

A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING A BEYOND MALIBU TRIP

YOUNG LIFE BEYOND MALIBU

The Goal

First, determine what you will try to accomplish on a Beyond trip.

Outreach

Do you want primarily non-Christians to sign up - for an evangelistic emphasis?

Growth

Do you want primarily Christians to sign up - to focus on basic principles of the Christian life?

Discipleship

Do you want a particular group of Christians to sign up (e.g. a whole campaigner group) -for an intense discipling experience?

Who?

Do you want all guys, all girls or a mixed trip? Other ideas: A trip with just fathers and sons or just mothers and daughters; two schools going together; a trip made up solely of Young Life leaders from your team or area; a group of all adult friends; others...?

Customize

The beauty of a Beyond trip is that you can literally customize the trip to fit any need that you or your particular group has. The key is to decide who you're going to "go after" based on what your goals are for the trip. Once you've determined what your goal is and who you're going to be focusing on, you can begin to promote the trip.

Promoting Beyond

A long-term strategy

Prayer

Nothing of spiritual value will occur without prayer.

- o **Pray ahead of time:** If you start to pray in September for God to formulate a group for a trip next summer, you can be sure that God will be faithful.
- o **Pray specifically:** Make a prayer "hit list" of all potential Beyond campers and begin praying regularly for each of them, their particular needs and potential obstacles to going.
- o **Pray strategically:** Ask many people to pray with you. If you lead young life, divide the list up among your team so no one person is overwhelmed with too many kids to pray for.

Plan and Promote Ahead of Time!

- o **Plant seeds:** Talk with underclassmen (freshmen and sophomores) about a two or three year set of options regarding their involvement in Young Life camping (e.g. "This summer you can go to Malibu, next summer you could go to Beyond and then the following summer you could go to the Grad week or maybe be on work crew"). In other words, kids in your club should begin to perceive Beyond as a normal part of the progression of "must do" experiences, which Young Life offers to them while they're in high school. Build a tradition!
- o **One year in advance:** Sell your kids on next summer's Beyond trip this summer at Malibu and at your fall camps.
- o **Reserve a date early:** Send in a trip request form in September. Contact the Beyond office at (206) 525-0791 to reserve a date for your trip in the upcoming summer. This will assure you of getting the week that will work best for you and your group.

- o **Take sign-ups early:** Begin signing people up in December. Require at least a \$50.00 deposit with a registration form in order to have their spot on the trip reserved. (Don't settle for verbal commitments only - without money on the line, people's memories of what they said tend to fade!) Make it your goal to have the trip filled and committed financially by March 1st. (Make deposits non-refundable after this date and begin collecting the balances.)

Dynamics of Selling a Beyond Trip

One on one is the Key!

- o **Make a list of every potential Beyond camper** you can think of (use a Yearbook).
 - o Divide the names on a sheet of paper into 3 columns: "Will go", "Might go", "No way".
 - o Pray for them daily and watch the "No ways" become "Will goes"!
- o Be sure to only seek as much commitment as a kid is able to make at a certain time. Each time you talk with them about the trip, if you can get them to make a little more commitment you'll end up with them on the trip. Just make sure you follow it up. Remember, it often takes 3-5 contacts before you finally get a "yes".
- o **Ask everyone on your list individually** as many times as it takes to get a definite final answer.
- o Once they agree to go **make sure you get their deposit as soon as possible**. This helps students and their parents to feel truly committed to the idea. Each year there are many kids who fully intended to go and wanted to go but didn't because they never got around to getting their money in.
- o Utilize "key kids". There are always some kids who are leaders among their circle of friends who, if they get fired up about going, will be a big help in getting their whole group to go.
- o Consider it a challenge to **work on even the most unlikely kids**. Do your part and then allow God to work.
- o Remember, this is a team effort. Cross-check your lists to make sure two leaders are not focused on the same person. **Make sure that every leader is involved** even if they aren't personally going.

Be Positive!

“Hey, there's this great hiking/sea kayaking trip around Malibu that I'd love to have you come on with me.” NOT, “There's this hike/sea kayaking trip- it costs over \$400 - you should go”.

Know Who's Going

Often, the most important issue for kids is who else is going. Always try and turn this concern into an opportunity!

- o Try to know before you contact a kid which kids he'd like to go with.
- o Always carry a list of kids who are going and thinking about it.
- o If you're going, let them know that you really want them to be there with you.

Sell

...the best points of the Beyond experience. Know which aspects appeal more to which kids. (e.g. the challenge, fun, friends, scenery, etc.)

Overcoming Excuses

It is not tough to overcome excuses when you treat them as just that - excuses! (Not legitimate reasons.) Most kids probably do want to go but are not sure of themselves enough to want to take a risk. When they say they "can't" - they usually really can. It just takes some loving persuasion.

- o *"My parents won't let me go"*
 1. This is the most important excuse to deal with. Parents control kids' decisions more than they tell us. You must develop credibility with the parents for yourself, Young Life, and the Beyond program through personal contact with them.
 2. Often, a parent has reservations about something like this simply because they are unfamiliar with it. Offer to meet with the kid's parents and answer their questions.

- o *"I don't have enough money"*
 1. This is the most popular excuse and yet lack of money should never be a reason why someone doesn't go to a Young Life camp.
 2. Explain to them that there are always ways to come up with the money. They should know that you have never left someone home from a Beyond trip because of a lack of funds.
 3. You must support a statement like this by providing effective fund-raisers for the kids to earn scholarship money. (See "Raising Scholarship Money")
 4. Talk to the parents. Often, they have the money but the kid was afraid to ask or the parent was hesitant about spending it without knowing more about the program.
 5. Suggest that they ask for part or all of the trip as a birthday or Christmas present.
- o *"That's our family vacation"*
 1. If you're selling the trip early enough, you may be able to ask if they can change their plans.
 2. If their vacation plans are set and your Beyond date is set, they have a legitimate reason and you should not pursue it.
- o *"I'm in summer school"*
 1. Check the actual dates of the classes. Often, the kid doesn't really know when the dates are and is surprised to find that there is no conflict at all.
- o *"I'm working this summer"*
 1. Very few high school students have such critical, key positions at their jobs that someone couldn't fill in for them for a few days.
 2. Have them talk to their employer well in advance - the earlier the better. Most are very receptive.
- o *"I'll go next year"*
 1. Tell them that next year will be busier than this year and now is the time to go.
 2. Remember, most of the "I'll go next year" kids never do!
- o Sports: Check actual schedule to see how much the trip will actually interfere.
- o Think about other possible excuses and how you would deal with them. It's best to have thought it through ahead of time.
- o While attempting to overcome excuses is good, be careful not to push so hard as to corner them and lose them for good. Keep the relationship. The key is to discover whether it's a legitimate reason or just a poor excuse.

Always Carry Brochures!

It is important to be prepared to talk about the trip any time and to have something to give them before they leave.

Always Carry your List!

Make notes on what kids you've talked to, anything you've found out about them (possible excuses, etc.), and where you need to go with them next. Also, other kids like to see who else is going.

A Note on Groups

Kids will not make commitments while they are in groups. You can give them general information but don't press them for a commitment, just build curiosity and interest. Then, later, see them individually to get a commitment.

Keeping the Trip Together

Your goal should be to have ten \$50.00 deposits by March 1st. From that point until you leave on the trip you still have several key things to take care of:

Overbook

Even after your trip is "full", continue to "go after" additional kids. Almost always you will have at least one camper drop out for whatever reason.

Keep the Interest High

The enthusiasm that was generated at the March slide show tends to wane by June when school lets out.

- o Have a couple of "Beyond Get-Togethers" after most of your group is formed.
- o Plan a day for everyone to get together and go shopping at an outdoor equipment store for bits of hiking clothes or gear people need for the trip.
- o Have a Parents Information Night where you meet the parents, discuss the trip and show slides of past trips.
- o Write a letter to each member of the upcoming trip encouraging them that: a) the trip is almost here, b) you're really looking forward to doing it with them, and c) you don't want them to forget about the "following items".

Secure your transportation well in advance

It is good to ask people to borrow their vans at least a month in advance. By doing this, it gives them plenty of warning and prevents you from having to scramble at the last minute.

Follow Beyond's instructions...

Regarding final payment, health forms, parental permission, the gathering of the proper clothing and gear for the kids and yourself.

Raising Scholarship Money

Always meet the parents!

Often they are much more willing to pay for a Beyond trip after they have met you and feel comfortable with you and Young Life.

Other interested adults

Often there are committee folks, church members, and other interested adults in an area who are willing to give kids odd jobs to help them earn money for camp. Have them write a check directly to Young Life, that way they get the tax deduction, work done in their yard, and the kid won't be able to spend the money on something else.

The best fund-raisers are "athons"

- o The key to success is collecting your pledges! Far too many kids will get lots of sponsors and then never go back to get the money.
- o There is no limit to what a kid can raise in pledges except his own willingness to work.
- o The best "athons" are ones where the sponsor gets something out of it (i.e. Free Car-wash-a-thon, Trash-a-thon, etc.), or where the kids have so much fun doing it that their excitement carries the event (i.e. All Night Dance-a-thon, Sports "athons", etc.)

Beyond Malibu thanks Bill Duppenhaler, Young Life Area Director for Gig Harbor, WA, and veteran of many Beyond trips, for the above information.