

Virtual Summer Camp During the Corona Virus Plague: Igniting Faith from Home

Demian Dunkley
July 15, 2020



This summer, children are enjoying the perks of camp right from their own homes. From California to New York, digital devices have become the source of virtual camp experiences in households across the U.S. as organizers follow safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unificationist leaders are also connecting remote campers. One Heart Camp in California had two back-to-back camps on Zoom for high school and middle school kids in late June. "We got creative to make it as fun as possible," said Sarah Takhar, [Youth and Young Adult Ministry](#) (YAYAM) Northwest coordinator. "Summer camp is something many kids look forward to."



The four-day camps, averaging 50 participants each, included everything you would expect at camp in person: singing, dancing, origami, puzzles, drawing, and exercise, among other activities. "Most of the activities were in groups organized in different chat rooms," said Takhar. "We had an entertainment night with jokes and family skits, and we even had an 'escape room' activity where the participants had to solve riddles to break out of the chat rooms."



Campers also had reflection time and group discussions each morning, with topics centered around the camp's theme "The Blessing in Me." A panel of guest speakers shared their insights and experiences, too. "We talked about our values, including the Marriage Blessing," said Takhar. "And we focused on our role as individuals who are part of a blessed family and greater community."



Normally, the camp draws as many as 200 participants. But this year was more intimate, with fewer

campers and about 15 team leaders. Takhar, a longtime camp volunteer, noted the difference while in her new director role. "I really felt this was the best camp we ever had," she said. "We were so united and it was really amazing to read through the reflections of all the participants. God was really able to touch all of them."



Campers shared uplifting, transformative experiences that bolstered their mindset and revitalized their faith. "At first I wasn't really sure about doing an online camp," said one participant. "But I'm really glad I did it anyway. It gave me the chance to be social with a lot more people, which is something I've been missing during the past few months. I was feeling more alone but participating in the camp made me realize I'm not. It helped me reawaken my relationship with God."

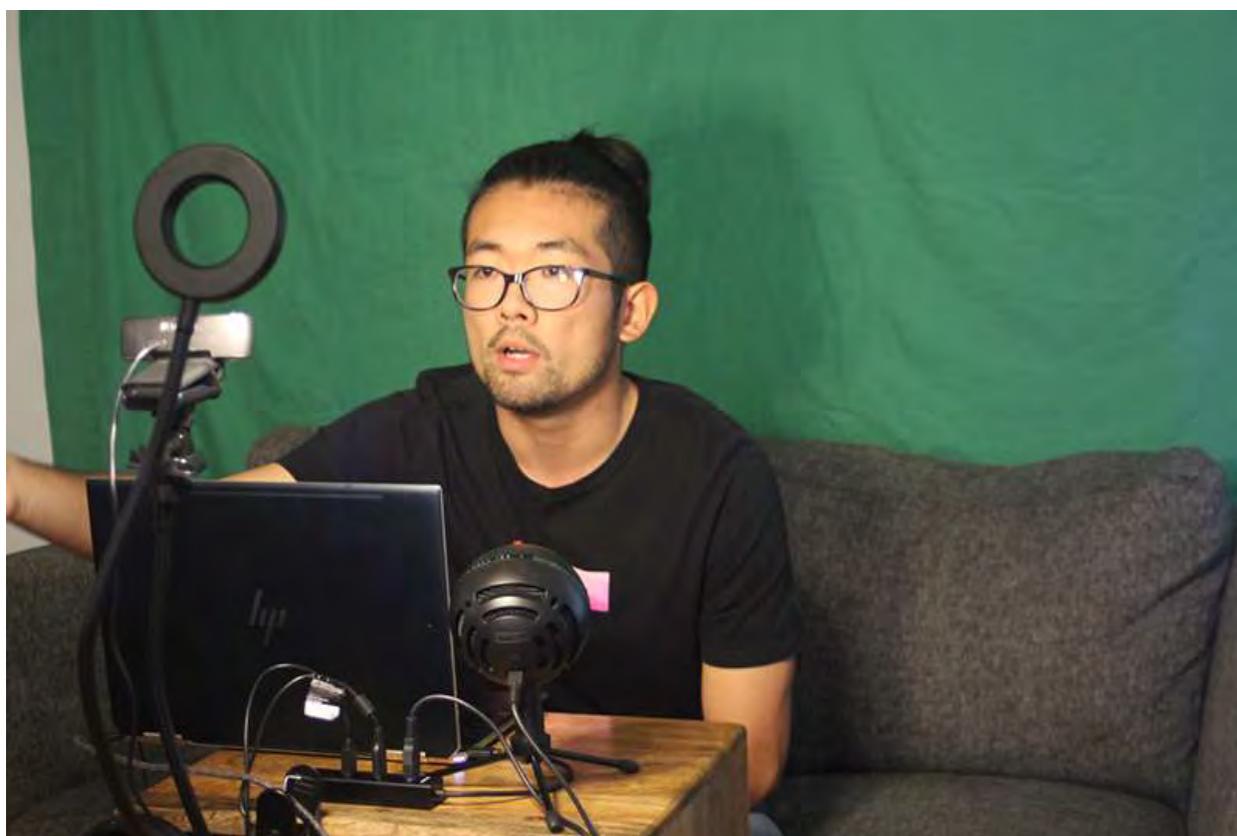


In Texas, Lone Star Camp director and YAYAM Southwest Coordinator Brianna Schneider felt inspired with a clever approach to this year's program. "Like most camps, we were hoping to meet in person," she

said. "But when that didn't happen we used virtual backgrounds of the camp's main hall."



Her team organized a mix of online and offline activities for about 15 participants during the weeklong camp in late June. They played digital Pictionary together, and a virtual talent show featured singing, dancing, and a drawing time lapse. "There were talents we wouldn't normally see from people who are more shy," said Schneider. "It was like a safe haven for introverts. The most important thing was creating an atmosphere where people felt comfortable with each other while having fun and coming closer to God."



The camp theme, "Light the Torch," offered a series of lectures and discussions on internal guidance, along with a panel of guest speakers. Campers talked about what fuels their faith, and shared their challenges and struggles. "One of the most inspiring things for me was how open and honest and vulnerable everyone was," said Schneider. "It's a very difficult time for many people during quarantine, so

this outlet was a source of comfort and healing. I could feel the warmth in that, igniting everyone's passion and faith to keep going."

"It really felt like there wasn't even a screen between us," said one camper. "I could connect with the heart of others in my community even if we weren't together in person, which was a great experience."



Less than two weeks away, YAYAM Midwest Coordinator Christelle Carlson is now preparing for Kogape Camp. She anticipates more than 60 participants during the last week of July, combining high school and middle school campers. "Our theme this year is 'I Am Essential,'" said Carlson. "We are all essential and make an impact in our families, our communities, and we are loved by God."

Camp sessions will include spiritual guidance, panel discussion, and various activities designed to strengthen relationships among campers as well as their families. "Relationships are so important, even when you are not physically together," said Carlson. "Even during this quarantine where we are physically separated, we are still connected to all of our brothers and sisters around the world. It's so important to realize our personal value, and the value we bring to our communities; to be a part of people's lives and be engaged in a positive manner."

Camp organizers also want participants to have fun -- it's summer camp, after all. A virtual scavenger hunt, gaming night, and fashion show are all in the works as Kogape Camp remains open for registration until July 19. "We want campers to build great memories and also have a meaningful experience," said Carlson.

You can register for Kogape Camp [here](#). Aurora Camp in the Northeast is scheduled for August. Date is to be determined.



SUMMER 2020

YOUTH CAMPS

Below you will find the various camps and programs being planned for this summer. Please note that we will be adhering to CDC's guidelines for the health and safety of our youth, young adults, and staff. The camps and programs being planned may be rescheduled, reformatted, or canceled altogether.

A huge shout out to One Heart Camp and Camp Lone Star for their very successful camps this summer so far! Check out below for more upcoming camps.

For further general questions, please email the YAYAM team at yayam@unification.org!



CAMP KOGAPE ONLINE
July 27 - July 31

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Registration Deadline: July 19th



"I am Essential"



Re-Save The Date!

August 16-22, 2020

EPIC: Online!

Embodying Principles in Culture
One Week DP Workshop

ONLINE CAMP KOGAPE: “I AM ESSENTIAL”

JULY 27-31

REGISTRATION JULY

19

Camp KOGAPE is going online! Connect with your midwest brothers and sisters as we explore why YOU are important to your community and God. This is for Fall 2020 6th Graders - 12th Graders.

Registration (due July 19th):

<https://hsa.regfox.com/camp-kogape-2020-online>

Look for more updates here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2048163588833707/>

EMBODYING PRINCIPLES IN CULTURE WORKSHOP

AUGUST 16-22

REGISTRATION

COMING SOON

Hey fam! SAVE THE DATE! We'll be hosting EPIC online this year —but don't worry—it's still going to be a BLAST! Save the dates for August 16-22.

Join us for an amazing, personal, interactive EPIC experience with the Divine Principle like you've never experienced before. Open to all high schoolers and first and second year college students!

Check back here for updates!



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Camp KOGAPE 2020 Online

Dates: Monday July 27th - Friday July 31st

Your Information

Registration *

Camp KOGAPE 2020 Online (\$15.00)

Name *

Gender *

Male

Female

Are you a: *

Participant

Staff

Date of Birth *

Country *

Address *

City, State, and ZIP *

Email *

Phone Number *

United States

Church Community (City, State) *

Are there any days or time frames you will be unable to join?

Will you be sharing a computer with someone? If yes, who?

Why do you think your are essential?

Total

\$15.00

Billing Information

Name *

Card Number *



Expiration Date *

Country *

United States

Address *

City, State, and ZIP *

State



ZIP/Postal Code

Email *

Email Address

Confirm Email *

Confirm Email Address

Phone Number *

United States



SUBMIT



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