

FFWP-UK Children's Summer Camp at Cleeve House in July 2018 a huge success

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The motto for this year's Children's Summer Camp was 'Circle of Life', taking inspiration from The Lion King's focus on knowing our place in the world and recognising and learning about the importance of our roots. The weather conveniently matched up to this theme, with the sun shining gloriously upon our 'village' (Cleeve House) throughout the camp. Each participant was put into one of four 'tribes': The Giraffes, the Kookaburras, the Chameleons and the Monkeys. The tribes were then split into junior and senior teams, each looked after by a teenage team leader. All 8 team leaders were great role models and flourished in their position of older siblings to the participants.

Friendly competition between tribes was encouraged through a points system, with the total points of each tribe revealed each morning and at the graduation. Points were given by the staff team to the participants.

During the camp, the children had many daily activities to look forward to. This included the sports sessions, led by Achan and Tiger, in which they played games in the back garden of Cleeve House, exercising and practicing teamwork with each other. They paid attention during their study sessions, learning about bible stories and virtues that they can practice in their daily lives. Chris Le Bas and Samuel Raynbird taught the senior and junior groups respectively, offering specialised lessons for each age group. The participants were also busy looking after their environment, doing their 'tribal duties' (washing dishes and sweeping the house) after mealtimes.

Alongside the motto of the camp, each day was coupled with a daily theme, which began with a short morning service, guided the focus of the study sessions and related to a unique evening activity. The first daily theme was 'Welcome to Our Village', encouraging the children to make the most of the upcoming week. It concluded with Games Night, a game of teamwork in the woods and then an extensive Just Dance session.

Day two was titled 'Our Roots Make Us Strong'. They were taught about the importance of thinking about where we come from and the foundation that has been made before us. It ended with Roots Night, a short talk about the roots of the movement in the UK and then a cosy evening watching Brother Bear, which related to our motto well. We liked this quote from the film: "Let love guide your actions, and one day you will place your mark next to those of our ancestors".

The third day was the outing day, titled 'God Lives in You', where we kept God in our minds throughout a busy day. We split the junior and senior groups. In the morning, the juniors visited Butterfly World, a zoo and farm with many animals for them to discover. The seniors were at Cleeve house on a 'safari': a specially made activity circuit involving riddles, taste testing, fort building and games. They then switched over in the afternoon. During lunch the senior group and the junior team leaders had the special opportunity to visit Stanton Fitzwarren to learn about the burial ground and pray around the Holy Oak Tree that Reverend Moon planted many years ago. The day ended with marshmallows around the fireplace in teams.

The fourth day was called 'We Will Find Our Place'. On this day we thought about where we fit into in this world, and how we could make the most of the rest of the camp. We all designed and created tribal masks for the craft project. You can see us all wearing them in the group photos! The tribes worked to create short skits to perform for Family Night, and some children also offered individual performances: including dancing, beatboxing, singing, playing musical instruments and stand-up comedy.

The last morning and afternoon of the camp had the theme 'The Path Unwinding'. This was a reflective but also celebratory day. The children cleaned up the house, had their final sports session and did a quiz to see how much they learned in the study sessions. They then graduated and received certificates and prizes. They also discovered the outcome of the points: in the end, beating the Giraffes by only three points, the Kookaburras triumphed!

Here are some reflections from participants of the Summer Camp:

"It makes me really happy when I'm doing sports"

"It was really fun to go on an outing with all my friends and see all the amazing butterflies and other animals"

What points about study sessions do you remember best?

"How we should be nice and fill each other's buckets"

"Ps. I loved doing dishes"

Overall, this year's Children's Summer Camp was a huge success and the staff team are excited for next summer. We hope to see the children from this year return next year along with many more Summer Camp newcomers!

From the Summer Camp 2018 Coordinators,

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Facebook Page: m.facebook.com/FFWPU-UK-Childrens-Summer-Camp-266335740224600/