

The following list offers an overview of **just some of the benefits** of sending our children to RMC camps:

- **Moral enrichment:** Unlike almost any environment most children encounter, RMC camps facilitate intentional discussions around what it means to be a moral agent with free will; why ethical questions are important; and how they interact with faith. Moreover, children may (within safe spaces) become involved with moral conflict, which we are grateful for, as camp is an excellent venue for these types of conflict resolutions.
- **Self-empowerment:** Many children come to our camps unsure of who they are, and even more unsure of what's expected of them. As staff, it's our job to help them navigate tricky social situations, their self-identity, and ultimately reach a place where they know that they are loved and celebrated by God and by their communities. We help them build their own expectations, and from there, they have the tools to shape who they would like to be.
- **Spirituality:** One of the largest questions at our camps is, "How does God/Jesus/the Bible fit into all of this?" Most of the time, the answer is incredibly complex and not immediately apparent. In these instances, we try not to guide youth to any "right" theological answers, but instead, we do our best to help them to ask the right questions to reach the answers on their own. Spirituality means so many different things to so many different youths, and our camps are meant for this very exploration.
- **Leadership:** Anyone who's attended an RMC outdoor ministry event will tell you that it doesn't consist of staff-members dictating the programming of the week. Sure, we plan activities and conversations, but it's truly up to the youth to drive the camp. This can be new for them; it's rare that they are asked how THEY want to experience the outdoors in a camp setting. But, by giving the campers the reins of the camp, it allows youth to grow their leadership skills in wonderful new ways.
- **Conflict resolution:** Conflict doesn't happen often at camp, but when it does, we have tested procedures in place to make sure that resolution is reached and everyone feels fully heard and understood. In life, conflict is unavoidable, so when a staff member can help mediate a conflict at camp, we hope to impart conflict-resolution skills that stick with the camper for years to come.
- **Communication:** One of the trickiest and most rewarding aspects of camp is that, unless there's a safety issue at hand, participation is mandatory. This often means at least 10 minutes of awkward getting-to-know-you conversations between two youths who've never met each other; but they almost always learn something new about the other person, and usually become fast friends.
- **Radical acceptance:** This is possibly the most important core value of everything we do at camp. We are radically and authentically inclusive; we accept everyone, no matter how their story/journey differs from ours; and we strongly encourage ALL campers and staffers alike to embrace their authentic selves.
- **A wider worldview:** At camps, youth have had some pretty amazing "a-ha!" moments. A male camper might have his world turned upside down just by hearing a few things that female campers go through on a daily basis outside of camp. Campers from a more affluent background might interact with campers there on scholarship, creating a

dialogue about the social class. Campers with traditionally liberal political views often end up learning something from those with conservative political views, and vice-versa.

- **A sense of being a part of something bigger than yourself:** Along with church and youth group, summer camps illustrate to youth that ministry isn't just happening in their hometown; it's happening all over the RMC, nation, and world. Youth also begin to think about their relationship with Christianity in a very safe space, and in a very real way. While beliefs run the gamut, the youth recognize that they do not operate in a vacuum; and, in fact, when we work together toward a common goal, amazing things happen. And, they can take these newly formed bonds and strengthened communities back to their home churches and do work that inspires others.
- **A sense of calling:** RMC outdoor ministry has been (and will continue to be) a huge factor in so many children's lives. It allows us to have deliberate conversations with youths to help them be proactive regarding the kind of adults they become. More than anything, we want each child to leave camp with a sense of duty, empowerment, and a list of simple and effect ways they can reenter the outside world with their La Foret spirit in mind, and have stronger bonds with their hometown church communities.

## **Our Call to Action:**

So, this is our charge to parents, clergy, youth ministers, and children across the Rocky Mountain Conference:

**[Register your child for summer camp.](#)**

I promise it will change their lives for the better. Even if you don't see the outward effects right away, the seed will be planted, and it will grow. Camp transforms children and adolescents into passionate, intelligent, accepting, inclusive, and confident adults, and it will influence their spiritual and emotional journeys for years to come.

If you still have questions, please [reach out to me](#), and let's start a conversation. If I can't answer your question, I can direct you to amazing people who can. I believe with my whole heart that RMC UCC outdoor ministry offers a unique experience found nowhere else, and is an experience that will greatly benefit every child.

Yours in Christ,

Cory Kibler  
Director of Communications Ministries  
[Rocky Mountain Conference of the UCC](#)  
[cory@rmcucc.org](mailto:cory@rmcucc.org)