

## ***How to prepare you and your child for camp***

Giving your child to the care of other people is perhaps the greatest act of trust you as a parent can give. We aim to do everything we can to earn and keep that trust; and, we know we cannot do this without your help. We want to partner with you to ensure your child/children will have the safest, most fun and faith-filled experience possible while at camp. Following are a few suggestions as you prepare your child for their week at camp:

- Talk about camp before you go. Ask questions together and discuss what camp might be like and what they might expect. Let them know what you will be doing when they are away. Help your child focus on making new friends and on being involved in camp activities.
- If your child has any special health, food allergies, or sleep related concerns, please share those with the camp staff so they can prepare for your child's arrival.
- Send a letter to your child before camp begins so a message from home will be awaiting his/her arrival. Ask specific questions about what they are doing and reassure them of how pleased you are by their being at camp.
- For safety sake, we have a "no cell phone" policy at camp. Cell phones can be lost, stolen or used inappropriately with photos or calls to outsiders who could potentially put campers at risk. Regular use of cell phones/texting also tends to slow the formation of community and takes away from the learning and growth of being in an outdoor setting. For these reasons we ask you to please leave cell phones at home.
- Be prepared to talk about camp with your child upon their return home. This is important. The act of "processing" your child's experience helps them not only share with you what they did; it also serves to involve parents in the experience and helps the child reflect on how they have grown.
- If this is your child's first time away from family for an extended period of time and you feel they may become homesick, speak openly on the topic before your child leaves camp.
- Try brainstorming some positive coping strategies like talking to their camp counselor, writing letters, or drawing pictures of what they did that day. It is not always helpful to simply tell your child that you will come and get them (even phone calls prevent this opportunity for success). Overcoming homesickness can be a great achievement for your child. Rest assured, should your child get homesick while at camp – and we feel it would be helpful – we will contact you by phone. If this happens, please use this as an opportunity to build up your child and help them face this new experience.

Going away to camp is a wonderful growth experience for both campers and parents. Please let us know how we at camp can help YOUR child have the best week possible. **And here is the best tip yet...pray for YOUR child while they are away at camp...and everyday for the rest of their lives!**

*Used with permission from Lutheran Outdoors in South Dakota*