

Camp Lone Star 2016 Texas, summer workshop: Owing My Identity

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Our theme for this summer's workshop was "Owing My Identity." This theme was driven by the idea of inspiring our youth to take ownership of their faith and understand our mission to continue True Parent's legacy and return joy and love to God. Our vision and hope for this summer was for the youth to reflect and begin to understand and discover their identities on a deeper level as children of God and True Parents, and as young Unificationists. We wanted to end on a note of hope, understanding why our mission is so important and keeping the end goal in mind.

Our staff workshop began three days prior to the participant workshop and consisted of activities and lectures that helped create a sense of ownership amongst the staff group, and the idea that each person and position could make a meaningful contribution to the entire camp. The participant workshop was six full days in length filled with activities, lectures, and team discussions. The lecture content for each day was centered on daily themes that were built from our workshop theme. The daily themes were as follows: "Identity," "True Parent's Legacy," "Ownership," "Our Mission," and "Hope." Over 70 youth attended this summer's workshop, including several youth from outside our district, who traveled from Florida and New Jersey to participate.

Talks this year were given by Rev. Sakai, Rev. Jackson, Rev. Hernandez and second generation Unifications from throughout District 9. Rev. Sakai shared a powerful and systematic presentation of True Parent's course, True Parent's historical accomplishments, and a clear understanding of significant proclamations by True Parent's. The culmination of his presentation was to show the absolute unity that True Parents achieved, as well as the victory of our True Mother. Other talks pertained to the daily themes, culminating in an overall sense of who we are not only as God's children, but also as the torchbearers of our movement, carrying on our parents' and our True Parents' legacy to bring about a world of hope and love. We must not take for granted our identity, but must take full ownership of who we are and what our mission is.

This year's theme for Challenge Night—a highlight of camp where participants are challenged physically, emotionally, and spiritually to experience God's heart and True Parent's life—was "Inheriting True Parent's Mission: to return joy to God." The goal was to be able to experience the deep heart of love and concern that True Parents have towards our Heavenly Parent. Challenges were designed to create opportunities where participants could experience the heart of True Parents who seek first to comfort God no matter how much they themselves may be suffering, practice the heart of true love as True Parents exemplified, and experience how our unity with and support towards True Parents is a crucial part of building Cheon Il Guk. Reflecting on Challenge Night, many participants said they realized how much True Parents gave without complaint. In comparing True Parents' struggles with each challenge, many said they felt stronger and knew they could persevere through anything for God.

This year our focus for Camp Lone Star was for the participants to understand and experience what it means to be young Unificationists. That we have a mission. Not a burden or something that is intimidating, but an opportunity to bring hope to God.

At the end of camp, as we said our final words to the staff and participants, I could really feel that God has hope in our young people. Even though things may be confusing at this time, and terrible things are happening all over the world, I felt like Camp Lone Star is a place where Heavenly Parent can see a bright light; a place where God can rest and feel excited about the future.

Thank You to God and True Parents for being with us and allowing us to have such an amazing experience.