

DANGEROUS CAMPING



Overview

WHAT IS DANGEROUS CAMPING?

Dangerous Camping is a weekend away for children in school years 3–6 (7–11 years) and their dads.

WHAT DOES THE PROGRAMME INCLUDE?

Dads and kids arrive on Friday night and leave on Sunday morning. In between, there's an exciting mix of camping, games, activities, meals and Bible times.

Our tried-and-tested activities bring structure to the weekend, while leaving space in the timetable for chat, impromptu sport and exploration.

Groups of families camp together in 'pods' of about a dozen people, so no one is lost in the bigger crowd. At the centre of each pod is a fire pit, which usually stays lit for the weekend. This acts as a focal point for the group.

Time in the Bible, in various contexts, brings Christ into the experience. We want to show families that Christ is at the heart of all goodness, mixed in with the fun of ordinary family life. We want



to help families talk about faith when they aren't in a church building. The spiritual programme consists of:

- Relaxed pod Bible times during breakfast.
- An all-age Bible talk and singing around the campfire on Saturday evening.
- A closing all-age outdoor service on Sunday morning.



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DANGEROUS CAMPING?

Dangerous Camping has four goals:

1. For dads and their children to spend time together, making memories and talking about Jesus. Dads, or parents more generally, can find it hard to carve out time for their children in the busyness of life. Time outdoors, camping and without screens can be a great opportunity to connect.
2. For children to spend time together in a positive, caring environment. We want this to be a place where there is zero discouragement or exclusion, even where there are differences.
3. For dads to form friendships (which doesn't always come easily to men). We want conversations to get deeper than just house, family and jobs. Families are grouped into small groups known as pods to encourage friendship-building.
4. To welcome guests into a Christian community. This weekend, without the 'religious' baggage that can deter guests, is a fantastic live advert for the Christian church family. We want guests to get as involved with the Christian elements of the programme as they feel comfortable with, without any pressure. An invite from a Christian friend that offers a chance for outdoor family fun is normally welcomed, and guest families have always left feeling very positive about the experience.

WHAT DOES THIS RESOURCE CONTAIN?

This resource contains samples of all the documents you would need to run your own Dangerous Camping event, including:

- A suggested timetable.
- A spiritual programme: notes for pod Bible times and two all-age talks.
- An activity programme: instructions for tried-and-tested games to use in the two group activity sessions.
- A planning checklist.
- Admin documents such as an information letter to attendees, including a kit list.

HOW SHOULD WE USE THIS RESOURCE?

This event is totally yours – you can run it however you like and call it whatever you like. You could include mums, younger children or older children. You could do it for one night only. In the first year, you might deliberately keep it small and manageable to learn in safety.

Therefore, you should use this resource as a starting point, customising our suggestions to suit your own group and site. You are free to use some or all of the elements in this resource, including the Dangerous Camping branding.

It is important that you remember that the responsibility and liability for your weekend rests with you and your organisation. You must ensure (amongst other things):

- The safety of those in your care. (See FAQs for a note on Safeguarding)
- That relevant Health and Safety requirements are met. This includes having a trained first aider with access to an in-date first aid kit and an accident book, as well as recording and catering for food allergies and other conditions.
- That the organisation taking responsibility for the weekend has the appropriate insurance cover, including public liability.
- That risk assessments are conducted for each activity and the event as a whole.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Is it actually dangerous?

No! We found that this age group (7–11-year-olds) are searching for adventure, so the name seemed appropriate. For most children, camping for a weekend feels exciting. As with all children's ministry, safety is vital, so approach risk assessments and safeguarding as you would in any other context.

2. What are the safeguarding guidelines?

Children remain the responsibility of their own dads throughout. This greatly simplifies the safeguarding situation. Those in authority for the weekend still need to act responsibly to ensure the weekend is safe and fun for all. Your organisation's safeguarding officer should be consulted during your planning, to ensure the correct procedures are followed.

3. What do we do for those families without a dad?

This weekend should be a celebration of fellowship and sharing life, so it would be a huge shame if some were excluded. If appropriate, the category of 'dad' could include any adult male in the family who is willing to attend, eg an active granddad, adult brother or uncle. In the past, we have seen some dads offer to bring another child from their church, as well as their own child(ren). For this to work, there needs to be a high level of trust between the child's parent/carer and the dad who is offering to take responsibility for their child. It would be wise to offer some written guidelines for such an arrangement, to ensure that the dad and the child are not on their own during the weekend (particularly in the tent) but always have the dad's own children with them. The nature of camping is that individuals are rarely left completely alone for long, unless isolation is actively sought.

4. What if we don't have many families in our church?

A Dangerous Camping weekend is a great opportunity to draw guest families towards church, but you will want a reasonable number of Christian families in order for the spiritual programme to feel natural. Involving another local church would be a good way to make the event big enough to feel exciting, and would also allow you to share the effort of planning and leadership.

