

# FAMILY MEETINGS

## HAPPY CAMPERS: 9 SUMMER CAMP SECRETS FOR RAISING KIDS WHO BECOME THRIVING ADULTS

*“Strengthening the family bond can prove to be challenging even for the most dedicated parents. One of the best tools to achieve this goal is holding a Weekly Family Meeting.”*

*—Barton Goldsmith, Ph.D.*

At camp, we always start the session with what we call our “First Night Campfire.” The counselor has a specific printed agenda for the campfire, which includes all the kids getting to know each other, sharing a goal they have for camp, and talking about the guidelines they want to live by during their two-week stay.

Families can do a similar checking in with each other at a weekly “Family Meeting,” which can be part of your dinner conversation one evening per week.

You don’t have to get fancy with your agenda. We keep ours on a legal pad, and we take turns being the “chair” of the meeting. Leading the meeting is good communication practice for kids.

### Ideas for items to have on your Family Meeting agenda:

- **What’s going on this week?**

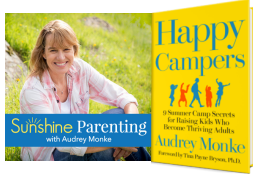
Talk about the schedule for the coming week, including any school or work projects, assignments, tests, and upcoming events. I love finding out about the poster board that’s needed for a school project early! Are parents or kids going anywhere this week? Any special travel or driving needs? This is a great time to lock down everyone’s schedule for the week.

- **Goal for the week.**

Each person shares a goal for the week (something they’d like to get done, do better at, etc.).

- **A value or social skill.**

If there is a value you are trying to instill in your kids, such as kindness, the weekly meeting could be a great time to check in and have everyone answer the same question. For example, “What did you do kind for someone this past week?”



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- **Problems or issues that need to be resolved.**

This is when you can discuss any challenges family members are having, offer support, and discuss ideas. This can also be a time to talk about any on-going family conflicts.

- **WOWs.**

Take a few minutes to compliment one another on good things you witnessed this past week.

- **Questions/comments about anything else any family member wants or needs to talk about.**

- **End the meeting with a fun game or family event.**

Playing a board game or watching your favorite TV show together could be a reward for having the meeting!