or restoring natural areas after they have been damaged.
- Practice using camp equipment and cooking outdoors.

- · Begin learning outdoor survival skills.
- Make a physical fitness plan and participate in hikes, bike rides, or other activities that will help you prepare for camp.

#### Spiritual Growth

- Plan a time each day for personal scripture study, journaling, prayer, and reflection. You could focus on the scriptures that are related to the camp theme.
- Plan daily camp devotionals.
- Go on a nature walk or treasure hunt.
- Prepare and give classes or devotionals that share gospel principles and standards. See *Handbook 2*, section 21.1.20 for instructions on guest speakers.
- Hold a testimony meeting and help young women understand the nature of a true testimony (see *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 178–80; Gospel Topics, "Testimony," topics.lds.org; and M. Russell Ballard, "Pure Testimony," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 40–43).
- Memorize a scripture, poem, hymn, "The Living Christ:
   The Testimony of the Apostles" (Ensign or Liahona, Apr.

  2000, 2–3), or "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2010, 129).

- Prepare for a mission through activities such as a missionary study or missionary role-play.
- Participate in family history by sharing stories, making traditional recipes, or participating in scrapbooking.
- Prepare to receive temple ordinances through activities such as a faith walk or standards games.
- Have a sacred music night.
- Play a game or create a presentation or skit that teaches a scripture or gospel principle.

#### Physical Activity and Health

As you choose from this list or select other activities, remember that all physical activities should be appropriate for the age and physical and mental condition of the participants. Involve appropriately trained specialists or certified guides for specialized activities, such as river rafting or rock climbing. Abide by all safety policies for activities and insurance regulations for facilities being used.

- Plan sports or physical health activities around the interests of the young women attending camp.
- Play a group sport, such as soccer, volleyball, or basketball.
- Plan and participate in a long or overnight backpacking trip.

- · Participate in a hike, bike ride, or nature walk.
- Go river rafting.\*
- Participate in water activities, such as swimming, snorkeling,\* scuba diving,\* canoeing, sailing,\* and so forth.
- Go rock climbing\* and rappelling.\*
- Invite someone with training to teach personal safety and self-defense.\*
- Make a health plan and practice and develop good exercise and eating habits.
- Study the Word of Wisdom and learn about nutrition.
  Learn about behaviors or attitudes that may lead to unhealthy habits, including eating disorders.
- Invite an expert to teach about mental health, emotional health, and coping skills.
- Learn the dangers of the internet and pornography, and learn how to protect yourself and your family.

#### **Emergency Preparedness and Survival Skills**

- Invite trained professionals to teach basic first aid or emergency response, including what to do in life-threatening situations, bandaging wounds, and rescuing victims.
- Learn how to make and maintain a first aid kit.
- Learn and practice techniques for building and maintaining a fire safely.

<sup>\*</sup> These activities pose above-average risks and require the help of an appropriately trained or certified specialist.

- Invite someone with training or experience to teach you about the potential natural disasters, resource shortages, and pollution that are common to your area.
- Learn to navigate in unfamiliar places by using a compass, different types of maps, and the positions of the sun, moon, and stars.
- Learn about cloud formations.
- Learn basic outdoor survival skills.
- · Build emergency shelters.
- · Learn how to find and purify water.
- Invite an expert to teach you how to identify harmful wildlife, insects, and plants. Also learn how to identify plants and animals that are safe to eat.
- Practice environmentally friendly ways of camping. Learn to set up a camp.
- Learn and practice the different types of knots and lashing techniques.
- Try different methods of outdoor cooking, such as reflector ovens, Dutch ovens, or campfire cooking.
- Learn how to store food and water.
- · Learn knife skills and safety.

#### Friendship and Leadership Skills

- Assign each young woman attending camp a "secret sister," whom she will serve during camp. She can serve by leaving kind notes or by making sure the "secret sister" is included in all the activities.
- Invite a panel of Church leaders to teach about building trust and resolving conflicts.
- Plan a talent show where each young woman can participate.
- Participate in a humanitarian or environmental service project.
- Show your appreciation for your adult camp leaders.
- Hold a simple awards ceremony to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of everyone at camp.
- Hold evening campfire programs.

#### Talent and Skill Development

These ideas are not traditional outdoor camping activities, but they may help you meet the needs of your young women.

- Learn and develop musical talents, such as singing or playing an instrument.
- Practice different types of arts and crafts, such as basket weaving, painting, sculpting, or knitting.
- Practice leading music.

- Invite an expert to teach you basic carpentry, home repair, or other homemaking skills. Use these skills to serve others.
- Learn the basics of budget and resource management.
- Invite a mother with small children to teach the basics of child care.
- Learn how to grow and preserve your own food. This could include how to plant and cultivate a garden.
- Learn the basics of sewing by making a simple piece of clothing. You could also learn how to mend clothing.
- Learn how to recognize and identify different constellations, planets, and other features of the night sky.
- Prepare and perform a short play or skit for the camp.
- Practice writing and giving talks for sacrament meeting.
  Share your talk with others.
- Take a tour of local educational or vocational training facilities. Make a plan to continue your education. Learn about the Church's Perpetual Education Fund.
- Learn how to recycle and repurpose items.

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