



2010 Camp Teaching Curriculum

Elation! The Outflow of *Relationship*



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Elation! The Outflow of *Relationship*

God cannot give us happiness apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.
-C.S. Lewis

Seeking God is important, but what about God seeking us? Could it be that God is so compelled by His love for us that he created us, seeks us, and saves us for a relationship with Himself? Can we be so bold as to claim that we are now children and friends of God?

The answer, of course, is a hearty and joyful yes! It is truly good news that Jesus received us into his life and brought us into a relationship with the Triune God. This standard teaching curriculum for 2010 GenMin camps seeks to proclaim the Trinitarian vision of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with clarity and joy. The curriculum's title, Elation! The Outflow of *Relationship*, reflects the delight that we each share in relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit and with each other. Through this curriculum, we invite our campers to experience what is already theirs in Jesus. This is reflected in the theme scripture:

So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

Romans 5:11 (NLT)

We further attempt to illustrate the good news of our inclusion in the life and love of Jesus by using an acrostic to highlight our identity as adopted children of God. The acrostic **CHILD** is proclaimed through five chapel messages:

Chosen – God the Father chose us in Jesus before creating the world. We find our identity, purpose and passion in Jesus. This was His pleasure and elation.

Healed – Through the incarnate, crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, our wounds are healed, our chains of captivity are broken and life eternal is ours in union with Him by his lavish grace. By believing the truth (Jesus), we are set free to enjoy this relationship with Jesus, just as he enjoys relating to us.

Included – Jesus has purposed that we find our belonging in Him. It's about relationship not religion. Jesus has included all of humanity in His life and love – because we “are,” we are wanted, accepted and loved.

Linked – In Christ, we are all included by one Spirit into one body – the church. We are needed and wanted in the body and it is there that we find we belong to one another. We find friendship, support, encouragement and elation in communion with our brothers and sisters.

Disciple – We are called to follow Jesus—to be his disciples, joining with him in helping other people believe the truth of who they are in Jesus and follow him as his disciples..

The intention of this curriculum is to provide a foundational structure from which each chapel presenter can work. We trust that each presenter will follow the Spirit in expressing the good news of grace in unique, personal and passionate ways. May God richly bless you and your camp as you proclaim the transformational gospel of Jesus.



Elation! The Outflow of *Relationship*

Chapel #1 – **Chosen**

CHILD

Emphasis:

God the Father chose us in Jesus before creating the world—this was His pleasure and elation. We find our identity, purpose and passion in Jesus.

Message & Notes:

Who are you? How do you see yourself? How do other people see you?

"I'm such a loser! I'm a fat, stupid, ugly, klutzy, unlovable geek. I can't do anything right. I'm no good to anybody. I'm just plain worthless!"

Dear friends, have you ever felt that way? I have. And everyone has, at some point in their life. As a child, little Bobby felt clumsy when he fell on top of his science fair project and crushed it. Middle School aged Bobby felt unwanted when he sat the entire game on the bench of the championship basketball game, and not once did his coach put him in. As a teenager, bigger Bobby felt worthless the time he went to go give a girl he really liked, a school picture. He had acne really bad and she said to him, "Why did you get your picture taken when you had chicken pox"? Even bigger Bobby felt stupid when he didn't get accepted to the college he wanted to go to because his grades in High School weren't very good. Much older Bobby felt worthless after making mistakes on the job and getting chewed out by the boss. Clumsy, no talent, unwanted, ignorant ... worthless – Bobby couldn't count the number of times he felt that way about himself. You've probably all had similar experiences and emotions.

But there is no reason for him to feel worthless. There is no reason for you to feel worthless. The words of God, spoken to us in our theme scripture provide an eternal message of comfort. No matter how worthless you or I might feel, God tells us otherwise.

Children of God, you are worth something. You are Chosen by Him and for Him!

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

1 John 3:1 (NIV)

The reality is that we all long to be chosen, loved by someone who sees us as we really are and recognizes our worth. The God of the universe said...You are chosen, my child.

Now let's look at what this fully means. Who likes looking at the stars? Who would like to travel to outer space to look at the stars someday? Let's start at the beginning - the very first scripture in the Bible states, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth".

So everything above, all the millions of stars were created by God. In Psalms 33 it says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth". Just by Him speaking it to be, this magnificent universe was created. Without lifting a finger! How many of you can even clean your room doing that?

Let's look at 4 stars just to get a glimpse and put this all into perspective:

- **The Sun.** The sun is ninety three million miles away. If the Earth were the size of a golf ball, the sun would be fifteen feet in diameter. That would be enough golf balls to fill a school bus. You could fit 960,000 Earths inside the sun. Illustrations:

Image of the sun: http://personal.tcu.edu/~mfanelli/imastro/sun_soho_2001a.jpg

Size of sun compared to earth: http://www.4to40.com/images/fastforward/feb2007/earth_with_sun_3.jpg

- **Betelgeuse.** It is twice the size of Earth's orbit around the sun. If earth were a golf ball, Betelgeuse would be the height of six Empire State Buildings on top of one another. You could fit 262 trillion Earths inside Betelgeuse. That would be enough golf balls to fill up the GA Superdome three thousand times. Illustrations:

Betelgeuse: <http://www.mpifr-bonn.mpg.de/public/pr/betelgeuse-Final-cc-90d-sm.jpg>

Size of Betelgeuse compared to the Sun:

http://www.psolis.com/dreamscapes/uploaded_images/sunvycomp-735426.jpg

- **Mu Cephei.** If the Earth were the size of a golf ball, Mu Cephei would be the width of two Golden Gate Brides, end to end. You could fit 2.7 Quadrillion earths inside this one star. Illustrations:

Full image of Mu Cephei: http://hirek.csillagaszat.hu/files/images/2008/09/20080915_mu_cep_big.jpg

Size of Mu Cephei compared to Betelgeuse:

<http://odysseyspace.free.fr/Images/mu-cephei-comparaison.jpg>

- **Canis Majoris.** It is the largest know star and also one of the most luminous. It is about 4,900 light years away. If the Earth were a golf ball, Canis Majoris would be the height of Mt. Everest. Mt. Everest is the highest point on Earth, reaching almost six miles above sea level. Just think about putting a golf ball at the base of Mt. Everest, climbing to the top, and looking down and seeing your golf ball. It is impossible because of the enormousness of Mt. Everest. 7 quadrillion earths could fit inside Canis Majoris. You could cover the entire state of Texas with golf balls, 22 inches deep, by comparison. Illustrations:

Full image of Canis Majoris: http://www.daviddarling.info/images/VY_Canis_Majoris_Hubble.jpg

Size of VY Canis Majoris compared to the sun:

http://daddyblog.files.wordpress.com/2008/09/800px-sun_and_vy_canis_majorissvg1.png

You see, this isn't some teeny, tiny God that created you...this is a BIG God. And God CHOSE to create you!!!

You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous-how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out, before a single day had passed.

Psalms 139:13-16 (NLT)

He breathed out the stars, but chose to knit you together. You are someone very special to God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He chose you to be with Him forever. That's why when Christ died, He died once for ALL.

For He chose us in Him, before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight.

Ephesians 1:4 (NIV)

The Apostle Paul says that God chose us in him to emphasize that salvation depends totally on God. We are not saved because we deserve it, but because God is gracious and freely gave salvation. We did not influence God's decision to save us; He saved us according to His plan. There is then no way we can take credit for our salvation. The mystery of salvation originated in the mind of God long before we existed. Because of Christ, we are holy and blameless in His sight. God chose us, included us in his Son, Jesus, and as a result loves us, wants us and accepts us.

Though we are but a vapor, we are marked in majesty. We have been created in the very image of the God who breathes out the stars and put the universe into place. You are someone INCREDIBLY special. Remember, God don't create no junk!!!

Your life has purpose, your life has meaning, and your life is of great value! God is our Creator and Father. When our lives are broken, He can heal them. When the plan falls apart, He can fix it. We are wanted, loved, and cherished by God. We belong to Him. We are chosen!!!!

Debrief questions:

- 1) How does it feel when you are not chosen? What about when you are chosen?
- 2) What is the criteria by which people judge others or themselves? (Beauty, intelligence, social status, success, talent, ethnic background)
- 3) How do you think God sees you?
- 4) Do you worry a lot about what others think of you?
- 5) How do you judge the worth of other Christians? Do you see them as rivals and compare yourself to them?
- 6) How do you judge the value of non-Christians in your community/world? Do you ever write them off?
- 7) What will you now do to make sure that others in your life know that they are so special to God and that they too are chosen?

Suggested Songs:

- 1) How Great is our God – Chris Tomlin
- 2) One Way – Hillsong United
- 3) From the Inside Out – Hillsong United
- 4) No Reason to Hide – Hillsong United
- 5) Mighty to Save – Hillsong United
- 6) Look to You – Hillsong United

Drama:

Chosen by God: <http://www.crossthesky.com/scchosen.htm>



Elation! The Outflow of *Relationship*

Chapel #2 – Healed

CHILD

Emphasis:

Through the crucified and resurrected Christ, our wounds are healed, captives are set free and life eternal is given. By believing the Truth (Jesus), we are free to enjoy the elation of relationship with Jesus as he enjoys us.

Message & Notes:

Have you ever noticed how in the Bible Jesus uses everyday physical things to talk about spiritual truths?

For example when he was talking to the woman at the well, he told her that he could give her water so that she would never thirst again – obviously he was not talking about water (John 4:1-42).

¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4:13-14 (NIV)

Jesus came to teach us about the Father, but often the way he teaches us is by using **physical analogies** to represent **spiritual realities**.

In like manner, when Jesus speaks to us about physical healings, we need to stop and think if he is trying to relay to us a deeper and greater truth. I believe that he is.

²⁴ ... by his wounds you **have been** healed.

I Peter 3:24 (NIV)

Many people use this scripture to say that because Jesus took a physical beating in his body just prior to the crucifixion that it is possible for us to now be healed physically from our pains and sicknesses.

If that were true, then it begs the question – why are some people still sick, blind, deaf, crippled and the like? If it is truly the case that “you **have been** healed” of your physical ailments, then there would be no more pain and suffering in this life. Obviously we can look around and see that this is not the case.

So what might this mean then?

Does it mean that God does not care about our pain now? Well, of course not. We know that God cares very deeply about our pain and suffering. He gives to us the hope and joy of a future resurrection where all pain and suffering will be vanquished (Rev. 21:1-5).

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Rev. 21:3-4 (NIV)

A time is coming when our bodies will not wear out – when we’ll experience a life of eternal bliss and joy in his presence (I Cor. 15:42-49). We may pray that our pains and trials now be short and easy, but those prayers are not always answered as we would like. Sometimes the answer is for us to be patient and endure. But we can rest assured in the following:

- The **wounded are healed**. By his coming in the flesh to not only die but to suffer through continuously and relentlessly fighting against the urges of the flesh, Jesus twisted back our fallen human nature to its original design. Through his substitutionary life, death and resurrection as our representative, Jesus has healed us!
- The **blind receive sight**. Those who did not know they were loved by God are now able to see this beautiful reality and are able to live in the joy of that knowledge.
- The **deaf can hear**. Those who could not hear the Holy Spirit speaking to them have been learning to understand how the Spirit speaks to them in Scripture, in their heart, through nature, in their prayer life, and in times of quietness and peace and meditation.
- The **lame can walk**. Those whose life was going nowhere before-- caught in the quicksand and rat-race of day-to-day living to earn a dollar have broken free from that way of life and have seen a greater goal – a goal of going forth and helping their fellow man and of putting others before themselves and thus starting them on a new path, a new journey, and walking forward as they are led by the Holy Spirit.
- The **mute can speak**. Those who felt unable to open their mouth to speak the gospel message to someone else have had their tongues released and can now speak with the boldness of the Holy Spirit to share the amazing and simple truth of the gospel message to those around them through their words and their deeds-- all wrapped in the love of the God for his beloved children.

- The **dead are raised** to life. Those who did not know that they are included in the family of God now know that they are indeed joined with Christ, and thus with the Father and the Spirit in an eternal bond which can never be broken and this brings them into the life of the Son – the only true life there is – and out of the “death” of trying to live apart from our Creator, Sustainer, Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

How can we see these **spiritual realities** lived out in the **physical realities** of our daily lives? A camp director recalls a story from a while ago when their whole family was eating dinner together. The middle child, Gabriel (3yrs old at the time), wasn't eating his dinner. He wanted to play rather than eat. They try not to be too hard on the kids, but they also know the kids need to eat their food. After Gabe was reminded to eat his food he still continued to play, so he was told to go and stand in the corner. Gabe got out of his chair and slowly walked to the corner and then promptly started to cry – all not more than just a few feet away from the dining table. So his dad looked at him and asked, “Do you want to come and eat with us?” Gabriel's eyes got real big, and then a smile came across his face, and he said, “Yes!” as he ran back to his seat at the table – eating dinner together, as a family. Right then and there, my friend could see God's story unfolding before his very eyes.

Once again he was able to see the Spirit weaving His story into their lives. The father was at the dinner table, the seat was there for his child, the food was even already on his plate. His son already lived in his house; his son already had a room there, which the father had prepared for him before he was even born. The father was right there beside his son the entire time, loving him. The son only had to acknowledge his role and position as the father's son to reap the rewards of the joys of that life – rewards which the father would go to no end to see that his son's life was full of love, of joy, and of hope. And the son knew in his heart what he wanted – a restored relationship with his father.

So please my friends, please understand this very day that **you have been healed** by the wounds of Jesus. You have been freed from the shackles of sin. You are no longer bound or condemned by the law. You are healed to see Christ working actively in your lives. You are healed to now hear the Holy Spirit speak to you. You are healed to walk side-by-side with Jesus, sharing in his ministry. You are healed to open your mouth and speak the truth of God's love to others. And you are freed from the fear of death because of the relationship you have been given in Jesus with the Father, Son, and Spirit.

You are free to enjoy the *elation* of the relationship with Jesus, just as Jesus enjoys the elation of the relationship he shares with the Father and the Spirit; and indeed all of us together may share in that same joy in the communion of the body of Christ, as believers in Him.

Debrief Questions

- 1) When Jesus was talking to the woman at the well, what did he really mean when he was saying that he could give her water to drink so that she would never thirst again?
[suggested answer = Holy Spirit; Eternal Life; Life with Jesus; the Gospel message that all of mankind has been joined with God by Jesus coming in the flesh – this is how we become a well of water springing forth, by telling others about the good news of the Gospel]
- 2) How can you heal the blind, deaf, lame, mute, and bring the dead back to life?
[suggested answer = By sharing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to those who do not yet know it and to those who do not fully understand how they are already included in Jesus Christ and are thus able to live in the spirit of elation in this life]
- 3) If Jesus forgave us of our sins before we ever asked, who remains in their sins from God’s perspective? Who might remain in their sins from a merely human perspective?
[suggested answer = From God’s perspective – no one; from a human perspective – those who believe they are still in their sins and separated from God]
- 4) So what is the main difference between Christians and non-Christians?
[suggested answer = What we believe; if we believe we are separated from God and trapped by sin then that is how we will live; if we believe we are eternally connected to God and freed from sin by Christ, then that is how we will live]
Follow up question: is our behavior as a Christian a perfect indicator of our core belief? [the point here is to indicate that our behavior as believers is never perfect, but Jesus’ behavior on our behalf is perfect]
- 5) What do we need to do in order to live in the elation of relationship with Jesus?
[suggested answer = Believe the Truth – believe Jesus and his message to us][you might want to speak of “belief” here as “trusting Jesus”]

Suggested Songs

- 1) You are a Child of Mine – Mark Schultz
- 2) I Am – Mark Schultz
- 3) Mighty to Save – Hillsong Australia
- 4) I Am Free – Newsboys

Suggested Videos

- 1) Blindness: <http://sermonspice.com/product/28891/blindness>
- 2) Because of Christ, I am: <http://sermonspice.com/product/23664/because-of-christ-2c-i-am>

Suggested Drama

Shackles – Tina Frantz version - song by Mary Mary “Shackles (Praise You)” tina.frantz@gmail.com



Elation! The Outflow of *Relationship*

Chapel #3 – **Included**

CHILD

Emphasis:

Jesus has purposed that we find our place of belonging within his body, the church. It's about relationship not religion. Jesus has included all humanity in his love and life – because we “are” we are wanted, accepted and loved. What a joy it is to know this! We find elation in communion with our brothers and sisters.

Message & Notes:

Ever felt like you're not wanted or you don't belong? You don't wear the right clothes, or have the right interests—aren't as smart as other people, or think the same way. It's easy to feel unloved from time to time—like the world is constantly judging or looking down on us. Well, despite how we see things through our human eyes, that's simply not the case. The truth is, each of us is loved—immensely loved—by God. We're not simply an afterthought tagged onto the end of the glorious creation that is this universe—we're the reason for its existence. We're not just covered by Christ's blood on the cross—we're the reason he sacrificed himself there. We've been included as His children—inheriting all the splendid joys, pleasures, and glory He provides. We're made complete by Him; but not only that, He has chosen NOT to be complete without us. God wants us, loves us, and most importantly has a plan for us.

The disciple Matthew wasn't a very likable guy. He was a tax collector for an emperor that held absolute control over his people. His life revolved around taking from his own society to support the Roman Empire. He was seen as a traitor—the lowest form of life—an outcast nobody wanted anything to do with. The only people that would even speak to him were other outcasts despised just as much as he was. He was unloved, unaccepted, and undesired—until he was found by Jesus.

Christ knew Matthew better than anybody. Knew exactly how he was using his life. Jesus knew exactly how everyone else looked at him—what they thought of him—but Christ didn't care. Christ saw him as the creature the Father created and had a purpose for before he was even born. The Father absolutely loved Matthew, had a purpose for him, and most of all, WANTED to share the experience with him.

The first words Jesus spoke to Matthew were, “Follow me.” Matthew's world was forever shaken. Jesus was offering him the love he was missing, and the purpose he couldn't find. He was wanted.

The same applies to us. In scripture, God calls us His “masterpiece” –he has had this plan and purpose for us in his heart from ages ago.

For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 2:10 (MSG)

What is a “masterpiece”? It isn’t some pile of junk that takes up space, and then gets thrown out. A masterpiece is cherished, prized, sought after. It has meaning. Imagine—the creator of the universe calling YOU his masterpiece, and dreaming about you before you were even born! That the Father is so consumed by love for YOU that He cares far more about YOU, than about what sports you’re good at, how you’ve lived your life, or who your friends are. God sent his Son Jesus to suffer, die, and be resurrected to grant you the same joys that He has, and to allow you to experience his life—life the way He intended it!! [Eph. 1:5-11].

The challenge is to see and to share that life. It’s easy to get bogged down by other things: school, sports, work. It’s easy to lose focus on the path God has planned for you and to put stock in other things. We do get sidetracked, but the beauty is that these little stumbles don’t matter. They can’t take away the glory we share with Christ. It’s not about what we do—it’s about who we are in Christ. We are utterly His, from our greatest accomplishment to our most devastating disappointments—he loves us and includes us in his life. When the door was opened for Matthew to take part in Jesus’ ministry, he didn’t look back at the life he lived before--there was no going back. His people would remember him as a traitor, and the Romans would replace him; but none of that mattered. His life became wholly about his relationship with Christ. He was defined by it. No longer was he some no-good tax collector—he was part of the foundation Jesus used to redeem humanity. He didn’t have to worry about where he belonged or how he was viewed—he had found his life and purpose with God.

You’re a part of that too. You’re the masterpiece that God has created, adored, planned for, and awaited. You’re the reason He suffered a brutal death before rising again to redeem humanity. You’re His child—the object of his incomprehensible love. He fuels you with His joys and with pleasures that defy imagination. Yes, sometimes the world breaks us—even if only for a moment—but that brokenness holds nothing against God’s redeeming love for us. It holds nothing against the awesome plan he has been orchestrating for us since the beginning of time. God loves you that much!

Debrief Questions

- 1) What does it mean to be a child of God? (*Living life complete with the joy and comfort God provides.*)
- 2) In what ways can we share God's glory? (Sharing in what God is doing in the world, through our schooling, our work, our worship, through serving others, by *studying scripture, etc.*)
- 3) What makes you a "masterpiece" in God's eyes? (By the unique things that God has given you—*your gifts, character, personality, etc.*)
- 4) How can we share God's gift of inclusion with others? (*By joining with God in loving, and serving others—helping them come to know their Heavenly Father.*)

Suggested Songs

- 1) *I Could Sing of Your Love Forever* – Martin Smith
- 2) *Made to Worship* – Chris Tomlin
- 3) *You Are My King (Amazing Love)* – Billy James Foote

Suggested Videos

- 1) He is my identity:
<http://simplyyouth.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/7768/He-Is-My-Identity>
- 2) I am the Beloved of God:
<http://sermonspice.com/product/24225/i-am-the-beloved-of-god>
- 3) I (Am): <http://sermonspice.com/product/13159/i--28am-29>

Outline:

- 1) God doesn't want to be God without us. Sharing his life with humanity was God's purpose for creating. He loved, cherished, and made plans for us, personally, before any physical existence (Eph. 2:10).
- 2) The love and sacrifice Christ displayed on the cross was nothing new. It was the focus of creation—the anchor that held the Trinity's ultimate plan of existing with us in place (Eph. 2:5-7).
- 3) Christ's incarnation, including his path to the cross, made us children of God. As such, we are fully included in His inheritance which allows us to take part in the joys, pleasures, and comforts He provides (Eph 1:5-11).
- 4) Just as God has chosen not to be complete without us; we simply cannot be complete without Him. The only way we can truly experience life is through an intimate sharing in the inclusion we have with God in Christ (Col. 2:9-10; Eph. 1:23).
- 5) Because of who God has made us in Christ, we no longer have any claim on mankind's "glory." Instead, we share in the glory of God who created the universe, suffered on the cross, and rose to new life to heal humanity (Rom. 5:1-2; John 17:21-23).



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Chapel #4 – **Linked**

CHILD

Emphasis:

Those who embrace the life they have in Jesus, and seek to follow him are included by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, the church. We are needed and wanted in the body and it is there that we find that we belong to one another. We find friendship, support, encouragement and *elation* in communion with our brothers and sisters.

Message & Notes:

Redwood trees are ancient giants, the tallest living things on the face of the Earth, reaching heights of up to 380 feet. These massive beauties are found only in one place - the west coast of the United States. If you have never seen one, make sure your “Bucket List” includes a trip to the National Redwood Forest. You won’t regret it.

There is something very surprising about these majestic trees. Keeping in mind their massive size, you would think that they would need a deep root system for growth, nourishment and protection from sweeping winds. But instead of having a root system that grows deep into the earth,, God has given these majestic trees a root system that grows out. Big time. For every foot that a Redwood grows upward, its root system grows outward by three times! If a Redwood tree is 300 feet tall, its root system expands outward 900 feet. That’s not all. You will never find a Redwood standing alone. These giant trees grow in clusters, called groves. Because of the close proximity in which each tree grows, their roots become intertwined, tangled and linked. As the years go by and the trees continue to grow, their roots systems become so linked that a tree could never fall. Many of these trees are 500-1000 years old. Still standing. Still growing. Standing the test of time and completely dependent on the fellow trees.

What a pertinent and beautiful illustration of what it is like to be a follower of Jesus. God the Father chose us to be adopted as his children and included in the life of Jesus before He ever created the world (Eph. 1:4-6). He did not choose us in isolation however. Never was it His intention for us to be alone. Think about this, God has always existed as the Trinity – Father, Son and Spirit. Harmonious relationship personified – in each other and for each other. Not once has Jesus thought about “running away” and doing anything apart from the Father. Never has the Holy Spirit said “take a hike” and thought about going it alone. Won’t happen, can’t happen. The Father, Son and Spirit love each other and are always and absolutely for each other. Linked in relationship for eternity you might say. So where do you and I fit into the family portrait?

God choose us and all of humanity and included us in the life and love of the Father, Son and Spirit through Jesus. Think about it. If God, as our Father, adopted us as His children, and not only us but all of humanity, that makes us all brothers and sisters! As the late Chris Farley said in the movie *Tommy Boy*, “Brothers

don't shake hands, brothers gotta hug!" We need each other. We belong to each other. We are better together.

You might say that God has called or chosen us in a way similar to redwood trees. The trees exist in groves, in groups of family, if you will. In the big picture, God has called each of us into the body of Christ – the global Church. However, He has also called us into a smaller family unit or grove – the local church. Listen to what the Apostle Paul had to say about this calling into the body of Christ.

⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."

Romans 12:4-5 (NLT)

Notice that Paul says we *belong* to each other. That's quite a statement. The word belong implies more than just being in each other's presence on occasion. It goes much deeper than just a smile and a "hello" from time to time. Belong means that we *be* together and *long* for each other. We love one another. We help one another. We encourage one another. We support one another. We laugh and play and eat with one another. We serve one another. We honor one another. And we do all of this together in the context of a local church.

What about you? Do you attend a local church? If not, please reconsider. God created you in His image. His image is one of relationship and of togetherness. He created you to belong to the Body of Christ – the church. It is in the church that we are reminded weekly of the good news of Jesus – that he has received us into his life so that we can have the elation of relationship with him for eternity! It is in the church that we continue to discover our identity in Jesus and our belonging to each other. It is in the church that we find other brothers and sisters on a similar journey with Jesus to help us along the way. We get a glimpse of the joy that is found in the fellowship of believers in the book of Acts:

⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity.

Acts 2:44-46 (NLT)

We are better together because that is the way God designed it. There is a story of a pastor who visited a man's house who had stopped attending his local church. The man invited the pastor in and they exchanged pleasantries and recent life stories. Finally, the pastor said he had missed the man's presence at church. The man thought for a moment and said, "I believe I can be just as fine outside the church as I can be inside it." The pastor didn't respond immediately but continued to look at the fire burning in the man's fireplace. After a few moments of silence, the pastor stood up, went to the fire and removed one lump of coal onto the hearth. He sat back down and both men watched that isolated lump of coal slowly but surely flame out. It dawned on the man what the pastor was illustrating and told him he would be at church the following Sunday. So it is with us. We are better by being linked together—this is God's design for our lives. There is a Greek word used often in the Bible to describe the beauty of intimate fellowship intended in the Church – *Koinonia*—translated as *fellowship, sharing or participation*. It is a beautiful word used to depict

a beautiful concept – God’s beloved children sharing life together in the loving community of Jesus. May you experience *koinonia* and the elation Jesus intended in the union and communion that is the Body of Christ – the Church!

Debrief Questions

- 1) Why should a Christian attend and participate in a local church? Isn’t it enough to love God, read the Bible and pray?
- 2) Why do you think God designed us to be linked together in the church?
- 3) What does the Bible mean when it says “we belong to each other”?
- 4) What are some ways that we can participate in serving others in and through the church?

Suggested Songs

- 1) Father, Spirit, Jesus – Casting Crowns
- 2) Make Us One – Twila Paris
- 3) Hosanna – Kirk Franklin
- 4) If We Are the Body – Casting Crowns

Suggested Videos

- 1) Welcome to Church, Are you Ready?:
<http://sermonspice.com/product/30066/welcome-to-church-are-you-ready>
- 2) Me Church: [http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/42/Mechurch%20\(satire\)](http://www.worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/42/Mechurch%20(satire))



Elation! The Outflow of *Relationship*

Chapel #5 – **Disciple**

CHILD

Emphasis:

All of us, in the unity of the Spirit, are called to serve and love others as co-ministers with Jesus.

Message & Notes:

God is good! In the previous chapel messages we have seen that God has chosen us before he created the world. Before he created the moon and the stars he knew each of us and chose to make us his friend. We marveled that he healed us and made all things new through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus. No one took Jesus' life - he chose to lay it down for us, his friends. We stood in awe that he has not only included us in his life, but has included *everyone* --all humanity. And all because of his tremendous love for his children. We experienced his rich goodness again yesterday as we learned that we are linked together as brothers and sisters in the body of Christ – the church. We have a family, an eternal family, the fellowship of believers.

All that we have learned so far points to the reality that we are loved by the Father, Son and Spirit and that God has included us in his love and life and invites us to share actively in that relationship with him. Can you believe it? How awesome is that! God's deepest desire is that we come to know him, believe him and trust him and be blown away by his goodness. Wow, God is good!

You can count on his goodness being consistent and the same during each day, each mistake, each hurtful thought, and each painful experience. God doesn't get moody and decide not to love us one day but be our best friend the next. He's not a fair weather fan. He doesn't give us the leftovers of his love but rather lavishes us with his tender loving care. God never settles on giving us "good enough", he always gives us his best.

As we look at the totality of what God has done for us, how should we respond? How do we live our lives in such a way that brings joy and glory to the Father?

The answer is simple, yet profound: Be like Jesus.

Whoa. Seriously? Haven't we been learning that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God who is God? He's divine and I'm human, how could I possibly be like Jesus? Isn't that too much to ask?

Listen to the following scripture:

Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

1 John 2:6 (NLT)

The scripture says that we should live as Jesus did and other scriptures say that God chose us to be like his Son (Rom. 8:29). You are probably thinking, “How in the world does that happen?” Some of you can barely get out of bed in the morning and get to school on time and now I’m telling you that you must become like Jesus. Isn’t that a daunting task? I can almost hear some of you thinking, “He’s flat out crazy!”

Loved ones, don’t be afraid that somehow you are not going to measure up. The good news is that this reality – becoming like Jesus – is something that He supernaturally does inside us. It’s by His will and love that we live like Jesus, not our own. If it were left up to us – if somehow He demanded that we develop into a person just like Him, but apart from Him, – we would be doomed to fail. However, through His Spirit, we are able to share His life and his love. What is not possible for us, is entirely possible for Him! So what does it mean to **live like Jesus**? Does it mean performing miracles? Walking on water? Turning water into wine? Healing the sick? Fasting forty days and nights? Does it mean that I have to live a perfect life free of all sin and bad habits?

Children of God, I say to you again, have no fear. The reality - the awesome good news is that Jesus is alive, and is sharing his perfect life with you. It is Jesus’ performance, his perfection that is what is holy and what pleases the Father (Eph. 1:4). So the question for you is this, WHAT IS JESUS DOING—and how can you share? There is no one answer—he shares his life with each of us in special ways. But what is common to all those ways is one thing. Listen to Jesus’ own words:

³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. ³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

John 13:34-35 (NLT)

The way of Jesus is the way of love. That is what he is sharing with you, and calls you to share in as he loves others. What Jesus is showing here is that people will come to know that you are a disciple of Jesus when they see you loving others

Where does love come from that frees you to care for other people like Jesus cares for them? There is only one source—God. God is love (1 John 4:16). Everything that He does flows from what He is. And God, in Jesus, through the Spirit is sharing that love with you, and he invites you to share with him in loving others.

It is the Father’s amazing love that compelled Jesus to touch the untouchable (leper), to love the unlovable (Matthew), to forgive the unforgiveable (adulteress woman), to save the unsaveable (Saul of Tarsus) and to redeem the unredeemable (you and me). That love is Jesus, and he is sharing his life with you.

There is so much pain, hurt and suffering in the world and people need to know there is a God who loves them dearly. God is a loving Father and He takes no joy in seeing His children hurt. He takes no joy in the misery people experience in this life. Rather, He loves them and lets them know His love in and through us.

If you take just a moment now, I bet you can think of a person, maybe several people, in your life that would be tremendously blessed to have you show the love of Christ to them. Maybe it's a simple word of encouragement. Maybe it's placing your arm around their shoulder to let them know that you are there for them. Maybe it's a text-message you have been meaning to send to someone to tell them what a difference they have made in your life. Maybe it's sharing a word of love with your parents. Maybe it's inviting your little brother or sister to come along with you and your friends instead of always saying no. Maybe instead of acting like everything is OK, you finally tell your friend that you are there to listen to their hurt. Maybe it's time to sit at lunch with that person that everyone in school shuns because they are not good enough, pretty enough, smart enough, athletic enough...you get the picture. Maybe, just maybe, it's time to forgive that person who wronged you.

There are several places in the Bible that make "just as" statements. We are told to live life "just as" Jesus does. We are to love "just as" Jesus loves us, to forgive "just as" Jesus forgives us, and to walk "just as" Jesus walks. It has been a marvelous time here at camp but there is a reason we go back to where we came from. It's great to be here in the "Holy Huddle" with like-minded and caring peers. Now, it's time to go home and live out what God has called us to. Have no fear because God goes with you. It's time to go back and love others as Jesus loves us. It's time to go back and forgive as Jesus forgives us. It's time to go out and remind others that God is alive and is working in their lives.

Child of God, as you leave this place, may you experience the elation that comes from the relationship that is yours with the Father, Son and Spirit! You are loved so therefore love someone else!

Debrief Questions

- 1) In what ways has God been good to you during camp?
- 2) What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? What does a life lived with him and for him look like?
- 3) What are 2 or 3 things you can do to express Christ's love to others once you leave camp?
- 4) How can you seek to go deeper in your relationship with Jesus?

Suggested Videos

- 1) We Are the Church: <http://sermonspice.com/product/27374/we-are-the-church-intro>
- 2) Nooma – Dust: <http://store.flannel.org/008.html>