



Fall 2025 Findings Report

Composite Report of Phase 2.3: Family Faith Practices and Church Partner Interventions





Introduction

The Growing Faith Together Project seeks to empower parents and caregivers in family faith formation by leveraging the power of camp experiences. The project is a 5-year, nationwide, cross-denominational initiative coordinated by Wheaton College's Center for Leadership Development (HoneyRock) and generously funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.

The project seeks faith formation through partnership: partnership among parents/caregivers; partnership among camps, congregations, and the home; partnership among practitioners and the academy; partnership among different Christian traditions. We bring together scholars and practitioners from Lutheran, United Methodist, and Evangelical traditions, drawing experience from camp, clergy, and academia.

This report includes data primarily from the third time point (three – four months after camp) and is intended to give some insight as to the longitudinal impact of camp. The data provided here attempt to address the following questions:

- 1) To what extent are parents engaging with camp and any resources it provides in the months following summer camp?
- 2) To what extent did parents' beliefs about camp and its role in faith formation change over time?
- 3) To what extend did family faith practices change over time?
- 4) To what extent did leaders from partner churches engage with the camp experience and how did their views of camp change over time?

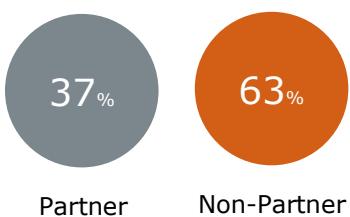
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Overview

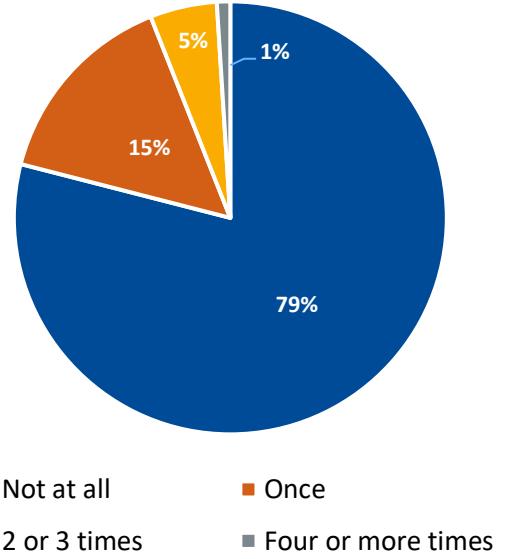
Total T3: 395
Matched T1-T3: 312

Partner Church Status

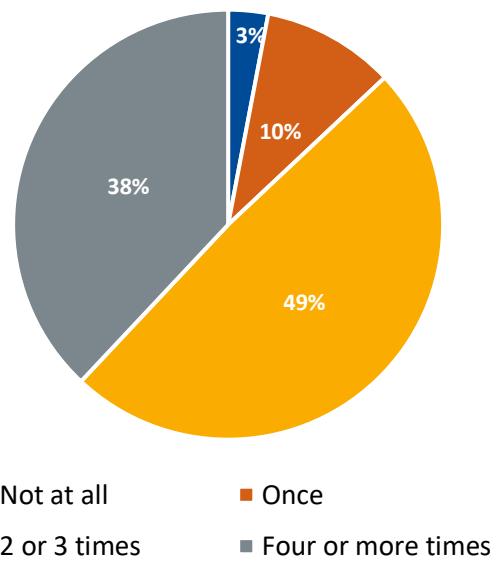


Partner Organizations	T3 TOTAL	T1 – T3 Merge
Bayshore	37	21
Covenant Point	75	58
Cross Trails	46	38
Camp Hebron	42	36
Camp Horizon	45	39
Lutherhaven	41	36
New Life	45	29
Shetek	37	29
Wanake	32	24

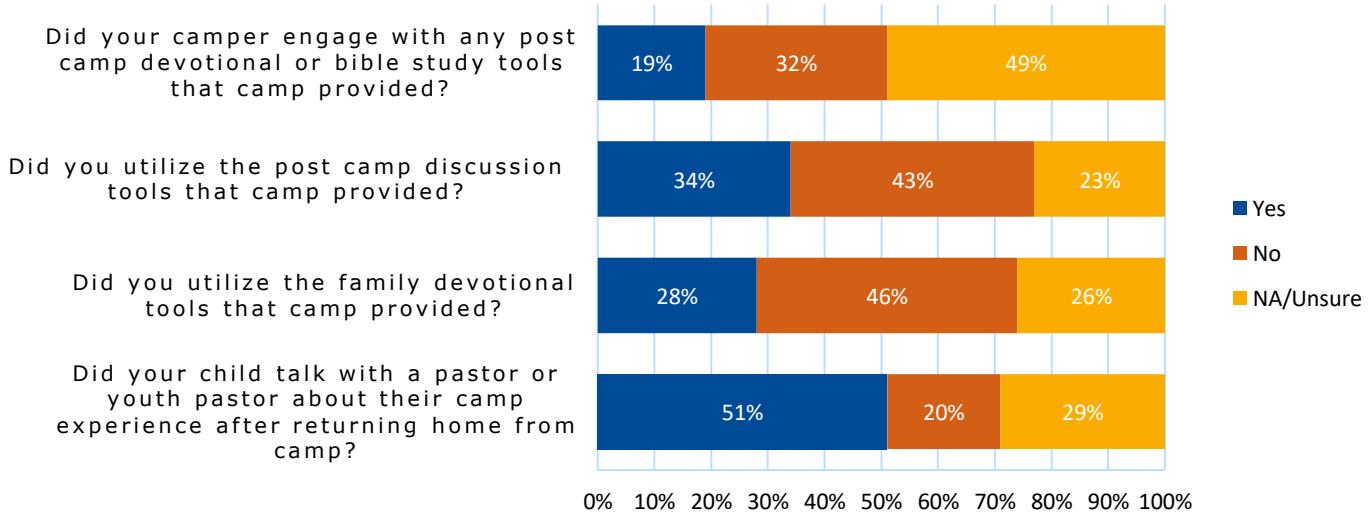
Visits to Camp Since Summer



Heard from Camp Since Summer



Post Camp Engagement



Parent Beliefs

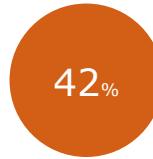
*Part of the goal of this project is to assess changes in parent beliefs about camp. Because many parents already have strong beliefs about the role that camp plays in faith formation, the metrics below focused only on respondents what had room to grow in their belief in each area.



After camp, 46% of respondents reported an increase in their agreement with the statement "Christian summer camp is an important tool for faith formation" after camp.



After camp, 36% of respondents reported an increase in their agreement with the statement "It is important to participate in the life of a church community".



After camp, 42% respondents reported an increase in their belief that "Faith formation is a very important goal of camp".



After camp, 35% of respondents reported an increase in their belief that "Deepening engagement with the local church" as an extremely important goal before camp. Amongst partner church families, 44% increased their level of belief.

Faith Practices (Local Church)

To assess change in faith practices, we isolated each practice and looked at the percentage of the sample that grew *only amongst those that had room to grow and did not decline*. This allows us to see the possible impact of camp in those that were less engaged prior to camp. The tables below display the percentage of people that reported an increase in frequency of engaging each practice, broken out by our nine core camps. The analysis is repeated for the family practices on the next page. Camp names are removed to protect the anonymity of the camps.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
Local Church Services	36.4%	11.4%	27.8%	28.6%	20.0%	41.2%	50.0%	16.7%	50.0%	27.7%
Parent Participation in Adult Bible Study	31.6%	18.0%	36.1%	32.1%	31.3%	21.4%	28.0%	28.0%	21.1%	27.1%
Child Participation in Christian Education	58.3%	25.0%	36.4%	23.5%	44.4%	56.0%	47.1%	56.3%	46.7%	41.2%
Child Volunteering in Worship or Other Church Activity	35.3%	20.4%	47.1%	17.1%	43.2%	27.3%	28.0%	37.0%	33.3%	31.1%
Parent Volunteering in Worship or Other Church Activity	52.9%	16.7%	32.4%	33.3%	44.1%	32.4%	15.4%	25.0%	45.0%	30.8%
Family Service at Church or in Community	40.0%	21.4%	28.9%	19.4%	42.1%	33.3%	11.1%	18.5%	38.1%	27.4%
Family Engagement in Worship Music Ministry	25.0%	7.3%	31.4%	11.8%	22.2%	25.0%	7.7%	24.0%	23.8%	18.7%

75%

Percent of respondents that reported growth in AT LEAST one of the 7 church related practices

Faith Practices (Home and Family)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Average
Spent time with children recreating outdoors	9.5%	23.6%	30.6%	22.2%	15.8%	24.2%	25.0%	27.6%	26.1%	23.1%
Conversations with children about God and faith	31.6%	35.7%	31.6%	27.3%	30.8%	43.8%	39.3%	35.7%	34.8%	34.5%
Conversations with children about how faith connects to daily life	57.9%	45.5%	36.8%	26.5%	35.9%	32.4%	36.0%	37.0%	45.5%	38.6%
Prayer with children at meal times	50.0%	22.0%	42.9%	33.3%	32.3%	32.0%	26.3%	30.0%	22.2%	31.1%
Prayer with children at bedtime	35.3%	17.0%	33.3%	14.8%	41.2%	38.5%	25.0%	23.5%	45.0%	29.4%
Parent prayer on their own	18.2%	24.4%	42.4%	31.3%	35.7%	32.0%	35.7%	22.7%	41.7%	31.6%
Parent bible reading or devotional reading on their own	35.3%	20.0%	30.6%	33.3%	29.4%	41.9%	31.6%	34.6%	15.0%	29.4%
Parent and child bible or devotional reading together	40.0%	24.6%	32.4%	29.4%	21.1%	38.2%	26.9%	37.0%	39.1%	30.7%
Utilization of digital tools or resources for family faith	31.6%	15.1%	37.8%	37.5%	31.4%	32.4%	40.0%	23.1%	37.5%	30.5%

88%

Percent of respondents that reported growth in AT LEAST one of the 9 family related practices

Partner Church Beliefs

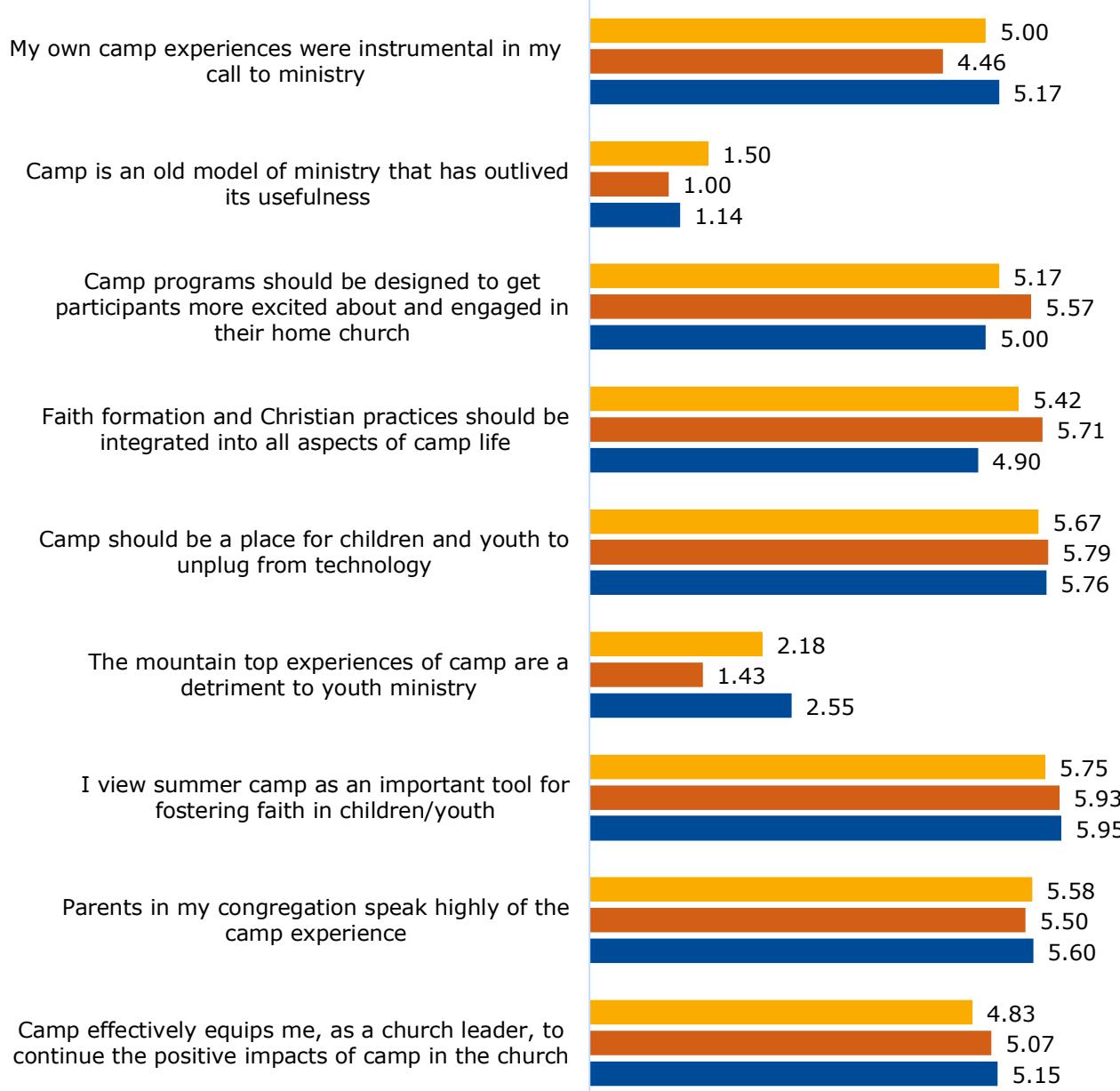
Partner Church Beliefs and Perceptions About Camp, By Denomination Mean out of 6, n=47

■ CCCA, n=12 ■ UMCRM, n=21 ■ LOM, n=14



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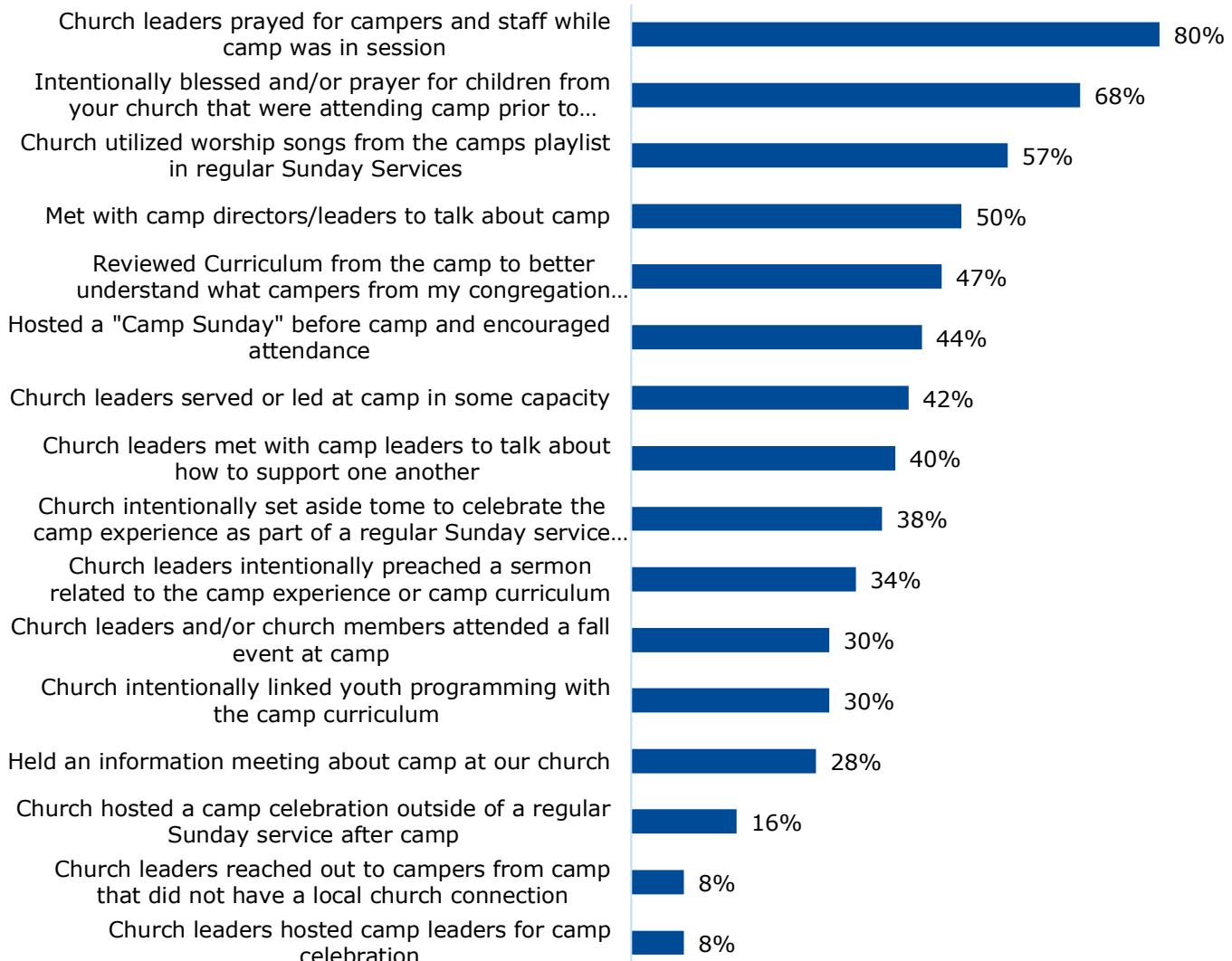
■ CCCA, n=12 ■ UMCRM, n=21 ■ LOM, n=14



Partner Church Interventions

Partner Church Interventions, n=47

■ Frequency



87%

Of responding partner churches had a church leader that visited camp at some point during the summer

89%

Of responding partner churches reported providing financial assistance to families from their congregation to attend camp



Summary

This report provides an overview of the data collected from both parents and church leaders in the weeks and months after camp. In total, we heard from over 300 camper parents and 47 church leaders. The findings presented in this report reveal four key take aways:

- 1) Usage of Resources by Parents: These findings suggest that even when parents are provided with resources to help them bridge the gap between camp and home, they may not actually be using those resources. Less than 30% of parents reported using the family devotional tools, and less than 40% reported using the post camp discussion tools. The reasons for their lack of usage are unclear, and further qualitative analysis is needed to understand this issue, but it is possible that parents need training on *how* to use the resources rather than just being handed a resource.
- 2) Parent Beliefs: In general, around 30-40% of parent respondents reported positive change in metrics intended to measure their understanding of camp as a ministry tool for faith formation. Though the numbers may be low, it is encouraging to see that some parents are expanding their understanding of the full reach of camp and the ways in which it may support them in their role as parents. For additional insight on these items, the previous report, Parent Beliefs and Engagement in Summer Camp Experiences, may prove helpful.
- 3) Varied Growth in Family and Church Faith Practices: A core goal of this project is to better understand that role that camp may be able to play in developing lasting family faith practices, which includes both home-based practices such as family devotionals as well as family engagement in local church communities. The findings presented in this report demonstrate that impact on family faith practices varies a great deal by camp. In general, respondents in this study began camp with many faith practices already in place and with no room to “grow” on the survey scales. Inevitably, every family will have areas of strength and weakness as it relates to faith practices, and the summary findings related to the number of families that grew in at least one area provides evidence that families are experiencing some change in faith engagement over time. Whether or not camp is the *cause* of any of those changes still must be determined.
- 4) Denominational Variation in Beliefs About Camp: The data from church leaders reveal that perceptions about camp may differ by denomination, especially in key areas. In general, church leaders from LOM and UMCRM networks appear to have a better sense of partnership with camps. Church leaders from these camps perceive greater levels of intentional partnership between themselves and their partner camps, have a greater sense that camp is equipping them as church leaders to continue the impacts of camp at church, and may feel more welcome to be involved in camp than churches associated with CCCA camps.

Growing Faith Together offers free resources, tools, and opportunities to participate in action-oriented research so that camps, parents, and churches are equipped to foster lasting faith formation in the home.

