



Capernaum.

Sharing the Gospel with a Capernaum Audience

Overarching Thoughts...

Know Your Audience- when we begin to think about sharing the gospel, we first want to consider who is in the room. We need to know our audience, how they think, where their hearts are, what they long for, the challenges in their lives and more. At first, this can feel big when we consider a room full of high schooler's with disabilities, but in the end, the hearts of our friends with disabilities are very similar to the hearts of any other teenager. They were made to know their Savior and they are longing for the love that only He can offer. Take some time to read through the Profile of a Capernaum Friend to gain a better sense of many of our friends.

Gospel Conversation- in Young Life we refer to the club talk as a gospel proclamation, but in Capernaum, we refer to it as a gospel conversation. Our friends with disabilities want and need to engage with you as the speaker, to be in the story with you, in your visual with you and a part of what's happening. This is freeing and fun!

The SO WHAT- knowing the main point of every talk is crucial. Consider what your one line will be for every talk and write a concrete sentence that sums up everything you say. Use this sentence to drive your talk in every way. Repeat it during your talk and invite campers to repeat it with you.

Heroes- sometimes in Young Life, we get caught up in being the hero or focusing so much on ourselves to try and "earn the right to be heard". In Capernaum, leaders have earned the right for you and campers will listen to you. You don't need to be the hero or even be the one with great catchy stories about yourself. Jesus is the hero and already proved Himself for the room! Be the guide. Hold on to this great quote from Donald Miller.

"Don't try to be the hero. Guide them to the hero." - Donald Miller

Engage Senses- every person learns in different ways, so we want to consider all of the senses when we plan our club talks and cabin times. Plan to engage at least two different senses in each talk. There are very simple ways to do this, as well as very intricate. Either way, it will help you connect with every single camper in the room. Be creative, have fun!

Teach, Show, Experience- as you saw in the Profile of a Capernaum Friend, our friends want to engage in every way in what you are sharing that day. We consider three areas when mapping out a club talk.

- **Teach Verbally-** This is your concept, your main point and what you want them to walk away with knowing. Teach this to the room with your words, by reading scripture and asking questions.
- **Show Visually-** We don't all learn just by listening, so we show as much as we can. This is a great way to make the scripture and/or concept come to life. Use visuals, act out the

scripture, get in the boat and have the wind and waves around you. Give the room an image that they will have with them, regardless of your words.

- Experience Personally- Cabin Time is the time during each day that we create an environment for every camper to experience what you shared about in club. We want to provide tools that help them engage their senses, recreate your visuals and be immersed in scripture.

Progression Thoughts....

In Young Life Capernaum, we follow the same gospel progression as Young Life.

With camp often being a five day experience, we have found that it is best if you follow the progression in this way:

Talk 1- Creation and Inviting them to see the Person of Jesus

Talk 2- Need

Talk 3- Sin and Cross

We combine these because the emotions of these talks can be hard for our friends. We want them to understand both concepts, but we know that it sets them up best for continued conversation about Jesus when the talk ends on the celebration of the cross. The cross is God's greatest victory and inviting our friends to celebrate that with you will draw them to focus on what this means for them, instead of getting distracted by the concept of death. Be sure to give two sentences about the resurrection so that we are celebrating a living God!

Talk 4- Resurrection/Appropriation

Talk 5- Walking With Jesus

Our friends with disabilities thrive on consistency. We invite you to consider how you'll utilize this reality in your club talks and with cabin time. There are two approaches that we have found to work excellently in Capernaum. We've included examples at the end for you.

Model 1: Multi-Scripture- this approach looks much like weeks of camp that you have seen before, where the speaker uses a different gospel encounter each day to share about Jesus. Exposing our friends to different encounters with Jesus will expand their understanding and invite them into the great story of Jesus. With your scripture changing each day, choose a visual that you can build on throughout the week to help the audience make the connections. Include great amounts of repetition and don't assume that the audience can make the connection- draw the lines for them and invite them in.

Model 2: Same Scripture- this approach uses one gospel encounter throughout the entire week to share the gospel progression. It enables you to build on the same characters and same context each day, while introducing a new concept. It creates consistency with the scripture, lending you to also build on the same visuals or to vary your visuals during the week. You will use supporting scriptures to bring in details for sin, cross and the resurrection.

Know the Scripture- share the scripture with more emotion and life than any other part of your talk! The more that you know the story, the more confident you will be to share it in its fullness.

Show emotion, create pauses, use words that are easy to understand. Every encounter tells the entire story of Jesus and points to Him. Let it be so!

Help the Audience- consider ways that you can help the audience understand and connect to the emotions of the people in the scripture. There are simple statements or questions that you can add in that will make emotions relatable. For example: “Jesus’ friends were in the boat during a huge storm. I bet they were scared, maybe like the first time that you swam in the deep-end or even today when you did the ropes course for the first time.”

Repetition- With both approaches, you want to create repetition that moves towards memorization.

Eliminate Noise- we don’t mean actual noise, there will be plenty of that in the room! We mean the noise in your talk. Often we have a lot of extras in our talks because of the audience that we are accustomed to writing for. In Capernaum, you want to simplify your talk. Take out details that distract the audience from your So What. This could mean lessening the amount of words that you use, cutting an analogy and remembering that simplifying isn’t dumbing down. We aren’t lessening the gospel, we’re just taking away the chatter and strengthening the voice of Jesus.

Think Linearly- in Young Life, we often jump in and out of a gospel encounter. In Capernaum, it is best if you think linearly. Tell the entire story and then do the teaching. This helps the audience stay focused on the story and then understand what you are teaching.

What to Expect....

Here are a few tips as you get started to help you know what to expect when you step onto stage each day.

We are eager to learn- campers in Capernaum tend to be eager to learn! They want to know about what have to tell them. They want to know about this God that they are experiencing through their leaders and at camp.

We are vulnerable- people with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable populations in our world today. They have experienced pain, loneliness and heartache. Invite them to know Jesus who has experienced the same.

They are often willing to be vulnerable with people they don’t know very well. This can be harmful, but when it comes to club and your talks, it’s an incredible gift. If you ask real questions, they will give you real answers. If you challenge them to go deeper, they will go with you. Take them to the cross and offer them life!

We can be noisy- sometimes our friends can have a hard time controlling their bodies, but that does not mean that they aren’t engaging their minds and hearts. Know that the room will not be silent during your talks. Some kids will make noises, some will talk with you and some will fidget. Trust the Holy Spirit to keep you focused and keep speaking to their hearts and minds, not their bodies.

We answer questions- if you ask a rhetorical question, most likely, you will get a lot of answers. As we have said, our friends want to engage in what you are teaching, but they don't always understand rhetorical questions. Know that if you are going to use them, you'll get answers. You will want to come up with ways that you will choose to answer questions and call on campers. Consider having campers raise their hands, have everyone answer by doing a movement like thumbs up or thumbs down, ask everyone to answer a question in their head without using words.

Cabin Time Thoughts....

Cabin Time offers every camper the chance to engage personally with what you shared from stage. We provide a Cabin Time Guide and Cabin Time Bin (see additional document) for each room. The guide gives leaders a summary of what you talked about, the scripture that you used, questions to engage their friends. The bin holds the tools that will engage their senses beyond conversation. These tools are as crucial for our friends with disabilities as a microphone is for the speaker and program team.

The tools that work best with campers with disabilities tend to be a recreation of the visual or object lesson that you used on stage. This helps carry the consistency from stage to their cabin and their relationships.

- If you acted out the scripture (see tips below), the cabin can spend time acting out the scripture encounter as well. They may try it multiple times, letting different campers play different roles. Provide them with props and ways to help the encounter come to life.
- If you used a basketball hoop to show that everyone misses the mark regardless of how good they are, put an over-the-door basketball hoop in every cabin. Invite campers to shoot baskets and see that just like you, they miss the mark.
- If you are building on one visual all week, give them the tools to build one all week as well. This can be done individually or as a cabin.

Closing Thoughts...

God has chosen you to be the speaker for these campers- He has called you and equipped you! On top of that, a team of people all agreed that you were an incredible fit for this role.

Take great rest in the truth that God created every camper in the room and knows how to speak directly to them. We trust the Holy Spirit to be at work, even if our friends can't articulate it.

The gospel will come to life for you in new ways as you plan, prepare and enter into the gospel conversation. Trust and know that you will be as impacted as every camper in the room. Be expectant!

Thank you for jumping into this adventure!

We're grateful for your vision and passion to share the truth of Jesus with every kid!

Progression Examples:

Multi-Scripture...

Talk 1: Intro, Creation and Person of Christ

Mark 4:35-41

Colossians 1:15

Psalm 139:14

Talk 2: Need

John 4:4-10, 28-30

Jeremiah 2:13

Talk 3: Sin/Cross

Mark 15:1-15

Romans 3:23

Mark 16

Be sure to finish with a brief statement about the resurrection!

Talk 4: Resurrection/Appropriation

Luke 15:11-32

Talk 5: Walking With Jesus

Matthew 14:22-33

Romans 8:38-39

Same Scripture...

Matthew 14: 22-33

Talk 1: Intro, Creation and Person of Christ

Use supporting scripture

The wind and the waves knew the voice of Jesus, our hearts were made to know Him too.

Jesus wants to come to us, wherever we are to be with us and invites us into the adventure of a relationship with Him.

Talk 2: Need

Peter and his friends felt a lot of different things during the storm and while Peter was walking on water. Those things kept Peter from being with Jesus. Like Peter, we feel and experience a lot of things that make us feel like we're sinking.

Talk 3: Sin/Cross

Use supporting scripture

Peter became overwhelmed by the wind and waves while he was walking on the water. He was trying to do it himself because he wanted to be in control. When Peter was sinking, he cried out to Jesus and Jesus immediately reached out and rescued him. The cross is Jesus reaching out to rescue us from sin.

Be sure to finish with a brief statement about the resurrection!

Talk 4: Resurrection/Appropriation

Use supporting scripture

Jesus and Peter walk back to the boat together and they go to the other side of the lake together. The resurrection is part of God's gift to us of being in a relationship, together, with a living God.

Talk 5: Walking with Jesus

Peter had the choice to grab Jesus' hand or to stay where he was. Just like Peter, we have a choice to make as well. When Peter chose to grab Jesus' hand, together they walked back to the boat and together they went to the other side. Jesus walks with us in and out of the storms.

Extra Tips & Tools:

A few tips for acting out scripture during club: Acting out scripture on stage is one of the greatest tools that we have to engage campers in the gospel. The more prepared you are for this, the stronger the experience will be for everyone. Consider these tips before you begin...

- Ask leaders for campers who will participate and enjoy the experience
 - Someone may need a leader or buddy to come up with them, if so, they can stand right by them or off to the side.
 - Someone's disability doesn't limit them in playing a role. We have often experienced a deeper understanding of the encounter when someone plays a role that we wouldn't have initially imagined.
- If possible, practice with them before club begins
- Have the lines for each person typed, in large font, for them to hold and read
- Have props that help show the scene, the sounds, the experience
- Be the narrator so that you can fill in, help guide campers and add emotion or clarity when needed
- When they are finished, invite the room to applaud them and then let them know that they can return to their seats. Be prepared that this may take a few minutes.