

5 Steps To Hyphen Camp

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1. Getting Started As A District Leader

- Talk with your pastor. Your pastor is more than your spiritual Shepherd, but he is also a wealth of information and wisdom. Utilize that resource any opportunity that you have and you will only gain from what they give you.
- Get your youth president on board. You need their support in more ways than you can begin to imagine throughout this process, which you will learn throughout your camp planning timeline.
- Prepare to propose your idea to your district board for approval. You will need the main ideas in mind for you camp because they will have their own questions about who (*speakers and workers*), what (*age group*), where (*location*), when (*time frame*) and how (*cost*). Don't be afraid to ask your own questions or to ask for a very important resource in this: money. You can operate at a minimal cost and make up for it with registration costs.
- Typically things like length of camp, time of year, and costs will be discussed in these meetings to prevent any real surprises.

2. Camp Culture

- The culture of a hyphen group can take on any number of characteristics, but it is more than likely determined by your leadership. What this means is that the people around you will adapt to the characteristics projected by you and your team/leadership there on the campground. If you and your team project positivity, spirituality, and confidence, then you can expect to see those traits in those around you. Embrace optimism!
- If you or anyone on your team provide a 'work around' (*passing the buck to deal with a situation that is less than ideal*) then we are not jointly creating opportunities for personal growth for ourselves, or any that attends. Every. Single. Experience. Matters.
Hosting a camp is a tremendous amount of fun for us, but at the end of the day, if your attendees haven't enjoyed themselves, then they won't want to come back next year. So, if a situation arises for you to get outside of your bubble, seize that moment and create a new bond with someone who may need a new friend. We put this here on this list to show it's importance about the relationships that can grow from a random 5 minute interpersonal conversation. Break that social bubble.
- As a leader we need to keep some building blocks in mind:
 - Vision (*short and long term goals*)
 - Non-comparisons between what is happening there versus at another camp (*you have to do what is right for your district's camp*)
 - The Bigger picture. You are there for a lot of reasons, but the main ones are to gain an audience with Jesus Christ, create an atmosphere amicable for spiritual breakthroughs, connect to the hyphens within your district, and of course have some fun!
- *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (Phillipians 2:3 KJV)*
- *"A leader is one who knows the way, shows the way, and goes the way." – John C. Maxwell*



3. Identify Your Leadership

- Create a team or group of leaders if you do not already have one. You can't do this by yourself. A district leader is only as good as the people around them, so choose carefully. Branch yourself out to areas that are outside of your back yard. What is the worst thing that can happen? They say no? You will be surprised at how much people are willing to sacrifice with a simple question to help.
- It is important to identify major areas of concern for your leadership placement i.e.: dorm placement, food, music, social media, service media, registration, event/game planner.
- Connect with other hyphen age group ministries like CMI and colleges to attend the camp. Their presence makes your camp feel more complete and their support can make waves in many different areas. Their involvement could support music, games, food servers, and touch any other areas of your camp too.

4. Services

- Millennials want/need to feel connected (*fame of social media supports that thought*), so our services need to support a close knit, connected, united front.
- Music: Don't be afraid to tell your worship leaders exactly where you want to push the atmosphere. You can garner the Holy Ghost the same way with an acoustic guitar and a couple of singers, as you can with a 12 piece band and chorus. Use what you have and God will bless it.
- Speakers/Content: There is no science for picking a speaker of speakers. You may choose the more traditional route for having one main speaker or you may choose to have a number of speakers with lesser amounts of time each. It is important to note with each speaker the 'atmosphere of theme' you hope to promote. Trust us, they will not be offended by your input, but rather prefer it. This way they will not have a 'shouting' or teaching message when the worship leaders and overall theme of the services suggest for something else. It is 100% okay to ask them to speak on a specific topic if your camp calls for it.
- Change it up. Feel free to try new things with your service schedule. Some congregation members may gain more from a non-traditional service. Example: Q&A session or panel discussion. Sometimes these types of things answer questions for some that are not out of the box or not touched in usual Biblical studies or preaching.

5. Timeline And Preparation

- Best topic for last! You can't start planning too early, but you can start too late. You can't throw a camp together in a week or a month because attendees for this age group have jobs, families, school, and any other imaginable amount of responsibilities to plan around. So, a good rule of thumb to keep in mind is a 6 month rule. If you can't give 6 months notice, then you may be pushing the limits. One night events can be thrown together quickly, but camps need time to develop. There will be things you forget no matter how prepared you are and it's okay. Use any extra time to catch loose ends on your side and the extra time also allows your hyphens to prepare to make the trip.
- Schedule: Post numerous schedules throughout the campground. One of the worst possible scenarios is to have someone left out of something fun or an opportunity to grow spiritually because they "didn't know" something was going on. Stick to your schedule as close as possible without deviation unless a service calls for the after service event to run later.
- Length of camp: There is no right answer for how long your camp needs to be. You may need a weekend, a 3 day event (*Wednesday-Friday*), or even a full week. Finances may cause your camp to be shorter than what you would like, but work towards it being longer/bigger in years to come. Remember you're 'building' a ministry.



Timeline Example for 6 Months of Prep

- Make a proposal for your district board/youth committee the year before you would like to host (*or at least 6 months before you would like to host for approval*).
- **Month 1:** Select camp site. Select your team and get helpers on board with assignments. Contact a speaker because most book their schedules very early.
- **Month 2:** Make announcement publicly using all forms of media (*youth rally's, social media, email, flyers*). Have a social media plan ready to put forward to promote your camp in best possible manner to carry on until day of camp, throughout camp, and promotion afterwards to shine positive lights for growth. Contact outside sources like CMI and affiliated colleges to plan to have a promotional booth if possible for them to attend.
- **Month 3:** Start planning for food resources. We are all adults here and it take more than a PB&J. Open pre-registration pricing with an online site of your choosing. (*Example: Eventbrite*)
- **Month 4:** Start planning for stage design if any is necessary. Create service schedules and contact speakers/worship leaders to give info on atmosphere/theme. Make your team aware of these to further promote into your district.
- **Month 5:** If you plan to have outside sources (*games, go horseback riding, hike a trail, zip lining, etc.*) make those plans to ensure they can accommodate.
- **Month 6:** Create checklist and go over entire process again. Ensure music, media, registration, your team, and camp ground in particular are ready to go. In coming days before camp, if possible, use this time to take care of small things like stage design, thank you cards, and printing schedules. There is no such thing as being over-prepared.