



CAMP 2 CONGREGATION
PROJECT

**The Camp2Congregation Project:
Leader Survey Report**

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Data prepared by:



Introduction and Contents

This report details the findings of the Camp2Congregation 2019 Congregational Leader Survey. This survey targeted leaders of Christian congregations that hosted traveling day camp in summer 2019. The leaders reflected back on the experience of hosting day camp and observed ongoing impacts on their congregations.

The Camp2Congregation Project, generously funded by Lilly Endowment, Inc., is a multi-dimensional study examining the impacts of Christian traveling day camp programs on congregations, families, and young leaders in the church. Major findings and project outline are available at www.camp2congregation.com. The study centered on SpringHill, a large Christian camping organization with overnight sites in Michigan and Indiana. Because of the prevalence of traveling day camp programs at Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) camps, a cohort of four LOM-affiliated camps serving in the geographical reach of SpringHill was recruited to compare and contrast programs/outcomes. These four camping organizations included Ewalu Camp and Retreat Center (IA), Crossways Camping Ministries (WI), Living Water Ministries (MI), and Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Indiana-Kentucky (IN).

The congregational leader survey was designed to assess impacts of traveling day camp on congregations after the conclusion of the 2019 summer. Participating camps invited congregational leaders to respond to the survey in fall 2019. Responses were collected between October 29 and December 13, 2019.

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SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

1. **Faith-Based Fun:** The responses and observations of congregational leaders indicated that traveling day camp experiences are fun for the campers who attend and are faith-centered experiences (Figure 1). Remarkably, there was universal consensus (100% agreement) on these two points across different camps, geographies, and congregations, even when other elements were not satisfactory.
2. **Supplemental Ministry:** Most day camp participants came from the host congregations. Only about a quarter of respondents (27%) indicated that more than half of the participants came from outside the congregation (Table 4). Although usually a minority, a fair number of participants came from outside the congregation, with 60% of respondents saying that at least a quarter of participants were from outside the congregation. As a group, congregational leaders saw day camp more as an educational ministry to supplement their own ministries than an outreach ministry to welcome new families, but a slim majority gave at least some weight to both of these priorities (Figure 4). In addition to the emphasis on members of the host site, three quarters of respondents agreed that new families were introduced to the congregation through day camp, demonstrating its significance for outreach (Fig. 5).
3. **Impacts Evident:** A large majority of leaders (84%) agreed that day camp had a significant, positive impact on their congregation. All but one respondent (99%) identified at least one of 12 positive outcomes, and two-thirds (67%) identified 6 or more. While some of these outcomes were superficial, like campers wanting to return the next year or singing the songs they learned, others were substantial, like increased family involvement in the congregation and volunteerism (Figure 5).
4. **Major Differences in Model:** There were major differences evident in the model of day camp between Lutheran Outdoor Ministry (LOM) sites and SpringHill sites.
 - a. **Program Size:** SpringHill day camps were much larger than LOM camps. This was true for camper numbers but most especially with camp staff: SpringHill averaged just under 5 times as many campers per site as the LOM average but 6 times as many camp staff. This is attributable, in part, to the size of host congregations. SpringHill served large congregations almost exclusively, with average weekly worship attendance of their ministry partners exceeding 1000 and only a handful averaging fewer than 250, while these small congregations comprised nearly 90% of LOM sites.
 - b. **Cost:** SpringHill programs cost much more than LOM programs, which were oftentimes free for participants. High program cost was a concern for many SpringHill host partners, with more than half (53%) agreeing that cost prevented many children from attending.
 - c. **Program Quality:** SpringHill site leaders expressed a higher level of overall satisfaction than LOM leaders in nearly every aspect of the experience, particularly camp staff and program (Tables 9 and 10). It is clear that, due to the superior program quality, SpringHill leaders were much more likely to express a desire to host day camp again in future years (Figure 2), and they observed much more frequently that campers expressed a desire to attend again in the future (Table 6).
 - d. **Partnership with Congregations:** LOM host partners indicated stronger overall partnerships with their camps than SpringHill sites. These partnerships were robust in terms of a multitude of partnership ministries in addition to day camp (Table 1) and durable in the sense that even when program quality was poor, the partnership endured well beyond the summer.
5. **Partnership is Essential:** Regardless of the strength of partnership between the camp and congregation at large, the quality of partnership in the specific ministry of day camp mattered a great deal to the impact of the day camp experience. Even though LOM sites exhibited robust and durable partnerships with the camps, this did not always result in an effective partnership in the specific ministry of day camp. There were several key factors revealed in the survey to be indicative of strong partnerships in day camp ministry:

- a. **Valuing Volunteers:** Most ministry partners wanted an active role in shaping the day camp experience. They wanted congregational volunteers intimately involved in the programming and relationship building with the campers. When leaders thought adult volunteers were undervalued, there was also less ongoing impact observed. This also extended to youth volunteers (often called counselors in training, or CITs). Their active presence and participation in the programming was a key part of valuing congregational volunteers.
 - b. **Care for Context:** Congregational leaders expected camp staff to adjust programming to fit their context. They also expected camp staff to care for their building and grounds.
 - c. **Communication:** Partnerships suffered when communication broke down. This occurred most frequently in the days and weeks prior to the day camp experience (usually a breakdown in communicating camp staff numbers and special accommodations needed), though it also included an expectation from congregational leaders that they would be involved in decision-making and well-informed during the week of day camp.
6. **Stronger Partnership and Quality Staff Results in More Impact:** These two factors, along with CIT involvement, strongly affected day camp outcomes related to congregational ministries. There were no major differences in kids having fun, showing excitement, or professing faith in Christ. The differences were in ongoing congregational involvement. When congregational leaders recognized that the staff was well-trained, saw the relationship with the camp as more of a ministry partnership than transaction for services, and had youth from the congregation (CITs) involved, there were clear differences in impact (Figure 6). Most especially, these impacts related to increased volunteerism in the congregation (for youth and adults), engagement and involvement of new families, and increased involvement among families that were already connected to the congregation. When the three factors were identified, 92% of leaders agreed that day camp had a significant positive impact on their congregation, compared with 67% of responding leaders for whom just one of the factors was absent.

WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS SURVEY?

Response Summary:

	# of Sites
SpringHill	71
Crossways	3
Ewalu	12
Living Water	8
LOMIK	1
Total	95

39% of day camps began in June

46% began in July

15% began in August

6 sites held multiple weeks of day camp

of day campers ranged from **10** to **900**

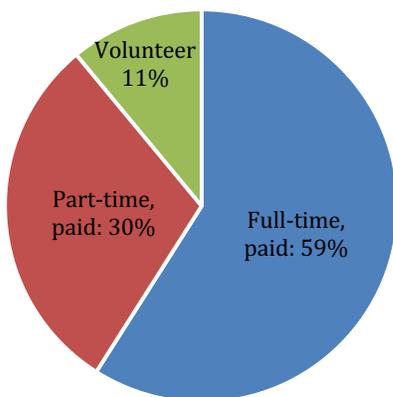
camp staff ranged from **3** to **60**

Average number of campers: **134**

SpringHill avg: **167** campers, **24** staff

LOM sites avg: **34** campers, **4** staff

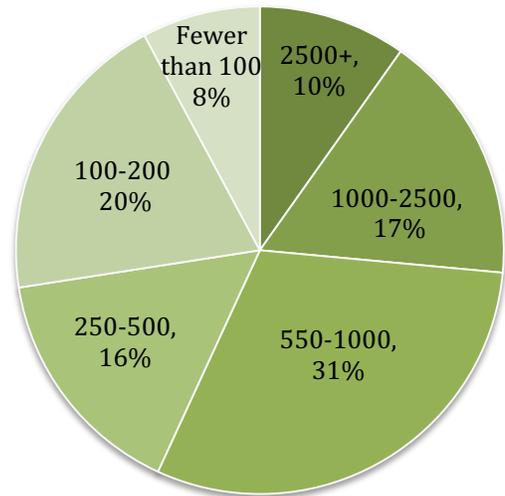
Role in Congregation:



73% of respondents were children's/youth ministry directors or pastors with specific responsibility for children or youth

95 congregations spread across **8** states

Average Weekly Worship Attendance



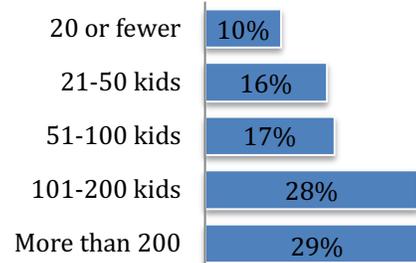
Weekly worship ranged from **22** to **8,000**

Average of all sites: **1,025**

Average of SpringHill sites: **1,311**

Average of LOM sites: **150**

Children's Ministry Avg. Attendance



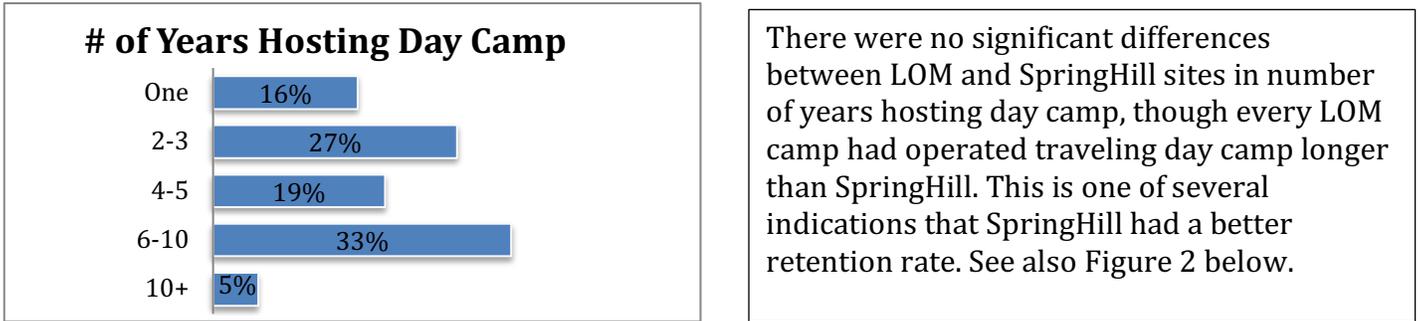
SpringHill sites averaged **250** kids

LOM sites averaged **38** kids

63% had more children's ministry attendees than the number that attended day camp. This was true for half of LOM sites and two-thirds of SpringHill sites.

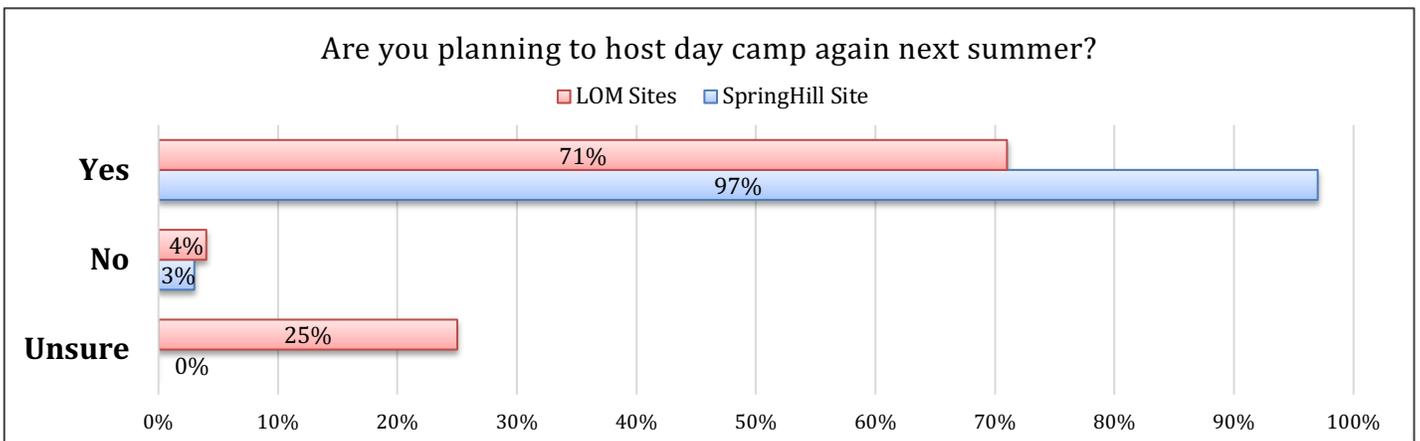
Camp and Congregation Partnership

Figure 1: Number of Years Site had Hosted Traveling Day Camp



There were no significant differences between LOM and SpringHill sites in number of years hosting day camp, though every LOM camp had operated traveling day camp longer than SpringHill. This is one of several indications that SpringHill had a better retention rate. See also Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Intentions of Hosting Day Camp in Future, LOM and SpringHill Comparison



Partnership Summary:

Based on open-ended responses from congregational leaders in a series of interviews in spring 2019, survey participants were given three broad options to characterize the relationship between the camp and congregation when it came to traveling day camp:

Robust partnership: “Day camp is part of a robust partnership that includes many ministry opportunities. The camp supports our congregation in multiple ways, and we support the camp.”

Complimentary relationship: “The camp is a resource for our congregation, coming alongside our staff and volunteers to provide a program complimentary to our children’s ministries.”

Contract for services: “We contract with the camp, and they bring their day camp to our congregation.”

Figure 3: Partnership Summary, SpringHill and LOM in Comparison

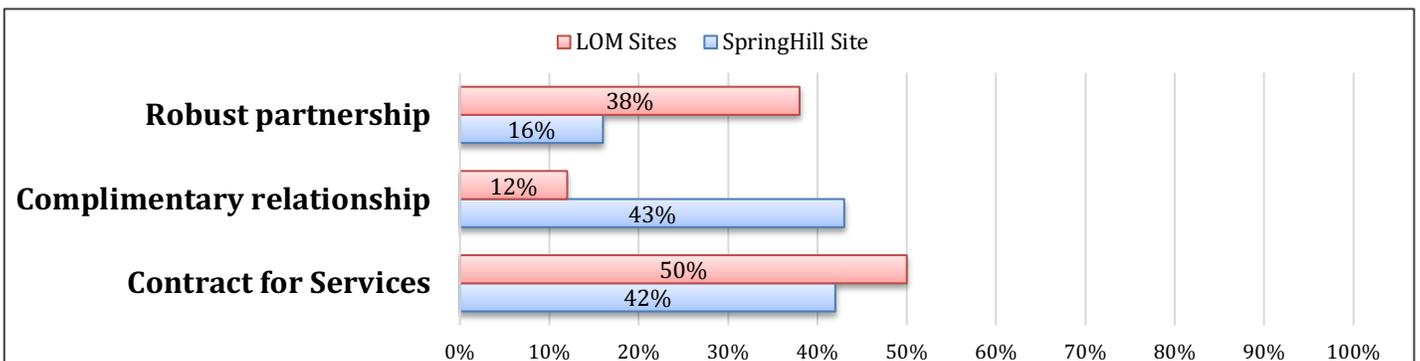


Table 1: In what other ways is your congregation connected to camp? (n=94)

	All (n=94)	SpringHill	Lutheran
Children/youth attend overnight camp	56%	49%	79%
We travel to camp for youth retreats/events	26%	21%	38%
Adults from the congregation attend retreats at the camp	18%	16%	25%
Pastoral staff participate in camping ministry	9%	1%	29%
Reps from camp come to church at least annually to lead/participate in worship/Christian education	10%	4%	25%
Congregation supports camp with annual financial contributions	16%	3%	54%
NONE. Day camp is the primary (or only) way we partner	36%	46%	8%

- Lutheran campers were more likely than SpringHill campers to attend overnight camp, although over half of all congregations are connected to camps with overnight campers.
- SpringHill was described in almost half of the congregations as only partnering through day camp. Lutheran congregations were more likely to partner in more ways than just day camp. This came out in multiple measures, including attending retreats, participating in camping ministries, and camp representatives joining the church annually to participate in worship.
- In more than half of the Lutheran congregations, partnership with the camps included financial giving. Only 3% of SpringHill congregations supported the camp financially. Financial contributions for SpringHill campers, however, were common (see Table 3).

Ministry Partnership v. Transaction for Services

The survey question most clearly addressing the quality of partnership asked how much the respondent agreed with, “The experience felt more like a transaction for services than a ministry partnership.” As shown in Figure 4, only 6% of respondents agreed with this statement. However, an additional 11% indicated “neither agree nor disagree.” Taken together, this group represented 16 sites, taken proportionately from LOM and SpringHill (almost exactly 17% of each). This sub-group was compared statistically with all those who disagreed with the statement (n=79) to determine which specific elements of day camp contributed or took away from feelings of partnership.

1. **Valuing volunteers:** One of the most significant differences between the two groups was in agreement with “Church volunteers felt included and valued.” Those considering the experience transactional agreed much less with this statement, $t_{16,75}=3.673$, $p<.01$ (only 50% agreed, compared with 93% of the other group). Additionally, transactional respondents reported being significantly less satisfied with, “Intentional engagement with and involvement of church staff and volunteers” ($t_{16,77}=3.007$, $p<.01$).
2. **Care for congregational context:** Transactional respondents reported being significantly less satisfied with, “Care shown to church facilities and grounds” ($t_{16,79}=2.573$, $p<.05$) and “Attention to our congregation’s specific context and needs” ($t_{15,70}=3.845$, $p<.001$).
3. **Communication:** There were two main areas of dissatisfaction with communication prior to day camp for those who felt the experience was more transactional: communication about program needs/specifics ($t_{16,79}=2.780$, $p<.01$) and communication about staff housing and dietary needs ($t_{16,79}=2.622$, $p<.01$).
4. **Program specifics:** Those who felt the experience was more transactional also reported significantly less satisfaction with the overall program ($t_{16,77}=3.034$, $p<.01$). Specifically, they were less satisfied with the small group curriculum ($t_{16,74}=2.443$, $p<.05$) and the closing program for parents ($t_{15,78}=2.065$, $p<.05$).

Those who felt the experience was more transactional still agreed that the children had fun and that it was a faith-centered environment. However, they were significantly less likely to agree that “the experience had a significant, positive impact on my congregation” ($t_{16,72}=4.010$, $p<.001$): 56% agreed, compared with 90% of non-transactional.

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

Day Camp has an interesting relationship with VBS, with some congregations calling day camp VBS because they worry about confusing families. Notably, this was only common among the LOM congregations. Many of these congregations replaced their own VBS program with day camp, while others continued operating their own VBS in addition to day camp. Those that operated both or replaced their VBS with day camp were asked to compare the two programs.

- **Day Camp Only:** 56% of respondents said that they run traveling day camp but not VBS.
- **Replaced:** 20% said they ran VBS in the past, but day camp has replaced the program.
- **Both:** 24% indicated that they run their own VBS program in addition to traveling day camp.

Day Camp as a Replacement for VBS

For those who opted to replace VBS with Day Camp, the most frequent reason given (58% of respondents) was that operating VBS was very difficult, particularly the challenge of recruiting volunteers. They viewed day camp as “easier,” as one LOM leader put it. A SpringHill leader exclaimed, “VBS is A LOT OF WORK!”

The second most frequent reason (32% of respondents) was that the camp offered a better quality program than they could offer. As one leader put it, “SpringHill was able to provide a quality, turn-key program that engaged our kids.” Another simply said, “Camp is much more fun!”

The next most common reason leaders gave (16% of respondents) was that they wanted to offer something unique in their community, with several indicating that other congregations operated VBS with the same curriculum/program. As one said, “I wanted to offer the community something new and different.”

Day Camp as a Supplement to VBS

For those who operated their own VBS in addition to hosting day camp, there were several common differences they noted between the programs.

VBS Serves Younger children (29%): This was particularly common among the LOM sites, several of which ran their own programs for preschoolers simultaneous to day camp, which was generally limited to elementary school kids.

VBS is Free (24%): This was the most common difference mentioned among SpringHill respondents. They noted that they offered VBS programs free of charge, which some of them said allowed them to serve different demographics than day camp. Some noted that VBS drew more people from the community than day camp because of the cost.

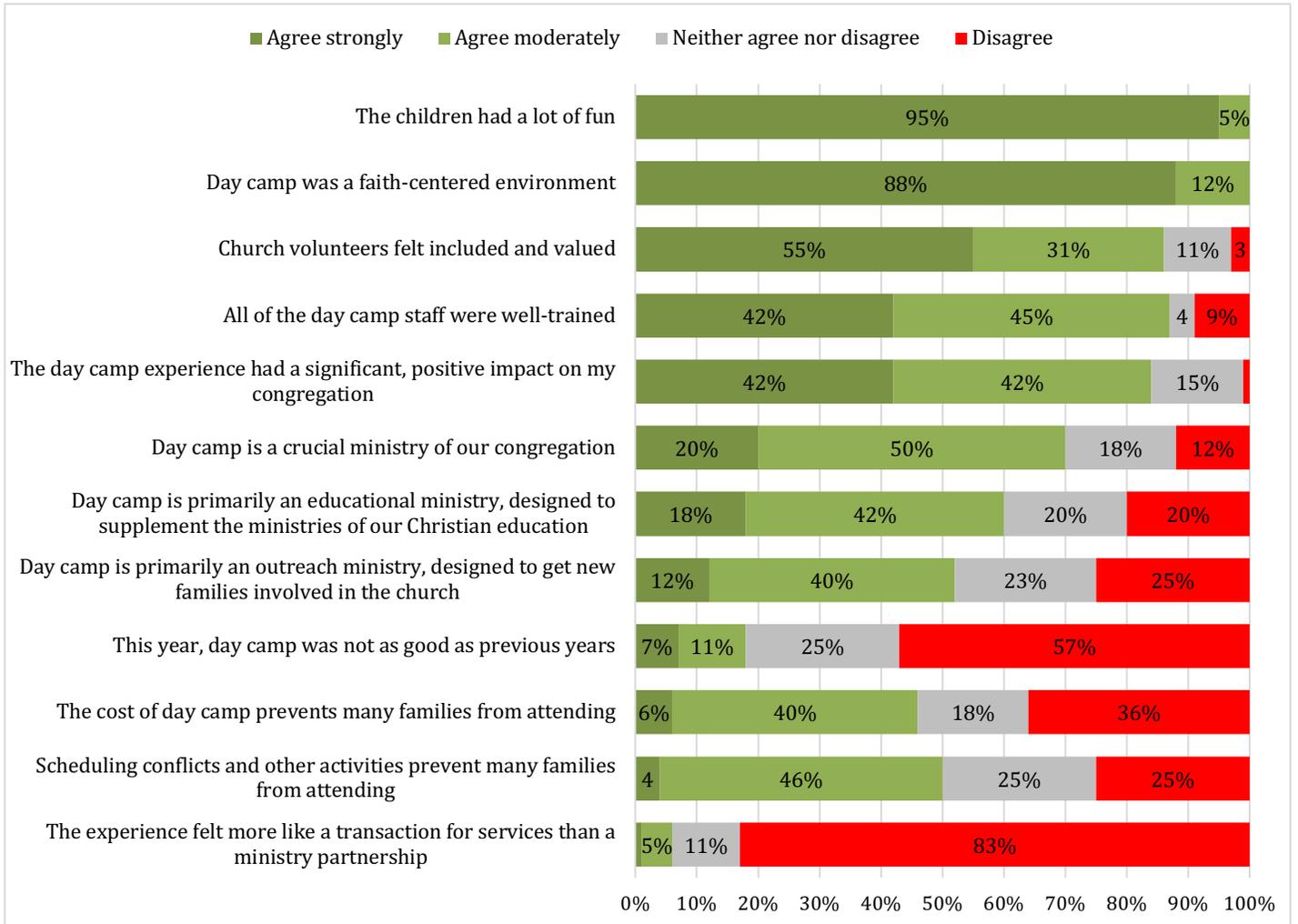
Different Program Focus (29%): Some respondents indicated that their own VBS programs were unique programmatically, providing the main difference from day camp. For example, one congregation ran a “Broadway Bootcamp” program focused on music and drama, while another said that VBS sends people out into the neighborhoods for programming, while day camp calls children to the church building.

Other differences: Some respondents indicated that VBS is generally shorter than day camp (in terms of hours of programming per day), and others noted that VBS is more work for congregational volunteers.

Traveling Day Camp Reflections and Overview

Leaders were asked about Traveling Day Camp partnerships and impacts on congregations.

Figure 4: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the day camp experience? (n=95)



- Leaders consistently agreed that kids had a lot of fun at traveling day camp and that the experience was a faith-centered environment.
- Most leaders reported that church volunteers felt valued and included (86%), although some disagreed with the statement (3%). This had implications for understanding the traveling day camp as a partnership ministry between churches and camps. For example, leaders often viewed day camp as crucial to the ministry of the congregation (70%), yet fewer viewed it as a supplemental ministry to their Christian education programs (60%). Even still, most leaders did not feel that the experience was transactional, rather that it is a partnership with the camps (83%).

Table 2: Comparing the SpringHill and LOM Experience (n=95)

	All (n=95)	SpringHill	Lutheran
The children had a lot of fun	4.95	4.93	5.00*
Day camp was a faith-centered environment	4.88	4.87	4.92
This year, day camp was not as good as previous years	2.23	2.12	2.52
All of the day camp staff were well-trained	4.20	4.24	4.08
Church volunteers felt included and valued	4.35	4.19	4.79***
The cost of day camp prevents many families from attending	2.96	3.27***	2.04
Scheduling conflicts/other activities prevent many families from attending	3.25	3.19	3.42
Day camp is primarily an outreach ministry, designed to get new families involved in the church	3.36	3.34	3.42
Day camp is primarily an educational ministry, designed to supplement the ministries of our Christian education	3.52	3.39	4.00*
Day camp is a crucial ministry of our congregation	3.77	3.64	4.17*
The experience felt more like a transaction for services than a ministry partnership	1.74	1.73	1.75
Day camp had a significant, positive impact on my congregation	4.25	4.18	4.43

+p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

- Both camps' leaders reported overwhelmingly that kids had a lot of fun during their day camp experience. LOM camps' results were significantly higher.
- Within the congregations, Lutheran leaders significantly reported that day camp is crucial to the ministry of the congregation and primarily an educational ministry to supplement other Christian education. They also agreed significantly more that church volunteers were included and valued at day camp.
- SpringHill staff were reportedly well-trained, although results were not significantly different. Leaders infrequently felt like day camp was a transaction for services, rather than a ministry partnership. Notably, the cost of day camp prevented families from attending SpringHill significantly more than LOM camps. More than half (53%) of SpringHill respondents agreed that the cost of day camp prevents many families from attending, compared with only 25% of LOM respondents, all of who only "moderately agreed."
- For leaders who reported that day camp is a crucial ministry to their congregation, the results were significant that they also planned on returning the following year across camps. Similarly, when leaders reported that the day camp experience had a significant, positive impact on their congregation, they were significantly more likely to report that they plan on hosting day camp again the following year.

Table 3: Approximately what percentage of day camp participants received a church-sponsored scholarship to attend? (n=95)

	All sites	SpringHill	Lutheran
None	7%	3%	22%
Less than 10%	11%	9%	17%
10-25%	25%	30%	9%
26-50%	14%	19%	0%
51-75%	10%	11%	4%
76-99%	12%	16%	0%
All campers	22%	13%	48%

- As previously noted, the cost of traveling day camp affects participation. Almost half (48%) of Lutheran churches provided financial help for all campers, including many that offered the program free of charge to all participants. Conversely, SpringHill's church-sponsored scholarships supported all campers 13% of the time, and the majority of these were not full scholarships.

Table 4: Approximately what percentage of day camp participants came from outside your congregation? (n=95)

	All sites	SpringHill	Lutheran
None	1%	0%	4%
Less than 10%	10%	7%	17%
10-25%	30%	33%	21%
26-50%	32%	35%	25%
51-75%	18%	19%	17%
More than 75%	9%	6%	17%

- Many congregations use day camp as an outreach tool to the community. Lutheran leaders reported that 59% of the time, at least a quarter of the campers came from outside of the congregation. Similarly, 60% of SpringHill leaders reported that at least a quarter of their campers came from outside of the congregation.

Differences Based on Week of the Summer

Participating camps operated day camp over the course of 12 weeks during summer 2020, 4 weeks each in June, July, and August. There were notable differences related to the camp staff members based on week.

Agreement with the statement, “All of the day camp staff were well trained” increased progressively over the course of the summer, with a modest 78% of leaders from June day camps agreeing (only 24% strongly agreeing), a much better 91% of July leaders agreeing (40% strongly agreeing), and an even larger 96% of August leaders agreeing (including a solid 77% strongly agreeing).

Table 5: Perceptions of Camp Staff Over Course of the Summer

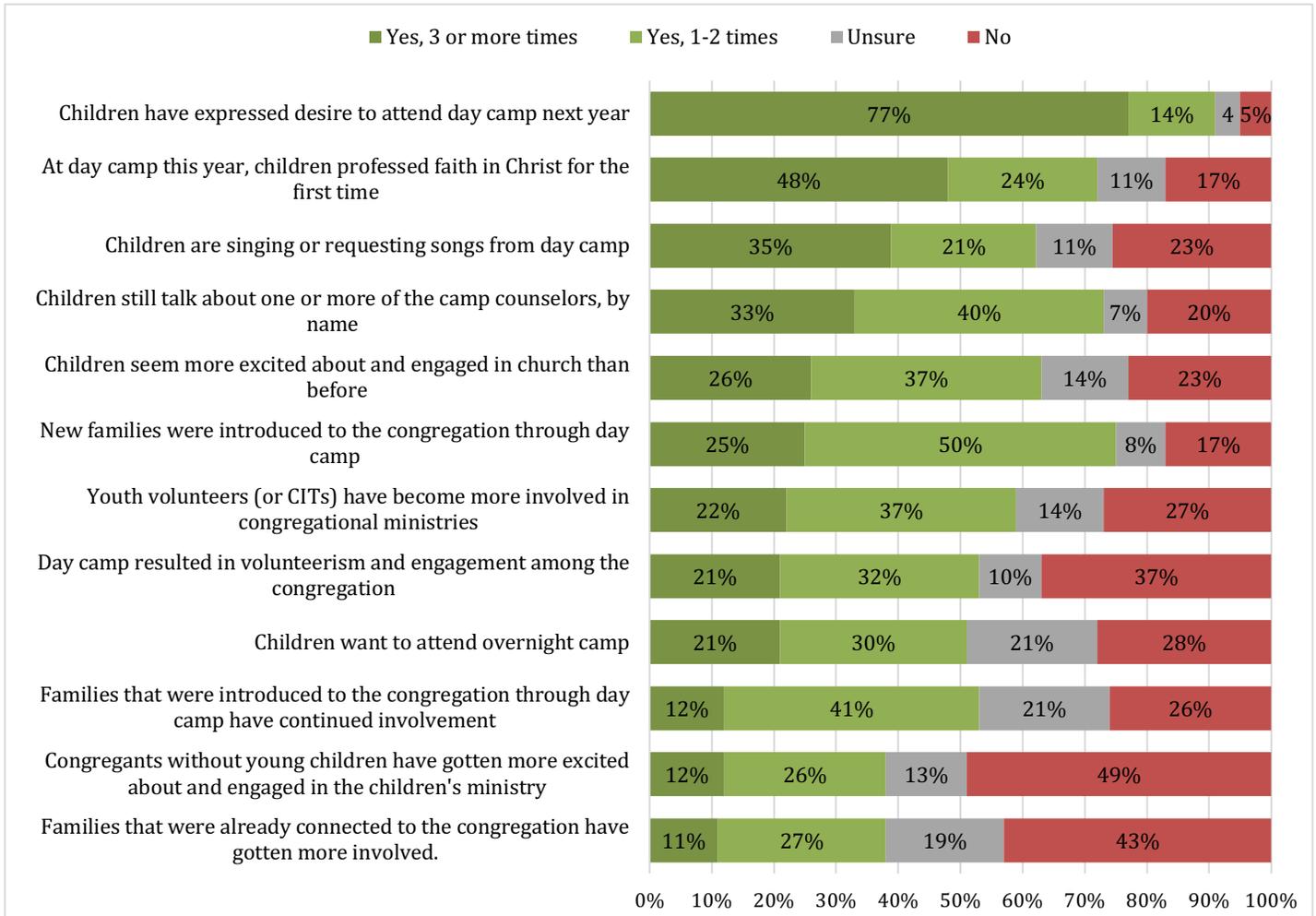
		June (n=37)	July (n=35)	August (n=22)
Energy level of camp staff	Satisfied	16%	28%	27%
	>Expectations	62%	67%	55%
Theological/biblical knowledge of camp staff	Satisfied	64%	62%	77%
	>Expectations	15%	29%	23%
Ability of camp staff to connect and interact with children	Satisfied	32%	22%	18%
	>Expectations	57%	69%	73%
Ability of camp staff to connect and interact with children	Satisfied	32%	22%	18%
	>Expectations	57%	69%	73%
Small group curriculum, education	Satisfied	62%	62%	64%
	>Expectations	21%	32%	36%
Overall quality of camp staff	Satisfied	43%	44%	36%
	>Expectations	43%	50%	55%

- Reflections on the overall quality of day camp staff were never particularly low (86% at least satisfied in June), but the rating increased over the course of the summer so that by August, 91% were at least satisfied, including 55% that said staff quality exceeded their expectations.
- Three specific areas of improvement that were evident among camp staff over the course of the summer, according to leaders, was their ability to connect and interact with children, their theological/biblical knowledge, and the small group time. Congregational leaders had the lowest satisfaction with these aspects in June, while those in July and August had markedly higher levels of satisfaction. Importantly, the level of satisfaction was never alarmingly low. It simply showed improvement, likely based on experience.
- Satisfaction with the energy level of the staff was inconsistent over the course of the summer. Satisfaction was highest in the mid-summer weeks of July. This confirms an observation during open-ended interviews with leaders that staff members are sometimes underexperienced in the early weeks of the summer and seem more exhausted at the end of the summer.

The Impacts of Traveling Day Camp

As noted above, 84% of respondents agreed that the day camp experience had a significant, positive impact on their congregation. This included 83% of SpringHill respondents and 87% of LOM respondents. Subsequent survey questions asked about the frequency in which respondents observed specific impacts.

Figure 5: Observed Impacts (n=95)



- All but one (99%) respondent identified at least one of the above 12 impacts, including 96% identifying 3 or more and two-thirds (67%) identifying 6 or more. Average number of impacts per congregation was 7.
- One of the most common impacts reported about traveling day camp was that children wanted to return after their experience (91%).
- Many children were observed by leaders as having faith-filled experiences, including professions of faith in Christ (72%) and seeming more excited about church engagement (63%). CITs also were observed as becoming more involved (59%).
- There is some evidence that day camp encourages interest in children for attending overnight camp (51%) according to congregational leaders.

Professions of Faith

Inviting day campers to make professions of their faith, or to dedicate their lives to Christ, was a common programmatic element at some sites, particularly those affiliated with SpringHill. Considering all respondents, almost three-quarters (72%) indicated seeing this as an impact in at least one or two cases at their congregations. As expected, this was much more common according to SpringHill respondents (92%) compared with LOM respondents (17%).

Factors Contributing to Impact

Ministry Partnership

Those who *disagreed* that the experience felt like a transaction for services (see above) were more likely to identify positive outcomes in several areas, all related to **ongoing congregational involvement**:

- Families already connected to the congregation have gotten more involved (identified by 41% of non-transactional, compared with only 25% of transactional)
- Families that were introduced to the congregation through day camp have continued involvement (identified by 54% of non-transactional, compared with only 44% of transactional)
- Youth volunteers (or CITs) have become more involved in congregational ministries (identified by 62% of non-transactional, compared with only 44% of transactional)
- Day camp resulted in volunteerism and engagement among the congregation (identified by 59% of non-transactional, compared with only 25% of transactional)
- Congregation members without young children have gotten more excited about and engaged in children's ministry (identified by 41% of non-transactional, compared with only 25% of transactional)

CIT Involvement:

Many congregations supplied youth volunteers to help run the day camp programs. In many cases (particularly with SpringHill sites), there were specific leadership development programs designed for these young people, who were oftentimes designated "Counselors in Training" (CITs). 93% of sites had CITs helping with the programs, including a third (34%) with more than 10 CITs.

- Of all sites that had CITs, 64% indicated the CITs became more involved in congregational ministries
- Of sites with 10 or more CITs, 81% indicated they became more involved in congregational ministries
- Increased number of CITs did not correlate with increased feelings of partnership between camp and congregation, suggesting the quality of relationships was more important than the program itself.

Well-trained Staff:

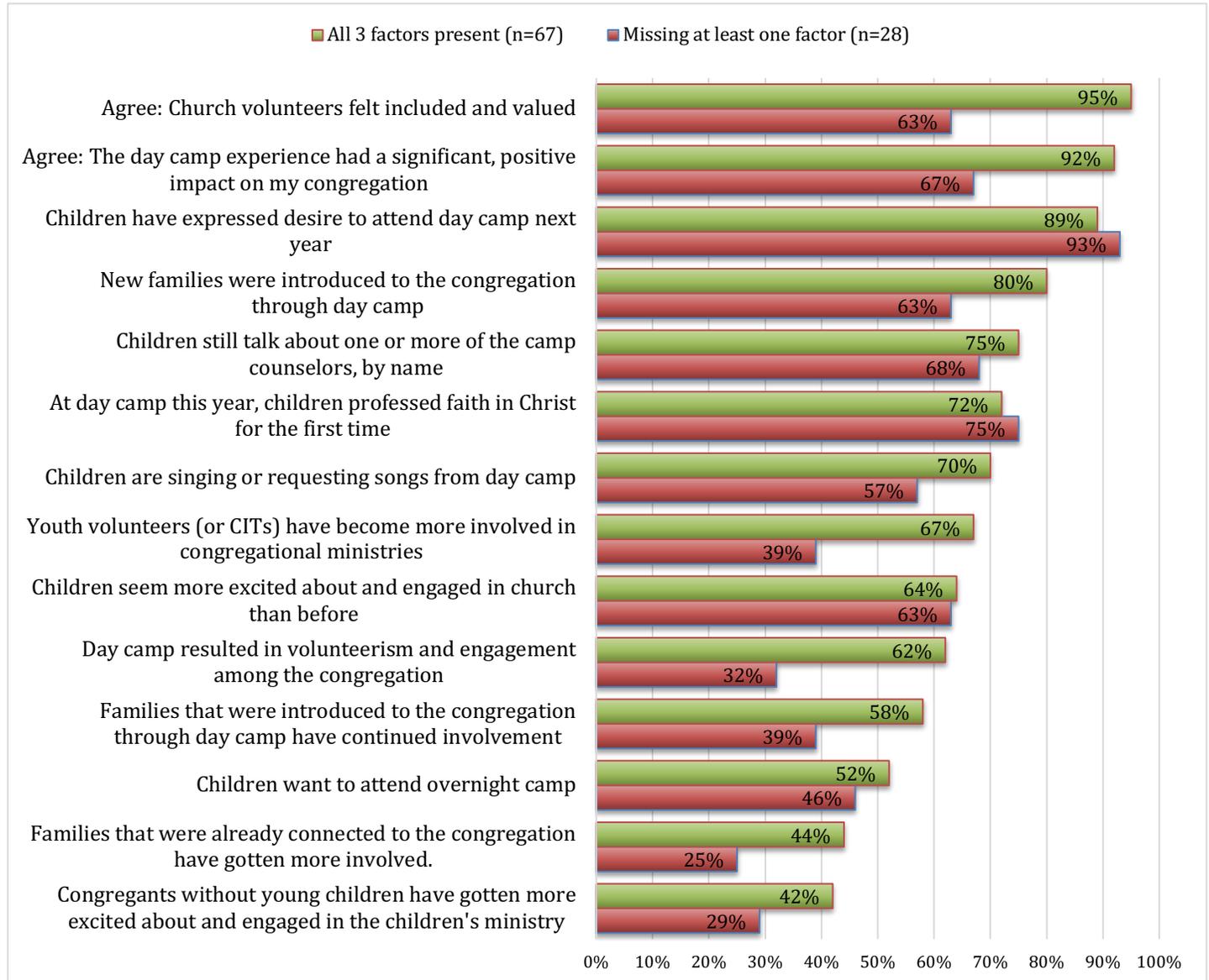
Respondents agreeing that all of the camp staff were well-trained were more likely to identify certain impacts, in comparison with those who did not agree. Similar to the partnership v. transaction findings, the impacts were most identifiable concerning ongoing congregational involvement. Campers still had fun, wanted to come back in future years, and made professions of faith in equivalent numbers. However, there were differences in post-camp outcomes.

- Not surprisingly, leaders that indicated they had well-trained staff also indicated that children were talking about the camp counselors by name in the weeks following camp (73%, compared with 50%).
- Those with well-trained staff were more likely to observe that "families that were already connected to the congregation have gotten more involved (38%, compared with 25%)."
- Those with well-trained staff were more likely to observe, "New families were introduced to the congregation through day camp" (79%, compared with 57%).
- Those with well-trained staff were more likely to observe, "Families that were introduced to the congregation through day camp have continued involvement (58%, compared with 25%)."

3 Key Factors for Congregational Impact

When all 3 of the above characteristics were in place (1. respondent *disagreed* that the experience felt more transactional than a partnership ministry, 2. had CITs involved in the program, AND 3. agreed that all the staff were well-trained), there were clear differences in program impact. Sites with all 3 key factors accounted for 50 SpringHill sites and 17 LOM sites, almost exactly 70% of each.

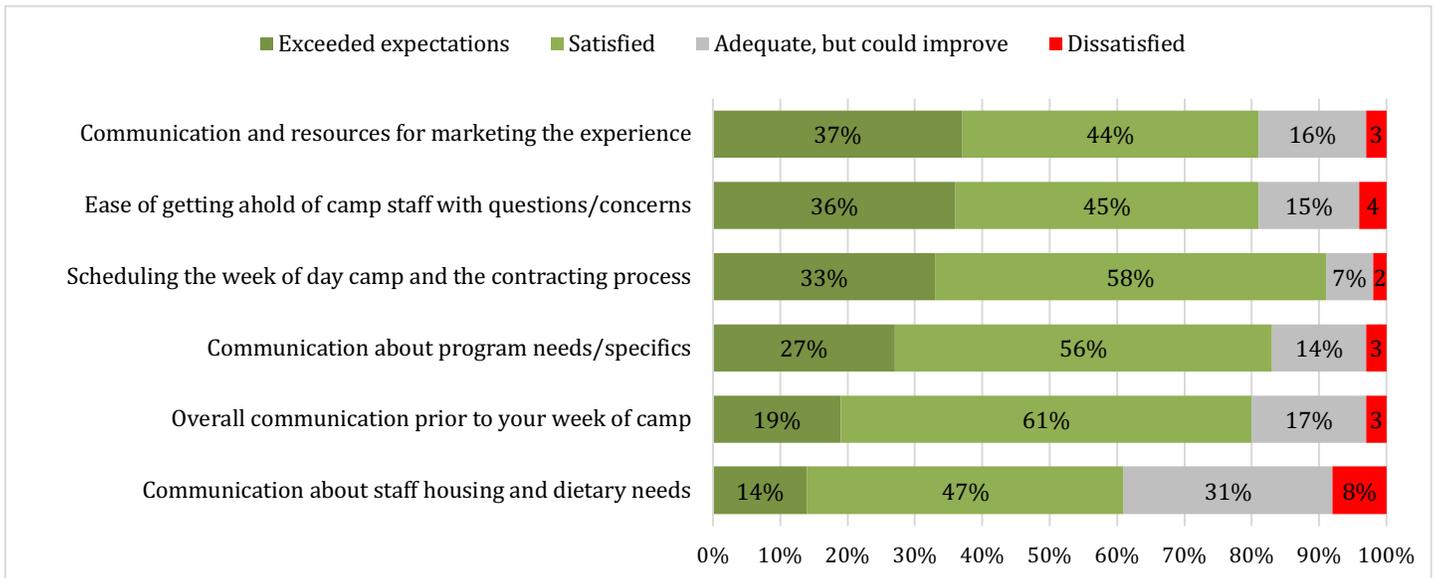
Figure 6: Impacts Observed, Based on Presence of 3 Key Factors



- The pattern of impact is clear when examining the three key factors. Some of the most identifiable impacts of the day camp experience are no different between the groups. In both groups, new campers profess faith in Christ with about the same frequency, talk about the camp counselors, express a desire to attend day camp in subsequent years, and even seem more excited about/engaged in church than before.
- The big difference is seen in ongoing impact on congregational engagement. When the three key factors are present, more leaders report new families getting involved in the congregation and staying involved in the months following day camp. They also report more frequently that connected families became more involved and congregants without children became more engaged in the children's ministry.
- Most clearly, there is increased volunteerism, both in general and with increased youth involvement. In these cases, the difference was almost two-fold in terms of leaders identifying impacts.

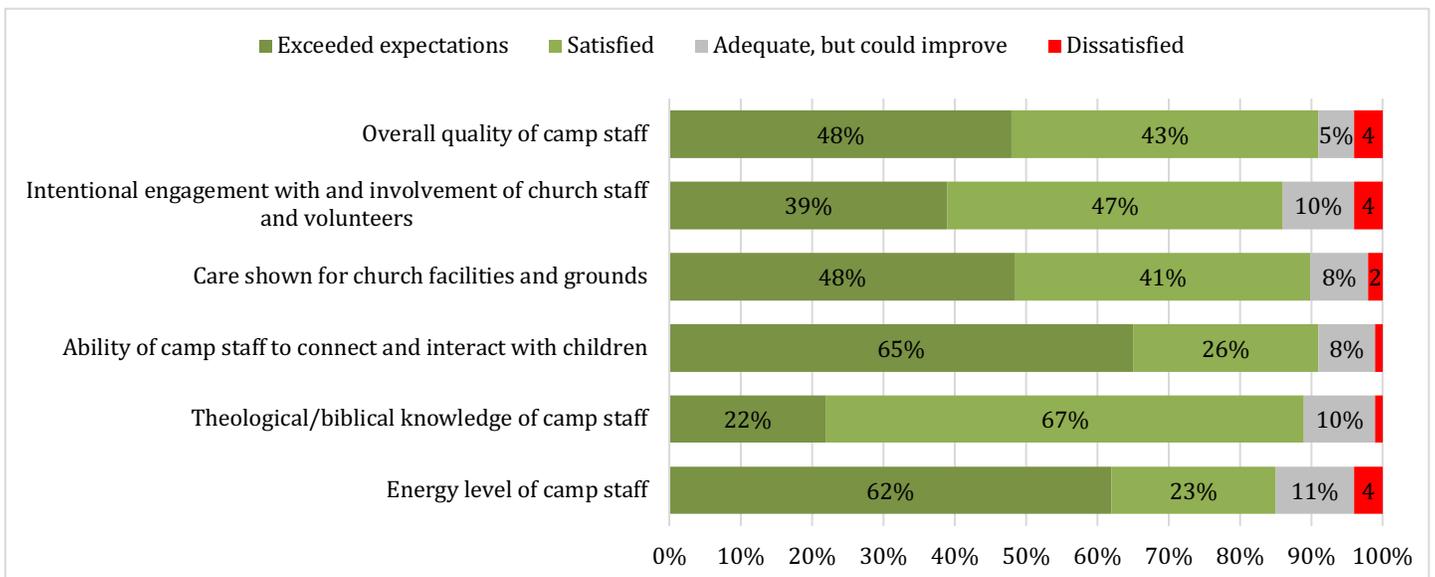
Program Satisfaction

Figure 7: Satisfaction with Communication (n=95)



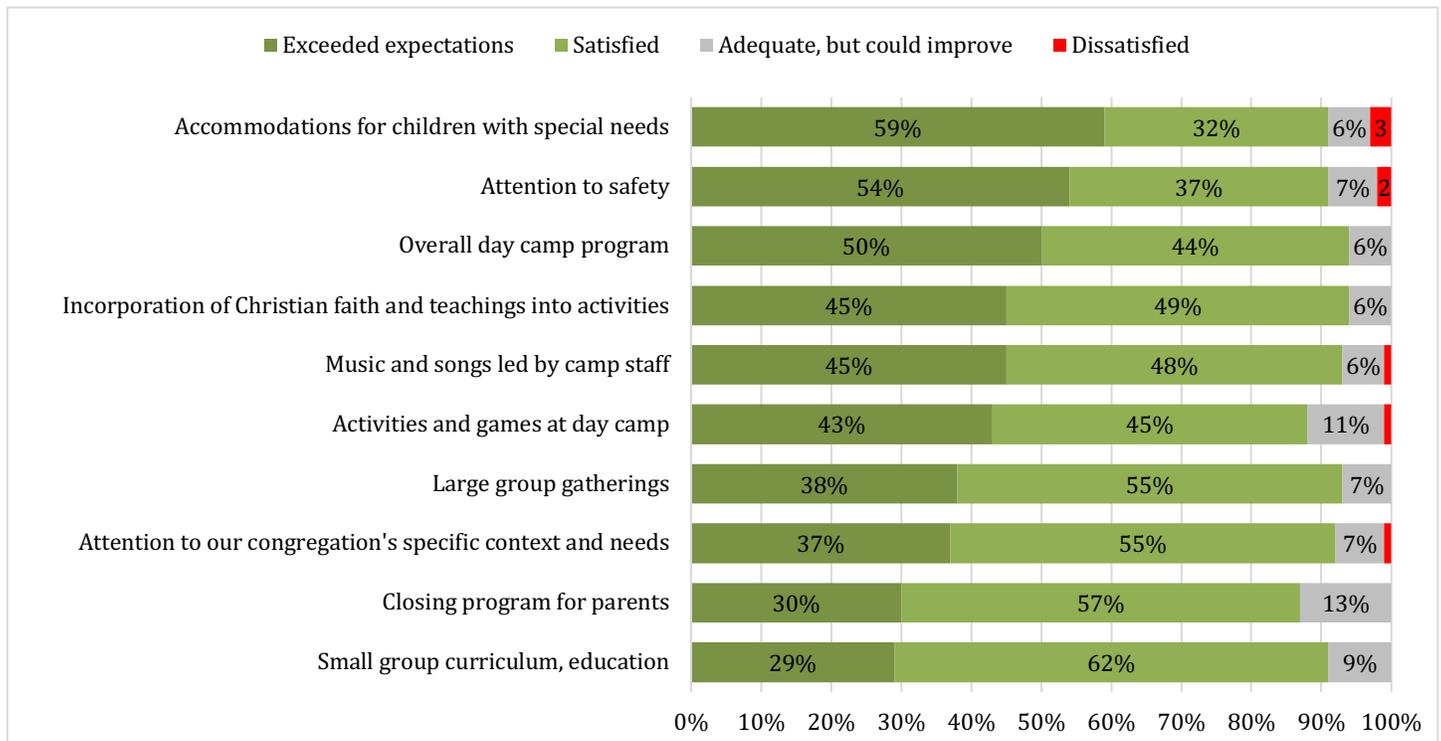
- Communication with congregations appears to be a growth area for the camps, with just 19% of respondents stating that overall communication exceeded their expectations. 39% of leaders desired improved communication about staff housing and dietary needs. One fifth of leaders said that communication could be improved or that they were dissatisfied with the communication.

Figure 8: Satisfaction with Staff (n=95)



- Camp staff are frequently well regarded by leaders. Staff reportedly demonstrated an ability to connect and interact with children, according to 91% of leaders. Even on the low end of the satisfaction spectrum, 85% of leaders were at least satisfied by the energy level of camp staff.
- The church facilities were treated with care, according to 90% of the leaders.
- The area for the most growth for camp staff may be their theological and biblical knowledge, considering only 22% of the leaders' expectations were exceeded and another 67% were satisfied. Even in this area, the dissatisfaction was very low.
- The overall quality of the staff was satisfactory or better for 91% of the leaders.

Figure 9: Satisfaction with Program (n=95)



- There was a high degree of satisfaction with camps' accommodations for children with special needs and attention to safety with 91% of the leaders. Traveling day camp programs overall programs were rated highly with 94% of leaders.
- Programmatic elements were highly rated, such as the music and songs (94%), large group gatherings (93%), and incorporating Christian faith into activities (94%).
- The least popular programmatic elements appeared to be small group education, with only 29% of leaders' expectations being exceeded, and 30% of the closing program for parents. The closing program for parents was ranked only "adequate" by 13% of leaders.

Differences Among SpringHill and LOM Camps

Impacts observed by congregational leaders varied by camp and day camp program. The following table disaggregates SpringHill from LOM camps to note the differences in day camps' impacts.

Table 6: Observed Impacts by Camp (n=95)

	All (n=95)	SpringHill	Lutheran
Families that were already connected to the congregation have gotten more involved.	38%	36%	46%*
Congregants without young children have gotten more excited about and engaged in the children's ministry	38%	32%	54%*
Families that were introduced to the congregation through day camp have continued involvement	53%	54%	50%
Children want to attend overnight camp	50%	48%	58%*
Day camp resulted in volunteerism and engagement among the congregation	53%	54%	50%
Youth volunteers (or CITs) have become more involved in congregational ministries	59%	62%*	50%
New families were introduced to the congregation through day camp	75%	76%	74%
Children seem more excited about and engaged in church than before	63%	66%*	57%
Children still talk about one or more of the camp counselors, by name	73%	70%	79%
Children are singing or requesting songs from day camp	66%	63%	75%*
At day camp this year, children professed faith in Christ for the first time	73%	92%*	17%
Children have expressed desire to attend day camp next year	90%	94%*	78%

**Observed impacts significantly more frequently*

- **Requesting songs:** 50% of Lutheran sites said they had observed this 3+ times, compared with only 30% of SpringHill sites.
- **Professing faith in Christ for the first time:** Only 8% of Lutheran sites said they had observed this 3+ times, compared with 62% of SpringHill sites (see below).

Table 7: At day camp this year, children professed faith in Christ for the first time (n=95)

	All (n=94)	SpringHill	Lutheran
Yes, I have observed it 3+ times	48.4%	62%	8.3%
Yes, in 1 or 2 cases	24.2%	29.6%	8.3%
No, I have not observed this	16.8%	4.2%	54.2%
Unsure	10.5%	4.2%	29.2%

Table 8: Satisfaction with Communication by Camp (n=95)

	All (n=95)	SpringHill	Lutheran
Scheduling the week of day camp and the contracting process	3.22	3.19	3.29
Communication and resources for marketing the experience	3.15	3.23	2.92
Communication about program needs/specifics	3.07	3.13	2.92
Communication about staff housing and dietary needs	2.66	2.65	2.71
Ease of getting ahold of camp staff with questions/concerns	3.13	3.17	3.00
Overall communication prior to your week of camp	2.96	3.03	2.74

+p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

- No results were significant regarding satisfaction with communication. Marketing resources were the closest to indicating a significant result.

Table 9: Satisfaction with Staff (n=95)

	All (n=95)	SpringHill	Lutheran
Energy level of camp staff	3.43	3.55*	3.08
Theological/biblical knowledge of camp staff	3.10	3.17+	2.92
Ability of camp staff to connect and interact with children	3.55	3.65*	3.25
Care shown for church facilities and grounds	3.36	3.31	3.50
Intentional engagement with and involvement of church staff and volunteers	3.20	3.22	3.17
Overall quality of camp staff	3.35	3.44+	3.08

+p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

- SpringHill congregational leaders were significantly more satisfied with the energy level of camp staff and their ability to connect and interact with children. There is also some statistical evidence that leaders were satisfied with the theological and biblical knowledge of staff, along with the overall quality of staff.
- Lutheran congregational leader results were not statistically significant. Although not significant, care for the church facilities and grounds did appear to be a strength for Lutheran camps.

Table 10: Satisfaction with Program (n=95)

	All (n=95)	SpringHill	Lutheran
Small group curriculum, education	3.20	3.32***	2.88
Large group gatherings	3.30	3.39**	3.04
Music and songs led by camp staff	3.36	3.43*	3.17
Activities and games at day camp	3.30	3.48***	2.79
Attention to safety	3.42	3.50*	3.17
Incorporation of Christian faith and teachings into activities	3.38	3.50**	3.04
Accommodations for children with special needs	3.48	3.60**	3.00
Attention to our congregation's specific context and needs	3.27	3.27	3.26
Closing program for parents	3.17	3.20	3.08
Overall day camp program	3.43	3.50	3.22

+p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

- SpringHill's leaders reported significantly higher satisfaction with nearly every programmatic element, particularly the activities and games at day camp and the small group education (p<.001). They were also significantly more satisfied with SpringHill's large group gatherings, accommodations for children with special needs, and incorporation of Christian faith and teachings into activities (p<.01). SpringHill's attention to safety (p<.05) was also significantly noted by leaders.
- No results were significantly higher for Lutheran camps, although they were statistically equivalent in their attention to congregation's specific context and needs.

Congregation Sizes and Camps

SpringHill served more large congregations than LOM camps. Congregation sizes were grouped with the data into about a third of the sample. Small congregations included 1-250 worshipping members, medium included 251-850 worshipping members, and large congregations included 851-8,000 worshipping members. SpringHill served all 29 of the large congregations and 32 of the 34 medium sized congregations. LOM served 21 of the 29 small congregations. This makes differentiation between SpringHill and Lutherans somewhat difficult. The following table includes all of the camps.

Table 11: Congregation Size and Day Camp Experience (n=92)

	Small (1-250)	Medium (251-850)	Large (851-8,000)
The children had a lot of fun	5.00*	4.97	4.86
Day camp was a faith-centered environment	4.93	4.88	4.83
This year, day camp was not as good as previous years	2.33	2.07	2.29
All of the day camp staff were well-trained	4.34	4.26	3.96
Church volunteers felt included and valued	4.52	4.25	4.26
The cost of day camp prevents many families from attending	2.24*	3.18	3.36
Scheduling conflicts and other activities prevent many families from attending	3.28	3.34	3.21
Day camp is primarily an outreach ministry, designed to get new families involved in the church	3.59	3.52*	3.07
Day camp is primarily an educational ministry, designed to supplement the ministries of our Christian education	3.96*	3.03	3.69
Day camp is a crucial ministry of our congregation	4.07	3.75	3.55
The experience felt more like a transaction for services than a ministry partnership	1.83	1.68	1.76
The day camp experience had a significant, positive impact on my congregation	4.36	4.33	4.07

*+p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001*

- Small congregations' leaders agreed more strongly that the children had lots of fun. This compliments and affirms the Parent Survey Report where parents overwhelmingly reported that their children had fun at day camp. Smaller congregational leaders agreed significantly less that day camp is cost prohibitive. Larger congregations agreed that the cost of day camp prohibits attendance. This is likely due to large congregations using SpringHill more often, which is more expensive than LOM camps. Leaders at smaller congregations also viewed day camp as an educational ministry more than those from larger churches.
- Large congregations' results were not significantly different from the others.
- When only SpringHill congregations were included, none of the results were significant for congregation size. Therefore, the differences appear to be between the programs, rather than congregational sizes.

C2C Leader Survey Open Ended Responses Summary

Leaders were provided with an opportunity to give open-ended comments about their day camp experiences and reflections. The following is a summary of those responses. Notably, 71 SpringHill leaders responded, compared to 24 Lutheran leaders. Therefore, results should be interpreted with the understanding of the difference in quantity between the two groups.

Both SpringHill and Lutheran congregational leaders found traveling day camp to be valuable. Lutheran leaders specifically noted 14 times that they value the camp staff who served as role models within their congregations (58%). Eleven leaders noted the benefits for kids that day camp brings to their church. One leader stated, "Overall we have been happy each year with day camp and our children really look forward to this week each year." Another 10 leaders noted the value of the local community access of day camp in their context. Similarly, 40 SpringHill leaders noted that day camp is beneficial for kids. They had 33 mentions of the high-quality staff who served as positive role models for campers (46%). One leader noted, "We loved the energy and genuine love for God the young staff shared with the kids." The results indicate that congregational leaders took note of the value that day camp brings to their congregations.

The majority of leaders reported that they intended to repeat their traveling day camp partnership. Forty-one SpringHill leaders and 14 Lutheran leaders said that they would repeat (58% for each). Only 2 SpringHill and 1 Lutheran leader said no. The two SpringHill "no" responses reported low attendance as the main issue for not continuing, one of which was initiated by SpringHill and the other was initiated by the church. The one Lutheran "no" response reported difficulty with recruiting volunteers and the cost of providing meals. Six Lutheran leaders were unsure about continuing day camp due to either cost, scheduling or volunteer recruitment challenges.

As with any program, there were areas for improvement noted by congregational leaders. Fifteen SpringHill leaders noted communication challenges, making this the group's leading concern. One leader explained, "The communication is a struggle. I know that they are hosting other camps throughout the summer, but it would be nice to know allergies, number of students in host homes, etc. closer than a week out for our newer host homes." Many of the communication challenges centered around host homes and preparation for housing staff. There were 14 comments about untrained and inexperienced staff members (20% of all SpringHill respondents). One leader wrote pointedly, "Many of the staff were new to day camp and didn't know the policies and procedures. Our CITs were more knowledgeable about how things run at camp." Another stated, "Camp Director is outstanding. A few staff were outstanding, several were very new hires and struggled with some of our kids. I felt somewhat unsure of the quality [with] regards to ministry to kids and previous experience. Staff to child ratios were definitely inadequate in comparison to previous years." Eight leaders also noted the staff partnership dynamics with the congregation could be improved. As one stated, "I was told 'it's great that you're so involved, but we've got this.' My understanding was that SpringHill comes to help our children's ministry 'win' in a big way, so that the kids from our community want to engage with us regularly. My expectation was that I would be not only included, but INVITED to interact with the kids more. Your team leaves, and the kids from our community need a connection with me and my volunteers going forward. That was my biggest disappointment. Thus the 'transactional' feeling." As noted previously, partnership dynamics enhance the day camp experience, whereas transactional dynamics hinder the experience.

Similarly, 9 Lutheran congregational leaders noted that staff seemed untrained and at times unengaged with the kids. This number represents 38% of all Lutheran responses, making it a dominant theme and about twice as prevalent as in the SpringHill responses. One leader noted, "I was dissatisfied with the way our counselors have been trained over the last few years. They have treated our week of day camp like a vacation from camp and used it as an opportunity to check out from work. Even parents of kids in our program have commented on apparent laziness of counselors in the last few years. The

counselors seem to have a lack of discipleship, and then are unable to disciple our students.” Two leaders specifically noted more training was needed for working with first and second grade campers. An additional 9 comments noted curriculum and program challenges. One leader stated, “We hope to continue encouraging the staff as they learn new materials, keep their presentations lively and new, and are able to adapt to the ministry culture and context in our setting. The mutual commitment to youth leadership development is important to [our church].” Another leader wrote, “It seemed like sometimes the crafts and connections with the theme were a little weak and didn't engage the kids as much. The games as time fillers were repetitive. And there seemed to be more time filling due to the crafts being a little weak.” Revitalizing the staff and the programs appeared to be areas for improvement from the Lutheran leader perspective.

C2C Leader Survey Conclusions

Congregational leaders overall reported that traveling day camp had significant, positive impacts on campers’ faith and their congregations as a whole. The study included differing camp models, with diverse program sizes, costs, program qualities, and partnership dynamics. Stronger partnerships between the camps and the congregations enhanced impacts. Valuing volunteers, good communication, and care for the congregational context greatly mattered, whereas more transactional partnerships diminished the impacts. The quality of the camp staff also had a large impact on the traveling day camp experience. As a supplemental educational ministry, traveling day camp supported and provided novel experiences for congregations and campers. Participants overwhelmingly enjoyed the faith-based fun at traveling day camp across geographies, camps, and congregational contexts, and these experiences showed evidence for clear positive impacts.