



Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion Showcases DADCAMP
Indiana-based DADCAMP operates weekend camping experiences and workshops aimed at strengthening families through greater father engagement

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WACO, Texas (Sept. 24, 2025) – The issue of Fatherlessness has long been a prominent subject of discourse of social science for decades. While this issue mostly examines the effects of the absence of a father, an often-overlooked issue is the role and value of fathers who are with their families, a critical component of a healthy family. A case study led by researchers with Baylor University's [Institute for the Studies of Religion](#) examines a program geared towards strengthening and affirming the unique role of fathers for their children's development and identity.

DADCAMP is an intensive weekend "fatherhood bootcamp" for fathers and their children aimed at reaffirming and supporting the irreplaceable role of fathers in the lives of their families. DADCAMP offers specialized programs for fathers with elementary school, middle school and high school children, providing opportunities to engage one-on-one with their child as well as intensive workshops with other fathers to improve their listening and communication skills and overall understanding of a father's role in his family.

The case study examines the history and development of DADCAMP and provides an overview of a typical DADCAMP weekend. From an empirical perspective, the case study includes the results of a survey of participating dads as well as their wives (who do not participate in the DADCAMP weekend) and their children. The survey results, among other things, show statistically significant self-reported improvements among participating dads, using the Inventory of Father Involvement¹ survey instrument, in the areas of taking time to talk with their child, praise and affection, promoting positive character in their children and other areas.

"Regrettably, the role of fathers in families remains an under-researched area. While there are scores of studies on the long-term effects of growing up without a father, there is very little that presents models for improving and strengthening the role of fathers," said Byron R. Johnson, Ph.D., director of Baylor's ISR, Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences and director of the Program on Prosocial Behavior. "The positive results of the DADCAMP program presents preliminary empirical evidence of an effective approach for strengthening families."

¹ The Journal of Men's Studies, Vol. 10, No. 2, Winter 2002, pp. 183-196.

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The case study also demonstrated significant improvements in terms of the fellowship among the participating dads that helps them understand they are not alone in their struggles to be the best father they can be to their children. DADCAMP also contributed to improving marriages, with close to 90% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that DADCAMP has helped improve communication with their wife. Overall, 96% of participating dads either agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in DADCAMP helped them realize the importance of a father's role in their children's lives.

In this Q&A, co-authors Johnson, ISR non-resident fellow William Wubbenhorst, and DADCAMP co-founder Jason Braun explain the distinctive elements of this unique approach to family strengthening.

Q: What was the original goal for establishing the first DADCAMP?

Braun: We realized that fathers have more impact on the social and spiritual well-being of their families than anyone else and knew we had to do something different to reach them and remind them how much they matter.

Q: Is DADCAMP limited to only Christian dads?

Braun: Not at all. While DADCAMP is a faith-based organization and the content is rooted in Christian values, DADCAMP is for all dads. We have served countless non-Christian dads who love DADCAMP and return year after year.

Q: What were some of the distinct findings from this evaluation that demonstrated the important value-added of DADCAMP for strengthening families?

Wubbenhorst: In research conducted on fatherhood and for men in general, there is often a tendency to rate themselves higher in certain behaviors and actions than may be true. I think the fact that their own wives rated the improvements they have seen since their husbands started participating in DADCAMP the same or even higher makes the results of this study that much stronger.

Q: How many DADCAMPs are there?

Braun: In 2025, we had over 150 weekend events involving over 5,500 dads and 6,500 children. We are also operating special day-long DADCAMP events in over 20 countries around the world, and we believe we will serve 100,000 dads and kids annually by 2030.

Q: Will you do future research related directly to social support programs like DADCAMP?

Johnson: Yes. We are always looking to examine exemplary family strengthening programs in order to determine which elements of these kinds of efforts are most consequential for producing significant outcomes.

ABOUT THE BAYLOR INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES OF RELIGION

Launched in August 2004, the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion (ISR) initiates, supports and conducts research on religion, involving scholars and projects spanning the intellectual spectrum: history, psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, epidemiology, theology and religious studies. The institute's mandate extends to all religions, everywhere, and throughout history, and embraces the study of religious effects on prosocial behavior, family life, population health, economic development and social conflict.

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