

FFWPU District Eight's summer Camp Agape, at the Y-Camp in Boone, Iowa

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Unificationist-born youth from all over District 8 gathered for its annual summer camp, Camp Agape, at the Y-Camp in Boone, Iowa, from July 13 to 22, 2017. In the following, Christelle Carlson provides an in-depth overview of the amazing summer experience.

The theme of Camp Agape 2017 was “Shape Destiny.” The goal this year was to empower a sense of hope and perseverance through life’s challenges. The main themes were understanding and valuing our amazing potential, what went wrong at the Fall, the long-term effects of the Fall within our culture today, and how we can still stand strong for our ideals.

There was a special emphasis on being open and honest—not only with one’s parents and elders but also with oneself. We also aimed to reinforce our kids by having them recognize the power of supporting each other as a community.

Camp started with a huge bang with our incredibly successful trip to New York City for the national Youth and Young Adult Hyojeong Workshop and for True Mother’s speech at Madison Square Garden. The participants bonded more deeply because of this rare and unique experience, in which they could spend intimate time with True Mother at East Garden and also get to know many young Unificationists outside District 8. For a good handful who went, this was their first time seeing True Mother in person.



The highlight of camp apart from this trip to New York was by far the “Coming Back to God” activity, which concluded our Brothers/Sisters Night. This involved having multiple people physically stopping you from reaching God, while a person representing God encouraged you to fight on to reach the goal. At the beginning “God” was just one person, but then “God” was joined by each person who made it through, until at the end everyone as a community was cheering on those who were still pushing through.

So many kids in their reflections said that this was an incredibly impactful experience, and said that they now feel much stronger to push through personal blocks in a similar way.

We also had a meaningful closing activity called “Touch of Acceptance.” The goal was to drive home the point that you are always loved and invaluable, regardless of anything wrong you’ve done in the past.

Other activities were our traditional Glow-in-the-Dark Capture the Flag, a volleyball tournament, and the Entertainment Night skits. Through themed and teamwork-based activities throughout the week, there was an incredible amount of team bonding. Many participants said that they connected more deeply with their friends and made new friendships, as well.

Overall, this year was an unimaginably meaningful experience for the participants. The New York trip gave them a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see and listen to True Mother. At the victory celebration of the Madison Square Garden event, many participants stood just a few feet away from True Mother. Then, at the Iowa Y-Camp, they bonded more deeply to support one other through life’s challenges.



Reflections

“I really enjoyed the New York trip/Hyojeong Workshop. It was truly amazing to see so many BCs, as I’ve never had that opportunity. Getting to see True Mother and the other speakers made me feel more a part of our movement and things going on in our church.”

“The Hyojeong Workshop and the New York trip were absolutely incredible. It was amazing to see so many young Unificationists gathered together for an internal purpose—to connect to True Mother and attend her. What a privilege to be part of such heart and unity.”

“I gained a better awareness of the outside world and its impact on me, even if at first look it does not seem like anything is changing me. Also, I learned to be careful what I consume and to take care of my relationships by actively being honest and opening up.”

“I learned what it’s like to be the older brother/sister, how to hand the baton to the next group; to look at the younger brothers and sisters the same way their parents do. It’s up to me and my daily effort to shape my destiny and the destiny of our movement, creating a place/a life I want.”

“I gained real happiness. There probably isn’t anything God wants more than to see His children loving one another and creating an environment, a place, where He can be. And this is a place where He can truly be. How happy and peaceful His heart may be.”