

OPERATION G.R.O.

A Staff Training Activity *Michael Brandwein*



We've discussed in our training that the mission of camp is people development. One of the most important differences we want to see in our campers is the ability to handle more responsibility. Camp is a fantastic place to learn how to do this, but only if we are very *intentional* about providing specific and frequent opportunities for campers to practice using these skills.

Suppose our campers were asked these questions after they returned home from camp:

1. *"Did you help set the rules?"*
2. *"Did you help decide what happened at camp?"*
3. *"Were you in charge of anything?"*
4. *"Did you plan more than one activity or event at camp?"*
5. *"Did you feel that your ideas counted?"*

Would our campers be able to answer yes to all of these questions and give lots of examples?

Here's our challenge: On the other side of this sheet, please make a list of the day-to-day tasks, big and small, that staff do to keep our camp operating. For example, at hypothetical Camp Joynus, early every morning a member of the leadership team gets the flag out of the office to bring to the flagpole for an opening ceremony. Here's a second example: after special events, ice cream treats are handed out by staff.

Operation G.R.O. stands for Generating Responsibility Opportunities. If we want responsibility skills to grow in our campers, we must increase the opportunities they have to *practice* responsibility skills. What we have to do is look at our list of tasks and ask this question:

Which of these tasks could a camper do? For some tasks, a camper might need the assistance or supervision of a staff person, but many tasks could be done by campers alone.

Our goal this season is to find as many new ways as possible to involve our campers in the operation of camp so they can learn the life skills necessary to be independent and productive members of their communities. Thanks for helping to make this happen!