



# Crossways Day Camp

Dear Adult Volunteer –

Welcome to the Crossways Day Camp experience. Our week of Crossways Day Camp is coming quickly. The planning team would like to take a few minutes to thank you for volunteering to be a part of Day Camp and also let you know a little bit more about your role during the week. You are an important member of the team. The team consists of your Congregational Coordinator, the Summer Camp Coordinator, and the summer counselors.

As volunteer, you'll be assigned to a specific classroom or group for the week. As a member of this group, we'll ask you to help in variety of ways. For instance, the group may need your assistance with glueing during arts & crafts, or getting a bandaid for a scraped knee. They may also need your help in a leadership role to lead a prayer or facilitate a small group discussion. Your cooperating summer counselor will be sure to ask for your help, but if you see an area where you can jump in please do so!

Ongoing communication between the counselors and volunteers will be essential to making the week run smoothly. The following pages will get you prepared for the week. We have taken highlights from our summer staff manual and created a manual especially for our Day Camp volunteers. Here you will find important camp rules and standards for working with campers, along with a host of useful information.

## **Introduction to Day Camp**

Day Camp is a weeklong program held in your congregation for children finishing 1st through 6th grade. Day Camp is a unique blend of outdoor ministry and congregational ministry with crafts, music, worship, games, Bible study, fellowship, and recreation.

The purpose of Day Camp is to provide your church with a quality Christian experience. Day camp supplements your year-round Christian education program and the faith development of your congregation's families and children.

The strength of Day Camp is the partnership between camp staff and the congregation's volunteers. Camp staff are caring, committed young adults who are trained to lead Bible studies, worship, music, recreation, crafts and building community. Their enthusiasm, energy, curriculum and program ideas are important to the success of the Day Camp week. Congregational volunteers provide important continuity to the children. The relationships that you develop at Day Camp will be beneficial to the children year-round.

## **Health and Safety**

Our number one concern is the health and safety of everyone involved in the Day Camp experience. We expect that the day camp experience will provide a ratio of one adult to every eight campers.

## **Guiding Principles**

- Have fun. Everyone is here to enjoy doing things together. Join the fun and let your fun side shine!
- Be sincere. Campers know if you care. They know if you're playing favorites. They know if you are really listening to them.
- Be fair. Campers value fair play. Be consistent. Affirm each camper.
- Be involved. Take an active interest in each camper. Listen and support them. You are the adult. You must remain the adult while playing at the camper's level. Keep your cool and refrain from shouting or harsh language. State your expectations clearly.
- Use positive reinforcement. When you see a camper doing something you approve of, tell them. Positive reinforcement will alleviate the need to discipline. Threats and removing campers from activities are not appropriate ways to deal with behavior problems.
- Lead by example. Don't just tell the campers how to do something, give yourself a job that allows you to role model and, at the same time, supervise the project.

## **Offsite Activities**

- Staff will establish boundaries and rules with the campers before leaving church. Help determine that the campers understand expectations and the importance of following the safety rules.
- Campers may not be left unsupervised.
- An adult will accompany campers to public restrooms, but never in a one-on-one situation.
- Camper counts will be taken every 15 minutes, before and after moving from one area to another.
- Use the buddy system and teach campers why it is used.
- At least one person must be First Aid and CPR certified. A First Aid kit will accompany the group.
- Keep belongings with the group or have someone stay to monitor the belongings.
- Adults should spread out within the group remaining visible, accessible and attentive to the needs of campers.

## **Common Camper Characteristics**

- **WARNING:** maturity level and academic abilities will vary from camper to camper

### Kindergarten, First and Second Grade

- Learns by doing
- Right and wrong are black and white
- Wants to belong and please
- Has begun to read and write
- Needs and likes to move
- Is able to share
- Beginning to understand cause and effect
- Hold concrete images of God
- Undeveloped abilities to reflect on the spiritual meaning of Bible stories

### Third and Fourth Grade

- Can distinguish between fact and fantasy
- May read and write well
- Enjoys working on projects alone or with others
- Can be verbally hostile
- Able to accept responsibility for own actions
- Physically energetic
- Tends to think of God in human terms
- May still confuse God and Jesus
- Likes learning facts
- Has definite ideas about right and wrong

Fifth and Sixth Grade

- Often curious about the opposite sex
- May have begun adolescent development
- Needs parent but wants independence
- Doesn't like to be called a child
- Can be very moody
- Likes making own decisions
- Moving from concrete to abstract thinking
- Faces a lot of peer pressure
- More aware of self, others and the world
- Not satisfied with simple answers
- Needs challenging activities
- Strong desire to belong
- Describes God in human terms
- Clings to faith attitudes of parents

Thank you for volunteering,

The Day Camp Planning Team

**"If you are planting for a year, plant grain; if you are planting for a decade, plant trees; if you are planting for a century, plant people."**

- **Old Chinese proverb**