

Camp St Mary of Egypt

Sponsored by the parishes of the
Northwest Deanery of the
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

Camper & Parent Handbook

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Dear Parents or Guardians,

We are so pleased that you have chosen to send your child to Camp St Mary of Egypt (CSME)!

During the week of camp, your child will have a wonderful opportunity to live in community with their brothers and sisters in Christ, make lasting friendships with other committed Orthodox Christians, and deepen their faith. Through the years, we have seen campers grow and mature in their faith and commitment, spurred on by the positive interactions they have at Camp St Mary of Egypt. Camp truly lasts a lifetime!

This booklet will help address some of the typical questions or concerns about the camp experience. We are grateful for the trust you as parents and guardians place in us during the week of camp, and we do not take that trust lightly. Please know that your child's well-being is at the core of our mission to make the week of camp a loving, encouraging, and edifying environment.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you!

Kh. Krista West
Asst. Director

What is Camp Like?

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. Some differences to prepare them for include having a different daily schedule, sharing living quarters with others, and eating food that might be different than at home. If you are sending a first-time camper, you will want to go over this section with them so they know what to expect.

A Typical day at camp

Here is a sample schedule of a typical day at camp:

7:00am	Early Bird (activities for those kids who rise early)
8:00am	Matins
9:00	Breakfast
10:00	Morning Educational Program Session 1
11:00	Break
11:15	Morning Educational Program Session 2
12:15	Cabin Time
12:45	Lunch
1:45	Free Time Activity Session (swimming, crafts, ping pong/games/music jam, climbing tower, canoeing, mini-golf)
3:00	Afternoon Program & Team Time
4:00	Snack
4:30	Cabin Time
5:30	Vespers
6:30	Dinner
7:30	Evening Program
9:00	Dismissal for Younger Campers
10:00	Dismissal for Older Campers

Meals and fasting

Meals are served family-style in the cafeteria. The servings are generous and there are always second helpings available. A salad bar is offered at both lunch and dinner. Fasting rules are observed on Wednesday and Friday (no meat or dairy). For those campers with dietary issues, please see the section on dietary issues.

Camp Activities

Camp activities include the morning educational program, in which the campers are divided up into age groups (elementary, middle school, and high school) and then have in-depth teaching sessions with several clergy. These sessions can feature “Fire-on-Father” question-and-answer times, mini “homilies” delivered by the priests, and stories from the Old and New Testament as well as the saint’s lives. Following lunch, the Free Time

Activity Session includes swimming (boys and girls separate), crafts, ping pong/games/music jam, canoeing, mini-golf, and nature walks. Team Time allows campers to get to know campers outside of their own cabin when they participate in teams. Team time breaks down barriers across the age groups and helps the older campers set a positive example for the younger campers, all while having a great time with exciting activities, scavenger hunts, and water games! Following the high-energy Team Time, campers are given cabin time to rest. After Vespers and dinner, the Evening Program features campfires with singing, the ever-popular talent show, and similar activities.

Conduct

All campers are expected to act in ways appropriate to an Orthodox Christian setting. Campers and staff alike comment year after year about the loving, positive, inclusive environment and this environment takes the work of each and every camper coming to camp!

Please note: 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 camper's early departure.

Preparing for Camp

Campers with dietary issues

If your camper has a medical need for a special diet, please note it on the health form. Ross Point Baptist Camp can accommodate certain dietary restrictions (gluten-free or dairy-free), but all meals are served family style and those campers with dietary restrictions must be able to advocate for their own diet.

For campers' safety, our policy at CSME is that campers who cannot advocate for their special diet will not be able to attend camp until they are mature enough to do so. This policy is not intended to be restrictive, but rather to protect those younger campers who cannot manage their own diets. The staff at Ross Point have been creative and gracious about providing wonderful food substitutes for those with dietary restrictions, but the food environment at camp does require that a camper knows what he can and cannot eat and ask for substitutes when needed.

If your camper has dietary issues, we ask that you pack eight, pre-packaged, individual snacks labelled with the camper's name and that you turn these in at registration.

Please note: Unless your camper has an actual medical need for a dietary restriction, we ask that you do not request a special diet—it creates a great amount of unnecessary work and expense for the kitchen staff for diet “preferences”.

Cancellation and refund policy

We understand that “life happens”, so in the event of your needing to cancel, we appreciate prompt notification. Cancellations before June 1 will receive a full refund (less the non-refundable deposit). After June 1, refunds 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 (not family choice). The deposit is non-refundable and non-transferable.

Health care

You and the camper's doctor must complete the Health History and Examination Form in its entirety. This form must be received along with your camp registration in order to secure your camper's spot at camp. The Camp Nurse or Doctor reviews all Health Forms prior to camp, and is in residence all week to handle routine and minor health care needs. Please refer to the Health Form regarding emergency medical care.

Health insurance

All campers must be covered by a medical insurance policy. While Camp St Mary of Egypt will act as guarantor, any costs incurred by CSME in providing required treatment for doctor's appointments, prescriptions, etc. will be billed to the camper's parents or guardians.

Media consent

Throughout your camper's stay, staff members will be taking photos for the final evening's photo slideshow (a highlight of the week!). There will also be a camp photo that will be displayed on the camp website. Please know that all staff members have signed a "CSME Volunteer Staff Policy for Social Media and Websites" and take your camper's privacy seriously. By sending your child to Camp St Mary of Egypt, you are giving permission for their photo to be on the camp website.

Sending a first-time camper

If this is your child's first trip to Camp St Mary of Egypt, your preparation in advance will go a long way towards helping them have a great experience and minimize the effects of homesickness. We have put together an article entitled "Preventing Homesickness," which can be downloaded on the Forms page of the website. However, we do ask parents to consider carefully whether their child is ready for camp. In our experience, we have found that if a child is hesitant about attending camp or does not yet seem ready, it is often in the child's best interest to wait a year. It is better to wait one year and have a camper have a positive experience, than to come too early to camp and be left with a lasting negative impression. Readiness to attend camp varies widely, especially among 9- to 12-year-olds, so please take your own child's temperament and social maturity into consideration.

Packing List

Dress code and modesty expectations

While camp is of its nature informal, Christian modesty should be your guiding principle when packing. Excessively revealing clothing should not be packed as any camper wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to change. Inappropriate clothing includes,

but is not limited to: open back tops, tops with low-cut fronts, too-tight clothing, half shirts, spaghetti-strap tank tops, short shorts (we prefer shorts to be worn a few inches above the knee), low-cut waistlines, clothing bearing inappropriate logos, sayings, or advertising, and tank-top-style undershirts.

Here are some particulars--

Daily wear: the best clothes to pack for daily wear at camp are a loose-fitting tshirt and either long pants, capris, long shorts, or knee-length or lower skirts.

Swimwear: we prefer one-piece swimsuits for girls, but understand that some girls need to wear two-piece “tankinis” due to size issues. If this is the case, we ask that the tankini shows no bare midriff (athletic styles are fine). Again, when packing a swimsuit, please consider our overall modesty policy.

Church Service Attire: for daily services, camp clothing is fine, although sleeveless shirts are never allowed during church services (either boys or girls). We will have Divine Liturgy once during the camp week, and for that we ask that you pack one nice “church” outfit—skirts or dresses for girls, pants and nice shirt for boys.

Footwear: part of the fun of camp is all the activities and you need to wear the right shoes. Sneakers, athletic shoes, or water shoes with a back-strap are best (flip flops are best kept for showers).

Weather and Cool Evenings: since it has been known to rain during camp, it’s a good idea to pack something for the rain such as a hooded sweatshirt or jacket as well as a pair of long pants. Evenings can be cool, so these same garments can keep you warm for campfire and evening activities.

Camper Packing List

- *Clothing & footwear for six days of camp, including one nice church outfit for Liturgy
- *Bedding: one bottom sheet to cover mattress, and a sleeping bag OR sheet set & blankets
- *Pillow
- *Flashlight (with working batteries)
- *Towels—one bath towel, one beach towel, one washcloth
- *Toiletries (no aerosol products such as hairspray)
- *Sunscreen
- *Hat/Headscarf for sun protection
- *Insect repellent (non-aerosol)
- *Lip balm
- *Reusable water bottle: this is mandatory as there will not be cups available for water.
- *Small backpack for afternoon activities: to carry sunscreen, water bottle, towel, etc.
- *Medicine: Please label all medication clearly with your name and dosage instructions. These will be turned into the Camp Nurse at registration as no medication of any kind (either over-the-counter or prescription) is allowed in cabins.
- *Laundry bag: All campers should bring a laundry bag in which to accumulate dirty clothing. There are no laundry facilities at camp. Clothing left behind will be donated to a local charity.

What **not** to pack

- *Money: we have no camp store and CSME is not responsible for replacing lost funds.
- *Cell phones: we do not encourage campers to bring cell phones to camp and CSME is not responsible for any lost or damaged cell phones. However, we do realize that some campers need to travel with their cell phones, so we ask that your camper understand that the cell phone is their responsibility and is to remain off for the duration of camp.
- *Snacks: (unless your camper has a dietary issue and then we ask you to provide eight, individual, pre-packaged snacks labelled with their name).
- *Electronics: CSME does not allow electronics at camp and is not responsible for the loss or damage of any electronics brought to camp.
- *Jewelry or expensive clothing
- *All tobacco products
- *Alcohol
- *Dangerous implements (including, but not limited to: knives, axes, fireworks)
- *Any illegal substances

During Camp

Visiting Camp

Please meet our staff and tour the camp facilities on Monday during registration (1-3pm). However, because campers often become homesick when they see a parent or family member, we ask that there be no other visits to camp during the regular camping session. No unauthorized visitors are allowed at CSME during the entire duration of camp.

Contact with your camper

The active camp schedule prevents regular contact with your camper. Outgoing calls may be allowed at the discretion of the Camp Director, and only for urgent matters. Receiving or placing phone calls during the camp week disrupts the program and often makes homesickness worse, so we do not allow them except for emergencies. If your camper suffers serious injury or illness, you will be notified promptly. Should a serious need to communicate with your child arise, please contact Fr Alban West at 503-313-3575 or call Ross Point Baptist Camp directly at 208-773-1655 during business hours.

Mail service is available at Ross Point, so you can send mail to your camper:
Camper Name, c/o CSME, Ross Point, 820 S Ross Point Rd, Post Falls, ID 83854

Arrival and Departure

Location of Camp

CSME is held at Ross Point Baptist Camp, 820 South Ross Point Rd, Post Falls, ID 83854. Directions can be found on the camp website.

Times of arrival and departure

Camp begins on Monday and registration is between 1pm and 3pm. Please make every effort to arrive no later than 2:30pm so that all campers will be registered by 3pm (if you have a first-time camper, you will want to arrange to come in time to meet your camper's counselor, tour the camp, etc.). Camp ends on Saturday at 11:30am and we request that parents pick up campers promptly as our facility contract requires us to vacate the facility at a specific time.