

Be kind at church and camps

Do you remember the first time you went to camp? How did you feel? I remember the first time I went. I was in 4th grade, 10 years old. The camp was held on a weekend for children in grades 3 through 9. Before this, we didn't have youth camps. I was happy to go but was also a little nervous about being away from home overnight.

Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesian believers. He instructed them about many things, including about being kind. "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Eph. 4:32). When we're kind, our friends and others around us feel good and safe and are happy to be with us. Jesus teaches the same in the Golden Rule (Luke 6:31). We want to treat others as we would like to be treated.

Everyone wants to belong and feel that others notice and appreciate them. When my children go to camp, I have a challenge for them. I ask them to meet and talk to one person they haven't known before. I know this can be hard to do because it's something that can be uncomfortable for me even as an adult. But from these little visits, we may find a new friend!

Showing kindness can happen in little ways. We can smile at someone we meet or pass by. We can say hi and greet with God's Peace. We can hold the door open for another person, take someone's tray after a camp or church meal or invite someone to join our visit or activity. Sometimes we may notice that somebody needs help and we can ask, "How can I help you?"

I remember a sad time at camp when I was young. It happened to a dear friend, although at that time I didn't realize this person would be such a dear friend later on. We were at camp together and he was not treated nicely by others. I was also treated unkindly, but I even said mean things to this person to avoid the unkind things that were happening to me. I thought that those who were mean might leave me alone. Many years later I was able to visit with this person. We remembered this sad time and most importantly were able to preach the gospel to each other.

When you're at camp or church and see someone being treated wrongly, say something. If you feel you can't say something to the person who is being mean, tell your mom or dad or tell a staff member at camp.

Apostle Paul reminds us to forgive each other. It is precious and important that we can ask for and believe our sins forgiven. We are weak, we make mistakes and we offend others. It is good that we care for offenses with the gospel. When we go to church or camp, we can pray that God will bless this time together!

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Things to visit about:

1. Song of Zion 463 speaks about our speech. What does it remind us to do? Or not to do? Sing this song and visit about it.
2. Challenge yourself next time you go to camp or church: visit with someone who you haven't visited with before.
3. What makes you excited when you think about camp?