

# Section 09: ASE Teambuilding and Challenge Course Official Manual

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## **ASE: Action Socialization Experience**

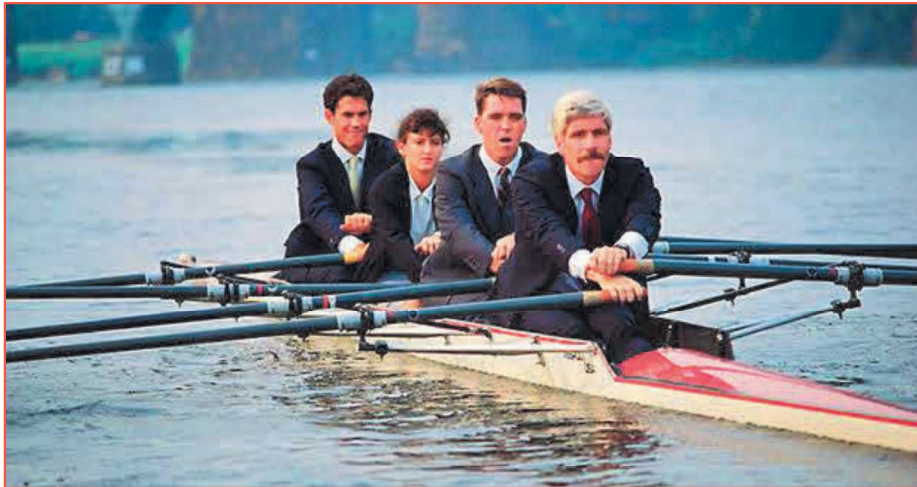
The process of working together as a group to accomplish certain tasks to help strategically grow the conscious, thinking person in later moments of tension during work, school, or recreation. ASE is a simulated team building experience organized with clear goals and objectives, helping the group participating to develop proper social skills through conflict resolution.

# Camp Fitch YMCA Adventure Programs



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\*Facilitators use discretion when running this program. For example, instead of having the group restart after touching the ground, maybe send them back after three touches. Make the low ropes course work for the positive outcome of the group rather than teaching it standard to every class or group.



### **Proper Class Outline**

When teaching challenge course as a class, the facilitator should set it up to where the group progresses through it in stages, increasing in difficulty. The facilitator should also be able to know when to ease up and choose something less difficult if the group is struggling. The result should be having the group finish a task with positive energy.

For an hour-long class, try the following timetable. Note that it takes 50 minutes. Examples of things that can rapidly change the flow of the class are situations when a group will show up late, giving them time to use the bathroom and walk to the next class area on camp property. For classes that are longer than one hour, double up on field initiatives and elements used. A good instructor only needs to use one element. Knowing how to continually make things more difficult at one location is more valuable than hitting several elements during the block of time.

❖ Introduction	05 minutes
❖ Field Initiative	10 minutes
❖ Five Finger Contract/ Trust Exercise	10 minutes
❖ Element	20 minutes
❖ Debrief	05 minutes

## Field Initiatives

*(Sample of Common Games Played)*

### **A. Group Juggle**

- a. Have the group form a circle. Begin by saying your name and then throwing the ball to someone at random. The process continues until everyone receives the ball, ending by throwing it back to you- the facilitator. When tossing the ball, the person throwing says “Here you go” and then their name. The person receiving the ball says, “Thank You” and the person’s name who threw it.
  - i. Person A: “Here you go Maddie”
  - ii. Person B: “Thank You Brian”
- b. Variations
  - i. The group can be timed
  - ii. Multiple balls or throwable items can be added
  - iii. Go in reverse

### **B. Maze**

- a. Using poly-spots, lay them out in a grid. Once the grid is laid out, come up with a precise path you would like the group to take. One at a time, have a participant try to navigate the ‘maze’. If they step on a wrong poly-spot, they must restart. The goal of this activity is observation; seeing if the group can remember where the person in front of them stepped. For the beginning round, try not to have them go backwards. Directions can be forward, back, right, left and diagonal right or diagonal left.
- b. Variations:
  - i. For harder scenarios try backwards, left-back diagonal, right-back diagonal.
  - ii. Blind Fold the participant and let the group tell them where to step.

### **C. Chocolate River**

- a. The classic game of trying to get to the other side without stepping off an item. Using carpet squares, the group tries to reach a certain point determined by the facilitator. If a carpet square is not being touched by a body part, the facilitator may remove that carpet square from the game.
- b. Variations:
  - i. Take carpet squares away from the group if a carpet square is not being held or left on the ground. A body part needs to be touching the carpet square.
  - ii. Assign speaking roles to others than those who normally take lead.
  - iii. Place a kid on a carpet square in the middle of the route. The group now must pick them up on their way to the 'destination.'

### **D. Where is the Pen?**

- a. This game focuses on observation skills. As a facilitator, bring a pen to the challenge course. Finding a 'playing area,' tells the participants to spread out in the field and close their eyes. While they have their eyes closed, the facilitator hides the pen on the ground. It must be hidden in plain sight. Do not put the pen under something, participants will never have to pick things up or move items to find the pen. Once someone has found the pen, they simply exit the 'playing area.' The goals are not to announce that one has found it but to let everyone try and find it on their own. Once everyone has found the pen, bring everyone back into the 'playing area' and repeat the process three to four times. The equestrian center porch is a great location to play this game.
- b. Other Hiding Ideas:
  - i. Place the pen near a kid's shoe.
  - ii. Place the pen on top of a window seal.
  - iii. Place the pen on a table with clutter.
  - iv. Last round- place the pen on yourself, visible, and walk around as the kids look for the pen.
  - v. Place the pen on a participant, with their consent.
- c. Variations
  - i. Have the players who have already found the pen play the Hot- Cold game with the other players.

### **E. Steal the Bacon**

- a. This game only needs a water bottle or throwable object. The game works as a version of *Red Light, Green Light*. Begin by placing the object at your feet. Have the participants stand at a distance you have set. When ready the instructor turns around, with their back facing the participants. This then lets the participants know they can move toward the instructor. After a certain length of time, dependent on the instructor, turn around and yell ‘STOP!’ If you catch anyone moving after you yell ‘STOP!’, send them back to the start. If you see that the bacon has been stolen (object is gone), the instructor gets one free guess to see who has it. If the guess is right, that participant must return the object and return to the start. The goal of this game is for the group to work together to get the object back to the start without the instructor being to guess who has it.
- b. Variations
  - i. Count down until you say ‘STOP!’ when working with younger kids.
  - ii. After two rounds, add the ability to guess twice.
  - iii. Have a participant take the instructor's place.

### **F. Hula Hoop Pass**

- a. Have the group stand in a circle and hold hands. Place the hula hoop between two participants. Instruct the group that the hula hoop must get back to the start, with everyone going through it.
- b. Variations
  - i. Each round can be timed.
  - ii. Have the participants sit on the ground instead of standing.
  - iii. Tie two pieces of rope together, forming a circle. Pass this around instead of the hula hoop.

### G. Over Under

- a. Grab a ball or throwable object. This object then gets passed down a line made by participants. The object must go over the first person's head. The second person then grabs the object from up high and then places the object under their legs. The third person then grabs the object from the second person and places the object above their head. This process continues all the way down the line.
- b. Variations
  - i. Split the group up into teams and have them race against each other.
  - ii. Blindfold some of the participants.
  - iii. Use a larger object.

### H. Line Ups

- a. Participants are given certain scenarios by the instructor to line up in a certain order. This has the same rules as the *Line Up* element listed in the next section. An alternate way to play this in the field (due to no platform to fall from) is to have the kids make numbers or letters by laying down in the grass.
- b. Examples:
  - i. Line up by birthday
  - ii. Line up alphabetically (first, last, middle name)
  - iii. Make a number or letter with their bodies



**I. Helium Stick**

- a. Have the group gather around a tent pole or long, straight object. (Hula hoops work well too). Have everyone place one fingertip under the object. Starting at waist height, tell the participants to put the object on the floor. It should take several tries for them to do it. What happens is that they will raise the object up over and over until they learn how to work together.

**J. Knot A Knot**

- a. Lay a giant rope in the middle of the ground, coiling it up and stacking it in a random mess. Have the group approach the rope. Inform them that without touching the rope, they have to guess if when the end of the rope is pulled by the instructor, will the rope tie itself in a knot or come out completely loose? The group will then be given a set amount of time to form their hypothesis. The key to this is that the group has to be unanimous in their decision. The overall goal of this activity is not to get the rope question right but to force the group to communicate with each other, share ideas, and try to persuade others that they are right.



**K. Marble Shoot**

- a. Lining up, participants use wooden or plastic piping to help a marble travel to the end of the line. If the marble is dropped, restart.

## Going from field to element

Before moving on to an element, the trained instructor knows that it is important to develop a sense of togetherness when having participants interact in each other's personal space. Many of the elements used for teambuilding purposes require participants to touch, spot, and be aware of other people's size and comfort zone. After doing a few field initiatives, try to add in the Five Finger Contract and at least one of the trust exercises.

## Five Finger Contract

Before heading into the woods, advancing to the elements, have the group talk about these five points:

- 1. Safety**  
Listen to all safety instructions before attempting the element.
- 2. Commitment**  
Be committed to helping the group succeed and to go outside your comfort zone.
- 3. Respect**  
Be respectful of everyone's own comfort zone, abilities, and leadership capabilities. No body shaming.
- 4. Team Effort**  
The group realizes that to accomplish these tasks, they need to work together and support each other. Try not to put each other down.
- 5. Fun**  
Listen to the task objective, accomplish it but also try to have fun while doing it.



## Trust Exercises

### Trust Leans

Participants face each other and have their hands touch palm to palm. Do not interlock your fingers. Once in this position, participants put weight on each other, creating a triangle with the ground. With one leg out in front, each participant takes turns shifting all their weight onto the other person.

### Trust Bridge

Participants make two lines and stand shoulder to shoulder. Everyone then holds their arms out horizontally, forming a zipper with other participants. There should be someone else's arm between your own arms. Once the zipper is formed, a participant then runs through the zipper. These builds trust in hoping that the team will raise their arms up vertically, one after the other, as the participant runs through the group.

### Full Body Carry

Using the hand positioning outlined above with the trust bridge, participants stagger their arms on the ground while kneeling. One person then volunteers to lay down on their back. The facilitator or a participant that wants to be in charge, can be positioned at the head of the person laying down. The person at the head then instructs the group when to lift the participant, how far to carry them, and how to softly place them on the ground.

*Note: If attempting the Horizontal option to the Spider-Web element, this must be practiced first.*

### Trust Falls

Have one person get into the athletic sports stance (one leg bent in front, one leg behind, and both forearms up, palms facing out). A second person then, with their back to them, slowly leans back until their back touches the first person's palms. Once at this stage, the first person slowly lowers their partner, using their own leg in front, to slide them down to the ground. For heavier people you can try using two people.

## Elements

### Before every new element:

- Check the area and clear any fallen debris out of the way.
- Reposition platforms, ropes, other objects if needed.
- Inform the group about the element.
  - Safety Concerns
  - Spotting Techniques
  - Instructions and the group's task

### After each element:

- Debrief what happened.
- Go over any safety issues that might prevent the group from moving to another element.



Elements that are found on Camp Fitch YMCA property:

*Note: See Map for Location (approximately)*

- **Line Ups (#1)**

- Instructions

- Have everyone randomly find a spot on the elevated balance beams and be standing. At any point someone falls off and touches the ground, the group has to restart.
    - Examples
      - Names in Alphabetical Order
      - Favorite Ice Cream Flavor
      - Age
    - Variations
      - See field initiatives
    - Safety Concerns
      - Spotting participants and help control their fall. Use counselors or support staff.



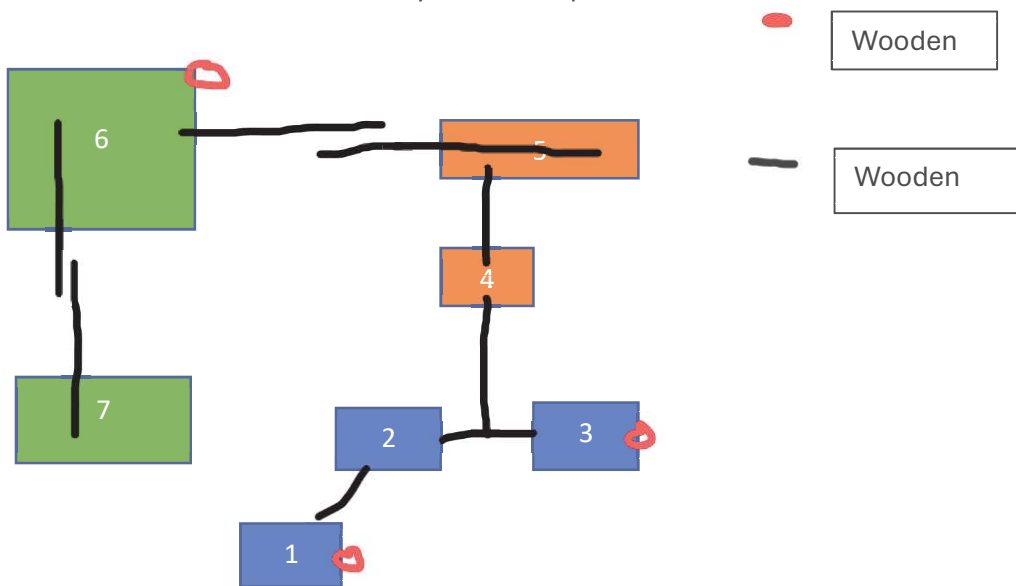
- **Alli & Gator Crossing (#2)**

- Instructions

- Participants use wooden boards to move from platform to platform. The platforms are numbered, and the group must work together to visit each platform in order.
    - The first few platforms can be reached by using only one wooden beam.
    - Once a second wooden beam is 'unlocked', the group must figure out how to make a 'T' with the boards to get to the next set of platforms.
    - After this, using two wooden boards, the group must figure out how to overlay the boards to get to the final destination. This can be done by two or three participants sitting on one board while balancing the second board on top. The overlay of the boards creates a walkway above the ground. When there are enough participants at the finish, the boards are flipped, having two to three people at the end to sit on them, stabilizing the weight and allowing the other participants to make it across. The key part here is getting a few people over to the last platform and then figuring out how to rearrange the boards to get the remaining people over.

- Safety Concerns

- Boards are heavy to pick up, might need some assistance from instructors.
    - Platforms can only fit 2-3 people. The group needs to figure out how to pass the wooden beams around. People can be spread out on the platforms and do not need to have everyone on one platform.



- **Whale Watch (#3)**

- Instructions

- Tell the group to balance the board. The board is a seesaw-like structure that is balanced on a fulcrum that is slightly off centered. Have the group restart if the board touches the ground.
    - Variations
      - That rare person that balances it by simply lifting the board with their hand without anyone on it.
      - Have the entire group enter, one by one, and once everyone is on the board have them balance it.
      - Make up a limit of how many times the board can touch
      - For big groups, divide them and have them compete against each other, seeing how many attempts it takes to balance. Once the board hits the ground, the 'other team' gets a chance.
      - Randomly place two or three people on the board where you (facilitator) would like to place them. After this, tell the group to balance the board understanding that the selected people cannot move.
      - Once balanced, have the entire group exit the board without the board touching the ground. If it is too difficult, make up a number of touches.

- Safety Concerns

- The Whale Watch element is basically a large fulcrum. There is a danger of participants getting their toes smashed by the large platform if bystanders are watching too close. To avoid this, have the group identify this safety concern and agree that they notice it. Have participants enter and exit at the fulcrum.



- **Nitro Swing/ May I Go? (#4)**

- Instructions for Nitro Swing
  - Have the group line up behind one platform (facilitator needs to adjust platforms dependent on group age and physical ability). One at a time, participants grab the rope and swing to the other platform.
- Variations
  - Have group 'obtain' rope to start
  - Once a participant swings to the platform, have them stay there with the goal for everyone to end up at the ending platform. If someone falls off the ending platform, have the entire group restart.
- Instructions for "May I Go"
  - Have all participants randomly stand on any platform (max 4 platforms).
    - Facilitator makes sure spacing is good for group.
  - Once everyone is on a platform, the facilitator makes up tasks for the group to accomplish. Once a task is accomplished, the facilitator needs to set this as a 'checkpoint'. If anyone touches the ground through swinging or stepping off a platform, the group goes back to the 'checkpoint'. If during a task, someone does not have to move, they are still helping the team by staying put. All movements need to be with the rope.



- Sample Levels
  - Gender
    - All the boys must end up on one platform, the girls another. (Be aware if someone in group is gender fluid- possibly do not do.)
  - Birth Month
    - Assign birth months to platforms, participants need to end on those platforms.
      - January, February, March
      - April, May, June
      - July, August, September
      - October, November, December
  - All Aboard
    - Have the entire group end up on one platform like Nitro Swing.
  - Go Back to the Beginning
    - Have the group get back to their original platforms after the previous task.
- Safety Concerns
  - Watch how participants use the rope. Do they jump onto it? Do they let go too early? Try to spot to avoid back and head injuries.



- **Wild Woozy (#5)**

- Instructions
  - Have people get in pairs. One pair at a time tries to make it down the 'V' as far as they can. The 'V' shape is made by two wires. Participants help each other by pressing palms against each other. Do not have them interlock fingers, hold hands, etc. Everyone else in the group helps spot.
- Safety Concerns
  - Spotting on the outside
    - Spot by hands up, near upper back. If participants start to fall off, help them off, trying to prevent them twisting an ankle on the wire.
  - Spotting on the inside
    - Doing a half squat, spotters are placed in the inside of the 'V' hunched over providing a safe landing area if someone on the 'V' falls inward. Start with one person, then as the pair work their way down the 'V' add one or two more.



- **Spider-Web (#6)**

- Instructions (Horizontal Portion)

- Have participants line up and walk through the spider-web one at a time. Their goal is to step over and duck underneath ropes to get to the main 'gathering area' before attempting the vertical portion. If someone touches, send them (or entire group) back to the start.
    - Variations
      - The whole group has to hold hands in a line to walk through.
      - The next person in line cannot go the same way as the person who just went and so on.
    - Safety Concerns
      - Do not run! The ropes are not meant to withstand weight from a fall. Ropes may even cause bruising and cutting due to light strength.



- Instructions (Vertical Portion)

- With all the participants in the 'gathering area,' have them exit one by one the eight boxes available, created by the ropes. For four boxes on the bottom, participants can simply step through. For the upper boxes, participants will have to pick up other participants and help them go through via safe practices that were taught before attempting element. If someone touches the rope, they must restart or send the entire group back.

- Variations
  - Once someone goes through a box, that passage closes and so on. Once all eight boxes have had participants go through them and if there is more than eight people participating, the boxes reset.
  - In fear of picking people up, only use the bottom boxes.
- Safety Concerns
  - Do not run! (See above)
  - Practice picking up participants before attempting. Use the open field for safe practicing



- **Stumped (#7)**

- Instructions

- Have the group gather and strategize on how to get everyone to the other side of the area. They are trying to get from point A to point B. Those points are determined by the facilitator or teacher running this.
    - There are stumps from old trees arranged in the ground and participants use huge wooden boards to act as a bridge between stumps. These wooden boards can only be placed certain ways. If a board does not connect one stump to another stump, it cannot be used. The board must be making a bridge and cannot be laying on the ground.
    - After trial and error, participants realize that the boards can connect stumps horizontally but not vertically. To move vertically, participants must connect a wooden beam from stump to the middle portion of another wooden board that has already been laid to connect horizontally.

- Variations

- Have the person running the group be the 'helicopter' and place the boards for the group through their instruction. This or have other spotters, volunteers, assistants be able to move the wooden boards. They are heavy.

- **A Frame (#8)**

- Instructions

- The A Frame looks like a big wooden triangle propped up by Equestrian Center. It has ropes attached to it. To start out, everyone grabs the end of a rope. The participant using the A frame gets ready by placing one foot on the horizontal wooden beam and one hand on each of the other two sides. When ready the participant stands inside the triangle, removing their last foot from the ground and tries to remain balanced inside the triangle. While this is happening, everyone else in the group holds the ropes and tries to keep the triangle (A Fram) erect.

- Variations

- The group can walk the A frame with the participant inside it by using the ropes. Group members can tug on one side, using communication skills, to lift each leg of the A frame to help move it forward. This requires everyone to be aware of how much tension in their own rope they are holding.

- Safety Concerns

- Spot the person inside the triangle (A frame)

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- **Walking Skis (#9)**
  - Instructions
    - The group's goal is to walk together and reach a certain point. To do this, they must work together to move the wooden skis they are standing on. Participants need to hold on to the ropes that are attached. They can use the ropes to pick up the skis as if lifting a giant foot.
  - Variations
    - You can blindfold the group.
  - Safety Concerns
    - If someone falls, stop the group from trying to lift the skis or move them. A participant could hurt their foot by a ski landing on top of it.
- **The Wall (#10)**
  - Instructions
    - After designating two people to be at the top, the group must now scale the wall with the help of each other. The two at the top may help by pulling people up the wall but should not overextend over the wall, making their position unsafe.
    - The group helps everyone scale the wall. Some examples are:
      - People kneeling down to let participants stand on their backs.
      - People form a human pyramid to help others climb up.
      - Participants running and jumping, getting help from participants above to 'pull them' up the wall.
  - Safety Concerns
    - People at the top falling off the platforms.
    - People at the top pulling other participants' arms (shoulder out of place) when helping.

- **Ask For Help**

- Set Up
  - Ask a facilitator to set up a range of ropes around trees that end up making a circle or connected pattern.
- Instructions
  - Have the group blindfolded first. Once blindfolded, have the participants place both hands on a section of rope. Each person should be taken to a different section. Once everyone is on the rope, inform them that they must find the end of the rope and that once at the end, they are to remain silent and cannot help others. Strictly say “If you need help, feel free to ask.”
  - The whole goal to this is that they cannot and will not find the end of the rope. This will force them to give up and hopefully ask for help. When they do, instead of talking to the person, simply take their hands off the rope, remove their blindfold and tell them to be silent. Walk them over to the ‘viewing area’ and tell them congratulations.



- **Yurt Circle**

- Set Up
  - Only Camp Fitch YMCA staff can teach this due to safety. For this you need a piece of rope with a well-dressed knot.
- Instructions
  - Have the group form a circle and place both hands on the rope. Once everyone has their hands on the rope, tell the group to lean backwards (one at a time) until everyone is leaning back, trusting each other to hold the rope.
  - Progression 2 is to have then have everyone (one at a time) sit on the ground while trusting everyone in the group to keep the rope tight.
  - Progression 3, now has everyone sitting on the ground, still holding the rope. Going around the circle again (one at a time) everyone transitions the rope from their hands to their ankles while they lie on their back with feet in the air.
  - Progression 4 and 5 has the group reversing what they just done and ending with everyone holding the rope leaning back.
  - Progression 6 then has someone leave the circle and being supported and spotted by the instructor and one other, they are to be lifted up onto the rope and attempt to tight rope walk around, trusting that the team will hold the rope tight.
- Safety Concerns
  - Everyone must be committed to holding the rope and trusting everyone to not let go.
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## Debriefing

At the end of each ASE Teambuilding session, the facilitator or instructor should conclude with a final debrief. Debriefing is a strategy used to talk about how the experience impacted everyone in the group. Topics can range from overall participation to performing one exact task. Debriefs are a great time where participants can give each other compliments and praise or talk about how they each felt during certain situations. Instead of getting in a group circle and talking, here are some ideas to get people to talk.

### Webbing or Rope Circle

With a knot tied in a long piece of webbing or rope, have every participant put both hands on it while standing in a circle. The webbing or rope can then be shifted in a circle. When the knot passes through someone's hands, they have the opportunity to talk.

### Using a Throwable Object

At the end take an object or throwable, perhaps one you used in a field initiative, and toss it around randomly while in a group circle. Having the object allows you to talk.

### Sports Center

The instructor becomes the radio or TV announcer and interviews participants at random, mixing up debriefing questions.

### Bag of Body Parts

Using the rubber body parts, provided by High 5 Adventure Learning, have the kids describe what body part of the group they were during the activity. An example can be that a kid was the ear because they listened to someone's idea.

### Emoji Cards

Using the emoji card deck, participants pick out what kind of emoji they feel like afterwards.

### Examples of Debrief Questions

- How did this element help the team to work together?
- How did the group respond to the variation or second try of the element?
- What did you learn about yourself today?
- Give a shoutout to someone in the group!
- How can this task help us in the next one?
- As a group, how can we take what we learned here and apply it to our time at camp?

