# All in the Same Boat Camping Sunday Service

Camping and other outdoor recreational ministries are

* the largest youth faith formation forum in The United Church of Canada
* a safe, unique space where campers are welcomed, accepted, and valued for who they are
* a transformational opportunity to build relationship with the Sacred in creation, self, others
* a fun-filled place to try something new—games, music, crafting, swimming, canoe trips, campfires, sleeping under the stars
* an opportunity to develop leadership skills
* an oasis away from the stress and busyness of everyday life
* a safe place for campers to explore who and whose they are and to integrate faith with life

### Preparation: prayer stations

Set up a variety of prayer stations in your foyer, narthex, and various locations in your sanctuary. Invite worshippers to visit the stations before worship begins. If you have space and worshippers who can move around, you can continue to use the stations in the reflection part of the worship service. Alternatively, adapt the prayer stations to be mobile by using magnetic scrabble tiles on a smaller tray, a number of smaller handheld mirrors (one for every row or group), a basket of rocks, and so on. Get creative and send the items through the sanctuary during the reflection time.

*Suggestions for stations:*

* Bananagrams or Scrabble tiles on a large serving tray: Spell the word “peace,” intersect it with the word “breathe,” and intersect that with the word “camp.” Leave a sticky note inviting people to add their own prayerful words and intentions.
* Praying in colour: Small 3 x 3-inch card stock, or plain paper with many sharp pencil crayons for folks to colour their prayers. (The writing materials can be left in the pews or seats so that those who do not want to wander can be part of the prayer experience.)
* Sand, rocks, shells, bulbs or seeds, sticks in a larger tray or basin: Invite worshippers to remember that we are co-creators with God, and to help create a peaceful scene one bit at a time.
* Water, source of life, sustenance, and joy—a gift we often take for granted: Invite worshippers to run their hands through water and offer prayers for the waters of creation.
* Large mirror with the words “Be still and know that I am God. I am a reflection of God. I am wonderfully made” and other affirmations around the edges.
* A Buddha Board or Aquadoodle mat (parents of toddlers may know about the latter).
* Pictures and brochures of your local United Church camp and other outdoor ministry opportunities in a storyboard or book format.

### scripture re-enactment

Review the drama suggestion on p. 3 and prepare cue cards for the Narrator and Jesus.

### REFLECTION

Consider inviting folks who have been involved with camping to participate (see pp. 3–4).

## Camping Sunday Service

*At the appropriate time, use music to draw folks into the worship space.*

### We Gather

#### Lighting of Worship Candles

Long, long, long ago, before there was anything, before there was a world, before there was light, before there was darkness, there was God: Creator and Source of Life. God moved and God breathed the world into being, and God said, “Let there be light.” We light this worship candle as a visible reminder of the Creator’s great light and love.

(*If you also light a rainbow candle, continue:)*

Not quite as long but still very long ago, One was born who embodied the light of the Creator in a way that sparked a movement and a new understanding of God. We light this rainbow candle as a visible reminder of the radical inclusivity shown to us by Jesus, who calls us to follow him.

#### Call to Worship

One: Shhh, did you notice that?  
Two: People are talking, whispering, laughing…  
One: That too, but more…  
Two: There’s the hum of electricity, the speakers, instruments ready to break out into song.  
One: That too, but more… a vibration.  
Two: Hey, do you feel that?  
One: I feel a bit chilly, I feel thirsty…  
Two: That too, but more…  
One: I feel a bit nervous in front of all these people…  
Two: That too, but more… a presence.  
**All: God is here!**One: That’s it! God is here!  
Two: That’s it! God, the vibration, presence, in us, through us, around us, God is here!  
**All: Let’s celebrate!**

#### Opening Music

“Over My Head” (MV 88)  
“Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary” (MV 18)

#### Opening Prayer

Peace.   
Peace in our hearts.   
Peace in our homes.   
Peace with justice in our church, community, and world.   
Amen.

### We PAY ATTENTION

#### Scripture

Psalm 46

Matthew 8:23–27

*As an alternative to reading the gospel story, invite worshippers to participate in the telling of it. (Prior to worship, create cue cards for the Narrator and Jesus with their words*.)

Ask for a volunteer for Narrator and Jesus and hand them their cue cards. Tell worshippers that as disciples of Jesus, you are all in a boat together. Invite them to sway or rock with you as if you are all on a boat together. Practise worshippers calling out “Save us! We’re all going to die!” when you hold up one finger, and then “Woah! Jesus is amazing!” when you hold up two fingers. As you are rocking and rolling with the waves, signal the Narrator and Jesus to begin.

**Narrator:** Jesus got into a boat, and his disciples went with him. *(point to congregation and remind them:)* “That’s you!” Jesus was tired after a long day of teaching, so he decided to have a nap.

**Cue the worshippers:** “Save us! We’re all going to die!”

**Jesus:** (*just waking up from a nap*) Why are you scared? Where’s your faith? (*to the water:*) Be still!

**Narrator:** Then Jesus got up and ordered the winds and the waves to stop, and there was great calm.

**Cue the worshippers:** “Woah! Jesus is amazing!”

**Wrap up** the story with: This is the word of the Lord! **Thanks be to God**.

#### Growing and Exploring Together

Have you ever felt like you were in the middle of a storm? Sometimes life is so busy. Sometimes life is very challenging, and it feels like we’re in a storm. This story reminds us that we’re all in the same boat. As a church family, and when we go to camp, we are supported and loved and it’s like we’re all in the same boat. We can support each other and have fun together and grow together in faith as we learn the sacred stories.

(*For this conversation, you may wish to invite someone who has attended your local United Church camp to share their favorite parts of camp. If there are children, youth, and adults who have been to camp at different times in their lives, consider inviting them to collaborate*.)

**Sing** “I’ve Got Peace Like a River” (VU 577) and other camp favourites.

*(If children leave for other worship and learning opportunities here, perhaps you can have some of the prayer stations in their learning space, offering camp games and songs and snacks.)*

#### Reflection

*(Worship leaders are invited to include any of the following in your personal reflection for the day or ask a camper, former camper, camp family, or camp staff to offer the reflection.)*

* Reflect on the “storms of life,” the stress and distinct lack of peace we experience in daily living. Acknowledge the reality that our children experience this too, regardless of whether or not we try to shelter them.
* The story of the stilling of the storm has been used many times at camps over the years. This story can be dramatized down on the waterfront or in the midst of a windy, rainy day. Well-trained staff engage with campers and invite them to think about the “storms” they are experiencing in their lives, perhaps in relationships, home life, school, or their view of what is happening in the world. Camp will not diminish the storm, but camp can provide shelter and it can provide faith tools to help campers weather and navigate the storm.
* Do you have a storm raging about you? If you could paint your storm, what would it look like? If you could write about a storm that currently or previously feels or felt overwhelming, what words would you use? Think about it for a moment. Paint your picture in your mind. Write the storm that is in your heart. Hear Jesus say “Peace!” and “Be still.”

### We Respond

#### Prayers of the Community

Divine Source in whom we live and move and have our being, we celebrate your presence this day. We give you thanks for the many years of vibrant ministry shared in the camps within our United Church of Canada. Thank you for the unique ways each camp shares your presence and call to be loving co-creators with you in this world.

Inspire us today to hear your call and to participate in the ministry of camp in concrete ways. Ever-present God, this day and every day we pray for peace. We dream of a world in which peace with justice is the norm: peace in the world, peace in our communities, peace in our homes, and peace within our beings.

Compassionate God, empower us to be more active in our concern, more generous with ourselves and our resources, that we might actively participate in the creation of peace within our world, community, church, workplaces, schools, and camps. Give us the courage, the patience, the honesty about ourselves, and the gentleness of spirit that are needed in a world filled with turmoil.

As our work requires the balance of worship to be sustainable, remind us to also “be still” in meaningful ways. Remind us to breathe deeply and to centre ourselves in your unfailing presence with and within us. Help us to see you in the faces and the actions of all whom we meet. These and the prayers that we hold within our spirits we offer to you with the prayer of Jesus…

### Sharing and Blessing of Gifts

#### Minute for Mission

Heaven among the Stars, Trees, and Lakes (<https://youtu.be/J64MyxwkeE8>)

**Dedication of our Gifts**

“What Can I Do” (MV 191)

#### Sending Song

“May the God of Hope Go with Us” (VU 424)

Commissioning and Blessing

Let us go in peace to be agents of peace,   
knowing that we never go alone,   
for the grace of Jesus,   
the love of God,   
and the peace of the Spirit are always with us.

*—Jen Fletcher-Power   
(Board Co-chair,   
Camp Kidston, Nova* *Scotia)*