



## MASTER GUIDE PROGRAM



# Camping Skills

## New Skills Development



January 2009



MASTER GUIDE

Teaching Resource for the Master Guide Course.

This resource has been produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church Youth Ministries of the South Pacific Division (SPD). We express our deepest thanks to Andrew West who compiled and shaped this document.

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# Introduction

Camping is perhaps the single most effective way to introduce people, both young and old to Christ. Camping is a biblical principle that even God Himself employed to “re-introduce” the Israelites to His principles through the wilderness experience found in the Exodus story. Camping takes people out of their natural environment away from the distractions of the everyday world. Camping helps people learn to rely on basic skill and knowledge that is imparted by someone more experienced than them. This teaches reliance on others and develops and encourages growth in self awareness and self confidence.

These are some of the reasons why Pathfinder leaders use this medium to reach young people. Other positive reasons and outcomes include:

- Learning to work as a team
- To learn more about God’s creation
- Increase fitness and health
- Learn valuable life skills

This resource material is intended to give you an introduction into the basic art of camping. We would encourage you to expand your skills and knowledge by reading other resource materials and by literally “getting out there” and putting what you have learned to the test.

This material is broken into 4 parts:

1. Planning For a Camp.
2. Camping Gear and Equipment.
3. Campsite Set Up and Safety.
4. Environmental Care.

# CHAPTER 1: Planning For a Camp

In planning for your camp you need to consider a few things:

1. **Why go camping?** Leaders need to assess what the needs of their club/unit are and what the benefits are, in camping. Leaders need to set several goals to be achieved at the camp. Then plan the event accordingly so that the camp will flow and be an enjoyable learning experience.
2. **How to choose an appropriate site?** Choosing an appropriate site will be determined by your purpose. Assessing a groups needs includes assessing their skill levels. You will need to choose a site that will achieve what you have set as your goals. For example, if a leader wants to teach river crossing skills as part of their goals, it makes sense to choose a site that has good river crossing sites close by. Check the type of terrain the camp will be located on, Check the prevailing wind direction and look for hazards in the area.
3. **Who is leading?** Leaders need to assess their staff's skills to assess if they match the set goals. Do they have the skills needed for the tasks set? If they don't then leaders should source staff who have the appropriate skills and utilise them. These people don't even have to be Pathfinder Leaders, they could be Church members or members of the public.
4. **Does the leader have access rights?** There are many recreation areas in New Zealand and Australia today that require permits for usage. Leaders need to ensure they have contacted the necessary people and gained permits or permission to go where they want to go.
5. **Who knows the plan?** Planning is only effective if it is shared with other staff. Make sure there is a home based liaison person that both camp leaders and parents can contact for emergency or update reasons. It is wise and good practise to let contact people know the camp location, goals, return date and time. Also plan for contingencies if campers are overdue. Parents need to know this information to ensure their children are in safe hands. Maintain contact with the liaison person especially when the group is back home safe and sound.
6. **Always have a plan B (Contingency).** Conducting camping activities is heavily reliant on the external environment. As such it is inevitable that plans will change either due to changes in weather conditions or some other external factors. It's a good policy to plan for the worst and hope for the best. Having an alternative plan as well as an emergency plan is crucial to the success of a great camp. As part of this planning, leaders should ensure at least one person in the group has current first aid certification along with a comprehensive first aid kit.
7. **What is the weather prediction?** Leaders need to check weather patterns well in advance of the camp, so that they are prepared in advance for specific weather conditions. Learn how to read weather maps and plan the camp accordingly.
8. **What gear/equipment is needed?** Leaders need a good understanding of what gear is available and how to use it. It is always wise to check that gear is in good working order prior to the camp and know how it works. Many people have headed out for a camp only to find that tents have missing parts, or cookers that don't work. Check appendix A for a basic list of what should be taken on a camp.

A well planned and conducted camp will produce fantastic results. Don't cut corners on planning and always evaluate at the end of your program. Be sure to ask these questions:

- What went right?
- What could be done better?

And finally, remember the old saying "to fail to plan is to plan to fail."

## CHAPTER 2: Camping Gear and Equipment

Today there is a huge variety of camping gear and equipment to choose from. The most important thing to remember is not to get overwhelmed when looking at gear and always work within a budget. Some basic items are essential for camping and outlined below are several tips on what to look for when choosing or purchasing camping gear.

### Tents

The staple of any camp. Tents come in all shapes and sizes. For Pathfinder style camping, look for tents that are no larger than 4 persons in size. Check the following:

- Tent size and weight. If the main purpose is hiking, keep the weight down. Aluminium pegs and poles are a good start.
- Manufacture materials. Canvas is out, nylon is in. Most good quality tents will be made of Rip stop nylon. Features like vents and bug mesh on doors are great.
- Water proof materials. Choose tents that have a fly that has at least a 4000mm water rating and a floor with an 8000mm water rating.
- Most tents are dome shaped now days. These provide better protection form the elements and are more robust in strong winds.

A good tent, properly cared for will last for years. Costs range considerably but unfortunately you do get what you pay for.

### Cookers

Today, most recreation sites will not allow open fires, so a good suitable cooker is essential. Choose a cooker with the following in mind:

- Ease of use. Simple is good.
- Stable. You don't want it to fall over with while in use!
- Affordable. Match the cooker to the budget.
- Weight. Not too heavy.

Some of the most popular styled cookers today are the gas canister cooker and the Methylated spirits Trangia brand of cookers. Both are good and easy to use. With the gas canister type, ensure that the "screw on" type is used rather than the puncture style canister. These are much safer than the puncture style.

## Footwear

Good solid foot wear is essential for camping. When choosing boots consider the following:

- **Fit.** Boots should not be too tight or too loose. If your toes are bunching up the boots will not be comfortable for long. If your feet tend to “swim” in your boots then blisters will develop quickly.
- **Materials.** Leather boots are still the best. However there are many styles that are made of high quality nylon and leather combinations. These unless treated, will not be very water proof. Always look for boots with soles that are sewn to the upper. These will last longer.
- **Buy within the budget.**

Like most outdoor gear, a good pair of boots, properly cared for will give years of service. To make boots last longer NEVER dry them out in front of a fire, as this will damage the leather and they will breakdown quicker.

## Wet Weather Gear

Don't skimp on quality. Choose wet weather gear with the following considerations:

- **Breathable.** Being breathable means that the gear will allow moisture or steam from exercise to escape while keeping the rain out. This means that campers will in effect stay dryer.
- **Materials.** There are many materials that claim to be breathable. Choose gear wisely. Goretex is still considered the best available by many people. Stay away from woollen coats as these get heavy and are not efficient.
- **Buy within the budget.** Don't blow the budget, shop around and wait for sales.
- **Invest in a quality jacket and over trousers.** The jacket should end just below your bottom, and your over trousers should be able to be put on a removed without taking your boots off.

## Clothing

There are a few things to think of when choosing camp clothing.

- **Layering.** Experienced campers use a 3 layer principle for their clothing. It is essential that you keep warm and dry especially once the evening comes on. The 3 layers should be:
  - ◆ **Close to the skin/underwear.** Clothing should be warm and quick drying. Polypropylene or merino wool underwear is great for this as it “breathes” and can “wick” moisture away from the skin keeping you dry and warm
  - ◆ **2<sup>nd</sup> layer should be Fleece or again, merino.** These materials also have a “wicking” effect allowing moisture to continue to transfer away from the body.
  - ◆ **The 3<sup>rd</sup> layer should be wind proof and possibly water proof** depending on the weather demands. The “outer shell” should be either a rain coat or a wind breaker type jacket.
- **Materials.** Today there are many man made materials that are light weight and quick drying that are excellent for camping needs. While there are some advantages to these over natural fibres like wool, they are all flammable. Wool still is a good product and with the technological advances in manufacturing, wool is a very good option, however cost is usually high.
- **What about cotton?** Unless used in a tropical environment, cotton is not a good option as it is quite cold against the skin especially when wet.



## Back Packs

Back packs come in all shapes and sizes, so when looking for a good pack, consider the following.

- Size. Pack sizes are measured in litres. It is not advisable to buy a pack smaller than 65ltrs or really any larger than 80ltrs. All gear needed should fit into your pack, don't hang anything on the outside. This can unbalance the pack or can be ripped off and lost.
- Material. Most good packs are now made of Cordura nylon, which is lightweight and very strong. It is also quite resistant to abrasion which is good. Canvas is good but heavy.
- Frames. Internal frame and adjustable harness are preferable, as they can be adjusted to fit the individual correctly. Most modern packs come with an internal frame system. Packs without frames don't sit well and don't protect the back from protruding objects that may have been poorly packed.
- Budget. Prices do range quite a bit so shop around.

## Sleeping Bags

A good sleeping bag is essential. Basically there are two types of sleeping bags, either synthetic filled or down filled, each with its pros and cons. The construction of the bags whether they are down or synthetic will make a huge difference in performance. Down bags are generally warmer and pack down smaller than synthetic but are more expensive and don't work as well if they get wet. Synthetic bags are cheaper and keep their warmth even when wet. Bag shapes are:

- Rectangular. These are OK for caravans and summer camping. Some are able to be joined together for couples.
- Mummy. These are shaped to fit the body so there is less air space. These are very warm most mummy bags have a boxed foot which gives more foot space.
- Half,  $\frac{3}{4}$ , or full zips. This is for ease of access into the bag. Zips let the heat escape so the longer the zip the cooler the bag will be.

As with all gear, shop around and buy within the budget. There are a few hints to caring for a sleeping bag.

- Never store a bag in its cram sack, as this will damage the down/fibres and reduce its life. Use a pillow case or some other breathable bag to store it in.
- Use a liner. Cotton and silk liners will keep bag cleaner and can actually increase its warmth.
- Never wash a bag in a washing machine. Use a bath to wash it and dry it on a line in the shade.

## Concluding Remarks

Always shop around when buying any gear. Keep in mind how often and where it will be used and what kind of activities will be done. Remember that better quality give better service, but wait for sales and specials.

## CHAPTER 3: Campsite Set-Up and Safety

A well set up camp will provide campers with comfort and a safe environment to enjoy the outdoors. When choosing a campsite, consider the following basic principles.

- **Size of site.** Will it fit the club or unit? Will other people be using the site also?
- **Well draining.** Make sure the site is not prone to flooding. Never camp right beside a river. Look for the “high water” mark and camp above that.
- **Away from the wind.** Try not to pitch in prevailing wind. Find shelter from strong winds where possible but not under trees that may fall due to strong winds. If tents must be pitched in the wind, set the tent door so that it is facing away from the wind.
- **Toilets.** If toilet facilities are not available, allocate the toilet area up wind of the camp site and at least 50 metres from a water source. Do not dig toilets any deeper than 30cm into the earth, as deeper holes will not allow waste to break down as fast as it would when the waste is buried within the leaf litter and topsoil layer.
- **Food storage.** To keep pests and other animals away from the campsite, make sure all food is stored away between meals, either in packs or sealed containers. Don't leave food scraps or rubbish anywhere around camp. Remember to carry out what is carried in.
- **Washing up.** Do all dish washing away from camp and never in the actual water way. Where possible use biodegradable detergents. Regarding personal hygiene ensure not to wash in the actual water way. Take enough water and wash away from the river/lake.
- **Water purification.** It is important to ensure there is enough safe drinking water. Water filters can be purchased, but these can be bulky, slow and not always effective. Water can be chemically treated and purification tablets can be purchased at most camping stores or the local pharmacy. Be aware that the chemicals will not take effect in water for at least 20 minutes. Treatment is not instant. The cheapest and perhaps most effective way of purifying water is still boiling. Boil water for around 3 minutes to kill most bugs.
- **Cleaning up.** Always leave camp sites in as good or better condition than when the group arrived. This should be common practise. Take out any rubbish generated, do not “burn, bash and bury” as they did in the old days.
- **Fires.** As mentioned previously most national parks will not permit fires. Fires should only be lit for emergency purposes. When lighting a fire, think of it's purpose, what it is needed for, cooking or warmth? Make sure the fire is a safe distance from all tents, any trees or scrub and is contained by either rocks, or clearing the area of any flammable material, where the fire will be lit. Digging a trench or a shallow hole is a good idea.

## CHAPTER 4: Environmental Care

In the current age where care for the environment is paramount in popular thinking, this consideration should be applied when camping. In New Zealand and Australia, various Conservation groups have developed their environmental care codes. The New Zealand Care Code has been adapted to include Australia as well and is outlined below.

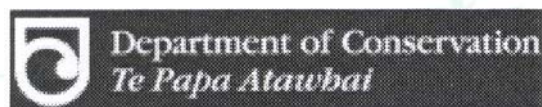
### New Zealand/Australian Environmental Care Code - 10 Point Checklist

1. **Protect plants and animals** - Treat New Zealand and Australia's forests animals and birds with care and respect. They are unique and often rare.
2. **Remove rubbish** - Litter is unattractive, harmful to wildlife and can increase vermin and disease. Plan your visits to reduce rubbish, and carry out what you carry in.
3. **Bury toilet waste** - In areas without toilet facilities, bury your toilet waste in a shallow hole well away from waterways, tracks, campsites, and huts.
4. **Keep streams, rivers and lakes clean** - When cleaning and washing, take the water and wash well away from the water source. Because soaps and detergents are harmful to water-life, drain used water into the soil to allow it to be filtered. If you suspect the water may be contaminated, either boil it for at least 3 minutes, or filter it, or chemically treat it.
5. **Take care with fires** - Portable fuel stoves are less harmful to the environment and are more efficient than fires. If you do use a fire, keep it small, use only dead wood and make sure it is out by dousing it with water and checking the ashes before leaving.
6. **Camp carefully** - When camping, leave no trace of your visit.
7. **Keep to the track** - By keeping to the track, where one exists, you lessen the chance of damaging fragile plants.
8. **Consider others** - People visit the back country and rural areas for many reasons. Be considerate of other visitors who also have a right to enjoy the natural environment.
9. **Respect our cultural heritage** - Many places in New Zealand and Australia have a spiritual and historical significance. Treat these places with consideration and respect.
10. **Enjoy your visit** - Enjoy the outdoor experience. Take a last look before leaving an area; will the next visitor know that your group have been there?



Protect the environment for own sake sake, for the sake of those who come afterwards, and for the environment itself. "Toitu te whenua" meaning, leave the land undisturbed. Finally, camping is a wonderful way to enjoy God's creation and introduce people, young and old to Jesus as their personal friend and Saviour.

Happy Camping!



## Additional Reading

*Bushcraft, Outdoor skills for the NZ Bush, New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.*

*Outdoor Safety, Risk management for outdoor leaders, New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.*

*Outdoor First Aid, New Zealand Mountain Safety Council.*