

LEAP 2018 Report

Introduction

The following report was prepared by the LEAP Program Facilitators, Daryl Drozda and Cameron Gutjahr, to give a brief summary of what was accomplished during the 2018 Leadership, Experience and Adventure Program (LEAP), some of the highlights, and some recommendations for future years.

Program Start and End Dates

The LEAP program ran from July 22nd- August 4th, 2018. This coincided with large numbers of people on site. This was beneficial, as it gave participants a sense of Sorrento at its best and provided a good energy in which to run the program and participate in community events.

Participants

There were six participants this year: 5 from B.C. (Lower mainland and Okanagan area) and one from Portland. All of the participants had been to Sorrento Centre before attending LEAP. This year all of the participants had grown up at Sorrento Centre. **The participants were also all active in their church communities, which helped their engagement with the spiritual and religious aspects of the program.**

The participants' ages ranged between 14 and 16 (4 males and 2 females).

This year, the group dynamics were stellar - all members formed community quickly and participated fully and enthusiastically in all aspects of the program. In addition, they also participated in the community life of Sorrento beyond the requirements of the program.

Pre-LEAP and Logistics

Communication continued to be very good between the facilitators and Sorrento Centre. Both parties worked together to make sure the facilitators and participants had the information they needed prior to the start of LEAP.

Expectations were made clear before arrival and were reiterated at the first session. This year, families on site and exclusive relationships were not an issue for the LEAP participants.

Accommodations, Program Location, & Scheduling

This year the LEAP participants stayed in Cabanas 13 & 14, while both of the course facilitators stayed in a Caritas lodge room. **This year, we had a trans participant who was able to stay in their cabana of choice without a problem from any of the other participants. Having a binary (male and female) sleeping system for participants should be evaluated for future years, to help accommodate future participants who might be gender fluid. Perhaps an optional, co-ed cabana might be a possibility in the future, or more generally co-ed arrangements. This is recommended for future years.**

A daily schedule was posted every night for the next day in the Art Barn and at the cabanas. The LEAP participants were given the responsibility of being punctual for meals and sessions, and monitoring their own shared space and sleeping habits. They met these expectations, typically with only one or two reminders, and enjoyed the freedom of having their own space. The LEAPers were quite tired over the course of the two weeks; however, they were given adequate time for sleep and ample free time in the afternoons. **Some participants requested more free time, while others said it was the perfect amount. It is recommended that this year's balance be kept in the future.**

Different for this year, rather than using portable 1, LEAP used the Art Barn. It turned out to be an invaluable resource well-suited to LEAP's needs. It also served as a natural and neutral "hang-out" space. This year we set up two different spaces within the Art Barn to work. Table and chairs were set up as "work space" on one side, while camp chairs used to create a more relaxed area to play games, have reflections, and debrief on the other. In previous years, Portable 1 was used for LEAP. The Art barn is a suitable space, however, during week two it was shared with another program group. This is not recommended moving forward. **This year in the second week, one of the children & youth program groups took one side of the art barn. We recommend that whatever space LEAP uses in the future, that it be consistent for both weeks to provide stability.**

LEAP Curriculum

This year there was no set theme for LEAP. Over the two weeks, we focused on developing both 'soft' and "hard" skills. "Soft skills" were theoretical in nature and usually involved a lecture, workshop or debrief of an event or activity. Sessions were made engaging with the use of games and role-playing. These "soft skill" sessions often included accompanying printed materials which were added to each LEAP participant's binder for their future reference.

"Soft" Skills

- Leadership Style Workshop
- Communication Workshop
- Conflict Resolution Workshop
- Group Facilitation Workshop
- Team Building exercises
- Public Lectures (David Taylor and Andrew Halladay; How to Love the Bible again and ; Marv Westwood Lynn Langley ; Gerotranscendence: Finding God in aging)
- Course Leader and Worship Leader Workshops (Andrew Halladay; Kathy MacDuff; Andrew Halladay and David Taylor; Ken Gray)
- Spiritual Gifts Inventory
- Personality types (Enneagram & Meyers Briggs)
- Activity and Worship Debriefs

The workshops were met with good engagement and positive feedback by LEAP participants. This year there were less games as the group did not seem to need them. One person requested more games, it is recommended that the number of games and activities be chosen based on the group's needs in the future. They can be good ways of engaging and reflecting upon different leadership principles.

The “hard skills” were practical and experiential in nature and included the work experience in the various departments, the practice of (mostly) daily journaling and “LEAP-Ins”.

“Hard” Skills

- Goal Setting and Evaluation
- Work Area Observation and Participation
 - Grounds & Farm
 - Housekeeping
 - Kitchen
 - Children & Youth
- Participation and Leadership in Worship
- Camping Trip
 - Tent building
 - Meal preparation
- Spiritual Practices
 - Nightly Prayer
 - Meditations
 - Lectio Divina
 - Yoga Nidra
 - Intention Setting & Reflection
- Daily Journaling and Group Examination of the Day
- “LEAP-ins”

LEAP-ins

Each participant was given an opportunity to lead the group in an activity of their choosing called a “LEAP-in”, which was followed by a short feedback session with the entire group. This year, the quality and engagement with the LEAP-ins was very high. This is an excellent way for participants to practice leadership skills in a safe setting with some specific and constructive feedback, and it was rated highly by the participants. **There were a couple LEAP-ins that had to be cut short due to time constraints, and it is recommended that the time for LEAP-ins be prioritized and protected from other scheduling pressures in future years.**

Work Experience

The work area observation and participations this year consisted of approximately one-hour sessions in the Kitchen, Housekeeping and Farm and Grounds departments, and then 30 minutes of observation in the children’s program groups. The department heads were wonderful and cooperative in arranging these times.

After experiencing the departments and observing the children and youth program in the first week, participants discerned which department(s) they would like to spend more time getting experience in. Each participant had two mornings of approximately 3 hours to work in the departments of their choosing. **This was a very popular part of the program and almost unanimously participants this year requested for more time in the departments. While 3 days of departments is not recommended because of other scheduling constraints, it is recommended that a longer period be scheduled in the future. This might be done by adding optional opportunities to go back into departments following lunch, so that people interested in doing more can, and those who are not interested can have their free time.**

Worship

LEAP participants participated in Sorrento Centre’s regular worship at least once a day when on site. Each morning after worship, the group debriefed the service - what parts they liked, what parts they didn’t like, and an assessment of the leadership of the worship leaders. This was not only a good way to help participants practice intentional debriefing and assessment, but also helped engage the participants in worship and in religious and spiritual discussion. **This year, many of the participants offered leadership in the community’s worship life.**

This year, during week 1, LEAP worked with the worship leaders to create a journal reflection about gratitude. Two participants shared their reflections during morning worship on Thursday. The participants enjoyed working on this. **In the second week, the participants shared a dramatized version of one of the scripture readings, which was also greatly enjoyed.**

In addition to Sorrento's community worship, the LEAP group also had daily check-ins at the end of the day, which always included prayers and some spiritual practice, as well as short services while camping.

Course Leader Partnership Guest Speakers

This year, we had a private session with a course leader in each week. In the first week, Andrew Halladay, taught the LEAPers about Benedictine spirituality. In the second week, Kathy MacDuff gave a short workshop on creative journaling. In addition, we also attended each week's public lecture (week 1 – David Taylor and Andrew Halladay; week 2 – Marv Westwood and Lin Langley). As well, each week's worship leaders were invited into a short session with the LEAPers. These sessions were highlights for participants and were good opportunities that inspired good discussion, used the wisdom and knowledge that was present in the community those weeks, and gave the LEAPers a wider taste of what Sorrento Centre does. **Participants did share that they would like more structured sessions when these occurred, or more time ahead of time to come up with questions, rather than have more informal meetings. It is recommended that attendance of public lectures and the invitation of guest speakers be continued in the future, and even expanded where appropriate. So that they can be more structured, it is also recommended that future LEAP leaders contact worship leaders, course leaders and others ahead of time so that they can come in with a more structured workshop and/or that ahead of visits, questions may be collected by LEAP leaders.** At the discretion of the LEAP leaders, we recommend that such opportunities and partnerships be actively sought out for future LEAPs.

Camping Trip

This year the camping trip took place at Woodhaven campground on White Lake. This camping trip was a good retreat; an opportunity for the group to bond further as a group. did not include a hike, and therefore was more of a "retreat", rather than an "adventure" and It included a lot of free-time, swimming, singing, napping. Meal prep and cleanup was handed over partially to the LEAPers. We recommend that the approach to the camping trip as more of a "retreat" than an "adventure" be continued in the future, as it is a good way for the LEAPers to bond and rest from a rigorous and tiring first week. The camping trip was the highlight of the program for most of the participants.

This year, the sites were not booked far enough in advance and so the two sites were quite far apart from each other. It is recommended that this be done by the office as soon as possible in the year so that two adjacent sites may be secured for the Saturday and Sunday night in the middle of LEAP.

We recommend that the LEAP leaders shop or pack the food from the kitchen for the camping trip. The kitchen supplied us with more than enough food, which was great, however some food was wasted. We also recommend readier to eat snacks be available for next year. We also recommend an audit of the camping supplies be done

before next year to check the condition of the supplies, especially the tents. We also recommend setting up the tents prior to the camping trip. This year Sorrento Centre provided a lifeguard during time at the beach. We recommend that this be continued in the future as swimming was a highlight of the weekend. **Participants, in their feedback, asked for more swimming time, and so in the future, it is recommended that, if possible, the lifeguard come more often, or for longer.**

LEAP-SYS Events

On top of the games that we did throughout the week, we also provided opportunities for LEAP and SYS to interact socially during two organized LEAP-SYS events. This year we did a game of Capture the Flag in the first week. The older youth on site were also invited to join, this should be at the discretion of the LEAP leaders and SYS coordinator(s) based on the needs of the various groups. In the second week, a game of Mafia was played. This was a great bonding experience for the SYS and LEAP. **The second activity was chosen in part by polling the SYS leadership team and the LEAP group. This was good in that it was trying to respond to the needs of everyone, however, it meant a lot of changing of plans, right up to 30 minutes before the event. It might be better in the future for the LEAP leaders, in consultation with the SYS leadership team, to simply pick an activity and stay with it for planning purposes.**

Daily Rituals

This year, we had several daily rituals with which we (usually) started and ended our days. We provided all the participants with journals which we gave them time at the beginning of most days to write about the previous day. This was especially useful for this group of participants as they enjoyed processing their experiences through reflection. In addition, we ended every day with some sort of spiritual practice (ie. Prayer, yoga...) and a round of "highs and lows". This combination of activities which formed our closing ritual helped to ground the community, and we recommend it continue in the future.

Participant Assessment and Evaluation

LEAP was run with a simple "pass or fail" model, and is dependent upon satisfactory completion and participation of all aspects of the program – as judged by the LEAP facilitators. This continues to be an appropriate model. All 6 participants passed and received a certificate of completion.

Two opportunities for assessment and evaluation were provided mid-week, during the camping trip, and at the end of the second week. These were largely self-evaluations with a few notes from the LEAP facilitators. These assessments were based largely upon the goal setting that was done at the beginning of the program. Both were positive experiences that allowed us to check-in with the participants and also allowed the LEAPers to both identify their own areas of strength and potential growth.

A common request in the LEAP feedback was more one-on-one meet-ups with the LEAP leaders. It is recommended that in the future, as part of LEAP, participants have an opportunity to meet-up one-on-one with a LEAP leader at least once in each week, perhaps using a sign-up procedure in the free-time that occurs in the afternoons.

Participant Feedback

The program was rated very highly by all participants. This included the balance and pace of the program, practical/active sessions and the camping trip to White Lake. The feedback is incorporated into this report, and can also be found in its raw form in the appendix at the end.

Leaders and Workload

We, Daryl and Cameron, planned LEAP over telephone and E-mail. This worked but proved to be difficult at times given the time difference.

Each day consisted of approximately 7 hours of programming in addition to attending community events, worship, meals and so on. There was usually 3 hours of free time in the afternoons however some days less as we had guest speakers or other activities. The free time was invaluable to participants as it gave them a time to relax and enjoy the facilities as well as bond. It was also invaluable for us as it gave us time to meet, prepare the next activity, or rest. Every evening ended with reflection or spiritual practice and often did not finish until 9:30 or 10:00pm, including community events.

Recommendations

This year spiritual exercises were done every evening. We recommend continuing this practice in the future.

- In previous years, there has been an art project at the end of week 2. This year, there was no art project and it was fine. We recommend future LEAP leaders use their discretion and utilize their strengths when considering program content.
- This year we did not play as many games as in previous years. This was fine as games did not fulfill the needs and wants of the group. This is something to be mindful of when planning for the future.
- We recommend that the Sorrento office books two adjacent tent sites for the LEAP camping trip as soon as possible in the year.

- We recommend that the LEAP leaders shop or pack the food from the kitchen for the camping trip. The kitchen supplied us with more than enough food, which was great, however some food was wasted.
- We recommend readier to eat snacks be available for next year. We also recommend an audit of the camping supplies be done before next year to check the condition of the supplies, especially the tents.
- We recommend setting up the tents prior to the camping trip.
- This year The Sorrento Centre provided a lifeguard during time at the beach. We recommend that this is continued in the future as swimming was a highlight of the weekend.
- We recommend evaluating sleeping arrangement in the future to accommodate non-binary participants; perhaps an optional co-ed cabana.
- We recommend keeping the current amount of free time.
- We recommend that whatever space is used for LEAP in the future, that it be consistent for both weeks of the program.
- We recommend that the time for LEAP-ins be prioritized and protected.
- We recommend that games and activities continue to be used in the program, based on the needs of the LEAP group.
- We recommend adding more time for departments by adding an option to return to departments on 'department days' following lunch.
- We recommend continuing and even increasing the number of guest speakers in the future, and that these sessions be more formal and/or that the LEAP leaders help to brainstorm questions with the LEAPers ahead of time. We also recommend that the LEAP leaders contact these potential guest speakers farther in advance.
- We recommend that the LEAP leaders and SYS leadership team pick an activity for the LEAP-SYS event and stick with it.
- We recommend a continuation of the daily rituals for the LEAP community.
- We recommend that LEAPers get an additional opportunity to meet up one-on-one with a LEAP leader in each week of the program, perhaps using a sign-up sheet which would take place during the afternoon free times.

Conclusion

2018 was a successful year for the LEAP program which continues to fulfill its original aims of providing leadership, work experience and adventure to a group of young leaders at Sorrento Centre. It was such a good program this year largely due to a wonderful group of participants, as well as the good teamwork that existed between us (Cameron and Daryl).

Appendix - LEAP 2018 FEEDBACK

Bold Text - Additions by leaders

∅ - recommendations from feedback

Guest Speakers (Public lectures, worship leaders, course leader workshops...)

- Love it! Speakers were likeable and had interesting things/concepts to talk about. Maybe they could have a smidge more structure or tell us to come up with questions a bit earlier so that there isn't any stress over having to come up with an interesting question.
- The guest speakers were all so good. I wish we had more people like them, but yeah it was great.
- All really great! (A few could have used more planning/structure).
- They were all great. I learned a lot, even when I wasn't necessarily the target audience. Thank you!
- I wish they had a bit more structure when they came to talk to us as it seemed like they weren't super prepared.
- I didn't connect with all of them, but even so they were all meaningful over-all **didn't connect so much with the aging lecture, generally connected with all the rest. Even when not for me, saw meaning for others.**

∅ Prepare speakers ahead of time. More structure. Even increase if possible.

LEAP-ins

- All of them were great! I liked the mix of content, the presentation, all of it.
- The LEAP-ins were awesome. Maybe more time for some though?
- So fun! Loved being able to choose and lead the entire process.
- I enjoyed the leap-ins a lot because it gave us the opportunity to experience leading something the whole way through. I really enjoyed participating in everyone else's. **up voted twice**
- Very fun, I enjoyed every last bit of it.
- It was great to share what I'm passionate about with everyone and I felt very privileged to get to hear and participate in things others were passionate about. LEAP-ins were definitely a highlight!
- **More time was a common comment**

∅ Protect and prioritize time around leap-ins. Very popular and useful process.

Check-ins/Reflections/Journaling

- Check-ins were very good. They gave me space to reflect, which I don't do often. Maybe more one on one check-ins with leaders if possible.
- Good. I only wish there were more one on one check-ins **upvoted**
- I loved the highs and lows! Really helped me reflect my day.
- Great! Forced me to think about my day and also the check-ins were nice for hearing about how different people reacted to different events. The spiritual exercises were very relaxing.
- These were great as I don't usually reflect on my day.

Ø More one-on ones. Maybe a system of signing up with one of LEAP leaders for one on ones each week.

Community Events (Campfire, worship, variety night, water fight, dance)

- They were all super fun and great for community interaction
- Really great! They were all really engaging and fun.
- Always felt included and a part of the Sorrento community.
- Wondrous! Majestic! I love the community and the energy here. It is great for everyone to have and excuse to be together.
- Felt not alone in this world anymore.
- They were amazing, I loved performing at variety night and getting to win Rasputin was really amazing.

Free Time

- Pretty good. I like it quite a bit. I only wish there was more...
- Free time was very nice. It was a good time to relax and spend time with other leapers.
- A great time to recollect and bond with each other!
- It was great, I felt like I really had time to connect with other leapers during that time. It was the perfect amount, too – not too much, not too little.
- I wish there was more free time, but it was good either way.
- It was like the perfect amount of time because we got to connect with each other but it's not like we got bored.

Ø Suggest keeping same amount of free time.

Camping Trip

- Loved it so much! I wish we had more time there and that we could swim more. Also, with a group of our size, I think we could have forgone the other campsite.
- The camping trip was the most fun I have had ever, but I just wish we had more time.
- It was SO FUN! It was very hot, though. Maybe next time you should wait and set up tents after going swimming so people don't get so cranky.
- The camping trip was lit!!! Except for maybe the tents...
- It was probably the best part of LEAP as it was so much fun getting to relax with everyone and enjoy the lake there. Wish we could have had more time at the water.
- All good except for setting up the tents... I really enjoyed the camping trip. It was super fun and we did a lot of great stuff.

- Ø More swimming? Lifeguards.
- Ø Set up tents ahead of time.
- Ø Swim before setting up tents.
- Ø Audit camping equipment, specifically tents.

Workshops (Communication, spiritual gifts, group facilitation, leadership, conflict resolution, personality tests)

- They were all super illuminating! I learned so much about myself and how I work and how I could work differently in the future. Wonderful!
- They were very interesting because they opened my eyes more to who I was and how to lead better wish we did a few more games as a group.
- I loved the workshops. No complaints **Tired and out of it sometimes**
- Workshops were all fine and dandy.

- I really enjoyed the workshops. They were engaging, and I got something important out of all of them.
- I love the topics chosen, very useful and they felt natural and very easy to listen to/reflect on. Personality test were a blast! Keep em up!

Ø Few more games to break up workshops. Depends on the group. This group had less games than the year before. However, practical application always very helpful.

Food and Accommodations (Cabanas, Programming space...)

- Everything was great the cabanas and the spaces we used; just everything was great.
- My cabana was clean and nice, and the food was mostly pretty good, except for when I forgot I'm lactose intolerant but that's my own fault. I really liked all the spaces we all shared.
- Everything was great as always. But I'm a little sad I didn't get the double bed. It's all good though.
- Really great. No complaints except for the Blue berry muffins, which were undercooked a bit.
- Cabanas were great. Food was great. Look more into co-ed potions in future **in terms of future?**
- I loved the cabanas, food and I love the lily pad! It's a good place for us cause it's farther away so we feel separated (not in a bad way!). It's comfy, has a bathroom and water, everything we need!

Ø Co-ed

Departments

- Very interesting getting the chance to experience working here and to help figure out what I want to apply for next year. I wish we had more time in the departments.
- The departments were more than great, they were the best things I have done in ages, they were great in every form.
- I wish that we had more time in departments – they were really great.
- Departments were awesome. Maybe 3 days for departments in the 2nd week if possible? **or more time in the 2 days**
- I really enjoyed working. It gave me a better sense of what I'd like to do here and a better appreciation of the staff and their hard work.
- I really enjoyed departments, gave me good insight and I wish I could have done more.

Ø Very popular. 3 days. More likely having 2 days that are longer, or at least option to be longer.

Overall (anything missing? Pacing...)

- Absolutely amazing overall.
- I loved how we started to slow down and spend more time together in 2nd week.
- Amazing. Really great.
- I was so nervous coming into it, but it ended up being one of the best things I could have done. Thank you for everything.
- Overall on of the greatest experiences of my life.
- Nope, just wish to have our friend ships to last forever.