

KENTUCKY DISTRICT HYPHEN CAMP 2016 RECAP

Cody Schuler



How we got started: Dream BIG!

If you are a district leader, sectional leader, local church Hyphen group leader, or want to start a Hyphen group in your church, I sincerely hope you connect and are able to take in all of this as I experienced it. Our Hyphen camp was a dream of mine and my youth president's about two years ago. We didn't want to put the cart before the horse, so we began slowly and didn't push too hard too fast. We began with a Hyphen group meeting at our HYC, then went to a district-wide rally, then another, and then we went into separate sectional rallies just for Hyphens. This was the point we decided we needed a camp for this age group. It was also a good time to begin the separation of our senior (teen) camp from those eighteen and up that were attending camp with younger adolescents.

As district leaders I encourage you to set goals and dream big. Never set limits, but set goals that you know can be obtained and exceeded with hard work. God will explore how far you are willing to push yourself in order to achieve your dreams and His work. With our district board's blessing, we began our planning. Since thirty to forty Hyphens had attended our senior camp the year before, we estimated we might have at least fifty campers. To our surprise, we registered 128 campers between the ages of 18–30! After including workers and drive-ins for the night services, I would say that we had approximately 175 people per service. The number of people that are interested in growing this ministry is bigger than you think if you will give them an opportunity to serve.

Let's be honest. Numbers help everything, and I would have been ecstatic with our anticipated fifty. But what we observed was a miracle from God. It felt like a Book of Acts moment. We must empower as many people as we possibly can in these crucial times to carry the mantle of Christ for this Hyphen group. We cannot afford to allow it to wait another day.

Go to work: Faith wins! Friday night service: I was so blown away by the immediate response of the people in our district that I was unsure of what to expect during our first service. Would it be a blowout shouting service where we danced around the altar for a while? Would it be a dud because everyone just stood around and stared at each other because it was our first time and didn't know how to approach the situation? From the very first words of the very first song, something was different. There was a thickening in the Spirit and a deepness to our worship. Our group opened themselves to the Holy Ghost in a way that I could have only dreamed about for an inaugural service. Lives were changed that night.

The jaw-dropping moment: During a chorus of a powerful song that had everyone in the chapel crying out to God, our sound went out. No mics, no keyboard. We had overloaded our amp and it went out. If you have been going to church very long then you know this is a service and worship killer. But what happened next brought a smile to my face and victory in my spirit. This intensified our worship. When the sound went out, our chapel turned into a choir and people started speaking out in a heavenly

tongue. I even heard someone yelling, "Take that, devil, you can't stop our praise!" Our leadership walked away from that service thinking that was the definitive service of our camp. It was without a doubt one of the best services I've ever attended.



Saturday morning: We decided to have a devotional and panel discussion in place of service. We addressed questions on relationships, premarital relations, the LGBT community, careers, and education. The group responded well, and there was an underlying theme of love throughout the discussion. We walked away from it believing that we were better for it. I would recommend a panel discussion to anyone, but use your time wisely. We spent no more than twelve minutes per question and that gave each panelist ample time to speak on each topic if they chose to do so. We had preplanned questions, but gave Hyphens a chance to text in questions as well.

Saturday day: We held an off-campus excursion at a state park and rented Jet Skis, kayaks, and paddle boards. The camp also had Put-Put, hiking trails, and other activities. It was well received because everyone was free to roam on their own accord. Next year we will look for another type of event, probably at a more exclusive venue since we will have an even larger crowd. These are young adults who are fully capable of enjoying themselves without someone standing over them handing out directions. I believe they appreciated the freedom to enjoy their friends that some only get to see once or twice a year on their own time.

Saturday night: I am three days removed from this service and yet I am sitting here getting emotional trying to figure out how to put it into words. There was a fullness in the Spirit that was unlike anything I have ever experienced. I can't speak for everyone there, but it was easily the most powerful move of God I've ever seen in the lives of so many people. My life was changed because of it. Ministers accepted their call to preach, men and women were called into mission fields, and some were called to attend Bible colleges.

We lingered at the altar for approximately an hour and a half. But, as it is with any service, after some time I felt the need to dismiss the service. I took the mic and gave the call to dismiss, but not one single person made a move toward the door. We all felt we were on the cusp of something greater. Something in the atmosphere told us we were about to break into a heavenly realm that we read about in the Bible.

God took us into an upper realm of praise and worship in that moment that no one will ever forget. I couldn't help but think of the NAYC15 prayer cry on the last night of service as we turned an entire room into an altar with 175 of our closest friends and family from around our district. It was the highest high and the deepest presence of God I have ever felt, and now it is everything I will strive to achieve every time I walk into His presence.

Sunday Morning: Sometimes after a service like the previous night, there can be a bit of a spiritual hangover. In order to fight against that, we decided to change up our music a bit and lead with an acoustic set. This service had an overwhelming sense of being thankful. There was no layover in that atmosphere, and before it was all said and done, the entire congregation of Hyphens stood and gave about a twenty-minute thank you to Jesus. It could only be described as pure appreciation for what we had experienced and for what He would now carry us through on our way to reach our world.

Camp speaker: Your camp speaker can make a difference in a number of different ways, but most of all this person has to be able to garner the anointing of God in a way that is conducive to Hyphens. Hyphens in large part need to feel connected and a part of what is going on whether they are sitting in the back row or on the platform, so look for what suits your group best in its season and not just what style of preaching you enjoy the most.

Worship leaders: Your worship leader's job is just as important as anyone else's. The anointing that can flow from them and their team of musicians/singers may strike chords within our souls that sometimes may not be able to be touched by just words alone. Get behind your worship leader and their ministry!

#WorldChangers: Forever transformed.

Romans 12:2: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Some in our Hyphen movement use the term #WorldChangers.



If you truly feel that way about this movement, then I would greatly advise you to reach toward holding a Hyphen camp in your district. It takes a lot of work, requires a lot of faith in the middle of a few storms, and builds up over time, but if one soul is saved from this work, it's worth it!

Our resources differ. We don't have equal volunteers or equal attendance, but everyone has the same twenty-four hours a day, and you can make time for what you truly want out of your ministry. Be the #WorldChanger for someone you otherwise may never get the chance to meet by making yourself available to your ministry.

If I can ever be of service to anyone that would like further details on our camp (what worked, what didn't, planning, or anything else you may question), please feel free to contact me any time.