



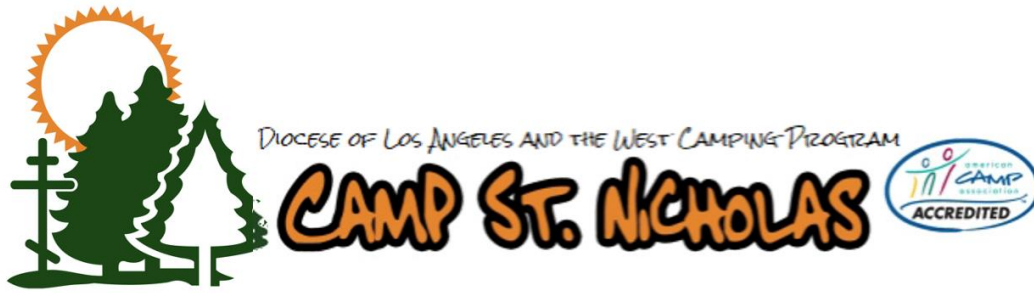
**2023 CAMP ST. NICHOLAS  
CAMPER / PARENT HANDBOOK**

The Official Camper and Parent Handbook for Camp St Nicholas of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Diocese of Los Angeles.

Campers and parents should familiarize themselves with the content of this handbook prior to packing and traveling to Camp St. Nicholas.

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Christ is in our midst.

We are very excited that you have registered your child(ren) for camp at Camp St Nicholas. You are in good company. According to the American Camp Association, millions of kids attend camp each year, and more than 2,600 young people attend camps throughout the Antiochian Archdiocese each summer alone. We appreciate the fact that you are ready to entrust into our care the ones who mean the most in the world to you. We work hard to never take that trust for granted, and feel privileged to be able to partner with you in the spiritual growth of your child(ren).

The following pages contain information vital to your ability to properly prepare your child(ren) and your family for camp this summer at Camp St Nicholas. We take the safety and well-being of your child(ren) as our first priority, and therefore we ask and expect that you will read each section carefully so that you can properly prepare your camper(s) for their camping experience, and we can be properly prepared to receive and care for them. This is especially important as we constantly strive to improve our work, and this booklet includes some information which has been changed from previous years.

We look forward to seeing your child(ren) at camp this summer here at Camp St Nicholas!

In Christ,

Fr Andrew Andrews  
Director, Camp St Nicholas  
Assistant Pastor, St Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral

# Camp St Nicholas

## Mission Statement

Camp St. Nicholas transforms lives and nurtures faith in Jesus Christ through Orthodox Christian community living, worship, education, fellowship, and love. To realize this mission, we will:

- Die to ourselves daily for the sake of Christ and our neighbor
- Be willing to repent and forgive
- Aim to be our authentic self, created in the image and likeness of God, and see the image of God in each person we encounter
- Model our faith in our actions and words
- Experience God's creation and our role as its steward
- Embrace every person's role as an integral part of the community; we are one body of many parts
- Be a servant leader
- Work together as a community that demonstrates what it means to be IN the world but not OF the world

## The Good Counselor

*I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

*As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*

*And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

*Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.*

*No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*

*—John 10:14-18*

Though there can be no complete list of attributes of the “Good Counselor,” our selection and training processes are intended to provide a staff that both understands and exhibits the attributes of the “Good Counselor”. We are proud of our staff and their commitment to your children. We look forward to serving you and them this Summer.



# Preparing for Camp

## ***CABIN ASSIGNMENTS***

Campers are grouped according to grade, age and gender. If your camper has special circumstances necessitating specific rooming assignments, please either make that request known using the “Roommate” function in the Registration System or notify us via email at [office@campstnicholas.com](mailto:office@campstnicholas.com). We cannot guarantee these types of requests but will do our best to honor them.

## ***REGISTRATION AND FEES***

To secure a registration, the registration form must be completed online and a \$100 deposit must be made. During this registration process, families may also select to be included in the bus service that transports campers to and from either St Nicholas Cathedral (LA) or St Luke Church (Garden Grove). There is a \$50 each way additional fee to use the bus, which is paid at the time the reservation is made. Any scholarships received from local parishes, or from the Order of St Ignatius will be credited directly into camper accounts and parents will see those credits when they view their camper’s registration online. Final payments are due by June 9, 2023. Any registration not paid in full by June 25, 2023 is subject to release to a wait listed camper.

## ***MEDICAL FORMS***

Basic medical information is collected at the time of registration, but campers must also provide a medical release signed by their physician by June 9, 2023. The form for this is available on the registration site and once completed can be scanned back in on the same website. Please note that the system can only upload one document per camper, so if your document is multiple pages, please scan it into a single PDF for uploading. If a family has difficulty getting the forms to upload, email them to [office@campstnicholas.com](mailto:office@campstnicholas.com) and we will upload them for you. Please note that whether directly uploaded or sent to our email, these files must be in our possession no later than June 9, 2023 or a late fee of \$50 will be assessed to your account. If you are having difficulty securing an appointment to get your medical form signed, please let our office know in advance of the deadline and we will do what we can to accommodate your timeline.

If your camper is a diabetic, is prone to seizures, has specific food allergies, or has asthma, you will find additional forms at [www.campstnicholas.com/site/forms/](http://www.campstnicholas.com/site/forms/) which will allow you to more comprehensively describe their condition and appropriate interventions that may be required at camp. If you complete one of these optional forms, please email them to [office@campstnicholas.com](mailto:office@campstnicholas.com).

## ***SCHOLARSHIPS***

In addition to scholarships offered by various parishes for their campers, the Antiochian Archdiocese offers scholarships through the Order of St Ignatius of Antioch. Speak to your parish priest about these scholarships. The Camp has additional sources of funding for those in need of tuition support. Any family who would like to request these funds can do so by filling out the “Additional Tuition Assistance Request Form” which is also downloadable from the registration system. We will do our best, by accessing multiple funding sources, to assist all requests for tuition support. This form can be found at [www.campstnicholas.com/site/forms/](http://www.campstnicholas.com/site/forms/). Once completed, it should be mailed to Fr. Andrew directly so that confidentiality of the request can be maintained. See the form for mailing instructions.

## ***CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS***

We understand that sometimes plans need to change. We will honor cancellations with refund of the deposit if the cancellation is made before June 09, 2023. After this date a cancellation request will be processed but the deposit will be forfeited. If a cancellation is requested after June 25, a cancellation fee of 50% of the full tuition will be assessed. Any exceptions to this cancellation policy must be approved by the Camp Director.

## ***HEALTH CARE***

Each week we will have on-site medical staff. Campers will check in at the medical table where we will confirm the information on their health forms, validate that we know of any dietary restrictions or food allergies, and receive all medications brought to camp. Medications will be dispensed throughout the camp session by our medical staff at twice daily medication calls (note that those with unique dispensing requirements should notify the medical staff at check in so we can accommodate your camper’s dosing schedule). In addition to our on-site medical staff, many of the counselors are trained in basic First Aid and in CPR. We also have a physician on call (unless the medical professional on site your week is also a physician) to provide consultation in the event of any emergent issues. Please be sure your emergency contacts are correct on your registration forms as this is the way we will reach you should we need to contact you from camp. Also, please be sure your health insurance information is provided with your registration. If your family is not covered by insurance, you must sign the release waiver on the Medical Form.



## *MENTAL HEALTH*

At Camp St Nicholas we take mental health seriously and we do our best to ensure all campers are mentally healthy and receive the help they need. As required by the State of California, all staff members are considered “mandated reporters”, which means we are required by law to report suspected child abuse. This means if we have any reason to suspect that a child (under the age of 18) is being abused – physically, sexually, emotionally, or psychologically – we are required by law to report it. At Camp St Nicholas, if we suspect any form of abuse, our policy, as mandated by law, is for the staff member who suspects the abuse (i.e. the staff member who received the information first-hand) to notify the Camp Director immediately who will contact the appropriate authorities, give the information that is required, and follow their guidelines going forward. Please know that if we do have to make a call, we are only permitted by law to make the report and then provide support to the alleged victim.

We do not have licensed social workers or therapists on staff at Camp St Nicholas. However, we will have several priests on camp, who are able and willing to talk to individuals at any time. No individual is ever forced to talk to anyone at camp.

Please know that our goal at Camp St Nicholas is the safety and wellbeing of our campers, staff, and volunteers. If we determine that an individual is a risk to him/herself or others, we may contact the individual’s parents/guardians and ask them to pick the individual up as soon as possible. This is especially the case if we suspect an individual wishes to hurt him/herself or someone else.

Our staff participate in an extensive training on the topic of mental health. They are informed and given information about several mental health disorders we often see at camp, common behaviors that are manifested in those disorders, and effective strategies for responding to those behaviors.

We instruct our staff to not “dig” for information from our campers. Our staff’s job is to simply listen if campers open up about personal issues. Our staff do not promise confidentiality, only that any action they take will be in the best interest of the camper, which may include speaking with clergy or with parents.

If you have any additional questions regarding our mental health procedures, please feel free to contact us at [office@campstnicholas.com](mailto:office@campstnicholas.com).

## *PREVENTING HOMESICKNESS*

Fr Michael Nasser, the Antiochian Village Camp Director for 10 years, wrote an article to help families prepare their children for camp and to help circumvent potential homesickness. The article provides practical steps to help minimize the impact of homesickness for your children while they are at camp. The article can be found on the Antiochian Village Website at <https://avcamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Preventing-Homesickness.pdf>. It recommends three key steps to minimize homesickness:

### **PRACTICE**

Don’t let camp be the first time a child is away from home. Weekends with grandparents or other family or friends are great practice runs. Children will learn they can leave home and the world doesn’t fall apart.

### **PREVIEW**

Prepare your children for what to expect at camp. Review this guide with them. Talk with other campers who have been to camp before. View photographs from prior camp sessions on our website [www.campstnicholas.com/site/daily-photos/](http://www.campstnicholas.com/site/daily-photos/).

### **PREPARE**

Don’t promise to pick them up if they get homesick. That’s the worst approach as campers will think that’s their “out” and won’t try to engage with the program. Once a child knows they are at camp to stay, they will make the effort to have a good time, but not before. All kids miss home when they are away. That’s normal. Tell your children it’s OK to feel that way. Also, let them know you will be OK while they are away.

# Guidelines for What to Pack

Updated by the Archdiocese Camping Program - April 2022

Enjoying everything camp has to offer begins with packing the proper attire. Our program contains a variety of experiences, and we want you to be ready for them all! **We will often be sitting on the floor, walking long distances, and participating in athletic activities.** This packing list should provide the details you need to prepare for an incredible time at camp!

## Bottoms

- Shorts
  - Camp is meant for running, jumping, climbing, etc., so be sure your shorts fit those activities
  - Be mindful of the length and fit
  - Spandex/biker shorts are not permissible
- Pants
  - The mornings and evenings tend to be cool, so some long pants are ideal
  - Sagging and see-through pants are not permissible
  - Long pants are a must for the evenings, as it gets cold on the mountain

## Shirts (*enough for at least 7 days- maybe more... we tend to sweat a lot*)

- Shirts should meet your waistline and cover your chest. Your midriff should be covered while arms are raised, allowing you to participate in athletic activities.
- Active wear and tank tops with thicker straps are great for afternoon program
- Low cut arm holes and spaghetti strap tanks are not permissible
- We recommend long sleeve shirts and pants during sunset hours when mosquitoes are most active and for the nighttime when temperatures will drop.

## Daily Services in the Chapel (*some morning services, vespers each night and one Divine Liturgy per week*):

- Long pants as well as shirts that cover your shoulders are required for daily services in the Chapel.
- Nicer attire is recommended for the Divine Liturgy
  - Guys: Collared shirt, and pants that are not jeans
  - Gals: Dress, skirt, or pants that are not jeans with a blouse (skirts and dresses should be near the knee or lower)
- We sit on the floor for homilies so please be mindful of length and ensure your outfit will allow you to remain covered in the front and the back.
- Cabin photos are taken after the Divine Liturgy, so look your best.

## Shoes

- Closed-toed shoes with backs are a must to keep our feet safe
- Flip Flops/open toed shoes are acceptable only for use in the shower and at the swimming pool
- Athletic shoes must be worn during the afternoon program
- Heels are not safe on camp terrain and should not be packed and worn at camp

## Pool Attire

- Guys: Swim trunks that fit well at the waist (be mindful of length and fit). Speedos are not permissible.
- Gals: One-piece swimsuits, tankinis, or swim shorts that cover the midriff. Bikinis and front cutouts are not permissible.
- Be sure to bring goggles (if you want them) and a towel (different than your shower towel).

## **Piercings/Tattoos**

- Because we are very active at camp, girls with pierced ears should consider studs rather than hoops.
- Body and facial piercings are not permissible. Earrings on guys are not permissible
- Tattoos should remain covered (with the possible exception of at the pool)

## **Other Garments**

- Underwear – enough for an entire week.
- Socks – up to two pairs a day (they get dirty really fast)
- Jacket/Sweater/sweatshirt – for early morning and evenings.
- Theme nights and Color Wars – More information will be provided as we approach camp about any theme nights scheduled so you can prepare some items to bring to dress in the theme.

## **Toiletries**

- Towels – Bring two towels (one for the pool and one for the shower). A washcloth is also helpful.
- Sunscreen, Deodorant, Shampoo, Body Wash or Soap, Chap Stick, Hand Lotion, Bug Repellent
- Hairbrush / Comb
- Toothpaste and Toothbrush
- Feminine products

## **Other Items**

- Reusable water bottle (this is critical as the 6,500 foot altitude is very dehydrating)
- Pillow, sleeping bag or twin sheets, and a blanket
- Flashlight
- Stuffed animal (if desired)
- Laundry bag for dirty clothes (marked with your name)
- Any medicine you take must be in its original container and given to the nurse at check in
- Bible and/or Pocket Prayer Book
- Musical instrument (camper takes responsibility for care and any damage that may occur)

## **Leave at Home (*any of these items will be confiscated upon arrival to camp*)**

- Food
- Electronics (cell phones, ipods, electronic games, ipads/tablets, etc.)
- All alcohol, drugs, THC or nicotine containing products (cigarettes, vapes, dab pens, water pipes, etc.)
- Dangerous implements (knives, axes, fireworks, etc.)
- Any illegal substances (campers found with any will be sent home immediately)
- Jewelry and other valuables
- Immodest apparel/Clothing with inappropriate writing
- High heels
- Open-toed shoes (besides shower/pool shoes)
- Pets
- Money

*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.*



# What To Expect At Camp

## **SNACKS AND CARE PACKAGES**

No snacks should be sent with campers as they will receive full meals and opportunities for snacks when appropriate during the camping day. To ensure the safe distribution of food, all food and snacks will be handled by the kitchen staff. There is no place at camp to store and distribution personal snacks. Likewise, any care packages from home should not contain any food.

*NOTE: There are exceptions for campers with dietary restrictions (by this we mean medical conditions stated on their physician signed health form, not just food preferences). Please notify the medical staff of any needs and present these foods at check-in. We will store them safely.*

## **LAUNDRY AND MISSING CLOTHING**

There are no camper laundry facilities at Camp St Nicholas. Pack enough clothing to last the entire camping session. All campers should bring a laundry bag to store their dirty cloths. It is recommended that your camper's name be written on clothing with a permanent marker or a name label to minimize loss as many campers' cloths look alike. Upon returning home, please check your camper's luggage and notify us at [office@campstnicholas.com](mailto:office@campstnicholas.com) should you find that you have lost items or perhaps have taken home someone else's item.

Clothing left behind at camp will be held for two weeks after the end of the final week of camp (so approximately August 15), after which all unclaimed items will be donated to local families in need.

## **CONTACT WITH YOUR CAMPER**

The active camp schedule prevents regular contact from our 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. Should a serious need to communicate with your camper arise, please call the camp at (661) 245-3571. If your camper suffers serious injury or illness, you will be promptly notified.

To give you an opportunity to peek in on them, parents and others are invited to check the camp website at [www.campstnicholas.com](http://www.campstnicholas.com) where we will post daily photos. We encourage letter writing both to and from camp, with mail being delivered daily. Sending a letter before your camper leaves home is a good idea, as the mail will be waiting for your camper on their first full day at camp.

## **CAMP-O-GRAM**

Email your campers at [campogram@campstnicholas.com](mailto:campogram@campstnicholas.com) Be sure to include the camper's full name and cabin number if you know it. Please note that this email address is different from the one we used in prior years (that address is no longer valid). We will print your message on a Camp-O-Grams template for distribution to your camper each day at camp.

## **HEALTH PRECAUTIONS BEFORE ARRIVAL**

In order to reduce the risk that a camper comes to camp sick, please minimize to the extent possible participation in large group activities in the week prior to your arrival at camp. Campers may consider masking when in large groups during the week prior to camp as an added protection from getting sick right before camp.

Vaccination is recommended for all camp participants, but it is not a requirement. Of course, and hopefully it goes without saying, if your camper is sick please do not send them to camp.

## **ARRIVAL DAY**

Drop off time on the Sunday your session begins is between the hours of 1PM and 4PM. We will be checking in over 100 campers each session, so please be sure to arrive within the check-in window. As you drive up to the camp, please take instructions from our staff who will guide you to the drop off spot.

We will not be allowing families to stay at camp after drop off. This is intended both to allow our staff to focus on the arriving campers, and also to minimize the number of cars in our limited parking area. Please say all your "Goodbyes" as you're driving up the hill so that you can help your camper unload, get them through the check-in station, and give them a hug. Remember that our camp speed limit is 10 MPH.

All bags will be dropped into a "drop pile" and our camp vehicles will take all the bags up to the quad by the camper cabins. Please stay with your children until we've checked them in and received any medication they may have with them. Also, please be sure to let us know if someone else will be responsible for picking your campers up at the end of the session. After that, you are clear to depart.

We encourage you to retain your camper's phones and other electronics. If they insist on holding onto their phone, we will be them at check-in, placing them in a bag, and returning it to them on departure day.

## *DEPARTURE DAY*

Pickup time is between 9AM – 11AM. Please be on time. Follow the staff instructions for bringing your vehicle up to the dining hall building. Identify yourself to our check-out staff and we will call your campers to come to collect their baggage and head to your car. Our staff will assist your campers in bringing their bags to your car. Once you have collected your camper, please depart the mountain.

## *VISITS TO CAMP*

Visitors are not allowed at Camp while it is in session.

## *DRIVING DIRECTIONS*

Camp St. Nicholas is located at 11770 Frontier Road, Frazier Park, CA 93225. From Interstate 5, take the Frazier Park exit into Frazier Park.

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.

Keep going straight for just a about 12 miles (the road will become Cuddy Valley Road). You will come up to a split in the road around 12 miles in. Slow down and turn right at the split onto Mil Portero Highway.

As you make that right, turn your LEFT blinker on. Just about 75-100 feet after you hit the split, turn left onto the dirt road and follow it up the hill to Camp St Nicholas (which will be on your left). Please drive slowly once you get to the dirt road as it may be uneven.

Turn left onto our camp property and follow our camp road up to the dining hall, following the instructions of our staff. The speed limit on our entire camp property is 10 MPH. Please do not drive in excess of this speed for safety sake.

Both Google Maps and Waze do a good job of finding the camp based upon our street address.

## *CAMP STANDARDS*

Campers are to stay with their assigned counselors at all times and remain at their scheduled events.

All food will be stored and consumed in the mess hall eating area.

Girls and boys will remain in their respective areas of the quad. Girls will only go inside girls cabins and boys only inside boys cabins. Porches are considered part of a cabin.

All camp and personal property will be respected and treated as part of the community. As active participants in this community, raiding and any other mistreatment of camp and personal property will not occur.

Caution will be used when playing outside or inside cabins.

Campers and staff are not permitted in the pool area without a lifeguard on duty. Campers and staff are not permitted in the Archery Range without a qualified instructor.

Alcohol, drugs, tobacco, products containing THC, vape pens, weapons, and any flammable substances are prohibited.

Each member of the community will participate in all church services, wearing appropriate attire.

Closed-toed shoes will be worn at all times when outside to avoid injury (except in the shower or at the pool).

Fighting, swearing, bullying, and other such behavior is prohibited as it does not reflect behavior consistent with living as a Christian.

Conflicts that arise between campers and/or counselors will be approached and addressed in a Christian manner, with love and understanding from all sides. Any required discipline will be based upon Christian love and a need to redirect inappropriate or unsafe behavior.

Cell phones should be left at home. If not, they will be collected at the beginning of the week. They will be kept in a safe place and returned to the camper at the end of the week. Staff with cell phones will never use them unless on break and outside the presence of campers.

## *A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP*

Each session is filled with activities that allow young people to experience a holistic Orthodox Christian lifestyle. Campers experience an average day with cabin wake-up followed by a morning church service followed by breakfast where, as at all meals, we begin and end with community prayer. Songs and playful chants are often heard at mealtimes that help create an atmosphere of love and fellowship. Divided into cabins, the morning program consists of two one-hour sessions, filled with Christian Education classes and other activities such as lives of the Saints and Ask Abouna sessions. Lunch is attended by all staff and campers to refuel for an afternoon of sports, activities, and fun. All campers attend two one-hour afternoon periods where they will rotate between activities such as Arts and Crafts, swimming, volleyball, basketball, archery, and two towers, just to name a few. We offer a snack between the afternoon sessions. There is quiet or social time within the cabin before the evening commences with Vespers where camper and staff participation is encouraged, followed by dinner. Each evening, the campers are entertained and involved in a wide variety of programs such as campfire night, skit night, talent night, and much more. Following evening program, cabin time allows for unwinding and unanswered questions for individual cabins. Our younger campers have an earlier bedtime to allow them sufficient sleep before the start of a new day at camp.

## *CAMP LIFE*

Nearly 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 you want them to gain many new experiences while away. Some areas to prepare them for include the following:

### *Living Arrangements*

Campers will live with approximately 15 fellow campers and their counselor in shared quarters. Each cabin is equipped with bunk beds and has its own shower and toilets. Campers are grouped according to age and gender. One of the best aspects of the camp experience is learning to adjust to group living, making new friends, and getting along as part of a team.

### *Meals*

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are eaten together as a cabin. Rest assured, our menu is both nutritious and attempts to meet the variety of tastes of the campers. Many items will be to your child's liking, some items served may be things your child may never have tried before, while other items may be things they dislike. Because of our need to feed nearly 150 people in a relatively short period of time, we are not able to handle

special requests for meals. Please help your camper by relaying your expectation that they will try new things and eat what is served. If for medical reasons there are dietary restrictions or food allergies for your camper, please notify the camp in the online registration portal, so that the Camp Nurse and Kitchen Staff may properly prepare for your camper's arrival.

If your camper has food allergies or there are medical reasons for dietary restrictions, you will need to provide a physician note outlining the necessary dietary needs of your camper. We will only prepare for food allergies if provided a doctor's note. For a camper with food allergies, the FARE Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan must be completed and signed by both parent/guardian and physician and submitted along with all required healthcare information forms by the health form deadline. This form may be found at [www.campstnicholas.com/site/forms/](http://www.campstnicholas.com/site/forms/).

### *Fasting*

As an Orthodox Christian camp, we adhere to the tenets of the Orthodox Christian Faith, and therefore, on prescribed days we follow the fast of the Church in a very simple and humble attempt. Our fasting practice here at Camp St Nicholas is to refrain from meats on fasting days. While we recognize that families follow different fasting practices, here at camp we feel this is a reasonable expectation of all campers and staff to aid us in our spiritual growth. We encourage you as parents to speak with your children about fasting so it is not a surprise while at camp.

### *Camp Activities*

Life at camp takes full advantage of our outdoor setting. Activities include field sports, basketball, volleyball, swimming, archery, and hiking. Please be sure to pack appropriate attire for outdoor activities.

### *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.

### *Independence*

Last but not least, one of the major adjustments campers experience is 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 as a parent, you may need to prepare for this as much—if not more—than your camper!

# Map of the Camp

