

LEVEL 1

training **ALIENS**



*adventures
in social &
emotional skills*

MELANIE WILSON, Ph.D.
illustrated by Raymund James Dakay

Training Aliens

Adventures in Social & Emotional Skills



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A NOTE TO TEACHERS

Training Aliens teaches social and emotional skills through the stories in this text and the exercises in the separate training manual. Although some of these skills are “more caught than taught,” most children can benefit from the specific instruction outlined in this curriculum.

The fictional stories about alien struggles allow K-8 students to see social and emotional challenges more objectively. The humor helps students take themselves less seriously. The fictionalized Space Camp setting (based loosely on the camp in Huntsville, Alabama) will engage students. Volume 1 teaches basic skills that are appropriate for the youngest students, students with special needs, and mixed-age student groups.

The curriculum is not intended to be used independently by students. Family, co-op, or class participation is especially important for discussing and practicing these skills. There are 16 lessons, or approximately one per week for a semester. The lessons may also be spread out over a longer period to allow for more practice. Although completing lessons out of order is acceptable, completing them in the order presented will be most beneficial.

Begin by reading the introduction and the discussion questions to your students. Thereafter, read the story aloud and ask students to choose option A or B for dealing with the challenge. These options are common but not the wisest choices. Ask students what they think will happen with each option before turning to the page indicated. Read possible outcomes for both options before turning to the corresponding mission in the **required training manual**. You'll find numerous helps for teaching each lesson there.

I want to end this note by thanking you for giving your students the gift of instruction in these invaluable skills.

Melanie Wilson

info@funtolearnbooks.com



INTRODUCTION

Anthony and Ava had trouble sitting still. They had been looking forward to Space Camp for months. And it was finally time to go.

But first their father said he had something important to tell them. Their father was a scientist with NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The children knew he was almost as excited as they were about camp. They also knew he expected them to be on their best behavior. “We’ll be good,” Anthony said. “Promise!”

“Yes! We promise! Can we go now?” Ava asked, jumping up from the couch.

“I’m sure you will,” their father said. “But that’s not what I want to tell you.” Ava sat down.

“Since we signed you up, we learned that this camp is serving a very important mission,” their mother added.

“We know. Space Camp is ‘to inspire a spirit of discovery in people of all ages,’” Anthony said in a sing-song voice.

His mother had to smile at Anthony’s recitation. “That’s right, Anthony. But this camp is unique. You’re being given a mission no campers have had before.”

The children stopped fidgeting. “Do they have a new space ride or something?” Ava asked.

“No,” their father answered. “This camp will have exchange students.”

“From another country?” Anthony asked.

“From another planet,” he said slowly, watching his children’s reaction closely.

“You mean . . . aliens?” Ava asked, withdrawing into the couch.

“Yes, aliens,” he said, nodding.

Before the children could respond, their mother quickly explained. “Three aliens are going to be at camp as part of a test program.”

Anthony sucked in his breath, then laughed and slapped his thighs. “Good one. I believed you for a second.”

“We’re serious,” their mother said calmly. Anthony stared at his mother, wide eyed.

“What are they testing?” Ava asked, trembling. “Running experiments on them and stuff?”

“No, no, nothing like that,” their father said, trying not to laugh. “They want to see if the aliens can be comfortable living here. They’re children like you. You’ll be teaching them about our way of life.”

“Can they understand us?” Anthony asked.

“Yes,” their father said. “Our common language will make it easier for you to teach them.”

“Teach them what? School stuff?” Ava asked.

“No. We’re asking you to help train them in social and emotional skills. So, how to get along with people and manage feelings,” their mother said.

“I’m not very good at that myself,” Anthony joked.

His parents chuckled. “You won’t be on your own. Camp staff will be there to help, and parents will be staying nearby,” their mother said.

“I’ve also been asked to monitor the program. NASA is very interested in how camp goes,” their father said.

“Me too,” Anthony joked.



When were you very excited about a trip?

Would you like to go to Space Camp if you could?

What kinds of things will the aliens need to learn?



MEETING NEW PEOPLE

Anthony and Ava chatted with other campers as they waited in line with their parents. The staff were handing out badges and space suits. This was exciting enough, but the topic of every conversation was something else: aliens.

Would they be short and cute like E.T.? Would they be creepy with visible brains? Would they be part robot?

The kids in front of them were asking staff members when they would get to meet the aliens. The answer they got every time was “soon.”

After checking in, the two children took their bags to their assigned rooms in the Habitat and met their roommates. Parents visited as the children greeted one another. Anthony noticed that the parents seemed just as curious about the aliens as they were.

“I’m sure they’re safe, right?” one of the mothers asked theirs.

“Definitely,” their mother answered. “My husband and I have talked with the people in charge of the exchange program. They have made us feel comfortable.”

“Oh, good,” the mother said, sighing with relief.

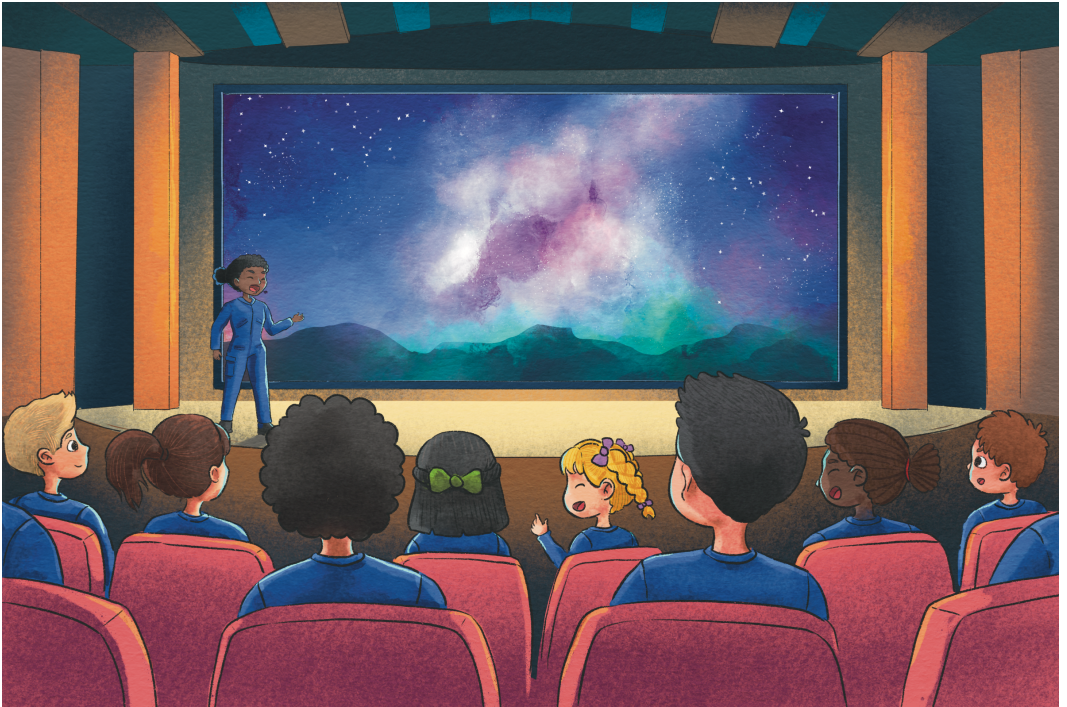
All the campers said their goodbyes to the parents, who were staying in nearby hotels.

It wasn’t long before campers heard an announcement over the loudspeaker.

“Please come to the auditorium to meet our special guests.”

“This is it!” Anthony said to his roommate as they left their room. The children’s chatter about the aliens continued from the hallways to the auditorium as they took their seats.

But as the camp director came on stage, all talking stopped. “Welcome to Space Camp!” she said. “We are so happy you’re here for this very special camp. Our guests are backstage and can’t wait to meet you. Please give a warm welcome to Raz, Jax, and Starla.” She clapped to indicate that the campers should applaud, which they did enthusiastically.



The director looked offstage expectantly. Campers were leaning in their seats to catch the first glimpse of their guests. “I don’t see them,” kids were whispering as the director disappeared backstage. “She’s going to get them,” kids said.

Finally, the director appeared but without the aliens. “They don’t want to come out. They’re shy,” she admitted, shrugging. “What do you think we should do?”

Two options appeared on the screen:

A: Let them stay backstage until they’re ready to meet us.

B: Drag them on stage.

What do you think will happen with option A? Turn to page 8 to see.

What do you think will happen with option B? Turn to page 9 to see.

A. Let them stay backstage until they're ready to meet us.

The director told the three aliens that they did not have to come on stage unless they wanted to.

Raz sighed with relief. "Could we have more snacks then?" he asked.

Jax nodded in agreement. "More candy? And soda?"

Starla was still trembling. "C-c-can we go back to our rooms?"

"We can meet everyone tomorrow," Raz said, agreeing with his sister.

"But the campers are so excited to meet you!" the director said a little impatiently.

Starla shook her head and got behind Jax.

"She's shy," Jax explained, grabbing some of the chips an assistant offered him.

"Right. Are *you* willing to meet the campers then?" the director asked Jax.

He put the chips down and tried to hide behind Starla. Raz shook his head to say no before the director could ask him.

"How are we going to have the campers teach them if they won't meet them?" a staff member asked.

"I have no idea," the director said.

**If you have not read what would happen for option B,
turn to page 9. Otherwise, complete Mission 1 in
your training manual.**

B. Drag them on stage.

“We’re going to need help getting them out there,” the director said.

“Right,” the assistant said. “I’ll get security.”

“Good idea,” she told the assistant.

While she waited for them, the director tried to calm the aliens. “You don’t have to go on stage now. Would you like some snacks?”

Raz and Jax agreed, but Starla continued shaking. “I wanna go back to my room,” she said.

“Soon, soon,” the director said soothingly.

When the security team entered the office, the brothers stopped eating. “Can we go to our room now?” Jax asked tentatively.

“Not yet, buddy,” the officer said, reaching to pick him up.

Jax screamed and grabbed a chair leg.

“We won’t hurt you!” the officer said, panting. “He’s really strong,” he told the director as he tried to pull him away from the chair.

Raz and Starla began running around the room, screaming.

“It’s not scary, I promise,” an officer said as she chased the two.

The two of them managed to stay out of reach for minutes of screaming.

“Enough!” the director yelled. “This isn’t working.” The officer let go of Jax and the team stopped chasing the other two.

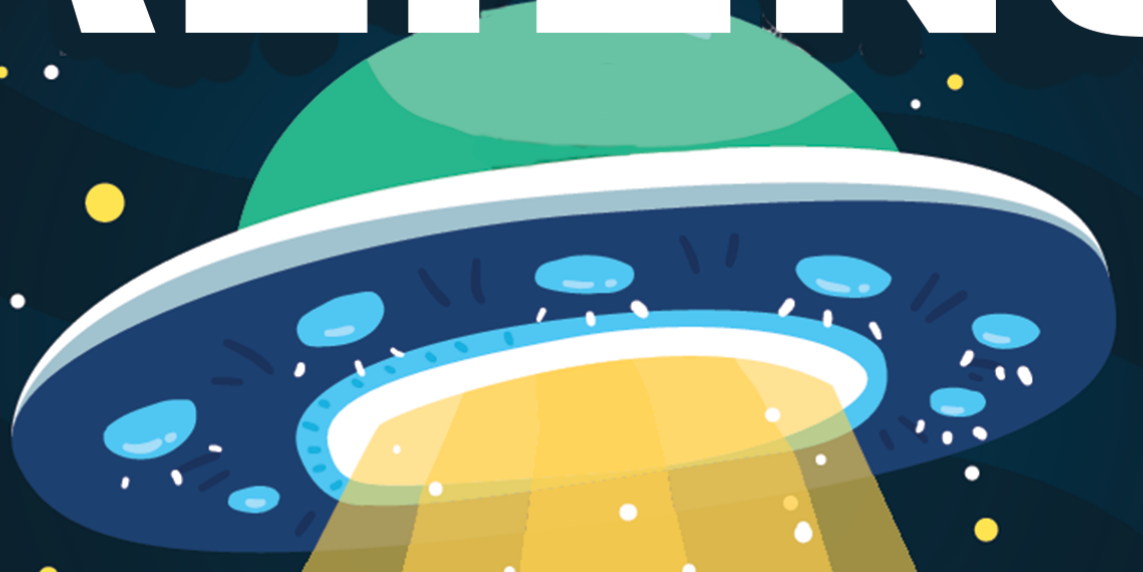
The three alien siblings clung to each other on the sofa, panting, ready to bolt again if necessary.

“What do we do?” a staff member asked, looking sympathetically at the trio.

**If you have not read what would happen for option A,
turn to page 8. Otherwise, complete Mission 1 in
your training manual.**

LEVEL 1

training ALIENS



*faith-based
training manual &
teacher's guide*

MELANIE WILSON, Ph.D.

Training Aliens

Faith-Based Training Manual



Melanie Wilson, Ph.D.

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A Note to Teachers

This training manual is for home educators or teachers who are leading a student or group of students in learning social and emotional skills. **This is not a student workbook.**

Most of the activities are designed to be used with multiple students. If you are using the training with a single student, invite family members and friends to participate. Or offer the training in a class or co-op, so your student can learn with other children. The activities will not only be more fun but will be more effective in teaching social and emotional skills.

You will read the story in the *Training Aliens* text aloud first. You will then read the letter from the Space Camp Team in this manual aloud and will teach the mission that is organized into three steps. You may complete the steps during three or more sessions or in one day.

A video lesson is included with the mission, but you may choose to teach the lesson yourself, with or without watching the video as preparation. Notes are included for your reference.

Training activities are suggestions to help you teach the skills. Add some or delete some at your discretion. You may use the blank page at the back of the manual for planning activities.

Bible stories may be read from a standard or children's Bible, or they may be paraphrased. Scriptures for memorization are from the English Standard Version but may be memorized in another version. A chart of Scriptures and stories used is provided in the back matter.

Review questions can be used if a step was completed during a previous session. For variety, have campers raise hands or stand up to indicate whether a statement is true.

Picture or nonfiction books are also used to teach the topic. Choose a title that you can access easily and have prescreened for content. A list of top-rated titles is on the website but should not be presumed appropriate for your family or class.

Required materials other than a video screen, Bible, picture book, and colored pencils are listed for each step and in a chart at the end of this manual.

You may wish to post the Level 1 chart on the next page and have a student color in each badge as that mission is completed. The chart can be used to review with students what they have learned in previous missions.

Copies of forms may be made from an included PDF **for students living in one household or in one classroom.** Thank you in advance for your integrity.

Teaching helps for each mission are available at *****. *Enter the URL with no spaces.* Access to video lessons and reproduceable forms for off-site purchasers may also be requested at this URL.

Have a question? Contact the author at info@funtolearnbooks.com.



Mission Control

MISSION 1: MEETING NEW PEOPLE

Attention Campers:

As you know by now, our alien guests were unwilling to meet you. We need your help to make them feel comfortable. We have asked Dr. Wilson, a psychologist with experience in training aliens, to advise us.

You will now meet with other campers and a group leader for instructions.

Thank you in advance for your help in completing this important mission.

The Space Camp Team

**Step 1: Discuss, Listen, Draw & Mission**

Materials: Copies of alien picture page, crayons, or markers if desired

Discuss. Ask the questions, giving multiple campers a chance to respond.

1. Why didn't the aliens want to meet the campers? [They were afraid.]
2. Why didn't it work to wait for the aliens to feel ready? [They would put it off.]
3. Why didn't it work to drag the aliens on stage? [They fought back.]
4. Do you like to meet new people? Why or why not?
5. What do you think the camp directors should have done about the shy aliens?

Listen. Teach the following truths about shyness or play the video lesson from the website.

1. Shyness is a form of fear. The best way to overcome fear is to practice.
2. The best way to practice is with individuals and small groups of people.
3. Use astronaut breathing (hold your breath, breathe normally) to relax.
4. Count down from five to do things that are scary.

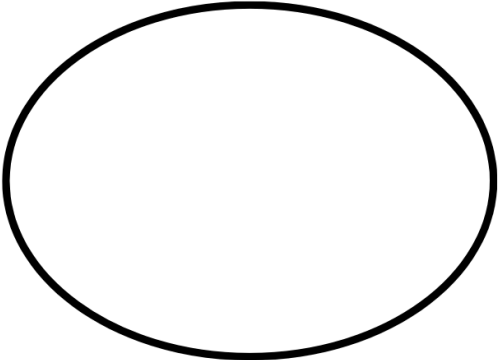
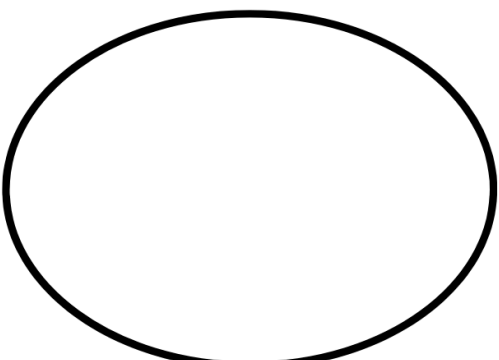
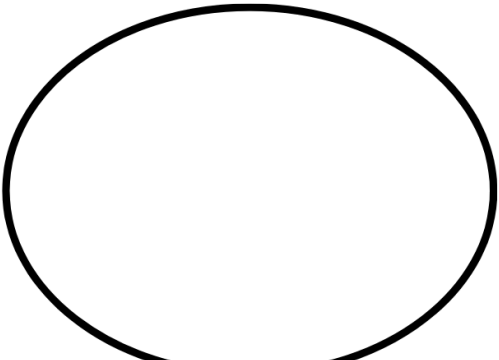
Draw. Have campers draw what they think the three aliens look like on the page that follows. First, ask campers to make a shy or scared face and draw the aliens with similar expressions. Work together or print copies of the page.

Mission. Tell campers that their mission for the week is based on Matthew 22:39: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Say the verse together two or three times, using the movements in parentheses: "Love (hands over heart) your neighbor (wave) as yourself (point to your chest)." Matthew 22:39 (open hands)

Explain that we can't love our neighbor if we won't meet them, and people like it when we say hello. Listen to the song "People Like It When I Say Hi." Encourage them to say hello to at least 5 new people during this mission (with adult supervision). They can complete the chart on page 10 to track their progress.




























For Step 2: Have campers choose / bring a beloved item to talk about for Show and Tell.

		
Raz	Jax	Starla

Hello!

Put each camper's name to the left of the row, or use the whole chart for one student.
Color in a hand for each new person met. Extra credit for writing the new person's name in the square.



Step 2: Review, Study, Practice & Share

Materials: Tape measure, masking tape; puppet or stuffed animal

Review. *If Step 1 was completed during a prior meeting, have campers indicate true or false for statements 1-3.*

1. Shyness is a form of fear. [true]
2. The best way to overcome fear is to wait. [false, it's practice.]
3. The best way to practice is to start with individuals and small groups. [true]
4. Let's practice astronaut breathing. Try to hold your breath longer this time.
5. Let's practice this week's verse: "Love (hands over heart) your neighbor (wave) as yourself (point to your chest)." Matthew 22:39 (open hands)

Mission Review: *Check how many people they've said hello to since Step 1 if it was completed during a prior meeting.*

Study. *Tell the story of Paul and Barnabas from Acts 9:1-28. Choose students to act out the parts of Saul, the high priest, the Lord, Ananias, and Barnabas as you read. Then ask the discussion questions.*

1. Why do you think Barnabas wasn't afraid of Saul? [He believed God had changed him.]
2. Saul first tried to join Jesus' students. How would you react to having aliens in your room with no introduction?
3. Barnabas took Saul to the apostles, the leaders that the disciples trusted. Whose opinion do you trust when you are meeting new people?
4. Barnabas's name means "son of encouragement." Do you know what your name means? If not, what would you like it to mean?
5. What are some ways to encourage shy aliens (and campers)?

Practice. *Teach the 10/5 rule: Smile at 10 feet away and say hello at 5 feet away. Using a tape measure and masking tape, mark off 10 feet away and 5 feet away from the group. Have one camper be the greeter and the rest of the group line up more than 10 feet away. Campers will take turns being the greeter who will smile and then say hello to other campers as they come within 10 and 5 feet.*

Share. *Have Show & Tell with your group (or on video with 1-2 campers). Explain that talking about an object can make the aliens feel more comfortable meeting new people. Use a puppet or stuffed animal to represent an alien. Have the alien do astronaut breathing, say their name, and then talk about their object. Thank the alien for sharing and compliment him. Then ask for volunteers to share. Remind the campers to encourage those who shared with a compliment, just as you demonstrated. Tell reluctant campers that you'd really like to hear about their object, but don't force them.*



Step 3: Review, Read & Practice

Materials: Rocket materials (template copies, small drinking straws, construction paper, scissors, pen/marker); rocket snack

Review. *Use these questions if Step 2 was completed on a previous day.*

1. Why was Barnabas willing to be friends with Saul? [believed God had changed him]
2. What does Barnabas's name mean? [son of encouragement]
3. If someone is shy, can God change that? [yes]
4. When you're afraid, what do people say or do that encourages you?
5. Let's practice the week's verse: "Love (hands over heart) your neighbor (wave) as yourself (point to your chest)." Matthew 22:39 (open hands)

Mission Review: *Add up the number of new people your group has said hello to since Step 1.*

Read. *Read a picture/nonfiction book about shyness. After reading, ask campers how the book could help the aliens feel more comfortable meeting new people.*

Practice. *Tell campers: "The Saturn V rocket that took astronauts to the moon in 1967 required 4.5 million pounds of fuel to overcome the pull of gravity. Pushing ourselves to overcome shyness requires a lot of effort too. We're going to create rockets to practice."*

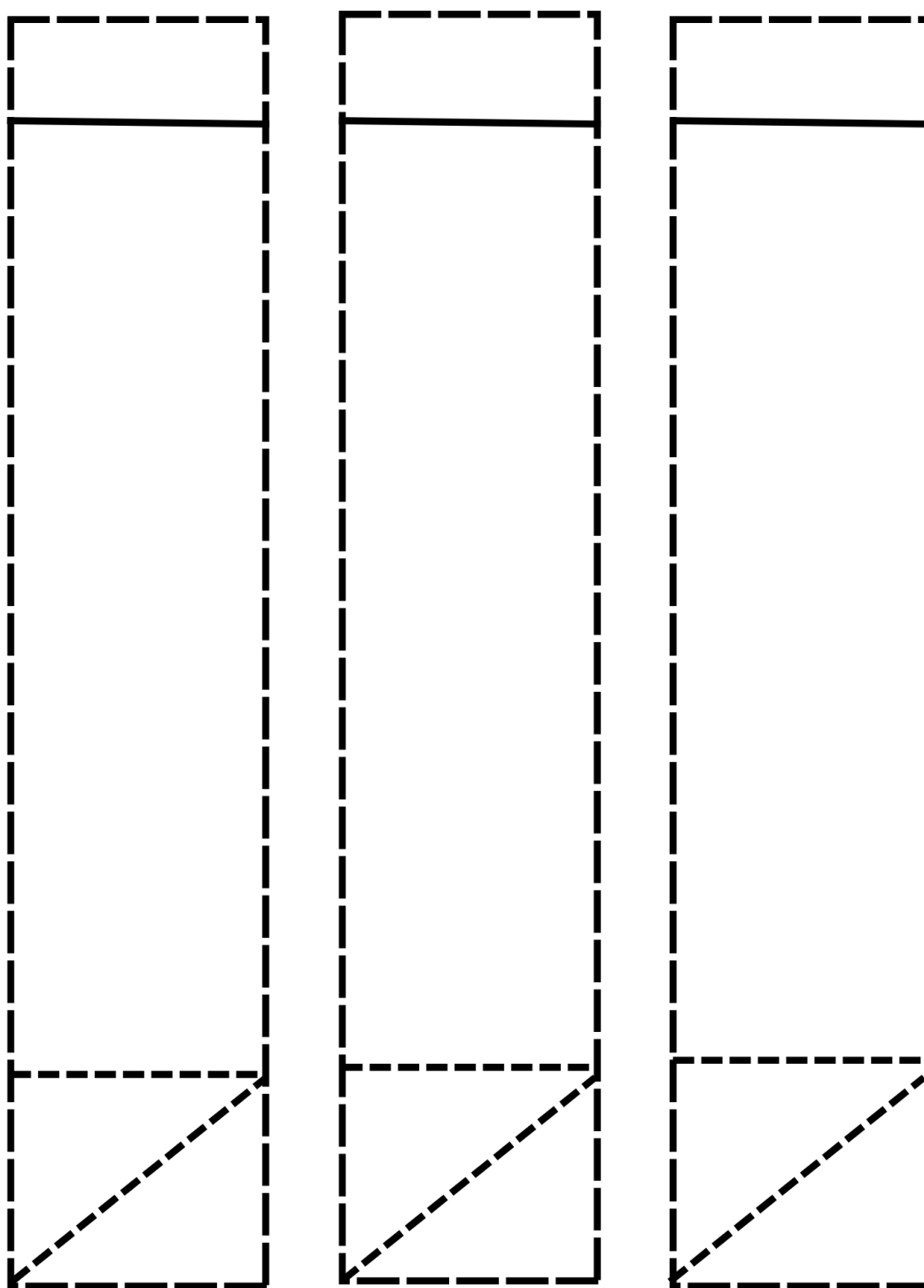
Print the template on page 14 on colored paper or use it as a guide to cut pieces from construction paper. Print as many copies from the included PDF as needed for your group. Demonstrate for campers how to roll the long paper rectangle around a straw, forming a thin paper tube. Use two pieces of scotch tape to hold the tube together, without attaching it to the straw. Fold down the top ¼" of the paper tube and use a small piece of tape to hold it closed. The tube should cover most of the straw and slide easily on and off. Next, have students write their initials on the two triangle fins (one letter per triangle). Add a symbol if you have two campers with the same initials. Finally, tape the two triangle fins to opposite sides of the bottom of the paper tube. (See the website for an example).

When everyone has a rocket, line them up on one side of the room. Say: "Before a rocket launches, there is a countdown. After counting down to 1, the team is committed to launching, no matter how nervous the astronauts are. We don't wait to stop feeling shy. We count down from 5 and then say hello to new people. Count down with me from 5. Take a deep breath on the count of 1 and blow on your straw to launch your rocket when I say blastoff."

Let's see whose rocket goes the furthest. We will launch a couple more times to practice."

Color in the Mission 1 Badge. *Using a colored pencil, color in the Meet New People badge on the Level 1 Space Camp chart. Congratulate campers on their accomplishment. Encourage them to keep meeting new people, practicing their astronaut breathing, and pushing past fear after a count of 5.*

Optional snack. *Serve a rocket-themed snack to celebrate if you like. See the website for ideas.*



Rocket Template

Cut on dashed lines. Fold on solid lines.