



13th Sabbath | March 28

## Thirteenth Sabbath Program

<http://www.adventistmission.org/mqa15q1-13th-sabbath>

### **Note to Sabbath School Leader:**

We invite you to choose a favorite song, followed by prayer, welcome, and the program below. Collect the mission offering, followed by a closing prayer. You might also remind people that they are always welcome to give online at our secure website: [www.adventistmission.org/give](http://www.adventistmission.org/give). Thank you!

**Participants: Five speakers—a narrator and four speakers, all young women.** *[Note: participants don't need to memorize their parts, but should be familiar with the material. Practice so that participants feel comfortable.]*

**Narrator/Interviewer:** Our Thirteenth Sabbath Offering is going to some of the remotest parts of the North American Division—Guam/Micronesia, Alaska, and the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia. While we have heard stories from each of these areas, today we will listen to an interview at Camp Polaris in Alaska. This conversation was between Laurie Falvo, from the General Conference's Office of Adventist Mission, and four young women who are camp counselors—Katie Purvis, who has worked at the camp for the past four years, and Katie Fry, Krisi Koliadko, and Talea Shupe, who started last summer (2014).

**Interviewer:** How many of the children at Camp Polaris are Adventists?

**Katie P.:** About 5 to 10 percent.

**Interviewer:** How many are from some other Christian background?

**Katie P.:** Maybe 60 percent, but it's a weird combination of some Christian beliefs with some traditional/supernatural beliefs mixed in.

**Krisi:** Shamanism is really prevalent in the native villages.

**Katie F** They are very connected to the spiritual world.

**Katie P.:** It shocks me because these kids are so aware, from a very young age, that there's more out there than what meets the eye—that there are other beings and presences. During evening worship in our cabin, one girl said that she didn't think that she was going to be in heaven. When I asked why, she said, "Because there's a dark presence that comes and I talk with him at night."

He keeps all my secrets for me and I feel like he's the only person who won't tell anything." I told her that she could talk with Jesus and that He would keep all of her secrets safe."

**Interviewer:** It almost sounds like she has a friendship with this being. Like she trusts it.

**Katie P:** Yes. Some of the girls were talking about going into the woods at night and being confronted by what they call "the little people." I explained that there is good and evil in the world, and that Jesus can overcome the darkness. They started to realize that Jesus really could be their friend. Ever since this conversation, all the girls in my cabin sleep easier. The whole group atmosphere is more open to Jesus.

**Interviewer:** Have you experienced watching the children listen to Bible stories knowing that it must be the first time they've heard these stories?

**Katie P:** Every night before we go to bed we read them stories. During my first year here I was trying to find something interesting, and then I realized that all they wanted were stories from the actual Bible. When I read them Bible stories, they would get quiet and just sit and listen. They really enjoyed hearing them.

**Interviewer:** Do they seem open spiritually?

**Katie P.:** Very open. I think it's because their situations are a lot more extreme than a lot of other kids, and they realize that life is hard. It's not just about having fun with their friends. A lot of the time they are with people who are drinking. At home, they are hungry, they don't have enough. But at camp they are fed, and we help where we can, so they realize that there is practical help that comes from Jesus. And they're so sweet and so open to it. They really are.

**Interviewer:** So their first exposure to God's love could be you.

**Krisi:** Basically. It's the practical part of God's love like sharing warm clothes and blankets. One girl came here and the only pair of shoes she had were a ripped up pair of black flats. She wore them everywhere—even in the water. She didn't have anything else to wear, so I gave her a pair of my flip flops. Now she's happier and getting along with the other kids because her feet aren't hurting her anymore.

**Interviewer:** Tell us a little of what you know about their home lives.

**Katie P.:** When we talk in the cabin, we gather around in our sleeping bags and sit on the floor. They'll tell stories, and almost every story involves alcohol. They'll say, "When my parents were drunk, this happened." Or, "When my uncle was drinking, we crashed the snowmobile. Or, "We were playing hide-and-seek, but we had to stop because my dad was angry and drunk." They say these things so normally, like it's not even a big thing.

**Interviewer:** Do you get the sense that the children are abused?

**Katie P:** Katie P: Yes. My mom works for the state [of Alaska], and they deal with all the things that come with drunkenness. Suicide rates are high. Abuse rates are high, and that brings another dimension to camp—kids coming who have been molested or abused. There’s a lot of self-abuse, too. We had a camper who came year after year, but sadly she committed suicide. That was devastating for all of us. The girls in my cabin were talking about it, and they brought up the subject of cutting or hurting themselves. They said, “That’s just a way to show that you’re ready to go to heaven.”

**Interviewer:** So “going to heaven” was a euphemism for committing suicide?

**Katie P.:** Yes. I wasn’t quite sure what to say to that. It took me by surprise.

**Krisi:** I think it’s a domino effect. If it starts in one generation, it continues on. I’ve heard stories of teenagers drinking and then wandering out onto the tundra and dying of hypothermia.

**Katie P:** A lot of these kids are raised by their grandparents because their own parents are alcoholics. Then these kids grow up very unstable and have children when they’re young. Then their parents will raise those children. But even with all their troubles they still show a sense of love toward one another. When we were talking about the girl who committed suicide, there were many tears. One girl got out of her sleeping bag and put her arm around another girl. There’s so much sadness, but they still really show strength.

**Interviewer:** Why are you here, and why do you think that Camp Polaris is important?

**Katie F:** These kids get the light of Jesus here that they don’t get at home, or anywhere else, it seems.

**Krisi:** The main mission is to influence these children for Christ. I love seeing them being happy because we’re here.

**Katie F:** I heard about Camp Polaris during my senior year of high school. I had worked at another camp in [my state]. At that camp, the water was cold (like here!), and the kids complained a lot. But at Camp Polaris, the kids are so positive! They just run out into the water. They’re so happy to be here. I love kids and showing them what life is like with Jesus, because so many of them don’t have any idea.

**Katie P.:** Camp Polaris is such a mission camp because it’s a lot more extreme than other camps. We don’t have a lot of the facilities and nicer things, so we’re basically just out in the woods and on the beach with the kids, sharing Jesus with them. Since I know what some of the villages are like, I wanted to be here because I have a passion for Alaska and the children in Alaska. I wanted to come work here because there’s such a need.

**Interviewer:** Would you say that the children are hungry for love?

**Katie P:** Definitely. They are so needy. They want to crawl onto your lap, and hug you. And the boys want the guy counselors to play football with them and tackle them.

**Talea:** I've always wanted to work at camp and make a positive difference in a child's life, so that's why I'm here. One day after class a girl hugged me and said, "Thank you so much! I had so much fun. I'll see you tomorrow." I thought, *Oh, my heart. If Camp Polaris weren't here, I don't know what these kids would do.* Here they can get away from all their troubles at home; they can actually relax, have fun, and be kids.

**Narrator/Interviewer:** Today we have the wonderful opportunity through the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering to help Camp Polaris in its very special ministry to the children of Alaska. In addition we can partner with our brothers and sisters in West Virginia as they bring Bible truth to the people of Appalachia. Finally, we can help the school children in Micronesia have a gymnasium where they can play during the heavy island rainfalls. Please give generously to this very special offering. Thank you!

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## **Future Thirteenth Sabbath Projects**

Next quarter the Northern Asia-Pacific Division will be featured. Projects include a youth training center in S. Korea, centers of influence in Taiwan, church plants in China, an international evangelism center in Japan, and a library for a school in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.