



## GROUP WELCOME

### **ABOUT US**

We are a non-profit / non-denominational Christian resource ministry for churches. We offer a variety of unique houseboating experiences for middle school, high school, and college age groups on the Sacramento River Delta and Lake Shasta located in Northern California. We provide all the resources and coordinate the logistics so that you may participate with your students and model to your staff your unique philosophy of ministry. Our staff will befriend your group with the love of Christ, encourage a biblical self-awareness in your students, model a Christ centered lifestyle, and invite them into a deeper Christian commitment. There is no other camp, ministry, or mission experience that will better train, equip, develop, and provide an opportunity for your students to grow in service, leadership, and maturity.

We are a camp completely on water. Put 9 students, 2 leaders from your group, and 2 Sonshine staff on a houseboat with skiing, wakeboarding, banana boating, swimming, tanning, and floaties galore; add Bible study, worship, sharing and you come up with one of the best weeks of your life! Sonshine staff work with your leadership to custom tailor the most incredible week on your ministry calendar. The combination of your leadership, our equipment and staff, along with the incredible power of God's Spirit makes it happen year after year. Sonshine Ministries is so much more than just a summer camp. Sonshine Ministries is the leading organization and experience in discipleship and leadership for Jesus Christ. Let us share our ministry with you. Focus on evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, or just a fun time in the sun with your students, whatever the trip purpose Sonshine Ministries can accommodate and enhance your efforts and goals. The reason why Sonshine Ministries is so unique is that we do not dictate your group's spiritual emphasis. Sonshine provides all the equipment and logistics while the church brings the spiritual guidance; however our staff are always standing by ready to assist or lead your group in worship, small groups, or give a message if need be. We will do as little or as much as you need. Small group or large, when you partner with Sonshine Ministries our experience, knowledge base, and camping model will bring you greater congruency, focus, and clarity to the personal and professional roles to which God has called you.

Sonshine is one of the most if not the most flexible camps when it comes to youth leaders influencing the weekly program. Many camps script the entire week for the youth leader. The camp determines the theme, the messages, the worship style and songs. Sonshine allows the

youth leader to determine the theme, messages, worship style and songs for nearly the entire week.

Sonshine carves out three unique events in the week that facilitate group development and spiritual growth – Mid week program night, Solo, and Affirmations. Sonshine puts these 3 elements in the week because after 46 years, thousands of youth leaders, and close to 100,000 students, Sonshine has learned that these three events, the timing of these three events, and the carefully thought out implementation of these three events give each group the best chance at leveraging gospel presentation, spiritual growth, group development, mentoring, and both personal and corporate leadership vision for the students. The three elements are catalysts for intense spiritual formation and personal development.

The Sonshine volunteer staff also serves your group by partnering in relational ministry with you during the week. The staff helps logistically by assisting students as your group cooks and prepares food for each other during the week. The staff also helps by handling the logistics of the houseboat and the ski boat. You will never have a better opportunity to pour your life into the lives of your students. Those that have been with us before can testify that their groups experienced a tremendous bond from experiencing the week together and sharing their lives with each other.

### **CAMPS - DELTA / LAKE SHASTA**

Wake up to the early morning sun and notice the beauty and peaceful quiet of being on the water. Start your day with breakfast, early morning ski runs, quiet time and Bible study. Bible study can be individual or conducted in small groups. After lunch, the afternoon is filled with skiing, boarding, banana boating, swimming, games, water olympics, fishing, reading, and exploring. After dinner, gather the whole group for an evening program. Often this is a time for worship, singing, sharing, and a talk from one of your leaders. After the evening program, many groups break into small groups to discuss the evening message or theme further. The rest of the night is filled with group games or deep discussion under the stars. Wake up the next day and do it all over again! Each day is very full and very relational. Only on houseboats do the words of the early believers come alive... “And they continually devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe...and all were together and had everything in common.” (Acts 2:42-44)

Many students, years later, have reflected on their week on houseboats as a sword in the sand moment where they once and for all surrendered their life’s pains, regrets, and self-destructive behaviors to the cross. Thousands of students over the years have abandoned addictions, abusive relationships, self-hatred, indifference, and apathy during their week on houseboats. God has chosen to reveal himself in a deeply intimate and transforming way to the students and staff who join us for their houseboat experience. We look forward to watching God work in and among your group out on the water with Sonshine soon.

## HOUSEBOAT PREPARATION SCHEDULE

Youth Leaders for years have been asking us for help in planning and executing their trips. The following Houseboat Preparation Schedule is just a suggestion; however, those who have followed it have seen growth each year in the number of students they bring to camp. Please read through the entire HOUSEBOAT PREPARATION SCHEDULE first before starting it. You will need to calendar and plan accordingly.

**SEPTEMBER** -Decide on a week and number of houseboats to reserve. Send in reservation confirmation form and fee.

**OCTOBER** -Begin developing yourself through disciplined times with God and the theme / curriculum for your houseboat retreat will emerge! 4 messages, 4 small group times, 4 morning devotional times, 1 3-hour solo devotional time, and 1 great skit for the Sonshine hosted program is usually a winning combo for any houseboat retreat.

**NOVEMBER** - Begin scouting for and/or building into your volunteer adult staff for your houseboat trip. Share with them your theme and vision for your trip that emerged from your October times. Get them excited and focused!

**DECEMBER** - Receive contract. Sign it and return all 5 pages. Plan trip budget, transportation (see March), advertising, creative fund raising, and a January parent meeting! In December? Yes, in December! Having your houseboat budget and flyers printed and circulating before Christmas is ESSENTIAL to the success of your trip. I know what you are thinking..."What about the spring break mission trip and winter camp?" Frankly...those should have been planned, announced, and in the "execution phase" MONTHS ago. By announcing and advertising your houseboat camp before Christmas you give parents, grandparents, and family members time to financially plan and more often times than not, gift their child or grandchild a houseboat trip for Christmas! (Seen it only about a 100 times or so!) Calendar a "Parent meeting" for January. Call every parent in your group and let them know why they need to attend this parent meeting. Let them know that ONLY at this meeting will early registration for houseboats be accepted guaranteeing their child a spot on the trip. \*If you are a middle school pastor, don't forget to call the 5th grade parents and high school 8th grade parents!

**JANUARY** -Advertise trip and execute parent meeting. At your parent meeting share with them your theme, message titles, small group ideas, and vision for the trip. Emphasizing your excitement for the trip and providing your testimony about how God impacts kids during the trip helps a lot! Let them know that your role/behavior throughout the trip is to create opportunities for friendship, interaction, love, companionship, membership, and recognition for their child. You want to remove ANXIETY, FEAR, and DOUBT from the parents surrounding you and the trip. After the meeting accept early registration from the parents with a full payment or deposit. Let them know how many spaces are available and the only other time to sign their child up is in March. Pick a day and time in March where sign-ups will open for example... Friday March 1, 2022 at 3:00pm. The first (However many spots are still open from your parent meeting) with full payment or 1/2 payment will get a spot.

What this does is create a frenzy! You will have parents showing up to the church office an hour early to make sure their kid has a spot. Once your boats are filled, start a waiting list. Continue to collect 1/2 or full payment. Once you reach 7 kids call Sonshine ASAP to reserve another houseboat! If you follow this schedule perfectly up to this point, I would be shocked if you are not calling us for another houseboat!

**FEBRUARY**-Continue to advertise the trip at every possible opportunity. Have a fun fundraiser. However, if money is the goal of your fundraiser, you have missed the point! What this does is get kids together in the name of the trip. They invite friends and your pool of participants grows! The underlying theme of any "Fundraiser" or event should be to befriend students, encourage them, model a Christ centered lifestyle, and invite them to a deeper relationship of intimacy and trust with Jesus.

**MARCH** -SIGN-UPS!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Let the frenzy begin!!!! We highly recommend the beginning of March, so you have time to properly plan transportation for WHEN you grow by another houseboat. A great way to cut cost is by being creative with your transportation. Have parents donate their vehicle and themselves as a driver to and from houseboats. Select 1 parent to oversee all your transportation needs. Parents love to be used and can be your greatest volunteers! We have seen parents drive students from other states to save money so their kid can go on houseboats. Do not underestimate a parent's love for their child and their desire to have their child grow in relationship with Jesus!

**APRIL** -Continue to advertise and have sign-ups with 1/2 or full payments! Have another fun - fundraiser, but do not forget to befriend, encourage, model, and invite! Begin showing slide shows or videos from last year's trip. Have students give testimonies at the weekly meetings from the previous year about how the trip influenced them. If this is your first trip go to [www.sonshineministries.com](http://www.sonshineministries.com) for videos and pictures.

**MAY** -Continue with sign-ups. Call all the incoming grade's parents and let them know why their child must attend houseboats (January parent meeting material). Call all parents of students who have not signed up yet and find out why. You may think this is a huge waste of time, but many youth leaders have filled a whole boat in one day with this simple exercise.

**JUNE** -Send in final payment by June 5, 2022. Continue to call parents and students. Never be content or satisfied with how many students you have until the day of your trip. Then trust that those are the ones Jesus has given you to serve. The same goes for July and August. **AFTER YOUR TRIP!** -Have a potluck dinner at the church and invite the whole congregation to view a slide show or video of your trip. Have a time of worship, testimonies from students, and a summary message from you, the leader. This will memorialize the trip for your group and springboard you right into September where it all starts again!

Again, we are here to serve you and we realize that Houseboats is your trip! We are just honored to be a part of it!

-Sonshine Ministries