



Confirmation Camp and Experiential Learning

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Rethinking the Classroom



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This one time, at Bible camp...

Common Perceptions

- Camp is theologically shallow.
- Camp is all fun and games.
- Camp ruins kids for church.
- Camp is a *Mountaintop Experience*.
- Any benefits fade quickly after the experience.

Fall 2014 Camp Survey Summary

- 332 individual camps representing 50 states
- 16% Episcopal Church
- 22% Presbyterian Church (USA)
- 26% Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- 34% United Methodist Church
- 4% Other (American Baptist, UCC, Mennonite, LCMS, Brethren, Non-Denominational)

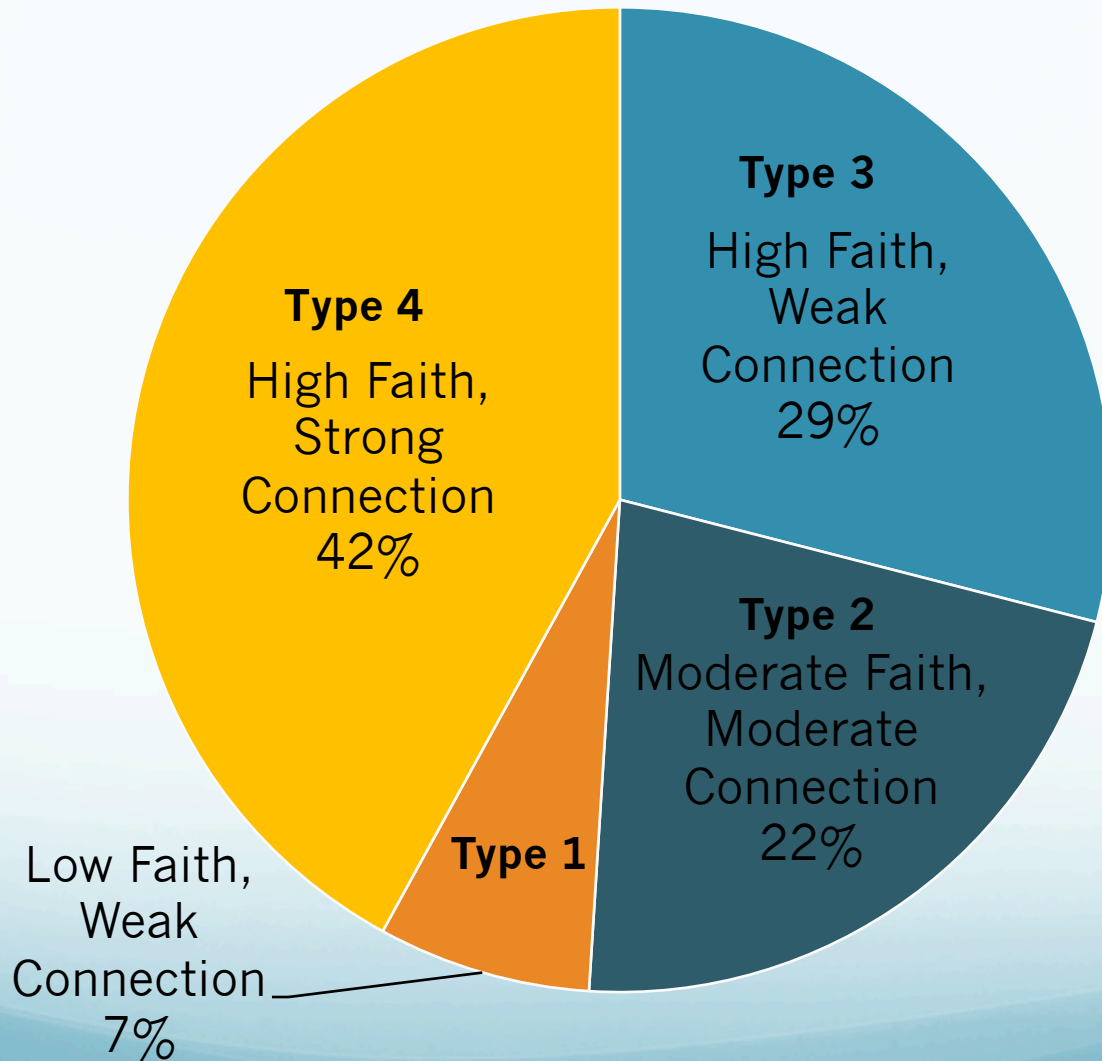
All Fun and Games?

1. Participant safety
2. Fellowship/community building
3. Self esteem/character building
4. Facilitating participants' experiences of or encounters with God
5. Individual faith formation
6. FUN for all participants

Mainline Camp Types

1. LOW faith emphasis, WEAK connection to congregations and denominational teachings
2. MODERATE faith emphasis, MODERATE connection to congregations and denominational teachings
3. HIGH faith emphasis, Weak connection to congregations and denominational teachings
4. HIGH faith emphasis, STRONG connection to congregations and denominational teachings

Camp Types





Camp All Saints, TX



Camp Stronghold, IL



Lake Tahoe, CA



Camp Lutherlyn, PA





Big Idea #1

**Camp is more than FUN
and GAMES**

Top 5 growth variables:

1. I have important things to offer the church and the world.
2. It is important for me to belong to my church/congregation.
3. Jesus' death on the cross offers salvation.
4. When I grow up, I plan to participate in the life of a church/congregation.
5. I want to participate in the leadership of worship services.

Big Idea #2

**Christian camp experiences
lead to greater engagement
in congregations.**

Big Idea #3

**Camps are effective
because they take Christian
community seriously.**

Big Idea #4

**Camps are effective
because they are places to
UNPLUG.**

Big Idea #5

**Camps are effective
because they take young
people seriously.**

Big Idea #6

**Camps are effective
because they take
experience seriously.**



6 Big Ideas from Research

1. Camp is more than FUN and GAMES
2. Christian camp experiences lead to greater engagement in congregations and Christian community.
3. Camps are effective because they take Christian community seriously.
4. Camps are effective because they are places to UNPLUG.
5. Camps are effective because they take young people seriously.
6. Camps are effective because they take experience seriously.







The Sanctuary



On Belay

A man wearing a yellow helmet, a black jacket, and blue jeans is zip-lining through a forest. He is wearing a blue harness and has a rope attached to his waist. He has a surprised or excited expression on his face, with his mouth open and his right hand raised in a fist. The background consists of many bare trees, suggesting a late autumn or winter setting. The text "The Zip Line" is overlaid on the right side of the image in a large, white, serif font with a blue outline.

The Zip Line

Theological Playground



Questions and Discussion