

Camp St. George



Parent and Camper Handbook

Camp St. George
3650 Cottage Grove AV SE, Cedar Rapids IA 52403

Camp Wapsi
2174 Wapsie Y Road, Coggon, IA 52218
Website: www.CampStGeorge.org

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Camp St. George

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 Cedar Rapids IA 52403
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Dear Parents or Guardians,

We are so pleased that you have chosen to send your child to Camp St. George. We understand the trust required by you in allowing us to care for your child. The staff of Camp St. George is made up of caring adults who feel privileged and grateful for the opportunity to serve you and your child in the unique ministry of summer camp. We hope and pray that our efforts will result in your child having a positive and wonderful “life experience.” It is a blessing to be associated with the camping program of the Antiochian Archdiocese and to be a part of the good work of Camp St. George.

One of the best things about camp is living together as an Orthodox Christian Community. We strive to make each cabin a “home away from home.” During their time here, our children form beautiful friendships and their faith is strengthened.

This booklet contains important information that will help you and your child prepare for his or her stay at camp. The safety and well-being of your child is our first priority, therefore we ask that you read each section carefully. Your cooperation is vital to our ability to care properly for your child.

If you have any additional questions about your child’s preparation for camp or camp life in general, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to spending a wonderful week together and we thank you for giving us this blessed opportunity!

Your servant in Christ,

Fr. Fred Shaheen
 Camp Director



Mission Statement

Camp St. George

The mission of Camp St. George is to present to young people a living experience of the Holy Orthodox Faith, in their relationship with God and other campers in an uncluttered, natural environment. To accomplish this we will seek to bring young people to:

- ❖ Awareness of self and fellow man
- ❖ A broadening of their Orthodox life
- ❖ A greater awareness of their religion
- ❖ Good sportsmanship
- ❖ Growth in personal relationships and personal responsibility
- ❖ An appreciation of nature and a concern for the environment.

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 every aspect of 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 have this unique and wonderful experience. Some areas for which to prepare them include: a very different schedule, sharing close quarters with other people, and eating food that might not be like home. Last but not least, one of the major adjustments is that they will be independent from you, with very little contact during the camping session. This can be a very positive experience and one that can be invaluable in the process of growing up. Be aware that parents need to prepare for this as much - if not more - than campers!

Camp Activities

Life at camp takes full advantage of our outdoor setting. Activities include such things as ball sports, horseback riding, wall climbing, archery, swimming and canoeing. If your child has any restrictions precluding any of these activities, please note these on the Health Form. Rainy days are a possible occurrence, so rain gear is a must.

Fees

Camp tuition is determined annually based on Camp Wapsie charges. Please see Camper Application for current camp fees. A \$50.00 deposit is required with the camper application, which is **due by June 30th** (after June 30th, please contact us as there may still be openings available). The balance of the camp fee is **due by July 31st**. The balance will be billed to the camper's parents regardless of any parish subsidies. Please also see below for information regarding the Camp Store.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

We appreciate prompt notification in the event of cancellation. Cancellations before July 15th will receive a full refund less the deposit. After July 15th, 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 emergencies.

Health Care

You and the camper's doctor must complete the Health History and Examination Form in its entirety. **This form must be received no later than July 31st** in order for our Health Director to be informed about every child's health condition and to be as prepared as possible for camp. The Health Director is in residence all week to handle routine and minor health care needs. The YMCA camp staff is certified in First Aid and CPR. Please refer to the Health Form regarding emergency medical care.

Insurance

All campers should be covered by their family medical insurance policy. Any costs incurred by Camp St. George in providing necessary medical treatment will be the responsibility of the parents or legal guardians.

Cabin Assignments

Cabin assignments are made strictly in accordance with gender and birthdate. If your camper has special circumstances and you prefer a specific cabin mate for him or her, please contact the Camp Director. Requests will be granted at the discretion of the Camp Director.

Packing for Camp

Dress Code

While camping is by nature informal, Christian modesty should be taken into account when packing for your child's stay. Inappropriate clothing (i.e. skirts and dresses above the knee, short shorts, strapless or spaghetti strap tops, midriff tops, low-rise pants/shorts/skirts, tight shirts, two-piece bathing suits, etc.) will not be permitted. Swimsuits should be carefully chosen. Although dress for daily church services is casual, *shorts and tank tops are not appropriate for church*. In general, clothing should not be revealing or skintight. For the Divine Liturgy or Vespers Liturgy, boys are expected to wear long pants and a special shirt (tie optional), and girls should wear a dress or skirt and blouse. No more than two pairs of earrings are appropriate for girls, none for boys. Other body piercings are unacceptable. Body tattoos are not appropriate and should be covered at all times. At Camp St. George we affirm the Orthodox Christian teaching that we are created in the image and likeness of God and that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Because of this we should present our bodies pure and undefiled, with respect for others and ourselves.

Altar Robes

Boys who would like to serve in the altar should bring an altar robe if at all possible, but it is not necessary to bring the robe in order to serve. If you are able to bring a robe, please bring the robe in a protective bag labeled with your name. Please reassure your parish priest that all robes will be stored with all the liturgical items.

Spending Money

The camper fee covers all regular camping expenses. In addition, a minimum of \$20 should be paid ahead of time for daily snacks at the Camp Store (see *Camp Store* below). *No money should be kept with the camper in the*

cabins, as Camp St. George is not responsible for any lost money. Please do not send cash to your child in the mail while he/she is at camp.

Camp Store (NEW POLICY)

Please note that \$20.00 for daily snacks (two snacks per day) from the Camp Store is included with the tuition this year. The Camp Store will be open on arrival day and departure day if you would like to purchase other items available.

Snacks and Care Packages

Please do not send snacks with your camper and please do not send food in care packages during the week. Campers are well fed and snacks are available each day at the Camp Store. Also, by way of reminder, ***no food may be kept in cabins.***

Laundry

All campers should bring a laundry bag in which to accumulate dirty clothing. To minimize loss, we recommend that your child's name be written on each piece of clothing with a permanent marker or name label. There are no laundry facilities at the camp. 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 a local charity.

Horseback Riding

Any camper wishing to participate in the horseback riding instruction activity must bring long pants and shoes with a heel. Gym shoes, sandals or bare feet will not be allowed. Helmets are required for riding and will be provided by Camp Wapsie. No one in a sling, cast, brace, ace wrap, finger splint, neck or back support may ride.

Day Trip

Each year the oldest boys' and girls' cabins are given the opportunity to take a special day trip; either a carefully planned service trip to put our Christian faith into action, or an all-day canoe trip. Parents of these campers will be contacted in advance about the details of this year's day trip.

Camper Packing List

We do not recommend bringing expensive or name-brand clothing or other expensive items to camp. Because of the nature of camp, **which means we are outside all day getting sweaty, dirty and/or wet**, consider packing **extra essentials** (i.e. socks, underwear, T-shirts) and more than one pair of pants/shorts. All items must be clearly labeled for identification. Cabin storage space is limited, so each camper should bring no more than 2 pieces of luggage: 1 suitcase/duffle bag and one carry-on size small bag or backpack

- Changes of clothing for at least 6 days, with all items marked in indelible ink or iron-on tags
- Nice outfit for Divine Liturgy/Vesperal Liturgy
- Long pants for daily services (jeans or capris below the knee are OK) and **jeans** for horseback riding
- Sturdy tennis/athletic shoes for walking, running, etc.
- Water shoes for canoeing, if desired
- Shoes/Boots with heels if horseback riding
- Modest swimsuit (no two-piece suits permitted), pool towel
- Sweater, sweatshirt, or lightweight jacket
- Waterproof rain coat or poncho
- Sleeping bag, pillow with case OR sheets, blanket (s) and pillow with case
- Pajamas/sleepwear
- Laundry bag, marked with camper's name
- Flashlight
- Two towels, washcloth, shower shoes/flip-flops

Camp St. George and Camp Wapsie are not responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items.

- ❑ Toiletries, including: Comb/brush, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant (non-aerosol)
- ❑ Sunscreen, non-aerosol insect repellent, lip balm
- ❑ Water bottle marked with camper's name
- ❑ Optional: Camera (marked with name), journal, reading book, travel games
- ❑ All medications in their original containers

LEAVE HOME...

- ✘ Cell phones, I-pods, I-pads, handheld video games, and any other electronic devices
- ✘ Food
- ✘ Jewelry and other valuables, including sports equipment
- ✘ All tobacco products
- ✘ Immodest apparel
- ✘ Dangerous implements, i.e. knives (including Swiss Army 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. must be NON-aerosol)

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!”

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 “P's” 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 to know what to expect at camp. Talks with other campers who have been to camp before, seeing their pictures, or checking out the Camp St. George web site <http://www.campstgeorge.org> and the Camp Wapsie web site <http://www.crmetroymca.org>.
- 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.” More than one homesick camper has tried 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.

Tips for 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 is 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. They’re 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 the fact that campers can become homesick when they see a parent or family member, we ask that there are no other visits to camp during the regular camping session. The campers have a full schedule with only a short time at camp.

Contact with your child

The active camp schedule prevents regular contact from the camper. If your child is sent to camp via plane, bus, or train, your child will be required to call home collect immediately after checking in, in order to confirm his or her safe arrival. Thereafter, 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. ***Campers are not allowed to have cell phones.*** 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. Should a serious need to communicate with your child arise, please call the Camp Office at **(319) 435-2577**.

Mail service is available at Camp Wapsie. If you send a short letter before your child leaves home or early in the week they will most likely receive it during camp. A brief, positive note that says, “I love you” or “Have a great time” or “See you in a few days” are just what your child will want to hear. Avoid telling your child how much you miss them and do not send multiple letters as this tends to spark unnecessary homesickness. Please do not send care packages with food. Mailing address: ***YMCA CAMP WAPSIE - 2174 Wapsie Y Road, Coggon, IA 52218.***

Campers will not receive E-mail messages during camp. Again, should a serious need to communicate with your child arise, please call the Camp Wapsie Office at **(319) 435-2577**.

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.

Arrival and Departure

Check-in Day

Sunday August 14th - On the first day of the camp session, campers being driven to the camp may be checked in between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM. Arrivals at any other time must be approved in advance by the Camp Director. Parents are welcome to stay and visit the facilities and meet the staff during these hours.

Registration will take place at Turner Lodge (map included). The process will include being introduced to your camper’s counselor(s) and meeting the medical staff to discuss any health issues and/or to hand over all medications (in original containers) which will be kept in the Infirmary.

Check-out Day

Saturday August 20th - Campers will be ready to be picked up by 10:00 a.m. (after breakfast). We would like all campers picked up no later than 12:00 Noon. If other arrangements need to be made, please let us know prior to the start of camp.

Important Addresses & Phone Numbers

Camp St. George Mailing Address

3650 Cottage Grove AV SE
Cedar Rapids IA 52403

YMCA Camp Wapsie Address

2174 Wapsie Y Road
Coggon, IA 52218

Camp Director's Cell Phone (Emergency only)

(319) 651-6452

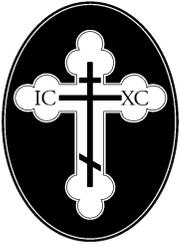
YMCA Camp Wapsie Office Phone

(319) 435-2577

Driving Directions

From Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Take Highway 13 north and turn left on to Paris Road. (When you go through Central City and continue on Highway 13, do not cross the railroad tracks or you have gone too far and missed Paris Road!) Once on Paris Road, follow the green directional signs to camp. Continue on Paris Road for 1 mile (west) to Valley Farm Road. Turn right on to Valley Farm Road. Follow Valley Farm Road 1 mile (first left turn) to Wapsie Y Road. Follow Wapsie Y Road through two curves to the camp entrance.

From Coggon, Iowa: Take Highway 13 south 5 miles and turn right on to Paris Road. (This turn is just past the railroad tracks.) Once on Paris Road, follow the green directional signs to camp. Continue on Paris Road for 1 mile (west) to Valley Farm Road. Turn right on to Valley Farm Road. Follow Valley Farm Road 1 mile (first left turn) to Wapsie Y Road. Follow Wapsie Y Road through two curves to the camp entrance.



Prayer of Parents for Their Child

The following prayer is beautiful and powerful in expressing our Orthodox Christian understanding of the awesome gift of parenthood – and the profound mystery of our cooperation in God’s creative power. Truly, every child is God’s child, merely “lent” to us in order to be offered back to Him. We share this prayer with you that you may share in how we feel regarding the Godly responsibility given to us as we assume parental roles in the lives of the children of Camp St. George. The prayer may be adapted to the gender of your child or children, and prayed during camp and at any time.

O Holy Father, Eternal God, from Whom proceed all blessings and all goodness, we diligently pray to Thee for the child Thy mercy hast granted us. Thou hast given him being, Thou hast quickened him with an immortal soul, Thou hast granted him new birth through Holy Baptism so he might live according to Thy will and inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Preserve him in Thy grace to the end of his life and enlighten him with Thy Truth so that Thy name may be glorified in him. Help us by Thy grace in raising him to glorify Thy name and to benefit others. Grant us the means, patience and fortitude to accomplish this. O Lord, enlighten him with the light of Thy Wisdom so that he may love Thee with all his soul and mind. Plant in his heart fear of and repulsion from every kind of lawlessness. Let him be incorruptible in all his ways. Beautify his soul by chastity, diligence, patience, peace and all virtue. Guard his lips by Thy Truth that any slander, falsehood and flattery be repugnant to him. Sprinkle him with the dew of Thy grace that he may make progress in virtue and holiness and grow up in Thy favor and in love of the faithful people. May his guardian angel ever remain with him and protect his youth from vain thoughts, from attractions and seductions of this world and from all snares of the deceiver. Whenever he sins before Thee turn not Thy face away from him but be merciful to him. Awaken contrition in his heart and with the multitude of Thy generosity cleanse him of his transgressions. Do not deprive him of Thy earthly blessings but provide him everything needful in time of existence until attainment of the blessed eternity. Preserve him from every illness, wrath, affliction, trouble and grief and cast Thy protective mercy on him throughout all the days of his life. O Good Lord, again we pray unto Thee, grant us joy and gladness about our child and vouchsafe us to appear with him at Thy awesome judgment and without shame dare to say: This is the child Thou hast granted us, O Lord. Together with him, glorifying Thine unutterable goodness and Thine eternal love, we praise Thy Holy Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

