



2018 Middle School & Combined Sessions

Groups Preview Packet

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A Message from the Youthfront Camp Staff

Dear Youth Workers,

Our camp season is now a few weeks away, and we are so excited about the content we have planned. We have chosen the theme, "Upside Down: the way of Jesus." Our session of camp will take us on a journey through the events of Holy Week, noticing how Jesus actions defy expectations and reveal God's loving and restorative nature. You can read more details about the flow of the session below.

As you prepare your students for camp, we want you to know that we are your biggest fans! We believe in local church student ministry, and we want to support what you do the other 51 weeks of the year. We believe camp plays a vital role (but not the only role) in the spiritual formation of students. We hope that what we do at camp will amplify the rhythms and practices your group creates throughout the rest of the year to help youth grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Here are a few things to note in preparation for camp this summer:

Volunteer Cabin Leaders - If you are bringing more than seven guys and/or seven girls to camp, we require you provide volunteer male and/or female cabin leaders to stay with your students during your week at camp. You are responsible for providing another volunteer for every 16 additional campers of either gender: 8 - 23 kids (1 vcl); 24 - 39 kids (2 vcl's); 40 - 55 kids (3 vcl's); etc. These volunteers will stay in the cabin leader room along with the Summer Staff cabin leader. If you have questions about our volunteer cabin leader policies, please contact **Andy Garlick** at agarlich@youthfront.com. **Ben Snethen**, our Cabin Leader Supervisor at Camp West or **Yale Averill**, our Cabin Leader Supervisor at Camp LaCygne, will contact you a few weeks before your session at camp to finalize your volunteers for the week. If you have questions about volunteers, contact either of them at bsnethen@youthfront.com or yaverill@youthfront.com.

Hype Themes - On the first day of camp, we split up the campers into teams to compete in events throughout the session. Each night has a different theme, complete with an event or competition attached to it. We encourage you to participate by bringing costumes and joining in the fun. Here is a little preview of each night:

- **Family Game Night** – We are going to take family game night to a whole new level! Come dressed as a giant dice, life-size game piece, Hungry Hippo, or something else from the world of board games.
- **Nightstrike** – A camp tradition, this game of stealth is played in the woods in the dark. Fight your way through zones and past Strikers to get under the infamous Tower of Power. You could play with the campers or be one of the infamous Strikers stopping campers along the way.
- **Grandparents Day** - No, we won't be having your grandparents join us at camp, but now you have an excuse to dress like them! Get your wigs, canes, and bifocals and start practicing your Bingo calls!
- **Polar Pool Party** – We are putting a cold spell on our pool party, so throw your sweater vests and ski gear over your swim suits and get ready to take a polar plunge into our pool party!
- **Star Wars Madness** – Will the force be with you? Will you go from padawan to Jedi master or succumb to the power of the dark side? We will find out when you join us in a galaxy far, far away for a special Star Wars Madness!

We are looking forward to your group's time with us at camp. If you have any questions about camp, feel free to contact our Camp West Director, Matt Saunders at msaunders@youthfront.com or our Camp LaCygne Director, Josh Madden at jmadden@youthfront.com.

Much love,
Youthfront Camp Staff

Youthfront Camps: Learning Theory and Practice

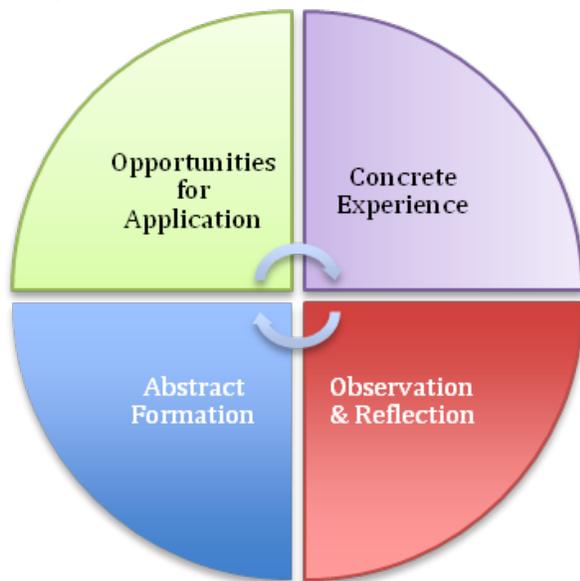
Learning takes place in all types of environments. The most effective learning, however, takes place within an environment that is intentional, authentic, transformative, and communal.

At Youthfront, we are **intentional** about the method of learning that we employ in order to maximize the **authentic** discovery, growth, and learning of each camper. Every activity we facilitate—from worship gatherings to games during free time—is carefully constructed for **transformative** learning in a communal context.

We are committed to creating environments for experiential learning. Experiential learning is simply learning by the process of making meaning from direct experiences. Therefore, we construct environments of learning through:

1. Concrete Experience
2. Observation and Reflection
3. Formation of Abstract Thought
4. Opportunities for Application

By intentionally crafting learning experiences using the four elements above, we are able to accommodate the learner's preferred method of learning, whether it be the **converger**, who learns by taking abstract ideas and actively experimenting with them, or the **diverger**, who prefers a concrete experience in which to observe and reflect. Experiential learning also accommodates the **assimilator**, who is able to take abstract concepts and make observations through inductive reasoning, or the **accommodator**, who learns best by *doing*, through concrete experiences and the active outworking of the concepts presented.¹



¹ <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>

Youthfront is passionate about bringing youth into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. While there are many effective theories of learning, we believe that the experiential learning theory we practice is best suited for a camp environment where we can facilitate experiences for campers to engage God's story in an intentional, authentic, and transformative way.

How is Youthfront different than other camps?

Youthfront is built around the fixed hours of prayer, also known as the Daily Office or the Divine Office.

Instead of building Youthfront's sessions around chapel, free time, cabin times, the snack shop, etc., we think it best to center all of the campers' experiences on the practice of prayer. Youthfront Camp practices morning, midday, and compline prayer. Each of these prayer times consists of the reading of the Scriptures, music, silence, corporate and private prayer, and confessing the creeds.

Youthfront is interested in helping adolescents ask questions that lead to ongoing engagement.

Youthfront works hard to spark the imaginations of all campers. Our content has been developed to help adolescents think, wonder, and feel. We believe we are most successful when we allow the Holy Spirit to work and do ministry without deliberately manufacturing or manipulating the insights of humanity. If adolescents walk away from Youthfront with more questions about God and the Bible than answers, we believe it is a great thing for their ongoing learning and formation.

What does this approach look like?

Below is a simple table illustrating how Youthfront Camp is distinctly different in our approach to engaging adolescents in learning. The table found on the following page is not intended to be an either/or list of values; rather, it reflects a continuum of moving beyond a teacher-centered approach toward a learner-centered approach.

Moving from...	Moving to...
Preferences of the teacher. Most information that adolescents get is filtered through the skills and preferences of the one disseminating the information.	Needs of the adolescent. Youthfront’s content takes into consideration the needs, styles, and habits of the adolescent and creates learning opportunities with the learner in mind first.
Static in nature. Typically, most learning environments are predictable and fixed.	Always evolving. Youthfront’s content is always looking for ways to create dynamic, unpredictable, and mobile learning opportunities.
Breadth. How much information can we teach?	Depth. How deep can we help learners go in any given topic?
Rote. Memorization is good. However, memorization alone doesn’t produce a lasting effect on a learner.	Experiential. Youthfront’s content provides learners with the opportunity to learn through practice and ongoing application.
Solo. Typically, learners left on their own don’t have the necessary influence of the learning of others to help push them to think about new insights and directions.	Peer to Peer. Youthfront’s content is about learning in community—sharing common opportunities. Often in peer-to-peer models, learning is owned with greater passion and learners are pushed to think more deeply as a result of the interaction with their peers.
Product. Most learners are pushed to be complete, leaving no room for trial, error, self-discovery, etc.	Process. Youthfront’s content is about the process of learning. It recognizes that learners learn at different paces and that the passion to own something takes some longer to acquire than others.

Adapted from *A New Kind of Youth Ministry*, by Chris Folmsbee. Zondervan, 2006. Used with permission.

Middle School Session Daily Schedule

(Sessions 1W, 2W, 3L, 3W, 4L, 7W, 8W, and 9W)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p>1:00pm Registration Begins 2:00pm Camp Kickoff 3:00pm Cabin Time 4:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm HYPE - Family Game Night 8:30pm Evening Gathering Expectations (Palm Sunday) 9:30pm Cabin Reflection 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Morning Gathering Expectations (Palm Sunday) 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Evening Gathering Belonging (Maundy Thursday) 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Nightstrike 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Morning Gathering Belonging (Maundy Thursday) 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm HYPE - Grandparents Day 8:30pm Evening Gathering Suffering & Loss (Good Friday) 9:30pm Cabin Reflection 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>
Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Morning Gathering Suffering & Loss (Good Friday) 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 4:00pm Talent Show 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Evening Gathering Restoration (Resurrection Sunday) 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Polar Pool Party 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Morning Gathering Restoration (Resurrection Sunday) 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 4:30pm Something to Eat™ Party 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Evening Gathering Now What? (An Invitation to Follow) 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Star Wars Madness 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Breakfast 9:00am Cabin Clean & Pack 9:15am Camp Finale / Parent Meeting 10:00am Open Time 11:00am Close Camp</p>

Combined Session Daily Schedule

(Sessions 6L & 9L)

	<p style="text-align: center;">Tuesday</p> <p>1:00pm Registration Begins 2:00pm Camp Kickoff 3:00pm Cabin Time 4:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Evening Gathering Expectations (Palm Sunday) 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Nightstrike 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Wednesday</p> <p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Morning Gathering Belonging (Maundy Thursday) 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm HYPE - Family Game Night 8:30pm Evening Gathering Suffering & Loss (Good Friday) 9:30pm Cabin Reflection 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday</p> <p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Morning Gathering Suffering & Loss (Good Friday) 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 4:00pm Talent Show 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Evening Gathering Restoration (Resurrection Sunday) 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Polar Pool Party 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Friday</p> <p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Morning Gathering Restoration (Resurrection Sunday) 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Experiences 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 3:45pm Something to Eat™ Party 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Evening Gathering Now What? (An Invitation to Follow) 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Star Wars Madness 10:45pm Compline/Lights Out</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday</p> <p>7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Breakfast 9:00am Cabin Clean & Pack 9:15am Camp Finale / Parent Meeting 10:00am Open Time 11:00am Close Camp</p>

Session 10 Daily Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9:00am Registration 10:00am Kickoff 11:00am Cabin Time 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Gathering - Belonging 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Nightstrike 10:45pm Compline/LO	7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Gathering - Belonging 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Exps. 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm HYPE - Family Game Night 8:30pm Gathering - Suffering & Loss 9:30pm Cabin Reflection 10:45pm Compline/LO	7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Morning Prayer 8:30am Breakfast 9:00am Gathering Suffering & Loss 10:00am Reflection 10:30am Cabin Exps. 12:00pm Midday 12:30pm Lunch 1:00pm Free Time 6:00pm Dinner 6:45pm Gathering Resurrection 7:45pm Cabin Reflection 8:45pm HYPE - Star Wars Madness 10:45pm Compline/LO	7:30am Wake Up 8:15am Breakfast 9:00am Clean & Pack 9:15am Camp Finale / Parent Meeting 10:00am Open Time 11:00am Close Camp

Upside Down

The Way of Jesus

Middle School Content

Overview of the week

Throughout Jesus' time on earth, He showed his love and compassion towards humanity in completely surprising, unexpected ways. Primarily, He changed the way people understood God's relationship with people, turning their views of the Messiah upside down. His teaching and his ministry challenged many of the religious conventions of the day. During our session at camp, we will focus specifically on the events of Holy Week and how Jesus' interactions with others continue to reveal an unexpected quality about Jesus. We begin the week with Palm Sunday. The arrival into Jerusalem would normally signal the coming of a conquering king. However, by choosing to ride a donkey, Jesus revealed that his way of power comes through humility. The next major moment of Holy Week was Maundy Thursday. This was the night when Jesus gathered his disciples to share the Passover as his Last Supper with them. During this meal, Jesus reveals that his way of belonging is not about what his disciples could do for him, but about the radical acceptance he had for them, knowing they would each betray or abandon him. Good Friday, the day we remember Jesus being arrested, tried, and crucified reveals God's unexpected presence in the midst of suffering and what seems like God's absence. Likewise, "Holy Saturday," a day of which the Bible is strangely silent, and the Emmaus Road story reveal God's presence in the midst of loss. Resurrection Sunday, the central day to our Christian Faith, reveals Jesus' way of new life, which means that death and the worst things that can happen never get the last word. As we finish our session and look at all the of the important moments of Holy Week and how Jesus' way is upside down to our conventional understandings, we must ask about how all of this relates to us today. A story that helps us capture our role is the story of Jesus, Peter, and the miraculous catch of fish. In this story, we see Jesus inviting Peter to join in God's restoration of the world. Like Peter, we are each invited to follow in this upside down way of Jesus, choosing humility, acceptance, sacrifice, and new life.

Monday evening - Tuesday morning

Title: Expectations (Palm Sunday)

Big Idea: We want campers to understand that Jesus changes our expectations of God.

Scripture(s): Matthew 21:1-11

Evening Gathering Direction: Campers usually arrive at camp filled with expectations for the week. There is much excitement anticipating the HYPEs, the free time activities, and, for many, even the music and gatherings. In this opening gathering, we want to call out that anticipation and relate it to our story for camp: Holy Week - the week of Jesus' death and resurrection. Up until this point in his ministry, Jesus had been teaching and healing all throughout the region. His life and ministry could be described as Upside Down because it challenged conventional wisdom. The first shall be last. The widow giving her two small coins gave more in her offering than others who clearly gave more. If you want to save your life, you must lose it. Etc. His message was one that sounded a little different from the other religious teachings of the day. He was attracting many followers. And the type of people Jesus interacted with were not typical for religious leaders of that day. There was something special and clearly different about Jesus. All of these factors led to a great sense of anticipation with Jesus returning to Jerusalem. Something big was going to happen, and everybody was excited to see what Jesus was going to do. As we close this first gathering, wrap up by calling out all the different expectations we have of God. What do we expect God to be like? What do we expect God to do for us?

Morning Gathering Direction: We'll pick up the story where we left off last night. We will explore the events of Palm Sunday, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The key question from this story is captured in verse 10, "Who is this?" Jesus' entry had stirred up the city. This moment was the climax of his followers' expectations, hoping to see a powerful leader overthrow the oppressive Romans and the religious leaders who had entwined themselves with the Romans. Upon further review, the details of the story begin to reveal that Jesus was up to something unexpected. Riding in on a donkey, while fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy, was not a power play. In fact, this choice of animal speaks to peace and humility rather than war and strength. As this story sheds light on our own lives, we may recognize how we want God to win and to be a champion. Middle schoolers may only look to God as a source of gaining success. They may believe that God exists to help them succeed at life (do well on a test, win a sports game, etc.). Jesus changes our expectations of God, and we are confronted with the understanding that God's definition of power and victory is different from our own definition. The way of Jesus shows power through humility.

Cabin Experience: Campers will participate in several activities in which their expectations will be challenged. These activities will include both physical and mental challenges that create opportunities for everyone to learn something new. This will lead into a conversation about how Jesus may challenge our expectations of God.

Tuesday evening - Wednesday morning

Title: Belonging (Maundy Thursday)

Big Idea: We want campers to understand the radical belonging that Jesus gives us.

Scripture(s): Matthew 26:14-35

Evening Gathering Direction: The next major moment in the story of the Holy Week is what is called Maundy Thursday. It's the night when Jesus shared the Passover meal with his disciples. In First Century culture, sharing a meal with someone was a symbol of acceptance. And the celebration of Passover was shared with one's extended family and closest friends. During this evening gathering, we want to capture the sense of belonging that Jesus shared with his disciples. And yet, Jesus knew each one of his disciples was about to abandon him. By sharing the Passover with them, Jesus defies expectations. We might expect Jesus to be aloof or standoffish. Instead, we see radical belonging. This gathering is an opportunity to teach about how the Passover meal, the central celebration of the Jewish faith, was what Jesus used to shed light on the sacrifice he was about to make. For Christians, Communion (or the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper) is our central sacrament. Everytime we receive communion, we celebrate the radical belonging we have in Christ that we do not have to earn.

Morning Gathering Direction: Who were these disciples, these friends, of Jesus? Taking a closer look at them, we quickly realize these weren't the "cool kids" or the ones who had their stuff together. They did not represent Judea's best and brightest. The fact that Jesus chose these to follow him has some implications for middle schoolers. First, there is no such thing as a middle schooler who is so messed up or so uncool that Jesus won't extend an invitation of friendship. The invitation to follow Jesus is universal. Second, the invitation to friendship and followership means middle schoolers have a significant place in God's kingdom. Finally, middle schoolers who fully "get" this idea of belonging will begin to share a sense of hospitality with others who may have troubles finding belonging in other circles.

Cabin Experience: Campers will participate in a journal-integrated experience in which they create a piece of "string art" using rubber bands. They will be asked to consider the roles they play in the various communities in which they belong. At first, the campers won't be able to see anything special about the string art that they create. Once assembled, however, each cabin's piece of art will come together to form a much larger piece with the message, "You Belong."

Wednesday evening - Thursday morning

Title: Suffering (Good Friday)

Big Idea: We want campers to understand that God is present in the midst of suffering and loss.

Scripture(s): Mark 15, especially 15:33-39, Luke 24:13-24

Evening Gathering General Direction: This gathering will feel much different from any other gathering that we do this week. Rather than following our traditional flow of singing, storytelling, response, and dismissal to reflection, the gathering will mix all of these elements and add some readings into several movements that focus the events of Good Friday. The room will begin bright with candles lit. As each movement ends, candles will be extinguished, and the room will grow darker. Before the final movement begins, attention will be given to some important points about what Jesus has done for us and how God is present even though going through suffering often makes us feel like God is absent. After the final movement, the gathering will end, and campers will return to their cabins in darkness and silence.

Morning Gathering General Direction: One of the most curious questions about Jesus' death and resurrection is why didn't Jesus resurrect on Saturday? Couldn't God have resurrected Jesus right away? Scripture is strangely silent about Saturday. There is nothing written about it. We can only imagine the tremendous sense of uncertainty, confusion, and loss that the Disciples went through on Saturday. They not only lost their friend, Jesus, but they also felt lost. What were they to do next? The story of the Emmaus road encounter sheds some light onto the confusion felt by the disciples. Rumors circulated that Jesus' body was missing, and some of the women said they had encountered an angel, but they were left with uncertainty and doubt. This story reminds us that mourning a loss is healthy and holy and we need each other to walk through our grief. Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn..."

Cabin Experience: Campers will walk along a trail marked with stations for reflection, contemplation, and response. These stations will help them explore the ways in which we all experience loss and suffering. They will also demonstrate the fact that we are not alone in our times of loss and that others around us can share in these experiences.

Thursday evening - Friday morning

Title: Restoration (Resurrection Sunday)

Scripture: Mark 16, Matthew 28, John 20

Big Idea: We want campers to understand that death doesn't get the last word and that resurrection is about restoration and renewal (not just getting the old thing back).

Evening Gathering Direction: During this gathering, we will emphasize the celebration of the resurrection. Easter Sunday, the day of the resurrection, is the central story of the Christian faith. We worship Jesus, who overcame death. Jesus' resurrection means that death doesn't get the last word. It reminds us that the worst possible things that can happen to us are never the last things. We have a bright hope for tomorrow. The resurrection signals new life. When we go through suffering not caused by ourselves, we have hope that God can restore, renew, and make things right in our lives. Sometimes we make choices to suffer for others. In these moments, the resurrection reminds us that God will advocate for us.

Morning Gathering Direction: Resurrection doesn't mean we will get back exactly what was lost. Jesus' words to Mary, "Don't cling to me," hint at clinging to an old reality. Does resurrection have any significance for us today, or is it only something that is far off in the future? Middle schoolers can experience resurrection in areas of their lives right now that seem like death, but it may not be getting the old thing back. Divorce--mom and dad may not get back together, but how can God renew and bring resurrection to my relationships with them? Injury--I may never be able to play my sport again like I used to, but how can God open up new opportunities that I could have never seen before when I was so focused on my sport? Death--I may not get my loved one back, but how can my life carry on their work and passions into the world? And of course, we look forward to the eternal life we have in Jesus.

Cabin Experience: Campers will fix a broken clay tile using the Kintsugi method of restoration. This method demonstrates the realities that death does not get the final word and that new, beautiful life can spring from times of suffering and brokenness.

Friday evening

Title: Now What? (An Invitation to Follow)

Scripture: John 21

Big Idea: We want campers to experience the invitation to follow in the Upside-Down way of Jesus.

Evening Gathering Direction: We've journeyed through all of these incredible moments of Holy Week, noticing how the way of Jesus is upside-down. We'll spend a few moments recapping how each of these moments reveals Jesus' upside-down way. As we continue the post-resurrection story of Jesus, we will begin to notice that in addition to admiring this upside-down way of Jesus, we find ourselves called to follow in that way. John 21 tells a story about Peter and the disciples encountering Jesus after the resurrection. This is an important moment for Peter because he had denied knowing Jesus three times on the night Jesus was arrested. As Jesus serves breakfast to the disciples, he pulls Peter into a tender conversation that joins together Peter's love for Jesus and Jesus' instructions to take care of his followers (feeding/taking care of lambs/sheep). Some of the very last words Jesus offers to Peter in this moment are, "Follow me." Jesus was restoring his relationship with Peter and inviting Peter into his upside-down way, and anybody who encounters the story of Jesus is also extended this invitation. We wrap up session of camp by extending this invitation to campers. Will you follow in the upside-down way of Jesus? Will you participate in God's ongoing restoration of the world?