



HOUSEBOAT PREPARATION SCHEDULE

Youth Leaders for years have been asking us for help in planning and executing their trips. The following 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 entire HOUSEBOAT PREPARATION SCHEDULE first before starting it. You will need to calendar and plan accordingly. *(The parenthesized text comes from CHURCH BUILDERS, a division of Sonshine Ministries that provides customer tailored solutions to pastors and ministry leaders for the healthy growth and development of their ministries. For more information on visit our web-site at www.churchbuilders.biz)*

SEPTEMBER - Decide on a week and number of houseboats to reserve. Send in reservation confirmation form and fee before September 23, 2011. *(Choosing a week can depend on how you want the trip to impact the life cycle of your group. What life cycle, you ask? Your group's spiritual development can be identified by four distinct stages. Dependency, Conflict, Cohesion, and Interdependency. Within each of these stages unique, climactic, and decisive events either begin your journey in a new stage or propel your group into the next!)*

OCTOBER - Begin developing yourself through disciplined times with God and the theme and curriculum for your 2012 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. *(When you realize that everything that you use or have is an undeserved gift from a gracious creator your countenance more clearly reflects joy, gratitude, and generosity. Focusing on the fullness of your creator is a daily discipline. The more you focus on your creator's fullness, the more you perceive your own emptiness. As the creator fills the secret, empty recesses of your soul your countenance reflects the creator's fullness. Leaders and followers are desperately seeking those who carry on them the fragrance of Christ. So why do so few seem to wear the person of Christ like a garment or perfume? The challenge is that the fullness of your creator is not something that you acquire. It is freely and extravagantly given. What lacks is the discipline and resolve to commune intimately with the creator's abundance.)*

NOVEMBER - Receive contract . Sign it and return all 5 pages with deposit by January 13, 2012. 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! *(If you are consumed with bringing out the best in others you will take yourself far less seriously. You will be generous with praise and proactive about serving. Generosity, praise, pro-activity, and service are bedrocks for effectively drawing out the best in others.)*

DECEMBER - 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! *(To be humble is to listen to the input and critique of others and sincerely factor their input despite feeling that your conscience is clear. To have a clear conscience and be willing to accept criticism and re-evaluate your perspective is a great exercise of humility. Humility is intoxicatingly attractive and greatly enhances one's leadership effect.)*

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. 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 2, 2012 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!

(To effectively lead is to draw out the creative capacity of those whom you serve. In order to attract, engage, nurture and inspire the individuals you lead you must be far more concerned with seeing them exercise their freedom and far less concerned with feeling that the full extent of your authority, knowledge, and strategy is felt and understood by your team. To attract and nurture talent demands that you limit your freedom to make room for the initiative, energy, and activity of those you lead.)

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 challenge them to a deeper relationship of intimacy and trust with Jesus. *(To create an environment of wholehearted commitment, passion and creativity, you must conspicuously articulate and reinforce through words, art, events, and/or music your values and the meaning behind what you do. You may have heard it said, haste creates waste. The more critical question is "what kind of waste?" The tragedy of haste is that haste creates a fulfillment wasteland. Lack of fulfillment/meaning is the wasteland that causes a toxic corrosion of personal and corporate fulfillment. Whole hearted commitment, flexibility, and passion all stem from a leader's focused effort to communicate the meaning behind the organization's values and vision (Befriend, encourage, model, challenge). The difference between writing or not writing down and regularly communicating your goals, values, and vision is in many cases the difference between an organizations life or premature death.)*

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 in your transportation. Have parents donate their vehicle and themselves as a driver to and from houseboats. Select 1 parent to be in charge of all your transportation needs. Parents love to be used and can be your greatest volunteers! We have seen parents drive students from other states in order to save money so their kid can go on houseboats. Don't underestimate a parent's love for their child and their desire to have their child grow in relationship with Jesus! *(The greatest detriment to your spiritual growth and leadership potential is you. The one common thread for every underperforming youth ministry or problem in your church or family is you. When we admit it, we grow! Deny it and we continue on a self-defeating path of irrelevance and ineffectiveness. We continue to "Be the victim" of every misfortune that we encounter. Ministry isn't something you do, it is life experienced out of who you are in Christ Jesus!)*

APRIL - Continue to advertise and have sign-ups with 1/2 or full payments! Have another fun - fundraiser, but don't forget to befriend, encourage, model, and challenge! 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 for videos and pictures. *(Reckless servant hood stems from living a life that is not defined, scripted, or controlled by expectations. If I am completely free from expectations and opinions I take criticism, ridicule, and misunderstandings far less personally. I am able to serve unconditionally/recklessly even when my servant hood becomes like slavery with very little positive feedback. Reckless servant hood is the most powerful factor for building morale, sustainable growth, efficiency, and loyalty among a leader's team and constituents.)*

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. *(If you agree to lead, you agree to serve. You can gauge your heart of service by how you react when someone actually treats you like one. How do you react when someone treats with insult and disrespect? Do you choose to serve and honor that person or do you retaliate? If you are in a position of widespread influence, you*

are called to serve. If you are in a position of little influence or recognition, you are called to serve. The position that you occupy is immaterial. The condition of your heart is essential. The inspiration to serve is never mastered by a job description. It only springs from singleness of heart to Christ. C.S. Lewis described hell as the place where everyone is permitted to be a master. The wise leader understands that the path to genuine growth, maturity, loyalty and development happens through creating a community of better servants. The misguided leader controls, protects, and demands in order to establish territorial rights. For the misguided leader synergy is lost as the team moves into deeper and deeper isolation from one another in order to protect their rights, ideas, and privileges. To crave abundance is to crave Jesus. To crave Jesus is to serve like Jesus. Out of abundance flows joy, love, and freedom. Abundance must empower the mission and culture of your organization. The transformative power of abundance is cultivated and released through choosing to serve.)

JUNE - Send in final payment by May 31, 2012. 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. *(Thoughts that direct us to the tree of life (the cross) lead us to submission to Christ. Thoughts that direct us to the tree of knowledge lead us to selfish ambition, pride and ultimately self-destruction. To be built up in love is to be crucified with Christ. The process is always more anguishing than expected but the resulting beauty of a life transformed is beyond imagination. Peter is a picture of the tree of life process. He journeys through disappointment, frustration, betrayal, and regret and surrenders to Christ his broken life. Judas is a picture of the tree of knowledge. He journeys through disappointment, frustration, betrayal, and regret and surrenders to his own tree in a field which ultimately led to self-destruction. To properly live and be built up in love is to let Christ destroy your old self, like Peter. If you are tired and disenchanted you are in a very sacred place. Christ is pushing you to eat from the tree of life. He's leading you to the cross. He's building you up in love. He's helping you discover that your relationship with Him is not cream puff ideas of how to have a better day but instead an intense love affair that demands your body, heart, mind, and strength.)*

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 brief summary message from you, the leader. This will memorialize the trip for your group and spring board you right into September where it all starts again! *(1 Cor. 10:16 – "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" In order to reveal the heart of Christ, someone needs to bleed. The depth and power of your leadership will stem from your ability to forgive. The genuine leader internalizes pain and disappointment and releases it to the fiery mercy of Christ. The spirit of Christ re-invigorates the leader with freedom, gratitude, and joy. The process always begins with intense pain but ends with joyful transformation. Outside of marriage no other structure refines a person more than leading. In other words, leading an organization is often one of life's incredibly humiliating and frustrating endeavors, but it is also profoundly refining and an intoxicating challenge. If you are called to lead you are called to be infused with the intoxicating wine of Christ. Drink the cup. You'll hate the pain but find great joy in the transformation. Keep in mind – leadership without blood is dead.)*

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