CAMP ST. NICHOLAS

The Southern California Deanery St. Nicholas Summer Camp

Camper & Parent Handbook

american CAMP association™

enriching lives, building tomorrows

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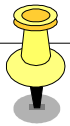


Dear Parent or Guardian,

I want to thank you for choosing to send your child to St. Nicholas Summer Camp this summer! We truly believe that it is a privilege for us to be entrusted with your child during his or her stay here. It is my prayer that our efforts will result in your child returning home having progressed physically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially.

This booklet contains information vital for allowing us to ensure that this takes place. We take the safety and well-being of your child as our first priority, and therefore we ask and expect that you will read each section carefully so that your child is prepared for their experience at St. Nicholas Summer Camp. This is especially important in that we are constantly striving to improve our work and this booklet includes some information which has been changed from previous years.

As we prepare for this summer's program, we ask you to keep us in your prayers, as they are vital to our ability to care properly for your child. We look forward to seeing your camper this summer at St. Nicholas Summer Camp!

With much love in Christ,

Katrina Bitar

Katrina Bitar
Camp Director

Preparing for Camp

The camp experience is like other important experiences in life: the better one is prepared, the more one gets out of the experience. This section covers all of the key areas that require attention before your camper leaves home.

Camp Life

Just about everything about life at camp is different than life at home. Preparing your camper with as much information as possible will be helpful to their adjustment. While giving them a positive preview of their coming experience, let them know that life will be different, and that you want them to go to gain many new experiences. Some of the areas to prepare them for would include the following:

Living arrangements: Campers live with fellow campers and their counselors in shared quarters. Each cabin has several sets of bunk beds and two private bathroom stalls. One of the best aspects of the camp experience is learning to adjust to group living and getting along as part of a team.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner are eaten together as a community in our Dining Hall. Some items served will be things your child may never have tried before, while other items may be things they dislike. Rest assured, our well-selected menu is both nutritious and attempts to meet the variety of tastes of the kids. Because of our need to feed a large amount of people in a relatively short period of time, we are not able to handle special requests for meals. Help your camper by relaying your expectation is that they will try new things and eat what is served.

Independence: Last but not least, one of the major adjustments campers experience is that being independent from parents, with typically no contact during the camping session. This can be one of the most positive experiences they can have at camp and one which can be invaluable in the process of growing up. Be aware that you as a parent may need to prepare for this as much - if not more - than your camper!

Camp Activities

Life at camp takes full advantage of our outdoor setting. Activities include field sports, court sports, archery (for Groups 3 &4), swimming and hiking. If your child has any restrictions from any of these activities, please note them on the Medical Form.

Cabin Assignments: Campers are grouped according to grade, age, and gender. If your camper has special circumstances necessitating the need to be in a cabin with someone else, you may write a letter to the Camp Director detailing the need. Cabinmates requests may also be made online when registering. Requests will be granted at the discretion of the Camp Director.

Registration & Fees: For a camper to be registered, we must receive both 1) a fully-completed Registration Form (attached) and 2) either a deposit of $50, made payable to "St. Nicholas Camping Program," or the full tuition payment. The Early bird tuition is $485 if registered and paid in full by April 1st, and $545 after April 1st for a one-week camper session. *Full tuition payment is due by July 1st or your registration is subject to cancellation.* Please make all payments in U.S. Funds only. Campers are registered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Be aware that online registration is also available on our website which results in immediate registration (campstnicholas.com).

Scholarship Information: Each parish in the Antiochian Archdiocese is provided with $700 in scholarship funds from the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch. Your parish priest determines the disbursement of these funds and can be consulted for all details. Additional scholarships may be requested by sending in the "Additional Scholarship Form" found on our website. **See pg. 2 of Confirmation Packet**

Cancellation and Refund Policy: We appreciate prompt notification if a camper must cancel. Cancellations before June 1 will receive a full refund less a $50 processing fee. After June 1, refunds of tuition payments may be requested in writing and will only be granted if a replacement for the open spot is found, except in cases of family emergency.

Health Care: Included in your registration "Confirmation Packet" are "Medical History and Health Examination Forms." These medical forms must be filled out in their entirety by you and the camper's doctor, and mailed to our office no later than June 15th or the camper's spot may be forfeited. A $25 fee will also be added to your account. Campers will not be allowed to attend camp without this form. A registered nurse or doctor is in residence during each week of the camping season to take care of any health care needs. Also, the majority of our staff are/will be certified in First Aid and CPR.

Insurance: All campers should be covered by their family policy. While the St. Nicholas Summer Camp will act as guarantor, any costs incurred by the camp in providing required treatment for doctor's appointments, prescriptions, etc. will be through your insurance. If your family is not covered by insurance, you must sign the Release Waiver on the Medical Form.

Packing for Camp

Dress Code
While camping is of its nature informal, Christian modesty should be taken into account when packing for your child's stay. Clothing should not be excessively revealing as inappropriate clothing will not be permitted to be worn.

Inappropriate clothing would include, but not be limited to:

- open back tops
- low-cut fronts
- skin tight clothing
- half shirts
- Bikinis and Speedos
  (Tankinis THAT COVER MIDRIFFS are permitted for females)
- tank tops with less than two finger width straps
- shorts cut shorter than a few inches above the knee
- low-cut waist-lines.
- clothing that promotes inappropriate products or themes

No more than two pairs of earrings are permitted for girls, none for guys. Excess earrings will be removed upon arrival. No other piercings (i.e. navel, tongue, etc.) are permitted.

Dress for church services are casual and include knee-length skirts, dresses and/or long pants for girls and long pants for boys. Shoulders must be covered and tank tops are not permitted.

Because of our outdoor setting with uneven terrain, tree roots, etc, backless shoes (flip-flops, etc.), open-toe shoes, and high heels are not safe and should not be packed and worn at camp. Athletic shoes must be worn during Afternoon Program.

Spending Money - Not!
Frazier Park, California, is not known as a source for shopping bargains. In fact, there is no need for money at all for campers since the Camp will provide everything necessary. Therefore, we request that you not let your camper bring any money to Camp.

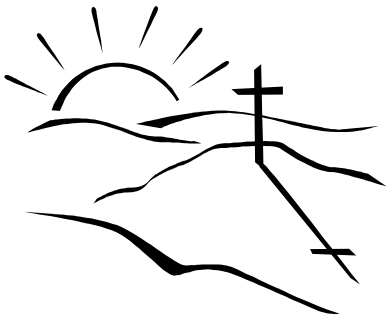
Snacks and Care Packages
No snacks need be sent with the campers as they will receive full meals and opportunities for snacks when appropriate. Here at Camp, packages with food or candy are simply an invitation for rodents and ants to come to a scrumptious dinner. Treats from home also often lead to stomach aches and improper nutrition, and complicate relationships between campers with treats and those without.

Laundry
There are no laundry facilities at Camp, so pack enough clothing to last at least one full week. All campers should bring a laundry bag in which to accumulate dirty clothing. It is recommended that your child's name be written on each piece of clothing with a permanent marker or with a name label to minimize loss.

Upon returning home, please check your camper's luggage immediately, and notify the Camp Office of any lost items. Clothing left behind will be held for two weeks after the end of the camping season, after which all unclaimed items will be donated to local families in need.

"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 18:3

"Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."
1 Timothy 4:12



"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 19:14

Camper Packing List

We do not recommend bringing expensive or name-brand clothing or other expensive items to camp. All items must be clearly labeled for identification. Cabin storage space is limited, so each camper should bring no more than two pieces of luggage: one suitcase/duffle bag and one carryon size small bag or backpack.

- ☐ Change of clothing for at least 7 days, with all items marked in indelible ink or iron-on tags.
- ☐ Long pants (jeans or sweats) for services each day
- ☐ Sturdy tennis/athletic shoes
- ☐ Modest swimsuit
  For Females: One-piece swimsuits or Tankinis THAT COVER MIDRIFFS and/or "boy-cut" shorts.
  For Males: No Speedos. Swim shorts must fit well at waist.
- ☐ A couple sweaters, sweatshirts, or lightweight jacket
- ☐ Sleeping bag, sheet and pillow
- ☐ Laundry Bag, marked with camper's name
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Two towels, washcloth
- ☐ Insect Repellant (non-aerosol, 10% max DEET content for children under 12, 30% max for 13 and up)
- ☐ Toiletries, including: Comb/brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant (non-aerosol)
- ☐ Optional: Bible, Red Prayer book, disposable camera (marked with name), journal, hiking boots, water bottle, travel games, cards

LEAVE HOME...

- ✖ Food
- ✖ CD/MP3 Players, pagers, cell phones, electronic games, etc.
- ✖ Jewelry and other valuables, including sports equipment
- ✖ All tobacco products
- ✖ Immodest apparel
- ✖ Dangerous implements, i.e. knives, axes, fireworks, etc.
- ✖ Any illegal substances (campers found with any will be sent home immediately)
- ✖ Pets
- ✖ Any aerosol products (hairspray, deodorant, insect repellent, etc)

St. Nicholas Summer Camp is not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items. Please be sure to label every item with your camper's name for easy identification.

Preventing Homesickness

Homesickness is a normal reaction for all of us whenever we leave our homes no matter what age we are. The question is then how we deal with this feeling, and how we can prevent it. The following section will help prepare the parent and the camper for this very normal feeling of missing home.

I Wanna Go Home!

By Fr. Michael Nasser

(Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese Department of Camping Director)

I can remember the feeling like it was yesterday- the dull pain coming from the hollow pit in my stomach, the overwhelming sense of fear, the terrible feeling that I was lost and alone. To top it off, I was horrified at the thought that I would feel like this for days on end. That is, of course, unless I could do the one thing that would make it all better- go home.

When the homesick kids tell me, "You don't understand!?" they couldn't be farther from the truth. When I was a camper, my camp director had never seen a more homesick kid!

Much later when I was 21 and coming to the Village for the first time to be a counselor, my mother's last words at the airport were "Are you sure you aren't going to get homesick?"

As adults we often minimize the experience that young children go through when they are homesick. Even if we do begin to understand what a difficult thing it can be, we know that our children must at some point leave the home without being traumatized, so we figure they just have to get through it. While that is often the only way to handle it, it would be better if homesickness could be prevented all together. Sound too good to be true? Maybe not.

Dr. Christopher Thurber at UCLA has done extensive research in the area of children's experience of homesickness (you guessed it, he was a homesick camper too). He has come up with several suggestions for preventing homesickness before it appears.

Getting Ready for Camp

We all know getting ready for camp means pulling out the sleeping bag and flashlight, but if you are sending a kid to camp for the first time, there's lots of *emotional* prep work that needs to be done as well. Here are three of Dr. Thurber's tips:

1) ***Practice*****:** Don't let camp be the first time a child is away from home. That would be enough to handle alone, without the fact that it's
at least a week and in an unknown place, often hundreds of miles from home. Weekends with grandparents or other family or friends are great "practice runs" even if your child doesn't know it. They learn that they can leave home and the world doesn't fall apart.

2) ***Preview*****:** Part of a child's preparation will be knowing what to expect at camp. Talks with other campers who have been to camp before, seeing their pictures, or taking a virtual tour of the camp at our website can help them preview what they will experience.

3) ***Prepare*****:** Promising your child you'll bring them home if they don't have a good time is the same as saying, "If you want to come home, here's what to do: don't have a good time." I've seen more than one homesick camper trying this as their best shot at getting home.

Once a child knows they are at camp to stay, they will make the effort to have a good time, but not before. You can always change your mind later, but do your child the favor by *not* letting them in on the option of an early departure. With the 'try it for one more day' approach, we find that kids do just that: they stay one day, and then demand that their parents make good on their promise and come pick them up. All kids miss home when they are away (well, OK, maybe not the teens). That's normal. Tell your child that they may feel this way and that it's OK.

Another big help is to let them know that *you* will be OK. Many kids' homesickness comes from worrying about how their parents are doing at home. Some good intentioned parents tell their kids, "Mommy and Daddy are going to miss you SO MUCH." Instead of conveying love, it tells the kids you need them at home. Let them know that while you will miss them, you will be happy knowing they are having a great time.

What to Expect

The first few days that a child is away from home, it is normal for him/her to miss home and to adjust to the new environment. Letters that are sent home on the first few days of camp often reflect this, and it is not uncommon for a child to over exaggerate to make the experience seem worse than it is. When a camper does this, they are also testing the parents ability to separate from their child. Although it can be difficult for the parent to insist that the child stay at camp, it is very important.

For school age children, it is appropriate to help the children deal with frustration, disappointment, conflict, and sadness while still remaining in their situation. When you give your child the confidence to cope and deal with the difficulties of daily life and the experience of handling an appropriate degree of discomfort, it is not only good parenting, but also helps the children to grow to be independent and strong.

Well, We Tried

So, you did all that and still you have a hysterical child calling from the camp director's office? If we at the camp think that an early departure is wise, we will tell you. The call is probably a tactic being used in the camp's treatment of the homesickness. The best thing you can do is support the plan the counselors and director are working on, which will probably include: letting the camper talk about his or her feelings without dwelling too long on them, writing letters and, most importantly, keeping busy. Receiving letters from home will be comforting (you may have to send one before the child leaves to arrive early in the session). Phone calls usually make homesickness worse, so please refrain from calling the Camp except for an emergency. In very rare cases after some time passes and the child isn't able to deal better with the homesickness, the camp director may suggest an early departure. If that's the case, it will be helpful to reinforce the fact that the child tried in the first place, and leave a door open for next year. With the right preparation and the right cooperation between parents and camp staff, your child can gain the invaluable experience of being OK away from home. Children gain independence and self-reliance from their time spent away from home at camp, so we hope that no campers leave early. While that is going on, parents can enjoy a guilt-free week or two of peace and quiet, knowing their child is taking some great big steps toward growing up.

Coping with Homesickness at Camp

- If your child wants to talk to you on the phone, we'll talk to you in advance about it. When speaking with your child, offer calm reassurance and love. Avoid the temptation to bring them home early. Let them know it is an important step towards growing up. Speak about the positive aspects of camp.
- Don't feel guilty about encouraging your child to stay at camp. For many children this is the first step toward independence.

- If you receive a letter saying “I hate camp. I can’t sleep. I cried. My counselor hates me.” Don’t panic. This a tactic some campers will use to achieve the ultimate aim of the homesick camper: Getting Home! Rest assured, your child is being loved, fed and cared for in every way. They뭘e just taking a rough but necessary step in the process of growing up. Send reassuring letters to your child, and feel free to call the camp director to obtain his observation of your child’s adjustment.

During the Camping Session

Relax!
While your child is at camp, take advantage and enjoy the (temporary) quiet! If you miss your kids, write a letter or two - campers love getting mail! Relax, knowing your children are in good hands.

Visits to Camp
Please feel free to meet our staff and tour the camp facilities on check-in day. However, due to potential problems with campers becoming homesick when they see a parent or family member, we ask that there be no other visitors to camp during the regular camping session.

Contact with your child

The active camp schedule prevents regular contact from the camper. Outgoing calls may be allowed only at the discretion of the Camp Director, and only for urgent matters.

Receiving or placing phone calls during the session disrupts the program and often makes homesickness worse, so we do not allow them except for emergency circumstances. You therefore will probably not hear from the camp and ‘no news is good news!’ If your camper suffers serious injury or illness, you will be promptly notified. These would include any issue requiring off-camp health services or an illness in which a fever lasts for more than 24 hours.

We know how hard it can be to let go, not knowing what your child is doing during their stay. To give you a non-invasive peek in on them, parents and others are invited to check the camp website for daily updates during the camping session at www.campstnicholas.com. You’ll find pictures of campers in action with accompanying narration to fill you in on the day’s events.

Should a serious need to communicate with your child arise, please call the camp at (661) 245-3571. We encourage letter writing both to and from camp, with mail being delivered daily. Sending a letter before your child leaves home is a good idea, as the mail will be waiting for your child on their first full day at camp. Ask questions about camp, but avoid telling your child how much you miss them, as this may spark homesickness. Short declarations of love such as, "We're so proud of you", or "We love you", or "See you real soon" are just what your child will want to hear.

Camper Conduct

All campers are expected to act in ways appropriate to an Orthodox Christian setting. While all disciplinary action will be taken to attempt resolution on site, the Camp Director reserves the right to dismiss campers for gross violations of camp rules. Parents will be responsible for arranging and covering costs for their child's early departure.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God."
Colossians 3:16

Arrival and Departure

Check-In & Check-Out Days
On the first day of the session, Campers being driven to the camp may be checked in between 1:00 PM and 4:00 PM. Arrivals at any other time must be approved in advance by the Camp Director. Chaperones are welcome to stay and visit the camp grounds during these hours only.

Registration will take place in the patio area. The process will include being introduced to your camper's counselor, meeting the nurse to discuss any heath issues and/or turning over all medications which will be dispensed them from the Infirmary, and collecting all cash to prevent loss during the session.

Each session ends on the following Saturday after the beginning of the session. Campers must be picked up between 9:00 AM and 10:30 AM. Please pick your child up no later than 10:30 AM as our staff must prepare for the following session.

Driving Directions

Camp St. Nicholas is located at:
11770 Frontier Road
Frazier Park, CA 93225

1. From Interstate 5, take the Frazier Park exit into Frazier Park.

2. If you were going South on I-5, you will want to turn Right off the exit. If you were going North on I-5, you will want to turn Left. (You will see a couple gas stations off of the exit on the west side of the interstate.)

3. Keep going straight for just a hair over 12 miles. (The road will become Cuddy Valley Road and it will be a two-lane road more often than not - one going each way. Just follow the curves.)

4. You will come up to a split in the road (often referred to as "The Y"). You want to slow down and turn right at the split onto Mil Portero Highway.

5. As you make that right, turn your LEFT blinker on. Just about 75-100 feet after you hit the split, you want to turn left onto the dirt road. (There is a wooden sign at the entrance.)

Printable maps are available on our website at www.campstnicholas.com