



GROUP
imaging.com

PHOTO GUIDE

Tips for Composing Better Group Photos

We know you want to send your campers home with the best photos possible and to make a great impression with your camper's parents. Focusing on your composition will help make that happen. We notice several common oversights that people make when taking group photos and we are reproducing some of those for you in this guide for you to study. If you do not take group photos for a living you will likely not naturally be thinking of all of these things when you put your campers together for the photo.

Start your composition with the goal in mind to get the largest head sizes possible. The larger the head size the better the memories your camper will have of their fellow campers. Larger head sizes should be your goal.

The only way to make the goal of larger head sizes a reality is to fill the composition as much as practically possible from left to right and top to bottom with campers.

Note: Allow space for your logo and/or text that is usually across the bottom of your photo/border.



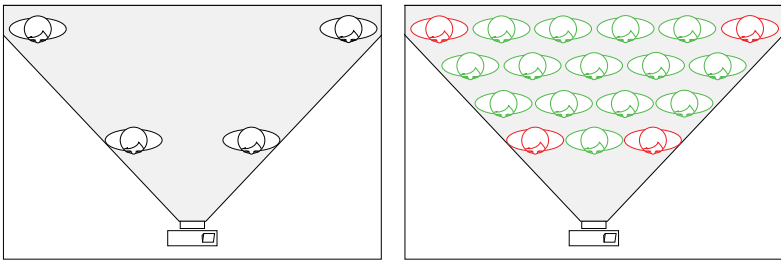
If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact us at:

800.556.7222
info@groupimaging.com

Common Oversights:

Practice Photos:

Photographers don't take the time to go make practice group photos before starting to take their camp groups. This is very important so that you can go through the whole picture taking process and go back to your computer and open the photos up and see how you can improve it before you are doing it for real. Doing this will improve your photos more than anything else. The best way to do this is to take four people with you as camper stand-ins. Have two of them sit in the left and right front corners of your composition and the other two in the back row left and right corners. If you can compose a photo with a person in all four corners you will see how well you are going to fill the photo later with people in the in between space. If you don't have anyone to help you do this you can substitute for of those orange caution cones used in parking lots as your four stand-ins (you can even use four rocks). Just take the time to do a test composition.



Practice Photos, (Aerial View)

Left and Right Composition:

The most common oversight is that groups sacrifice head size by leaving too much empty space on the left and right of the composition. This is the opposite of our goal of getting as large as possible the faces of our campers in the photo.



Positioning of Campers:

A close second to leaving too much space on the left and right of the composition is to have only a few rows of campers and you end up with a high amount of empty space above their heads and below their feet. This usually manifests itself in a large grassy area taking up as much as 1/3 of the bottom of the photo and 1/3 at the top for sky. Our goal is to put faces of campers where the sky and grass were as much as possible.



Tips for Overcoming Composition Oversights:

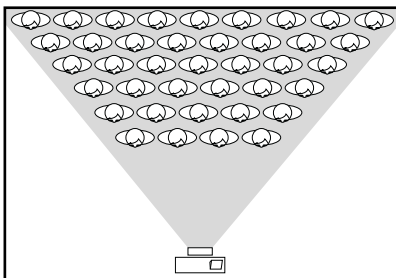
1. Do the practice photos.
2. Take a moment when getting ready to take the photos and examine the LCD image on the back of the digital camera and ask yourself if you are as close as you can be to the group. Do you see wasted room on the sides and the top and bottom of the composition?
3. Always ask yourself, "How can I make more rows of campers?" Breath deep and take a second to examine the group and look for ways to make shorter rows of campers and make more rows. The reason for this is that when you make shorter rows of campers you can move the camera closer to the group and the goal is met as their head sizes increase as you get closer. Always be thinking, "GET CLOSER".

Note: it does not help to move your zoom lens to a wider setting (*we usually call this "zooming out"*) from normal as a way to get closer. You might want to zoom out to get closer to the group, but remember that when you zoom out and this allows you to get closer, you also are zooming out on the top and bottom and this creates more sky and grass at the top and bottom of your composition. The only time to take advantage of zooming out with you lens is when you are in a situation where you can't step back any further to get all of the group in the photo. An example would be if you are in a small room and the group is on one side of the room and you are

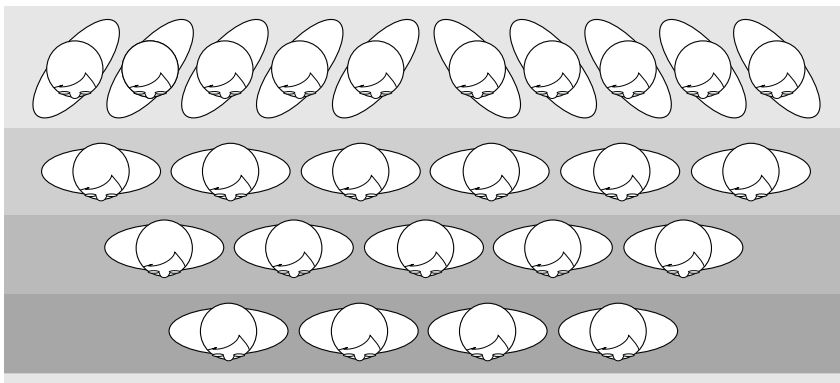
on the other and you still can't get everyone in the photo, now you must zoom out to make this work.

4. Photographs are two dimensional not three dimensional like the real world and this has a very odd but important effect on your composition. In the real world (3d), when you have a group of people line up 15 across they are as wide as each row behind them that is also 15 people across, but not so in the composition world (2d). If you line up 10 rows of campers 15 across (150 people) you will not have a back row that is as wide as the front row in the composition world (2d). In the photo you will end up with a back row that is about half as wide as the front row, we call this the **Railroad Effect** (test this with your four stand-ins and see for yourself). This fact is going to help you with your goal of getting larger smiling faces of your campers. If you set up your front row with 15 people you can add more people to each row as you go further from the camera and they will not get any wider in the composition (*this does have limits, but you will see that as you look at the LCD screen on your camera when you are composing the group*). So if you have long rows and lots of grass in front and sky on top in your composition, stop and think of ways to make more rows and allow each row that is farther away to have slightly more campers in them.

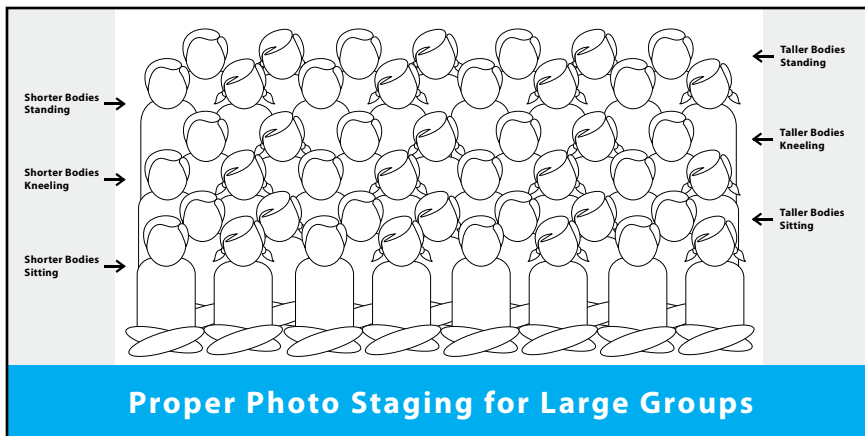
Railroad Effect:



Often you can shorten your back rows by having those on the left turn their bodies slightly to the middle and those on the right to also turn towards the middle. Make sure that after you ask them to turn that you get each side to inch in closer to each other so that they take up less space.



Make more rows in front. You almost always need more rows so you can get closer and reduce the grass at the bottom and the sky at the top of the composition. If you have bleachers you have a great way to compose, but not all settings have this feature, so you might have a row that is standing at the front and you can add two to four more rows in front of the standing row. You can add two rows that are kneeling (on their knees, but as tall as they can pose that way). Make sure that you position the front row of the kneelers so that their heads fall between the heads of the row of kneelers behind them. This way you don't hide any faces of the back row of kneelers with the head of the front row of kneelers. Now you can repeat this with two more rows of campers sitting on the ground and repeat the process of positioning the front row of sitters so that their heads are between the heads of the back row of sitters so no faces are hidden.



5. Aspect Ratio

This last tip is technical but it is very important, so read it over several times and if you have questions please call us.

(The charts and illustrations will help the most)

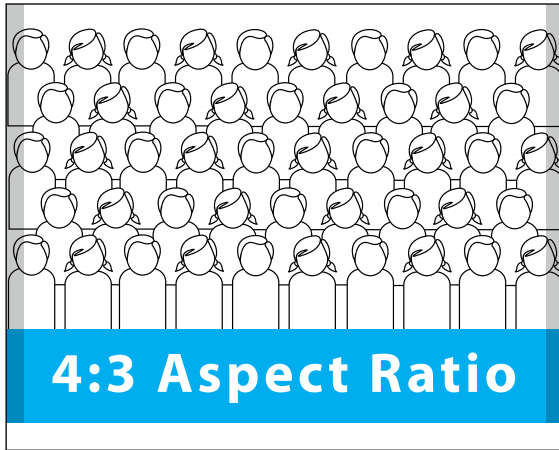
Note: You must know your particular camera aspect ratio to do this.

The standard size of a group photo is 10x8" but the frame in almost all digital cameras is not proportional to that print size. This means that all that you see on the LCD screen when you make your composition will not print on the 10x8 sheet. This can be very frustrating to a group photographer who has been told above more than once to, "get closer" and "fill the composition". For the most part, you will want to always get closer. But a very small part of what you see on the left and the right of your composition will not print to a 10x8 group photo (*this is also true for the top and bottom but it is very uncommon for a group to fill the image all the way to the top and all the way to the bottom*) So here is the technical part: Most smaller digital cameras (*the ones that do not have interchangeable lenses*) have an **Aspect Ratio** of 10.66" x 8" (*your manual will call this a **4:3 aspect ratio**, but for our purposes it is a 10.66:8 aspect ration since we are printing 10x8 photos*). This means that when we print your composition to a 10x8 photo we can only get 10" out of the 10.66" that is in your photo. The .66" that we can't print needs to be considered when you are focusing on your goal of getting as close as you can to the campers. If your camera has this aspect ratio we will not be able to see .33" (.66 divided by 2 = .33") on each side of the composition. .33" is 3.3% of the width of your composition.

We need to think in % since your LCD screen is not 10x8". It is much smaller so if you think in % you can guess at how much you need to leave on each side with no campers. Think of it this way, if you had 100 campers across your composition in the front row and you put the outside camper all the way to the edge of your LCD screen, when we print your photo you would lose just a little over three people on each side. So in this example you would want to leave about 3 and a half bodies space in the composition on each side so that no one is cut off when the 10x8 photo is printed. If you had 50 people across and you had the outside campers on both sides all the way to the edge of the composition, you would loose about 1.5 people on each end when a 10x8 was printed. As you move to smaller groups, the effect is less of a problem. If your group was only 10 people across and they were all the way to the edge of the composition you would be cutting off just 1/3 of a body on each side. So in that case just make sure you have at least 1/3 (*1/2 of a body on each side would be a safe amount*) of a body width on each end of the group. These examples above apply to you if your camera has an aspect ratio of 4:3 only. This is the same as standard Television screens (*not the wide new styles*).

4:3 Image Loss Chart

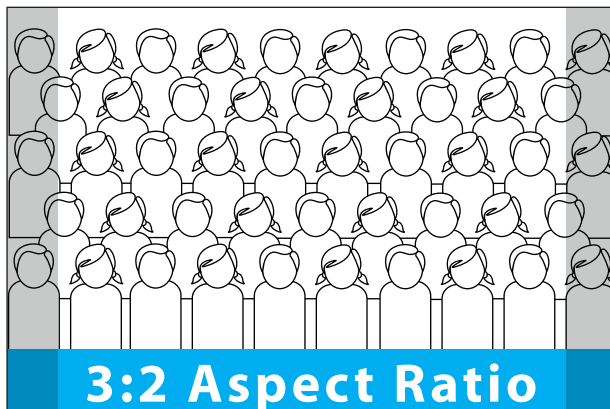
# of Bodies	# of Bodies Cut Off	Amount of Space to Leave Empty
100	3	3 - 4 Body Widths on Each Side
50	1.5	1 - 2 Body Widths on Each Side
10	1/3	.5 Body Widths on Each Side



If you have a high end digital camera that takes interchangeable lenses (removable lenses) and is much more like a 35mm camera it is likely to have aspect ratio of 12" x 8" (your manual will call this a **3:2 aspect ratio**). If you have this aspect ratio you will have more that will not print on the sides of your composition. Two inches to be exact. That is one inch on each side of your composition. To make sense of this, again, we have to look at this in % so you can do this on your LCD screen. Your composition will not print 20% of your image width. That is 10% on each side. To use our examples above:

3:2 Image Loss Chart

# of Bodies	# of Bodies Cut Off	Amount of Space to Leave Empty
100	10	10 - 11 Body Widths on Each Side
50	5	5 - 6 Body Widths on Each Side
25	2.5	2.5 - 3.5 Body Widths on Each Side
10	1	1 - 1.5 Body Widths on Each Side



*This can be frustrating but remember that these cameras are very high resolution and you will never miss that 10% on each side in the photo. With these cameras you just have to **leave that 10% empty on each side.***

- Remember to take into account where your text & logo overlay on your photo. Make sure to save space at the bottom to accommodate these. Remember to take into account any custom border effects that may intrude into your composition.

Quality Guarantee:

If you ever get your photos back from Group Imaging and you would like to retake them because you want to make the composition better, please do and we will reprint the photos at no charge. If this means that Group Imaging has to mail the photos directly to the homes of your campers we are more than happy to do that.

Reprinting the photos will be at no charge, we only ask that you pay the shipping to homes of \$1.35 each and send us a set of labels or a printable spreadsheet (*one that we can print into labels*).

The images in this flyer are intended to show you oversights in composition made by others. They are here so that you can study them and learn from them.



751 N. Country Club Drive, Suite 1, Mesa, Arizona 85201
ph. 800.556.7222 fx.480.830.5646
www.groupimaging.com