

# **Civic Engagement at Bear Creek Camp**

## ***Leader's Guide***



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## *Meeting Time*

These civic engagement sessions will take place for about 1-2 hours each Sunday morning.

## *Ground Rules*

These rules should be set as known time together each week. The staff can help create these rules, or “covenant,” or you as the leader can set expectations. Some non-negotiable rules may be:

- Respect others and their words
- Go easy on yourself
- Know when to be serious and when jokes are okay
- Keep away from distractions like excessive side-chatter or cell phones
- You are allowed to leave the space if you feel uncomfortable
- Ask questions

“Let us remember:  
One book, one  
pen, one child, and  
one teacher can  
change the world.”

— Malala Yousafzai

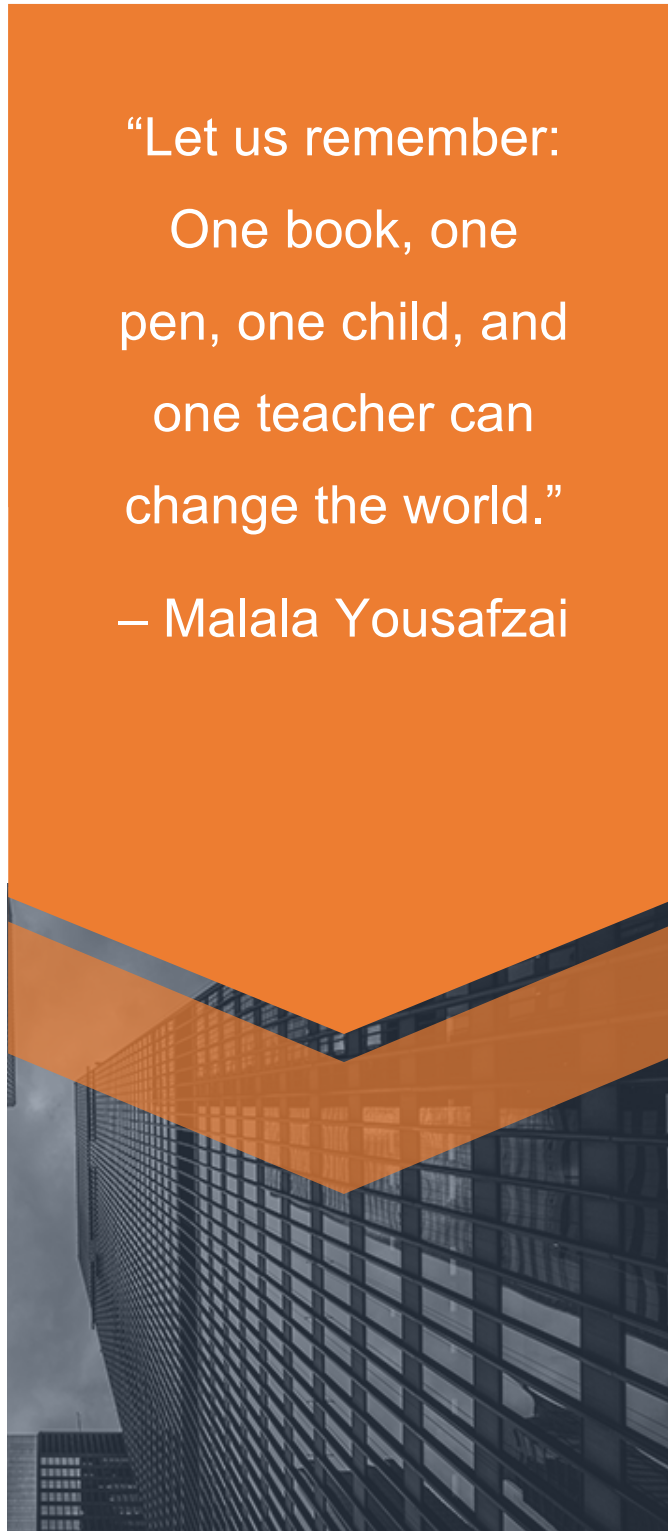
## *Starting a Meeting*

Each Sunday meeting will begin with a breathing exercise and/or prayer. This can be led by you as the leader each time, or you may ask if others would like to lead for the following week.

Talk each meeting also about what is going on in the world. Are new things occurring locally or in the country? Should certain issues be brought up in this meeting? Let the floor be open to bring up any conversations or questions that may have come about throughout the week.

## *Evaluation*

As these meetings occur, be sure to take notes of what is happening and how develop is going. Each week will be shaped by the things that occur in each individual time together.



# WEEK ONE

## *Who Are We?*

Often times, we realize what we are passionate about based on who we are, where we come from, and the experiences we have had.

To get to know ourselves and one another better, we will start our 10-week journey with art and reflection.

This art piece will be referred to often to remind us that we are all humans with different stories and lives as we are all simply trying our best.

### ***Leader Notes:***

You will need one large canvas and enough paint and brushes for all. Let the staff have ownership over the activity, but feel free to help and guide as you see needed.

“A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

### *Art Instructions*

As a group, come up with symbols that can stand for an identity. These do not have to be “stereotypical” symbols at all, but simply shapes or objects to correlate to words. For example, our symbol for woman can be a circle and non-binary can be an arrow. This can be for any identity thought about: race, age range, gender, in-state, returning staff, education level, etc.

Each person will receive a color of paint and a brush. With this, you will draw the symbols of all identities that you associate with.

***Time Allotted:*** about 1 hour



## WEEK TWO

What does it mean to you to be civically engaged?

### ***Leader Notes:***

Feel free to bring into this week a message about what you perceive civic engagement to be in this community. Let this be the week to hype up your 10-week journey.

For this project, help the staff think creatively about what this means in their life as young adults and Christians in our world. Give them plenty of space to think and do not require anyone to share this week.

When they are finished, go over how each example can look.

***Time Allotted:*** about 1 hour

“Civic engagement involves working to make a difference in one’s community and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes. Civic engagement includes both paid and unpaid forms of political activism, environmentalism, and community and national service. Volunteering, national service, and service-learning are all forms of civic engagement” – youth.gov

**HIGHLIGHT THE WAYS IN  
WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE  
TO SHOW CIVIC ACTION**

Voting

Helping others vote

Join a protest or rally

Sign a petition

Contact local representatives

Attend local meetings

Attend City Council meetings

Join the local Chamber of Commerce

Go to Town Hall meetings

Make donations

Volunteer as a Crisis Text Line counselor

Organize a clean-up

Volunteer

Read books

Listen to a podcast

Learn your local area

Watch documentaries

Shop locally

Fact check

Talk to people

Follow local politicians

Pick up trash

Teach

Watch varieties of news

Ask questions

Check your own privilege



# WEEK THREE

How can we be civically engaged at camp?

If you were to make a Personal Diversity and Inclusion Statement, what would it say?

As others share their Personal Diversity and Inclusion Statements, take notes on words and phrases that pop out to you.

How can we decide as a group what matters?

## ***Leader Notes:***

Give plenty of time for them to answer the first two questions. Perhaps give some time to answer those two in small groups with others around them.

For the Personal Diversity and Inclusion Statement, help shape what this means for your community. Should this include race, sexual identity, ability level, socioeconomic status, etc.? Let them get personal.

Create a comfortable environment for all to share their Personal Diversity and Inclusion Statements. Maybe supply hot chocolate or tea, and remind all of our ground rules of respect and care of others.

***Time Allotted:*** about 2 hours

# WEEK FOUR

## ***Agree to Disagree Activity – Mild Round***

- 1) Pepperoni pizza is the best pizza
- 2) Dogs are better than cats
- 3) The Eagles are better than the Steelers
- 4) Hemlocks is better than The Gallows
- 5) Shrek is a superior show to Ratatouille

### ***Spicy Round***

- 1) Chacos are better shoes than Crocs
- 2) Bear Creek Café is better than Scratch's
- 3) Love Round is a superior song to Hey Everybody
- 4) The Office is better than Friends
- 5) Sanctuary is a cooler spot than Pavilion

### ***Impossible Round***

- 1) Some people should have more rights than others
- 2) Poor people should not receive good things
- 3) People should not get to choose where they feel safest going to the bathroom
- 4) Borders should exist to keep people away
- 5) People should get to make choices, even if it hurts others

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

– Albert Einstein

### ***Leader Notes:***

Really understand how you want this activity to function and feel. The main purpose as the leader is to guide them through the first two rounds to be fun. They can "agree to disagree" by saying this phrase out loud or raising their hands if they disagree with each statement.

Instruct all on the "Impossible Round" to not raise their hand or speak, but simply listen. It may feel daunting or overwhelming to hear some of these sentences out loud, but that is the purpose. We do not get to have opinions over other people's existence and experiences.

When do "facts" become opinion, and when do our opinions hurt other people?

How is it our civic duty to care for others?

***Time Allotted: about 1 hour***

# WEEK FIVE

Who are we “missing” at Bear Creek Camp?

What might our culture tell us about who belongs here at BCC and who may not feel as welcomed into our community?

## Small Group Sharing

Talk in your small group about a time when you did not feel like you fit in to a place or group.

### ***Leader Notes:***

Give space for wondering. The first two questions may be more targeted at staff who have been at Bear Creek Camp for more years. This should also be talked about – that there may be a hidden culture that also isolates people.

Remind all of the ground rules when they share in small groups.

Give time to wonder about the final question of an end-of-summer goal. Let them be as creative as they wish and really dream up civic engagement actions for camp.

Bring an idea with you to dinner. What is a good goal to set for the end of summer for us as a group to be more civically engaged and to guide camp to be more inclusive?

*Some ideas to offer:*

- We have been in many conversations to be an RIC (Reconciling in Christ) organization. This may be our time to push this through the board.
- We stand on the Lenape Tribe Land. Perhaps we should create a Land Acknowledgement known by all to remind us of whose land we occupy.
- We have been in the works for two years in our Diversity and Inclusion Commitment. Maybe now is when we as a staff create a Statement of Inclusion for all guests and campers to see and know what we stand for.

***Time Allotted: about 1 hour***



# WEEK SIX

## Worship

“Canticle of the Turning”

Grounding Meditation

Reading of Personal Diversity and  
Inclusion Statements

Message

“Lord, Listen to Your Children”  
with prayer intercessions

Personal Reflection Time

Fellowship lunch together in small  
groups with guiding questions

“My heart shall sing of the  
day you bring, let the fires  
of your justice burn

Wipe away all tears for the  
dawn draws near and the  
world is about to turn!”

### **Leader Notes:**

Pre-plan this event so other staff  
can assist in leading portions of the  
worship. This should give the  
counselors good practice at  
leading things they may not be  
comfortable with or to allow them  
to do more faith-filled public acts.

Supply lyrics and words for all  
songs and words needed by either  
projecting or printing paper.

Keep an understanding of small  
groups to allow staff to mingle with  
people they may not have yet.

### *Small Group Questions:*

- What have you learned from someone else over these weeks?
- What have you heard from someone else that you connected with?
- When have you felt the Spirit moving through our time together?
- How do you see us a community functioning together moving forward?
- What are you looking forward to in your own personal civic engagement?

***Time Allotted: about 1 hour***

# WEEK SEVEN

## *Breakfast with the Board*

Intentional time with others at Bear Creek Camp is crucial to understanding our organization and community on a bigger lens. Because our Board and alumni is so strong, we should utilize their knowledge, expertise, and experience to help us all at camp be more civically engaged – both personally and as an organization. We will take time this week to listen to Board Members present to us as well as have time of fellowship and relationship building.

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”

– Albert Einstein

### ***Leader Notes:***

Have clear communication with the Board early on in the summer so as many as possible know when this breakfast is taking place and they can best prepare. Encourage them to also come with ideas and hopes they have for BCC and our civic engagement. Check in about their presentations if needed.

Allow the Board Members to ask questions of the staff as well. This may both help and challenge staff members to think more deeply about what they are already pondering in civic engagement.

Some questions for Board Members:

- Why are you passionate about Bear Creek Camp?
- How do you see our organization's values and mission change moving forward?
- What do you think we are doing well in the realm of civic engagement?
- What would you be excited to see us do better?
- In what way would you like to help us in moving camp to be more civically minded?

***Time Allotted: about 2 hours***

# WEEK EIGHT

## *Civic Action*

Now it is time to get our feet on the ground and get moving! In groups of interest, we will gather to do engage in civic action that is happening around us. Understand what is happening locally and globally as you prepare for the ways in which you best want to serve your community.

Civic engagement is very important. We all live here together, and we need to look out for one another.

— Elizabeth Goreham

### ***Leader Notes:***

Get these civic action pieces scheduled beforehand so you can communicate with organizations. Be sure to get any forms needed and have clear instructions for each individual and group.

Because you will know what each will be engaging in, send personalized questions to help prepare them for their discussions the following week.

Think of the list you highlighted in Week Two of ways you would like to be civically involved. Do any of these apply to this day of service? Has anything else stuck out in your mind of how you would like to serve? Is there anyone else you can get on board to engage with you?

Whatever way you choose to be civically engaged, be prepared next week to discuss with all others what you as individuals and groups did within your community.

***Time Allotted:*** about 3+ hours



# WEEK NINE

## *Civic Engagement Presentations*

This week, time will be offered to not only explain what you have been most excited about in civic engagement, but also how you perceive Bear Creek Camp moving forward in our civic action for the BCC community. All staff and board members will be invited to join these presentations.

“No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.”

— N.H. Kleinbaum

*Notes space for other presentations:*

### ***Leader Notes:***

Create a clear sign-up time so all know when they are speaking. Have times open throughout the week to allow staff to chat about what they are wanting to say. Help them clarify any ideas and ask questions to guide them to a focus.

Communicate with the Board how they can be present and supportive during all presentations.

***Time Allotted: about 2 hours***

# WEEK TEN

## *Getting to Work*

Perhaps a major theme has sparked for us where our next steps are obvious, or perhaps we are needing more time to develop as a community where the Board and others can step in to help. Either way, our engagement with civic action should always be an ongoing process where we continually try to learn more and do good.

### ***Leader Notes:***

Let this be very community driven by what you have been seeing the over all 10 weeks. Communicate what you are hearing and seeing, but leave plenty of space for open conversations. Perhaps even begin with time in small groups to have others hear from each other.

Offer all options of “next steps” such as further conversations with Board, regular group meetings, or book studies. Allow each individual to speak for what they might find they need as it may be different from person to person.

Key the Board in on these conversations to see how they can guide as well. Prepare to make a plan for a final meeting if there seems to be a topic or issue that stands in the forefront.

Celebrate your staff who are constantly learning and trying.

What do you see as the “next steps” for us at Bear Creek Camp?

