

## **Camp Hurlburt 2008: A Great Summer of Camping**

This past summer at Camp Hurlburt was a huge success with over 180 overnight campers and 74 day camp participants. A great time was had by all, away from our normal daily routines and lives; lots of laughter, fun, new experiences, time out in nature and the start of lifelong relationships.

The camp offered five camps ranging from 5 to 8 days depending on the age group

intermediate ages 9-11	junior teen ages 12-14	senior intermediate ages 10-12	Junior ages 8-10	senior teen ages 14-16
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A large number of our campers experienced overnight camps for the first time, most saying they would love to come back again next year. Some of these first time campers were given the amazing experience to go to camp - something they would not normally have the opportunity to do except through the *campership program* offered by Camp Hurlburt and Trinity United Church!

Typical programming at Camp Hurlburt included a variety of wide games - Jurasik Park, Deer, Capture the Flag, Alien and Mission Impossible being some the most popular games - played on the camp ground. Other activities included:

- night games
- traditional campfire with action songs and singing
- arts and crafts
- water activities
- times for sharing
- hanging out in your cabin
- theme dinners
- vespers
- and a dance on the last night.

Some traditional theme dinners were twin dinner, utensil dinner and monk dinner. We tried a couple of new ideas this year; a Japanese style dinner, a backwards dinner and a dinner where you ordered you meal in code not knowing which item or the utensil you would get to eat it with. Lots of fun!!!

All camps include water activities such as swimming, canoeing/kayaking and games on beautiful Lake Okanagan. For the first time in several years a day long canoeing out-trip happened during the senior teen camp. The weather co-operated and we had a perfect day for canoeing five kilometers south of the camp to a beach just south of the new development at the end of Eastside Road.

Younger camps had theme days such as *Carnival*, whereas older camps partook in themes such as *Survivor Day* where teams faced challenges that were carried out through out the day; a *Beach Theme Day* finishing with a dance on the beach; and a day of *Holidays* starting with Christmas Eve—decorating the tree and making small gifts for each other, ending the next day with an evening of

Halloween activities—trick or treating, bonfire, bobbing for apples and a very scary haunted house. We had *Christmas morning*, *Valentines affirmations*, an *Easter Egg Hunt* and a *Thanksgiving Dinner* in between.

Another part of the Camp Hurlburt tradition is to have “Celebration Groups” for the teen camps. Campers have an opportunity to participate in an ongoing small group activity for the duration of their camp. Each group had a different theme and activity. This year staff created and facilitated these imaginative Celebration groups

- batiking
- building a rope bridge
- a Lively Poets Society
- circus activities
- painted a Camp Map Mural
- digging a hole for mud wrestling
- synchronized swimming
- photography - teen camp collection
- a Choreographed stage combat.

At the end of the week each group made a presentation of what they had completed to the whole camp. This indeed was a time for laughter and the celebration of the work, creativity and talent of each of these groups.

Part of our mission as a United Church camp is to provide a safe Holy place to develop and grow in relationship with God and each other. This happens all day long throughout camp. Specific programming to foster this mission each year includes evening vespers, grace at meal times and development of an annual theme explored during a time of faith building.

This year we provided a “*Footprints*” theme as a way to explore how we leave our mark on this earth by examining how we relate to the earth, to each other, to ourselves and to God. Each camp had age specific programming with all the camps creating footprint banners.

Every camper wrote a letter or drew a picture describing their camp experience, which was mailed back to them at the end of camp season.

The older teen camps had more in depth opportunities to explore the “*Footprint*” theme. The junior teen camp focused on an inter-generational theme culminating with an awesome visit from members from Trinity United Church. The visitors participated with programming on the morning of July 18<sup>th</sup> and finished with sharing the lunch meal together. A lot of the visitors had been campers at Hurlburt in the past, sharing their camp experiences with the current campers. The senior teen camp program was geared around activities that allowed campers to identify and explore experiences that shape and influence “the Story of their Life”.

The letters mailed to each camper included an invitation to attend a “Welcome Back Camp Hurlburt” Sunday at Trinity September 14<sup>th</sup>. This service had a different flare to it and was intended to reunite campers from this summer’s

camps. A variety of activities including meditation, drumming, camp songs and wide games made up the second part of the September 14<sup>th</sup> worship service at Trinity United Church on Alexis Park Drive in Vernon. Staff and junior counselors from the summer were invited to lead the camp activities. A barbequed hamburger meal and time of fellowship followed this special "Welcome Back" service. Many of the local staff and campers were in attendance, having a chance to reconnect and reminisce about the summer.

Overall the Summer Camps of 2008 were a huge success .. and we are looking forward to creating new memories and new formed relationships for the 2009 camps! See you then!