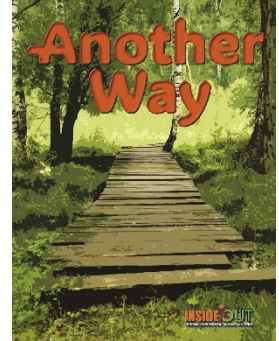


# Worship Resources for Camp Sunday

## 2025 Another Way

Jesus often confronted the world around him with another way of being and by his example, we are reminded that God always invites us to reimagine who we are and how we do things. This year's camp curriculum, *Another Way*, explores themes around while at camp we can find another way, apart from the trappings and distractions of home. In the peace of this space set apart, we can explore what would change if we lived as our authentic selves and respected the truths of others. In this humility, we will imagine how growing changes the way we live. In this potential for transformation, we imagine how our personal change meets the change we seek in the world. We know that God calls us to do a new thing and faithfully forge another way.



The focus of this year's Camp Sunday comes from Day 4: Wild Ideas

Story: John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Theological Summary/Sermon Ideas: Adapted from *InsideOut Another Way curriculum, Day 4: Wild Ideas*

John the Baptist is a great counterexample to the narrative that being a Christian is about being polite and well-behaved. When people asked him what they needed to do to get right with God: he told them not to cheat people, not to take advantage of people or do people harm. And he gave them a reset button—baptism—and guidance on creating a world that would be ready for God: “Prepare the way of the Lord.” And he didn't just tell them to do it. He walked the talk: he wore the simplest of clothes and ate the most basic of foods.

There are a lot of voices competing for our attention in this world. Some of them are loud, aggressive, incredibly confident, and maybe even a little judgmental, like John the Baptist's voice. Some of them are full of compassion, playfulness, and even fun; which Jesus' enemies accused Jesus of being...and they did not mean it as a compliment. There are voices that want to distract us with gossip and voices that want to teach us who to blame for hard things in our lives. Voices that want to help us become numb to the world around us.

With all those voices, it can be hard to figure out which voice is the right one to listen to. Time at camp can help us to discern which voices are speaking truth and love and which voices are speaking negativity and hurt. Camp experiences are like what people experienced in the wilderness with John. The people traveled away from home to a place set apart to hear something different than what the world was telling them. They encountered someone who spoke differently, dressed differently, and ate different foods. When we come to camp, we meet new people who bring different experiences with them, who may talk, dress, and eat differently. During a time at camp, campers may talk and play differently, dress

differently and be offered different foods. At camp, hearts and minds are changed and people go away from camp different than they arrived. They leave camp to go into a world to be different.

Our hearts and souls need different messages at different times. The voice that tells you “You are made so gloriously in the image of God, and you’re not acting like it; you can do better,” and the voice that tells you, “You are made so gloriously in the image of God, and God is so pleased with who you are,” those are both the voice of God. Both voices can help campers prepare to participate in preparing the way of the Lord, the task to which all God’s children are called. At camp there is time and space for campers to hear God’s voice without the noise of the world.

Scripture (NIV): Matthew 3: 1-6 John the Baptist Prepares the Way

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea <sup>2</sup> and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

*“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,  
make straight paths for him.’”*

<sup>4</sup> John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. <sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Possible Supplemental Texts:

- Isaiah 40: 1-11

**Call to Worship**

**Option 1:** Call and Response (From InsideOut “Another Way” curriculum Day 4)

Leader: In the lonely places, in the wilderness. Your voice calls out.

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord!**

Leader: In the dark places, where we hide our fears. Your voice calls out.

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord!**

Leader: In the celebration, and the joy. As music uplifts our souls. Your voice calls out.

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord!**

Leader: In the chaos - the back and forth of our day-to-day. Amid friends and enemies. Your voice calls out.

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord!**

Leader: The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of the Lord endures forever.

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord!**

**Option 2:** Call and Response

Leader: Get ready, people of God! The time of hope and peace is at hand.

**People: We are called to action rather than reaction.**

Leader: Open your hearts to God's word and God's will.

**People: Help us to be workers for God rather than observers.**

Leader: Come, draw near to God in faith.

**People: Let us prepare our hearts to receive the wondrous gifts of God**

(Call To Worship 2: <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4432/worship-connection-december-4-2022>)

### **Opening Prayer**

*Boundless and bold God, we have gathered here to hear from you in a new way. Open our ears to the voices that are "crying out in the desert" that might change our world. Guide us to hear your voice, and trust in your voice - to tune out the noises of distractions and temptations that pull us away from you. Open our minds to new ways of thinking and seeing that might transform our hearts. May we have the boldness of Spirit to say yes, to repent, and to have our hearts and lives transformed to know and serve you better, as we follow the One whom John proclaimed - Jesus the Christ. Amen.*

### **Alternate Opening Prayer/Prayer for the camps**

*God who creates and inspires all that is good in the world, as we celebrate your gift to us that is Camping and Retreat Ministries, we lift to you those who will attend camps this year. Watch over them as they venture out and open them to new and enriched relationships with you and with others who seek to know you and love you. We also ask you to wrap your arms around the staff people who will serve in ministries of all kinds at our United Methodist campsites. Bless them with the spiritual gifts to provide the greatest hospitality and safety for all who come to their sites. Inspire them to preach the gospel with words, actions, and all that is needed to share your love. Finally, we long to hear your voice, a voice calling out to us to live fully into who you have called us to be. We lift up Storm Mountain Center as an offering to you and as a gift to our world. We lift up Lake Poinsett Camp and Living Waters Retreat Center that you again might use it to provide so many with the life-giving waters that are a relationship with Jesus Christ. We lift Wesley Acres Camp and Retreat Center to be a place where you again bridge the gaps that we experience or imagine between each other and with you. May your love that flows through us be felt in all that they do. Amen.*

### **Prayer Suggestion** - This could be done as a prayers of the people or children's moment (See below)

Place a bell, chime, drum, or any other item that can create a resonant sound in the front of your worship space. This could even be an old metal sign or a hollowed-out log. Make sure there is some way to strike or chime the object that campers can use.

Invite the campers to think about the voices that have made a big impact on them. This might be family, friends, teachers, mentors, or other loved ones. Ask them to say a silent prayer of thanks for that voice in their life, then come and make a sound to celebrate them.

Remind the campers that they are also important voices that others listen to. Make one more loud sound as a prayer of thanks for the campers' voices. Close with an "Amen."

**Prayers for the People** (Either as your pastoral prayer or if you share prayer requests as part of your service.)

When sharing a name/situation - Invite folks to respond "Lord, hear our prayer" and you play the bell/chime/drum. Let the sound resonate throughout your space. When it has almost completely dissipated - continue with your prayers and prayer time.

**Children's Moment:** *(Place a bell, chime, drum, or any other item that can create a resonant sound in the front of your worship space. This could even be an old metal sign or a hollowed-out log. Make sure there is some way to strike or chime the object that campers can use. See Above)*

Invite the kids to share about what noises they hear every day. Whose voices do they hear? (Parents, siblings, teachers, coaches, musicians, etc....) John the Baptist invites us to listen for God. We are thankful that John helped to share the Good News about Jesus to so many to help prepare them for when Jesus would come. Now, we're going to pray by using the 5 finger prayer method for those who help prepare us and then we will pause to listen.

**Thumb** - let's pray for those who are closest to us, our family, friends, and those who are like family. When I (or have the kids do it) ring this bell I want you to whisper their names. If you don't want to whisper it, you can think of them in your head.

**Index Finger** - Let's pray for those who help us point to God, and help to point the way - like John the Baptist. When I (or have the kids do it) ring this bell I want you to whisper their names. If you don't want to whisper it, you can think of them in your head.

**Middle Finger** - Let's pray for those who "stand tall and/or stand out" these can be leaders, folks that are our helpers, etc. When I (or have the kids do it) ring this bell I want you to whisper their names. If you don't want to whisper it, you can think of them in your head.

**Ring Finger** - Let's pray for those who need the most love, those who are vulnerable, struggling, hurting, needing to know they are not alone. Those that are sick, going through a hard time, may not have enough of what they need. When I (or have the kids do it) ring this bell I want you to whisper their names. If you don't want to whisper it, you can think of them in your head.

**Pinky** - Let's pray for ourselves. It's OK to pray for yourself. To share your hopes, dreams, fears, anxieties, etc. When I (or have the kids do it) ring this bell I want you to whisper your name. If you don't want to whisper it, you can say it in your head.

### **Children's Time Story Options:**

***The Monster at the End of This Book***, by John Stone: This book is written by Grover, a lovable blue monster from Sesame Street to the reader. The entire book is Grover urging the reader to stop reading and to turn no more pages because there is a monster at the end. Of course, the monster at the end is Grover. It is a great conversation starter on what we expect and how we can misunderstand a message based on our expectations.

**Green Eggs and Ham**, by Dr. Seuss: This classic reminds us that many of the things we judge or look down on simply reflect our lack of experience. We are all one moment of courage away from liking new things, making new friends, and learning more than we imagined.

### **Prayer of Confession**

*Lord of mercy and peace, open our hearts to receive your words of hope. We live far too much in darkness and fear. We have let the fears invade the very center of our lives and find ourselves changing, moving from your light to the darkness of despair. It seems that this world and its people are more pleased to fight and destroy than they are to have peace and harmony. We become part of that crowd when we wallow in anger, resentment, apathy, and greed. Forgive us, patient and merciful God. Help us be people who will look at the ways in which we have blocked your presence; ways in which we have truly failed to be your people. Let your unmistakable voice call out to us and give us courage and strength to change our lives. May your peace become a reality in this world, right now, this day. For we offer this prayer in the name of Jesus. AMEN.*

### **Words of Assurance**

Though the darkness seems so deep, do not fear. God is with us. Repent! Turn your lives to God. God's love is being poured out for you, always. AMEN

(<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4432/worship-connection-december-4-2022>)

### **Invitation to Offering-**

One of the many ways in which we support our conference camping program is through our apportionment giving through the local church. There are also opportunities for direct gifts to ministries or programs. These things all start with having a healthy local church. We invite you to give generously in that way. We also invite you to give to local camp scholarship funds and support individuals in your congregation to attend camps. Finally, each of your conference campsites will gladly receive and faithfully use any gifts that you would like to give in support of this vital ministry.

### Invitation to Offering (Psalm 72)

Our God has done wondrous things, and has done them for us. Let us respond to God's acts of love and wonder by offering our whole selves that God's promises might be fulfilled through us. (<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4431/worship-elements-december-4-2022>)

### **Offertory Prayer**

*Good and gracious God, all that we have comes from you. Today we return a portion of all that you have blessed us with back into your service. Accept this act of worship as we give not only our financial gifts, but our gifts of time, talent, and prayers. Bless our camps, camp leaders, and campers so that they may encounter you through these gifts. Multiply these gifts to reach farther and do more than we can dream or imagine. Amen.*

### Offering Prayer (Isaiah 11)

*We thank you, Holy One, for all your good gifts, especially the gifts of prophecy, promise, and calls for preparation. As a thankful response to these gifts, we offer our belief, our commitments, and our money, that we may hasten the time when no one will hurt or destroy on all God's holy mountain.*  
(<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4431/worship-elements-december-4-2022>)

### **Invitation to Communion**

John the Baptist called people away from their regular lives and to change their hearts and minds. He offered a tangible act for people to be cleansed in baptism water to show their desire to live a changed life. We are also invited into a tangible act to show that we have heard a voice inviting us to live differently. When we come to the table, we respond to God's welcoming call to turn our lives towards The One who created us and loves us. Even when we think we don't deserve it, God invites us to the table to share a meal together. You are blessed and beloved. We are changed through the sharing of the meal. We have heard the voice calling us to draw closer to God - this meal, this gift of grace, is our response to hearing, to go into the world living differently so that we can encourage others to hear a voice calling them to the table.

Continue with communion liturgy as preferred.

### **Benediction**

Prepare for the coming of the Lord! Make way in your hearts for love! Get rid of all anger and fear, for God is about to bring incredible light to the world! Go in peace and confidence as witnesses to God's love. AMEN  
(<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4432/worship-connection-december-4-2022>)

### **Song Suggestions:**

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* (UMH #196)  
*Grace Alone* (TFWS #2162)  
*Change My Heart O God* (TFWS #2152)  
*Mighty To Save*  
*Build Your Kingdom* (Rend Collective)  
*My Lighthouse* (Rend Collective)  
*Days of Elijah*  
*Spirit Song* (UMH #347)  
*Every Move I Make*  
*Gratitude* (Brandon Lake)  
*Come As You Are* (Crowder)