



Ramona Mann, left, leads the Bible study with the pre-teen girls at CC Freiburg's youth camp. The 19-year-old youth leader accepted Jesus as her Savior at the annual camp a few years ago. The church hosts three separate camps within a month; a weeklong outing for the youth, a long weekend for families and a 10-day camp for teenagers.

SUMMER CAMP

Calvary Chapel Freiburg's summer camp has introduced many children to a relationship with Jesus Christ. Some who attended as children now serve as youth counselors.



Hauke Bestmann portrays the converted jailor who learned about Jesus from Paul and Silas (Acts 16).

Story and photos by Tom Price



Irina Scissek, wife of Pastor Falk, leads evening worship.



A boy shows a verse to his leader. For many kids it is their first contact with Christianity.



Dominic shares the love of Jesus with his team. The church's good reputation in the community has enabled many children from non-Christian homes to attend.

Ramona Mann, the Bible study leader, sat 20 feet off the ground with the pre-teen girls in her group. The girls were just a few years younger than Ramona had been at her first summer camp with CC Freiburg. Back then, she was still drawn to worldly distractions, but by the end of that momentous week, Ramona had changed. Her spiritual restlessness dissipated as she learned about God's grace. She invited Jesus into her heart. For the last several years she has served at the church.

Today, the 19-year-old and the group she led were seated on a platform of freshly hewn trees, as they read through Acts 16. The passage described how Paul and Silas had gone to jail in Philippi for exorcising a demonic spirit from a slave girl. Ramona explained that the slave girl's masters had made a lot of money off her fortune-telling abilities.

Startled back to the present by a young man running through the camp shouting joy-

fully, Ramona and the girls scrambled down the ladder to see what the commotion was about. The young man, Hauke Bestmann, a school teacher by trade and camp volunteer, was wearing garb from the first century. He yelled for everyone to come to the meeting place. "I've got great news!" he exclaimed. Ramona and her girls and the other groups followed. Staying in character, Hauke jumped atop the speaking platform and explained that he was the jailer where Paul and Silas had been imprisoned. "Did you feel the earthquake?" he asked excitedly. He shared his horror when he thought the prisoners had escaped. The jailer continued, "I had been listening through the night as these prisoners sang songs about this Man named Jesus. When I understood that none of the prisoners attempted to escape, I desired this same joy. Paul told me to 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.' My entire family was baptized." Ramona and her group clapped



Youngsters play “paper-rock-scissors” to vie for cards they later traded for prizes. At week’s end, their worldly possessions are contrasted to spiritual riches in Christ.

appreciatively as some of the boys’ group crowded around the jailer asking questions.

Each August for the past seven years, volunteers from CC Freiburg have taken over a farmer’s field in the hills above the city, close to the French border in southwestern Germany. The camp ministers to teens for ten days and then to families with small children for a long weekend. The last week of August is the camp for pre-teen children. The church’s impeccable reputation in the community has encouraged many unbelieving families to allow their youngsters to attend the camp, knowing that the emphasis

is on experiencing God and learning about His Son, Jesus Christ. Many of the current youth leaders had attended the summer camp while they were children and were drawn to a relationship with Jesus. Many youth have encouraged their parents to attend church with them after the camp’s completion each year.

At the beginning of each weeklong camp, the children hike a day to reach camp with their group, which consists of ten boys, ten girls, and seven counselors. Along the way, different volunteers in period costume come out to meet them, which enables the children

Extraordinary Commitment for Extraordinary Fruit

Pastor Falk Scissek of CC Freiburg explained the church’s vision for the ministry: “The summer camp is for kids to hear about God and to experience Him in practical and supernatural ways.” The planning begins each October, with involvement from nearly every church member. Falk added, “Our city has been impacted for Christ by the camp ministry. It has become an outreach framework for our church that the Lord has used in a mighty way.” At the teen camp this past year, 13 youths were baptized. Many of them didn’t come from a Christian background.

Falk continued, “Over 40 volunteers work 10 hours a day over a three-day period in order to set up the camp.” This doesn’t include the nearly monthlong commitment made by the summer camp volunteers and youth leaders to supervise and staff the

camp. Volunteers are adults, university students, and high school students in training from the church. Each person who leads the children is responsible for one day’s theme and its subsequent Bible stories.

The camp is set up in a local farmer’s field for a month. Electricity and running water lines are brought up the hill. Stoves, refrigerators, sheds, showers, tools, and toilets are trucked up while the sewage pipes are laid to flow downhill to a collecting facility, where volunteers transport it away every day. Nearly 100 kids and volunteers are fed three hot meals a day. Food is transported to the camp several times through the week and stored in the refrigerators. Since the farmer rotates his fields for planting, every piece of equipment is removed at the end of each August.



A youth leader gives instructions regarding tool handling and safety as children prepare to make crafts.

to imagine they are going back in time. The final destination is the first century. During the week, the children have Bible study,

At the camp, spiritual truths are learned through the Bible studies and then applied throughout the week as the children deal with their communal living environment. Various games are played throughout the day. The winners acquire cards. Prizes are also granted for campsite orderliness, cleanliness, and originality of design. When a team had accumulated five cards, they were able to purchase a special treat. In order to purchase goods, five children need to be present, each holding one card. Toward the end of the week, the children begin to recognize that the worldly things are of little importance compared to what they have been learning from the Bible all week. Falk concluded, “The children realize that the spiritual truths that they have learned in camp is what is truly important in God’s eyes.”



Samira mimics the hand movements during morning worship in the tent.

games, fun, and rest. They win prizes for creativity, cleanliness, and team contests; each day has a different theme. The leaders make sure that every child shares in the victories. Following an after-lunch break, the kids have water battles with garden hoses. Always supervised, the children still enjoy the freedom to be kids.

The entire church body of CC Freiburg prays for the youth coming to the camp, some hearing about God for the first time. The congregation prays against weeklong downpours of



A youth leader and his team celebrate their first place win in the team-building exercises. Prizes and recognition are second to the spiritual benefits acquired.

rain, injury, and illness that could potentially ruin the experience for the campers. CC Freiburg Pastor Falk Scissek stated, “Everyone in the church has experienced the power of prayer through our involvement in the camp. Conducting a monthlong, outdoors venue for three different groups exposes us to an assortment of potential problems.” He added, “It really adds another dimension to learning to trust God.”

Last year’s youth pre-teen camp brought about unforeseen problems just before

it was about to begin. A disabling illness struck several of the 16 youth leaders needed to safely manage and teach the 80 kids. “The leaders felt that the Lord just wanted us to stand still and trust Him,” said Assistant Pastor Oliver Roming.

Eventually others in the church stepped forward who had originally been hesitant to get involved and several of those sick recovered. “Putting on the summer camp is always a time when God teaches and grows all those who help,” said Oliver.