

Day Camp Specific Counselor Training

Thanks for being willing to help at Junior Day Camp or First Adventure Day Camp this summer! This is such an important camp because many kids ask Jesus to be their Savior in this age range! They are capable of understanding lots of things about God! It is also important because it is many of these kids' first time at camp, so we want to make it a great time for them!

Logistics:

There are two camps running at the same time. Junior Day Camp for 9-12 year olds is Monday through Friday and First Adventure Day Camp for ages 6-8 is Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. We all have flag raising, chapels, and eat lunch together, but the rest of the day they mostly have separate activities.

Both Day camps are from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm each day. If you live in Huron, you can ride the bus from JVC each day! It leaves at 9 am and gets back at 4 pm. Having counselors ride the bus is super helpful for us. It helps make it safe and fun for campers. If you are driving yourself, you can come to camp at 8:30 am for a counselor meeting. For those who can help, each day from 3:30 to 4:30 we will clean up and reset camp for the next day. After day camp on Thursday, we will have supper together, debrief and worship time, and hangout time.

Counselors for Junior Day Camp will have a devotional group and a team that they are a part of leading and will also supervise free time activities.

Counselors for First Adventure Day Camp, you will get paired with some other counselors, and you will help lead a group of about 8-10 little boys or girls to different activities around camp.

You will want to bring a backpack everyday with your Bible, clothes that can get wet or a modest swimsuit, a water bottle, shoes that can get wet, and a towel. Wearing a watch is super helpful.

When you arrive each day, put your backpack on a hook and let your first thought be “*how can I make a kid's day right now?*” Hang out downstairs in the Retreat Center with the kids until the bell rings and then we will head outside to start the day with flag raising.

Training for Junior Day Camp Specifically:

Most everything we do at Jr. Day Camp is similar to overnight camps. One thing to remember is that we have less time with them, so use every opportunity you have to build a

friendship with them and talk about God. This camp seems to take some extra patience. For devotional time, splitting up in as small of groups as you can is helpful.

Training for First Adventure Day Camp Specifically:

God can do big things in little kid's hearts! Kids 5-8 are the perfect age to understand the gospel. I gave my life to the Lord at 6 and I understood! Expect great things from God.

We don't force kids to do anything, but we ask the whole group to stick together. Kids this age may need to watch an activity first before they are comfortable participating.

It's important to watch the clock and rotate on your own so you get to the next thing.

It's super helpful to give this age a heads up before transitioning to the next event, that way their brains have time to process. Having a watch and telling them "in 10 mins..." or "in 5 mins we'll be heading to _____" is helpful for them.

If you are willing to ride the bus, it is a HUGE help to keep the campers safe.

How to give a short camp tour...

- Show: bathrooms, chapel area, cups for water, drinking fountain, dining room, game room, craft room, gaga ball, human foosball, gym, warn about waterfront. Just point out these things. You can give a few helpful instructions but this is not a time to teach the rules of gaga ball and play or to hang out in the game room. It's just to show them around.

Katelyn will teach them "Peace and Quiet" to get their attention when they first arrive at camp. You can use this in your own group, but don't overuse it they can be loud and crazy a lot of the time 😊 Can also try...

- Clap if you can hear me, clap two times, make it three eyes on me.
- Or have them do things like hands in the air, hands on the floor, hands over your mouth, ears ready to listen eyes looking at me, hands folded

Each group will be given a rope in your color that can be used as a tool to help keep them together or move locations. You could have them hold onto the rope while you are waiting for everyone or to hold with one hand and walk calmly to the next space. Use this when needed, but sometimes letting them run from one building to another is a great option too.

Have them take their water bottle everywhere.

Encourage bathroom breaks, refilling and drinking water. Go with them if needed.

Make sure there is always a counselor with the group.

Counselors are here to help them feel SAFE and LOVED!

They have short attention spans, that's why activities are 20-30 minutes long.

Remember: This age group might not be able to read, tell time, tie shoes, count money, put on sunscreen/bug spray... Be ready to help them!

Names! Be intentional to learn your campers' names, review them every day and use them often. Introduce yourself too! And point out names of other important adults. (maybe play a quick game to help them learn each other's names)

Be vocal! And repeat often. Have patience to say things multiple times to help them understand. Use their names often and give specific encouragement when you see them.

This is about them, not us, and they are watching and listening to everything we do.

Patience! They don't always know how to process emotions or even know why they're upset. Give them time, love on them and gently talk to them. They don't think in logical terms like adults when they're emotional. Ask what is wrong and how you can help.

Be imaginative! Their brains are so creative and constantly learning. Find fun ways to tie in the Gospel and stories of Jesus to everyday activities.

This age is when they start making friends and opening their worldview beyond themselves. Encourage and model friendships to them.

Don't be afraid to ask another counselor for help, advice, or if you have a question. We are here to help each other! Also, it is important to back up other counselors on what they say is okay so the kids don't get frustrated or confused.