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CampBethelOffice@gmail.com

www.CampBethelVirginia.org



## 2025 Week 7 Adventure Camp Confirmation Packet

Dear Camper and Parent,

Thank you for registering for Adventure Camp at Camp Bethel! Your spot is confirmed for Week 7, and we are excited to see you!

**Arrive at Camp Bethel at or before 4:00pm, Sunday.** Check-in begins promptly at 4:00pm at the Cave Trail Shelter with important announcements you need to hear. Park in the Cave Trail field and load your luggage onto the Adventure Wagon beside the shelter. It's important to pack minimally and lightly so the camper can easily carry all gear. Parents must accompany their camper through check-in and meeting their group's counselors. The Trading Post (camp store) will be set up at the Cave Trail Shelter from 3:45 through check-in. See detailed check-in instructions on page 6 of this packet. Dinner will be served to campers at 5:30pm on Sunday.

**Pick up time and camper dismissal is 6:30pm Friday at the Cave Trail Shelter.** Watch for a Thursday email with any updates and announcements. Park in the Cave Trail field. **Parents are encouraged to arrive at exactly 6:00pm for our Closing Singing and Celebration from 6:00-6:30.** This is an important and meaningful ceremony for your camper and their group, so we will not dismiss campers until after our final prayer at 6:30pm. Your camper will have eaten Friday dinner with their unit prior to 6:00, and we encourage you to come witness the singing. After 6:30 dismissal, claim your camper's luggage. The Trading Post store by the Ark parking lot is open Friday 6:30-7:15pm. See page 6 for detailed check-out procedures.

This packet includes important "**Preparations for Your Time at Camp**" with your packing list, Hygiene Rules and Camp Rules, behavioral expectations, health and safety preparations, forms, and detailed check-in procedures. Please consider donating toward our Wish List (page 2) and our Summer Offering Project (page 5). Carefully read all the enclosed information.

Your CampWise registration includes all your forms needed for check-in. If any changes occur in your child's health or situation, please update forms accordingly. Please complete all forms on CampWise seven days before your camp begins. If your payment includes Good-as-Gold, scholarship request or any other payment differences, please reach out to us for information!

Send mail to your camper (their name, c/o Camp Bethel and our address) several days before camp begins to ensure contact; or leave a pack of letters addressed to your camper with check-in staff for daily delivery. You can also send daily e-mailed notes through CampWise (see instructions on page 6). In case of extreme emergency during the camp week, contact our Camp Bethel office at 540-992-2940. After hours, our answering machine message will prompt you to our on-call emergency staff number.

Subscribe to our eNews at [CampBethelVirginia.org/subscribe](http://CampBethelVirginia.org/subscribe). Camp keeps getting better, and we have an active, on-the-go week planned. Please encourage your friends and classmates to register for summer camp at Camp Bethel in Fincastle, VA! If you have questions, contact us at 540-992-2940 or [CampBethelOffice@gmail.com](mailto:CampBethelOffice@gmail.com).

We look forward to seeing you at camp!

Together, in Christ our hope,

*Kathleen, Elizabeth, Mickey, Ben, Hannah and the Summer Staff of Camp Bethel*

# PREPARATIONS FOR YOUR TIME AT CAMP

1. What to pack: Gear list
2. Adventure camp details
3. Safety during transport for adventure
4. Hygiene rules to teach your camper
5. Camp rules and policies
6. Goals and Outcomes for your time at camp
7. Preparing for camp living
8. Preventing homesickness
9. Trading Post
10. Summer Offering: Food Pantry
11. Summer Curriculum
12. Sunday check-in procedures
13. Friday pick-up procedures
14. Communicating with your camper during the camp week

## #1: What to pack: Overnight Camper's Gear List

**Write your name on ALL items and bags!** Pack lightly so you can easily carry all gear by yourself. You will be sleeping in a bunk bed, and your gear space is limited. Cabins are air-conditioned; prepare for hot days and cool nights. Keep your packing simple and minimal. SHARE supplies with a camp friend (shampoo, sunscreen, etc.); anything to reduce your gear load!

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Backpack or daypack for daily use on hikes, around camp, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag <b>or</b> blanket/sheets for cabin bunk.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pillow for cabin bunk.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bath towel &amp; washcloth and a pool/beach towel.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Swimsuit or swimming clothes appropriate for active play in the pool, for creek play, and active water games.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom supplies: toothbrush/paste; shower soap; etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Clothing, light jacket; and sleepwear; <i>Hot days, cool nights.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Everyday <b>dry</b> shoes (closed-toe active shoes for running, hiking, games, climbing wall).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strap-on sandals (w/ heel-strap) or water shoes to get wet for creek play, rain hikes, pool; <b><u>NO flip-flops.</u></b></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Large plastic bag or laundry bag for dirty clothes &amp; wet shoes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rain jacket or poncho with hood; no stopping for rain!</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle: quart-sized, non-glass, screw-top.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight or headlamp &amp; extra batteries.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sunscreen (waterproof and at least 30 SPF) and bug spray.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Summer offering to be turned in at check-in (checks to "Camp Bethel Summer Offering"), or donate at <a href="http://CampBethelVirginia.org/donate">CampBethelVirginia.org/donate</a></li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### Optional to bring:

- Hat or bandana
- Watch  Shower caddie/bag
- Camera/GoPro  Bible, notebook
- Goggles and/or swimming ear plugs
- Swim floaties or lifejacket for non-swimmers

*Camp Bethel provides all necessary program, camping, first aid & safety gear.*

**Please consider donating** new and gently used supplies. We ALWAYS need items listed in the Gear List above and items on our Wish List: 15-passenger van (2015 or newer); Outdoor Storage Shed (used or new); window air conditioning units, cleaning supplies, first aid supplies  
Amazon wish-list at <https://a.co/5qG5JYq> or [CampBethelVirginia.org/donate](http://CampBethelVirginia.org/donate). *Tax-deductible!*

### Things **NOT** to bring:

- electronics, video games, toys, pets, skateboard
- vapes, tobacco/nicotine products, alcohol, drugs, cannabis, CBD products, smoking/vaping/drug paraphernalia
- weapons, knife, fireworks, matches, lighter
- clothing with inappropriate language/images or that is too revealing including short-shorts, string bikinis, or speedos
- food, drinks, candy, snacks, gum
- cologne, perfume, scented products, hairspray, because these attract biting insects AND many persons have allergies to scented products
- flip-flops

## #2: Adventure Camp Details

Adventure Camp has your perfect mix of wild fun and discipleship activities. Adventure Camp is for active youth who enjoy the outdoors. You will truly live as a Christian body in a co-ed Unit of 6-10 campers with 2-4 counselors in one of our creek-side Adventure Villages in our vast and beautiful riparian forest. Each A.V. includes a boys' hut, a girls' hut (both with bunk beds, mattresses, & personal screening) and a dining shelter with a fire circle, all by the clean waters of Wilson Creek. Our platform huts have metal roofs and open ends for free air flow. You'll eat most meals in the Ark, swim in the pool, attend all-camp events, and have access to all the amenities of the camp (including showers!).

### Specific Adventure Information (This is a comprehensive list; note that only your chosen adventures apply)

**Biking:** Spend one day biking down the awesome Virginia Creeper Trail (a historic "rail-to-trail") with top-grade rented bikes & helmets. This trail winds down through a spectacular mountain gorge with 32 bridge/creek crossings. Along the way, we'll visit USFS Green Cove Station and enjoy an icy cold swimming hole.

**Canoeing:** Your week includes 1/2 day of paddling on the beautiful James River, just 8 miles from Camp Bethel. Canoe skills, swimming, lunch on the beach and more with your adventure counselors on a 10-mile river section, perfect for beginners and seasoned paddlers. Rated easy-moderate.

**Caving:** The wonder of exploring the underground world thousands of years old; nothing quite like it. We'll explore the speleothems (look it up), corridors and cavern rooms in one of Virginia's natural caves with the experts from Wild Guyde Adventures; a great way to get down and dirty while learning how to protect these unique treasures. Learn what happens when water meets limestone, (like springs and caves beneath Camp Bethel). **Bring headlamp, pants, shoes & long-sleeved shirt to get very muddy.** Helmet & leadership provided. Rated easy-moderate.

**River Tubing:** It's our best way to beat the summer heat! Your week includes a fun and relaxing morning of river tubing on the beautiful and historic James River, just 6 miles from Camp Bethel. Let the river do the work as we ride the gentle current through gorgeous scenery over riffles and mini-rapids while keeping cool splashing, swimming and playing. Get creative with your float style or team up with your counselors and new friends to build an ultimate tube-blob-flotilla! Tubes, PFDs and transport provided by our friends at Twin River Outfitters, with counselor leadership provided by Camp Bethel. Rated easy.

**Rock Climbing:** Enjoy an awesome day of excellent outdoor anchored belay climbing along and above the Maury River, led and instructed by the experts from Wild Guyde Adventures. Learn all the moves and gear as we safely jam up the crux of the headwall and rappel back to deck, suitable for beginners and experienced Edgers. Back at camp, we'll learn high ropes course facilitation: very cool! All gear, helmets, harnesses and leadership are provided. Rated moderate with challenging options.

**Whitewater Rafting:** Your combo-adventure week includes a day of wet, wild & wonderful fun, courtesy of our professional raft guides and the glorious Lower New River Gorge. Learn crucial teamwork and coordination as we paddle "all-forward" through Class IV and V rapids: the "Keeny's," the "Railroads" and the "Million Dollar Wave." It's an incredibly fun experience; suitable for beginners and soggy paddlers alike. All gear, helmets, PFDs, paddles and professional leadership included. "Dig in" for adventure and a great day of group fun on the water! Rated easy-moderate.

### #3: Safety During Transport for Adventures

If your camp includes an offsite adventure, campers receive a safety orientation in preparation for travel. Please remind your camper to have safe behaviors while in the camp vehicles and offsite for the adventure. Vehicles used for transporting campers are equipped with a first aid kit and emergency accessories, seatbelts for each passenger, and we check vehicle safety conditions prior to transport. Counselors will carry health forms for all passengers and a cell phone for emergency communication.

The staff of Camp Bethel have selected our Adventure outfitters (those providing equipment, leadership and expertise) and off-site projects based upon their qualifications and their adherence to safety standards as outlined by the American Camp Association.

### #4: Hygiene Rules to Teach Your Camper

1. Tell your counselor if you feel sick.
2. Cough and sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and then throw the tissue away and wash your hands.
3. Wash your hands with soap and water after bathrooms, coughing and sneezing, or touching your face. Use hand sanitizer if you cannot wash your hands.

Health protocols remain as common-sense practices: stay home if you're ill or recently exposed; hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette; majority-outdoor activities; sanitizing high-touch surfaces; and symptom screening and testing at check-in, if needed. In the weeks before camp, monitor your child for any onset of symptoms and avoid people who are sick.

Parents should keep campers who are sick or symptomatic at home. Camper refunds (minus your deposit) are available in case of illness. You should NOT send an injured or sick camper to camp. Also ensure that your camper is free of headlice.

### #5: Camp Rules and Policies

#### The 7 Camp Rules to teach your camper

- |                                  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Be kind and be helpful.       | 4. No rough play.                                | 6. Do not throw or kick anything.      |
| 2. Stay with your Unit.          | 5. Wear shoes always (except bed, shower, pool). | 7. Walk on paths, pavement, or gravel. |
| 3. Follow your Counselor's lead. |  |  |

#### Safe Behavior Requirement

By requesting enrollment into Camp Bethel programs, you and your camper agree to our Behavior Policy and understand that safe behavior is required. Your camper will be with other children/youth and their counselors all day each day. We stay together with our group during our entire time at camp.

**Unsafe behavior does not fit and cannot be tolerated.** Behavior deemed dangerous, inappropriate, intolerable, detrimental to the group, or unmanageable by the counselors or directors is grounds for dismissal from camp. Examples include not following the camp rules; hurting others (verbally, physically, or emotionally); possession of prohibited or harmful item; constant misbehavior; unsafe behavior; straying from your group; etc. The Program Coordinator will call parents/guardians as needed. Should it become necessary for your child to return home because of unmanageable behavior, homesickness or other reason, you agree to accept the Program Coordinator's decision and arrange for transportation.

#### Camper Medications

If you send medication for your camper to take during the camp week, you must have correct information in your CampWise account. All medications must be given to our Medical Staff at Check-In on the first day of camp. All medications are stored and dispensed by the Health Coordinator unless special arrangements are made through the Health Coordinator and Camp Director. Send exactly enough medication for the camper's time at camp.

**Medication MUST be in the original, labeled packaging and container naming prescribing physician, camper name, medication name, dosage, and frequency.** Place all this into a gallon zip-lock bag (or a box if more space is needed) with camper's name on it to speed the check-in process.

#### Policy for Cancellations, Late Arrivals, Early Departure:

Should you pay for camp, and later decide to keep your child home, YOU HAVE OPTIONS:

1. Credit your payments toward another available, current-summer program, or
2. Credit all but \$50 of your payments to next summer's pre-registration, or
3. Donate part or all to help Camp Bethel enhance how we operate, or
4. Refund all your payments minus your \$50 deposit. We just need to hear from you at least 24 hours prior to the start of your camp, and sooner if possible. Please notify the camp office 540-992-2940 or CampBethelOffice@gmail.com ASAP if your camper will not attend this session.

Late arrival and early departure are discouraged but allowed if needed. However, because staff, food, and supplies are already secured, we cannot provide pro-rated refunds for partial camp attendance once your camper has arrived unless Camp Bethel cancels your child's program. If programs are cancelled, you will be notified ASAP of your options, including full refunds.

#### Caring for Campers

We take the safety and care of your children (our campers) very seriously. Allowing us to care for your child is perhaps the greatest act of trust a parent can engage in. That makes Camp Bethel not just a fun place, but also a *sacred one*. We do everything we can to honor your trust, including our voluntary adherence to over 300 standards of health, safety, staffing, and programming. We know we cannot do this without our excellent counselors who, by joining our summer staff community, are trained and committed to providing a safe and fun week of learning and growth. If a camper is sad or if there is an issue, illness, injury, or emergency the Program Coordinator WILL contact parents.

#### No Camper Cell Phones or Gadgets: A matter of TRUST

Aside from the fact that phones and gadgets are expensive, can get lost, and the physical camp environment is rough for such items, the main reason we don't allow campers to have phones/gadgets is TRUST. We TRUST that campers who come to camp WANT to be here and choose to temporarily disconnect from their constant phone/internet communications to be FULLY present with us at camp. When children/youth come to camp they (and you) are making a leap of faith, temporarily transferring their primary TRUST from their parents to their counselors. This is a growth-producing, yet challenging aspect of camp. As children/youth learn to TRUST other caring adults, they grow and learn, little by little, to solve some of their own challenges. *This emerging independence is one of the greatest benefits of camp!* (AND there's ample research proving that youth greatly improve their social and emotional growth while phone-free!) Let your child/youth know that they can always reach out to their counselor and camp leaders. The Program Coordinator WILL contact you if your child/youth is experiencing a challenge while at camp, and the Camp Director WILL contact families in case of any emergency. Counselors do carry charged phones in their backpacks as tools for emergency use if needed. We encourage bringing an inexpensive digital camera to camp, but you may NOT bring a "connected/serviced" phone to use as your camera. Thanks, and read #13 "Communicating with Your Camper."

## Emergency Preparedness and Parent Notification During the Camp Week

Using smart phones, our director and staff receive and communicate instant updates on summer storms or emergencies, and your counselors are trained for camper safety during storms and emergencies. In case of any emergency in which we request parental action, our office will contact you via e-mail and phone. Add [CampBethelOffice@gmail.com](mailto:CampBethelOffice@gmail.com) to your contacts so our emails come to your inbox. Otherwise, **NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS**, and everyone is safe. In case of a family emergency that must be communicated to your camper, contact 540-992-2940 or e-mail [CampBethelOffice@gmail.com](mailto:CampBethelOffice@gmail.com). For after-hours emergencies, call 540-992-2940 and our answering machine will prompt you to our on-call staff number.

## Visitation is NOT allowed during camp week

DO NOT arrive at camp unexpectedly! Our site is closed to visitors/guests during camper weeks. While supervising campers, all staff are trained to stop and question anyone they don't recognize on site. If you need to visit camp prior to the official pick-up time (see "Pick-Up Procedures"), you must call ahead AND check in and wait at the camp office when you arrive.

## #6: Goals and Outcomes for your time at camp

Camp Bethel's WHY is RELATIONSHIPS. Our mission is "to foster and build RELATIONSHIPS with God, each other, and Creation.

Camp Bethel's HOW is TOGETHER in the ministry of relationship. A culmination of 98 years of ministry at Camp Bethel and over 65 years of small group camping philosophy, centered on what it means to be a part of the Body of Christ as described in 1 Corinthians 12.

1. Small Group Emphasis: 10-12 campers + 2-4 counselors combine to make a Unit, or group. Even while individually caring for each camper, the main focus of all activities and camp structure is the group we call a "Unit." The Unit does "everything" together all week, and there is no unsupervised free time. This high supervision guarantees camper safety with a very low rate of accidents. Counselors lead cooperative team-building games rather than competitive games, and counselors use language and plan activities that intentionally facilitate group building. Campers develop significant relationships with mature Christian counselors and with one another.
2. Sanctity of the Small Group: Each unit (group) plans their week together on the Program Board, and units are not disturbed in their "body-building" process. Units only interact with other units at appropriate times and places such as meals, worship, pool, and all-camp events.
3. Experiential Christian Education: More time is spent living and doing things together as Christians than is spent listening to lecture. Christian truths are learned through the relationships that form during a week of activities together, supported by Bible study and worship. Christian camping's role in the total life of each camper is INTRODUCTION to Christian living, not indoctrination or conversion. "Show them a light so lovely that they wish to know the source."
4. Emphasis on stewardship of God's creative Earth: We hold camp in "a place apart" (instead of a city street) because immersion into a "wilderness" setting invites openness to risk and self-examination. This, in turn, creates a rich atmosphere for new relationships (with God, with others, with creation). Both nature study and Bible study are forms of God's revelation of love. We do things at camp you CAN'T do in other settings. We have 470 acres of forests, fields, ponds, creeks, trails, and hills... and we use them! Counselors facilitate unstructured play time interacting with God's creative Earth, and as often as possible, activities are held out-of-doors and immersed in nature.
5. The Small Group's Dynamics and Make-up: The process of Relationship: The foundation of the summer camp is the group. Throughout the summer, in addition to the attention we give to the individual camper, our focus is continually on the "family unit" living as the Body of Christ. Behavioral Psychologist Dr. Bruce Tuckman, describes five stages in the progression of small group development:
  - a. Forming: individuals become a group (1st night and 1st few days).
  - b. Norming: group interactions take on patterns, styles, codes and "norms."
  - c. Storming: Not necessarily conflict so much as exposure and openness. Any group difficulties eventually come out into the open; needed for true relationship.
  - d. Performing: problems are confronted; group realizes their potential; functions as the Body of Christ.
  - e. Reforming/Adjourning: preparations/discussions before returning to the "real" world.
6. Progression of Programs: Each age level offers a new activities and more exciting programs; age-group efficacy and target marketing. Adventure camps, skills camps, and trip camps encourage future participation in the Camp Bethel community. (No trust = no beginning. No fun = no return. No challenge = no continuation.)
7. Family-Style Meals and Cook-Out Program: Meals aren't just a "get-'em-in, feed 'em, get-'em-out" time; meals are a major part of the Experiential Christian Education for each camper. Christ is the head of each round table in the Dining Hall. Counselors teach family style meal manners, values, and expectations, plus how to set tables and host meals.
8. Camping (to camp) implies action: We believe there should be EFFORT required at camp to provide for one's daily needs (food, shelter, clean bathrooms, set tables, etc.). When we work together providing for others, a deeper sense of our own creativity emerges. We experience the closeness of living with and caring for ourselves and others, analogous to the community of early Christians described in Acts 2 and 1st Corinthians 12.

Camp Bethel's WHAT is everything else. Bible curriculum and Bible studies, worship and music, activities, meals, experiences, adventures, crafts, etc.

## #7: Preparing for camp living away from home

Each counselor is trained to help guide your group safely and successfully through each camp day. Also, good parent preparation can give campers the knowledge they need to fully succeed during their camp week.

### Physical expectations of living in a cabin

1. No bathtubs here, only individual showers. Before camp, teach your younger camper how to take a shower.
2. We have several bathrooms around main camp. Remember, you can ask your counselor to use the bathroom ANY TIME. Hikes on camp property often venture away from bathrooms, so remember to "go" before you go; counselors will also remind you.
3. Living in a cabin or bunkroom with 9 other people (same gender) may challenge our need for individual privacy, especially when changing clothes. We prohibit nudity or disrobing directly in front of others. All cabins and bunkrooms have access to private changing areas. In a pinch, teach your child the "sleeping bag" clothes-changing method used for years by most children.
4. We walk everywhere, and we're on-the-go most of each day. Comfortable (dry) shoes & socks are very important. Take good care of your feet and prepare for a highly active week.
5. On hot summer days it's important to drink lots of water and apply sunscreen. Pack your water bottle: quart-sized, non-glass, screw-top, and remember to hydrate often and apply sunscreen 20 minutes before outdoor activity. Cabins have window-unit air-conditioners if needed on the hottest days/nights.

**Social/Behavioral/Spiritual expectations**

1. You will be with other campers and your counselors all day each day. We stay together with our group during our entire time at camp, so we have little to no "alone time." Unsafe behavior does not fit and cannot be tolerated.
2. Group living: We'll experience all our daily activities **together** as a Unit, including our daily group duty and eating meals together.
3. Make new friends: Even if you come with a cabin-mate, you are expected to be friendly, courteous and helpful to others in the group. Cabins are single gender, but Units are co-ed unless we need to create an all-male OR an all-female group because one gender of campers registers more than the other. You will share your group with youth of different backgrounds and abilities. We believe Jesus' message of love and unconditional acceptance, and at camp, "Love your neighbor" is part of daily living.
4. You **MUST** learn and follow the Camp Rules and Hygiene Rules (page 2) to ensure a safe and fun week. Most of each day is active and boisterous. Also, there are times and events during the day when we're expected to listen and participate calmly and quietly, (Bible study/worship, meals/announcements, counselor explaining an activity, bed/quiet hours).
5. Try new things: Camp is a great place to taste different foods, sing different songs, try and practice new skills, play new games, and grow in our relationships with God, with each other, and with Creation.

**A Sample Adventure Camper Day:** (Also see your individual activity descriptions in your Program Description or at [CampBethelVirginia.org/camps](http://CampBethelVirginia.org/camps))

7:30am	Unit 1 prepares for "hosting" breakfast	12:15pm	Unit 2 prepares for "hosting" lunch	5:30	Dinner/songs/announcements
7:45	Morning Watch at the Spring	12:30	Lunch/songs/announcements	6:30	Unit activities: Games, etc.
8:00	Breakfast in the Ark; Unit 1 hosts	1:30-5:30	Unit activities: swimming, hiking, games, High-ropes, crafts, showers!	8:30	Special evening Unit activity
8:30	Singing/announcements	5:15	Unit 3 prepares for "hosting" dinner	9:30	Campfire vespers: worship/songs
9:00-12	Adventure outing, activities, Bible study			11:00	Lights out for Middle/High camps

**#8: Preventing homesickness**

Good parent preparation is essential to give campers the confidence needed to fully enjoy a camp experience:

1. Set realistic expectations for the camp experience based on our information and the activities listed in the program descriptions online. Reinforce positive camp aspects; encourage new learning.
2. In the weeks before camp, hold one or more "practice" overnight sleepovers in another room of your home with your child.
3. With your child, come and visit Camp Bethel. Call us to arrange a self-guided pre-tour.
4. Don't force a child to camp if they have no desire to go. Only send a willing & ready child to back-to-back camps.
5. Don't tell campers how much you will miss them. Instead encourage new friends and new experiences.
6. Don't tell campers they can call home. Instead, encourage your camper to talk to their counselor if they are sad. If a camper is sad or if there is an issue, injury, illness or emergency the Program Coordinator WILL contact parents.

**Camp Bethel will never force a camper to stay at camp who does not want to stay.**

Our counselors are thoroughly trained in methods to prevent homesickness, and our program style keeps campers active and engaged in camp activities and interpersonal relationships. If, however, your child becomes homesick:

1. All staff will do everything possible to address the cause and to encourage the camper.
2. If symptoms persist, the Program Coordinator will call home to discuss options before you speak with your child.
3. If all determine the best option is to pick up your child, we will have the camper ready. There are no refunds for campers who leave early, because staff, food and gear are already secured.

**#9: Trading Post camp store open Sunday 3:45-4:30pm (at Cave Trail) & Friday 6:30-7:15pm (in Store)**

Parents can shop with campers from 3:45-4:30pm on Sunday at Cave Trail Shelter prior to check-in and 6:30-7:15pm in the actual Trading Post store on Friday after dismissal. T-shirts, water bottles, Camp Bethel-made apple butter, blankets, croc charms and more can be found in the store. Earnings directly support the programs of Camp Bethel. At the Trading Post (Sunday 3:45-4:30 at Cave Trail Shelter & Friday 6:30-7:15 in store) lock in this year's rate for next year's camp and get 1 FREE short sleeve tee-shirt by using our "Early Summer 2026 Pre-Registration Form."

**#10: Summer Offering 2026: Botetourt Food Pantry**

St. Mark's Episcopal church houses and staffs the major outreach ministry, the Botetourt Food Pantry with the help of other area churches, organizations and schools who assist with the distribution. The pantry was created over 40 years ago and now serves over 500 people per month. The pantry relies heavily on community support and donation to address food insecurity in Botetourt County. Learn more at <https://www.stmarksfincastle.org/info/botetourt-food-pantry.cfm>.

We will be collecting financial AND non-perishable food donations. Please donate only in-date, non-perishable foods that can be used by the shelter. Donations will be collected at check-in and check-out.

**#11: Summer Curriculum: In the Wilderness**

Wilderness is a time or place where we encounter what is new, strange, scary, lonely, unknown or mysterious. The wilderness is a wild and beautiful time and place where we can discover the sacred within each person and all creation. The wilderness can inspire us and guide us, assuring us of God's constant presence. As the Spirit guides us through the wilderness, we find what we need to face our fears and the very real challenges that impact our world. The wilderness teaches us the importance of community and the ways we navigate challenges together. The wilderness reveals our strengths, growing edges, and potential as God equips us for the unknown still to come. The wilderness awaits us all, and God meets us there.

## #12: Sunday Check-In Procedures

1. Check-in begins promptly for everyone at 4:00pm Sunday at Cave Trail Shelter with important announcements and introductions for all families. Arrive at or before 4:00! Registration does not begin until 4:00; cabin entry is not allowed without your counselors. The Trading Post Outlet (camp store) will be set up at Cave Trail Shelter from 3:45 through check-in. Park in the Cave Trail Field. Follow directional signs.
2. LUGGAGE: Carry gear to the Adventure Wagon in the Cave Trail Field.
3. Please tag or label all luggage/gear with your name. We will have markers & tape available. Please pack lightly enough so that the camper can easily carry all gear by herself/himself.
4. After announcements, proceed to the check-in tables at the Cave Trail Shelter (there may be a line). Check in with the registrar and turn in offering donations to the offering box near the registration table.
5. At the first check-in table you will find your Parent Info Card, organized alphabetically by camper last name. This page has (1) your Camper's Unit number, (2) your cabin/lodge, (3) Bunk Notes instructions, and (4) Friday pick-up procedures. You will use your Unit number to eventually find and meet your counselors and your group.
6. At the second check-in table, you will (1) complete any adventure waivers or forms due, (2) update or add any names of adults who are authorized to drive the camper home from camp, and (3) answer a few quick Health Screening questions (fever? achy? sore throat? cold/flu symptoms?).
7. If you bring medications, you will then give any medication and any Health Form updates to our Health Coordinator. Place all medication (**in original packaging**) in a gallon zip-lock bag with camper's name on it to speed along the registration process.
8. Parents and Campers will then walk to meet your Unit in the Cave Trail Field. Parents: Take time to meet the counselors and other campers in the Unit. Tell the counselor any information they should know (in addition to the information you included on your Camper Information and Health Form). *Don't linger too long!* Say "Goodbye" as your campers begin a great week at camp with their counselors and new friends.
9. Parents: Drive slowly as you leave, watch for pedestrians, and follow exit signs out of camp.
10. These procedures were established (and revised) to ensure camper safety and supervision, to reduce vehicle traffic through camp, to ensure the security of staff and campers' belongings, and to begin group unity and cooperation as soon as possible after arrival. Thanks for understanding!

## #13: Friday Camper Pick-Up Procedures

1. Dismissal/Pick-up is Friday at 6:30pm at the Cave Trail Shelter. Your camper will have eaten Friday dinner with their group prior to 6:00pm.
2. You are encouraged to arrive at 6:00pm at the Cave Trail Shelter to witness our Closing Singing and Celebration from 6-6:30pm. This is an important and meaningful ceremony for your camper and their group, so we will not dismiss campers to your care until after our final prayer at 6:30pm.
3. Park in the Cave Trail Field. Bring your Photo ID. Meet campers and counselors at the Cave Trail Shelter.
4. To "claim" your child at 6:30pm, present your PHOTO ID or DRIVER'S LICENSE to your child's counselor. Only adults listed as authorized may pick-up the camper AND only with a valid photo ID or driver's license.
5. If you brought medication, your camper's medication can be picked up at the medication table located in the Cave Trail Shelter at check-out.
6. After 6:30 dismissal, please claim your child's luggage from the wagon.
7. If you arrive after 6:30pm dismissal, park and go to the Cave Trail Shelter.
8. After 6:30pm dismissal, the Trading Post (in the actual camp store) will be open from 6:30-7:15pm. At the Trading Post from 6:30-7:15, lock in this year's rate for next year's camp (and immediately get a **free tee shirt!**) by taking advantage of our "Closing Day Pre-Registration Form." It's a great way to reserve your spot for next year and save \$10.
9. Parents: Drive slowly as you leave, 5 mph; watch for pedestrians; follow exit signs out of camp.

## #14: Communicating with your camper during the camp week

Since phones/tablets are NOT allowed by campers at camp, here's how to keep in touch:

1. Provide your camper with a pack of home-addressed, stamped envelopes and a notepad.
2. Write and send your camper hand-written letters or postcards. Mail these 3 or 4 days before their camp week begins so they reach your camper while s/he is here. OR leave 5 pre-written dated notes for your camper.
3. Send your camper daily one-way e-mail through CampWise's paid e-mail service described below. All funds raised by one-way emails go directly to our Staff Adoption fund that allows our staff to receive an end-of-summer bonus.

### TO GET STARTED TODAY with CampWise's secure and easy paid e-mail service:

#### SENDING EMAILS TO YOUR CAMPER:

**Step 1:** Purchase your one-way email package on CampWise. Unlimited emails can be sent by you for just \$5. You can access this option through your CampWise account by clicking the "one way email" option.

**Step 2:** Submit your note **before 8:30am** for same-day delivery at lunch. All emails sent after that time will be delivered the following day.

**Share with family members:** All family members you invite can send notes to the address and have them delivered to your camper. Please know each member you have sending emails will be an additional \$5 charge.

### BUNK NOTES F.A.Q.s:

**Who do I call if I have questions or problems?** Call CampWise at 866 433-4548. **Do NOT call the camp.**

**Why do I have to pay for one-way emails?** The CampWise system bundles and sorts the messages for us to easily print and distribute to campers. Your payment will help offset printing costs and will add to our Summer Staff Adoption fund.

**Can other relatives use these services?** Absolutely! All family members you invite can send notes to the address and have them delivered to your camper. Please know each member you have sending emails will be an additional \$5 charge.

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