

Secret Service: Serving in Secret Vacation Bible Camp



March 30, 2017

To the interested party,

This curriculum is a step-by-step guide to putting on the Catholic bible camp, *Secret Service: Serving in Secret*. I created this program in 2016 as part of my Girl Scout Gold Award, and it was tested at St. Louis Catholic Church in Batesville, Indiana in June of 2016. I created this program to teach young children about service and how service connects to their faith. My goal was for these children to come away from this program with the knowledge of how many ways they can serve others and how easy it can be to do so. I hope by their participation in this program and by the use of this program by other parishes and groups, it will have a positive impact on the world.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest honor in Girl Scouting and is only awarded to a Senior or Ambassador Girl Scout in high school who has developed and implemented a significant project that has made a positive impact in her community. It takes a minimum of approximately 80 hours and a dedication to certain idea and project. I had a dedication to service and my faith, and I used this Gold Award project to combine the two and help the children of my parish. I know I have impacted my community in some ways by my service, and hopefully the children I taught to serve continue to spread this spirit of service as they go out into the world to make a difference.

This bible camp is set up for five days of approximately two hours with daily themes each day. Each day in this curriculum is designed for four to five groups of kids to visit five stations with opening and closing programs. We had a separate area for preschoolers so they could break into smaller groups, could do simplified crafts and activities, and stayed contained in one section of the school. The other four groups (Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd/4th grade) met in the gym for opening and closing programs and traveled from classroom to classroom, wherever the stations were, according to the schedule. A sample master schedule is attached. The names used for each age group, the creative names and general descriptions of each of the stations, and the daily themes and verses are also listed in the following. Each station lasts approximately 20 minutes with the opening program lasting about 30 minutes and the closing program lasting around 10 minutes. A description of each part of the day follows in the curriculum, organized by day. Descriptions of each part of the curriculum is included in this letter.

The opening program is the gathering celebration at the beginning of each day. We had the opening program in the gym, which we had decorated in a secret-agent theme, and as the parents dropped off the kids, they joined their groups. Then the groups came forward to take part in the morning program. There is an MC who guides the morning program, welcoming everyone and introducing each part of the morning program. Each day, there should be a song that relates to the theme, with lyrics and actions that are easy to learn. Some teen volunteers should know these songs beforehand and should stand in front to teach the children. These songs can also be done when the children are coming to keep them entertained during drop-off. We used songs from previous programs bought by our parish. Any related songs can be substituted for the examples listed. We also had someone from a service organization come in each day. During morning program, they explained what their service organization does and how the kids can help, even as young as they are. Next there was a skit where Double-O Zero (OOO) learned how to be a secret agent. He is taught by five different agents, one each day. As he trains to be a secret agent, he learns something that the kids will learn that day to become secret agents for God. Then the MC introduces the memory verse and the virtue from the ladder of faith (taken from 2 Peter 1:5-7). These should be reinforced in the stations throughout the day. Finally, the MC

closes with a short prayer and dismissal of the groups to their stations. The closing ceremony is at the end of the day, immediately before the parents pick up their kids. There is a song again when they gather, and the MC leads an interactive review of the day. Both the MC and the actors in the skits should be energetic and relatable teen or adult volunteers.

The first station listed for each day in the curriculum is the service organization station, or the “Daily Mission.” This station has a craft or activity related to the service organization that came to speak at the opening program. This station should also talk about the daily service theme, the daily verse, and the virtue from the ladder of faith. The next station is the bible story station, also called “Recon.” This station uses a skit or activity to explain the bible story with a discussion afterward. Most days list an activity to follow if there is extra time after the skit and discussion. The third station listed is the outdoor games station, also known as “Training.” Kids have a hard time sitting all day, so this is an opportunity to get outside and be active. The games and instructions are given. The final station listed is the craft station, also called “Gadget Making.” The crafts have instructions listed with it. Sometimes there are easier crafts listed for younger children as well as slightly more difficult crafts for the older kids. The fifth station, the snack station, or “Refueling,” does not have a description for each day. We put together a simple snack with juice, but you can be more creative if you so desire by creating a snack combination or edible craft that reinforces the daily theme. All instructions listed for the crafts and activities give necessary material lists and how-to instructions. Assign each station to a responsible volunteer to lead. Some or all stations may need additional helpers.

Following the fifth day’s closing ceremony is a final ceremony. This ceremony is designed to be a review utilizing volunteers of all ages from each group sharing what they learned. We invited the parents for this hour-long celebration of the end of bible camp so they can hear what their children have been learning throughout the week. The songs were performed by the kids for their parents, and we played a slideshow with pictures from the week that we put together. Finally, I spoke about my gold award, and our Director of Religious Education gave closing remarks. This was the end of our week together, and the parents brought their children home with great memories and a better understanding of service and how they can help.

The final part of this curriculum is an adapted curriculum for preschoolers. It includes many of the same activities and instructions in an easier, more simplified, form. One notable difference is the bible story is only simply listed. In the preschool version, the bible story should be read as “story time” and perhaps a coloring page could be found to reinforce it. Coloring pages may also be used to fill extra time and to keep children busy. Use coloring pages related to the bible story, service theme, or fun, secret agent themes. Some examples are attached. Stations for preschoolers are separate; however, they joined everyone else for opening and closing ceremonies. Plan to have ample volunteers, especially for preschool.

The hardest part of creating this curriculum was putting it in a form that anyone could use. We had songs, daily organizations, and special notes that were specific to our resources, location, and activities. Because of this, there are notes in italics, parenthesis, and asterisks to help you fill in what applies to you, while still seeing what worked for us. We suggest songs that fit with the daily themes, and organizations that are similar to the ones we used. Ideally, every part of the curriculum should reinforce the themes of the week and daily themes. The organizations we used, in order of the week, were a Summer Food Program, Safe Passage, the Waters, the Sisters of Saint Francis, and Samaritans, Inc. Looking through the activities in the organization station may give you a good idea of who to help. It may be helpful to think of local food pantries, shelters, nursing homes, religious organizations, service groups, hospitals,

charities, and any other good organization that helps people in your area that the kids can benefit with these activities. These, like all activities, are flexible and can be edited as needed by you.

I would like to thank everyone who made this project possible. Thank you to Mrs. Tonges, our Director of Religious Education, and my Project Advisor. Without her and everything she does, none of this would have happened. Thank you to Connie Miller, my Girl Scout leader and advisor, for helping me with everything on the Girl Scout end of my project. Thank you to my core teen and adult volunteers, who not only took the time to volunteer, but also helped create, plan, and implement the entire curriculum. Thank you to all of the volunteers and participants, especially those who took particular leadership roles. Thank you to Caleb for writing the skits and to Sophie, Grace, and Erin for writing the bible story stations. Finally, thank you to my family and friends for supporting everything I do and still taking time to help me at all stages of the project, including volunteering. The week of bible camp turned out better than I had hoped, and I hope that together, we have made a difference in the world.

As part of my gold award project, I have made this curriculum to be free for use by any parish or group. Changes may be made as needed; however, I ask that you keep it true to its themes and values. I ask that you please place credit where it is due, as I have tried to do. Thank you for the work you are doing to teach young children about service to others.

Thank you, and good luck,
Josie Wesseler
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Daily Themes

Virtue from the Faith Ladder: 2 Peter 1:5-7

Daily Forms of Service

Daily Memory Verse

Day 1 (Monday)

Goodness

Giving alms

Matthew 6:3

Day 2 (Tuesday)

Knowledge

Raising awareness

Proverbs 2:6

Day 3 (Wednesday)

Self-control, Endurance

Volunteering of time

Matthew 25:40

Day 4 (Thursday)

Devotion

Praying for others

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Day 5 (Friday)

Mutual affection, Love

Being there for others

1 Corinthians 16:14

Groups:

Pre	The Helping Hands
K	The Giving Trees
1	The Prayer People
2	The Smarty Pants
3+4	The Control Freaks

Stations:

Daily Mission	Service Station
Recon	Bible Story Station
Training	Outdoor Game Station
Gadget Making	Craft Station
Refueling	Snack

	9:00-9:30	9:32-9:52	9:54-10:14	10:16-10:36	10:48-10:58	11:00-11:20	11:22-11:30
Kindergarten (The Giving Trees)	Opening Celebration - Activity Center	Recon (Library)	Gadget Making (art room)	Refueling (Activity Center back corner)	Daily Mission Computer Lab)	Training (outside)	Closing - Activity Center
First (The Prayer People)	Opening Celebration - Activity Center	Training (outside)	Recon (Library)	Refueling (Activity Center back corner)	Gadget Making (art room)	Daily Mission (Old Computer Lab)	Closing - Activity Center
Second (The Smartie Pants)	Opening Celebration - Activity Center	Daily Mission (Old Computer Lab)	Training (outside)	Refueling (Activity Center back corner)	Recon (Library)	Gadget Making (art room)	Closing - Activity Center
Third/Fourth (The Control Freaks)	Opening Celebration - Activity Center	Gadget Making (art room)	Daily Mission (Old Computer Lab)	Refueling (Activity Center back corner)	Training (outside)	Recon (Library)	Closing - Activity Center

This is the budget from the camp that we put on. It might give you an idea of what to budget for your parish. We had less than 100 campers and close to 50 volunteers in total. Not all volunteers volunteered every day.

Vacation Bible Camp 2016

Revenue

Fees	\$765.00
Donations	\$125.00
Total:	\$890.00

Expenses

Snacks	\$90.25
Snacks, water, cups	\$54.48
Snacks	\$44.18
Water and adult volunteer gifts	\$32.79
Teen volunteer gifts, snacks, cups, water	\$106.11
Supplies	\$26.00
Water balloons	\$7.23
Crafts	\$5.97
Tissue Paper	\$12.75
OTC - Crafts	\$ 75.93
Donuts	\$ 76.30
Quill - Name badges	\$ 65.52
Total:	<u>\$597.51</u>

Income

\$292.49