

About St. Matthew's Day Camp

Mission Statement

The Summer Day Camp serves the children and families of the Parish and of the surrounding community. The camp provides a diverse recreational experience through a safe and structured program that emphasizes friendship, caring, self-esteem and fun. It provides both campers and staff the opportunity to enjoy the Parish grounds and the company of one another, and to develop physical, social, and personal skills in a Christian setting as a complement to their family upbringing and formal education. In addition, Day Camp provides opportunities for the development of leadership and guidance skills among the high school and college-aged staff.

Camp Groups

Each camper is placed in a camp group according to age and gender. There are eight boys' and eight girls' groups. Typically, there are about 15 campers in a group. Each group is assigned a counselor and a co-counselor. Campers work with their counselors to choose a group name, and the groups each design and silk-screen their own group t-shirt. Counselors and campers stay together in their groups for the entire six-week program. The teamwork and friendship that develops within each group is the reason the Day Camp has been so successful for more than sixty years.

What to Wear

Camp is an extremely active and messy outdoor experience. You can expect your camper(s) to come home very messy and tired. Please do not send your child to camp wearing any clothes that should not get dirty. Shorts, a t-shirt, and sturdy tennis shoes are ideal. No sandals or open-toed shoes should be worn. Day Camp will provide two camp t-shirts to each camper, which will be used for silk-screening and tie-dye projects. Keep an eye on the weather; fog in the morning can be quite chilly, and sometimes we get days that are exceptionally hot. Sunscreen is very important, as the campers spend the entire day outside. We recommend waterproof sunscreen be put on at home before camp,

and again throughout the day, as needed. Please teach your child how to apply sunscreen and encourage its use. All campers need to bring a bathing suit and towel for our daily swimming program. These items, along with a lunch, are usually kept in a backpack. Please be sure to label everything with your child's first and last name. We tend to grow a mountain of lost and found items, which can be avoided if all items are labeled. Do not send toys, electronics, cell phones, iPods or anything of value to camp unless specifically requested by a memo from Day Camp.

Typical Camp Day

The campers meet with their groups and counselors in the courtyard between 8:45 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. The campers store their lunches and other belongings in their group's buckets. There is a brief flag ceremony at 9:00 on Founder's Meadow before the groups walk together to the outdoor chapel area. The day begins with an informal chapel service, which is an integral part of the Day Camp program. Chapel includes songs, prayers, and a skit to illustrate the "Thought for the Day". The entire chapel is prepared and performed by one of the camp groups. It is important that all campers arrive on time to camp. Campers who arrive late disrupt the chapel service.

There are several activities, which we call resource programs, that are scheduled for each group during the week as follows:

Arts and Crafts: 1 hour, once a week

Swimming: 30 minutes, every day

Music: 30 minutes, two times a week

Each counselor plans additional activities that are appropriate for their particular group. Our counselors are walking encyclopedias of creative games and activities. Some of the more common games we play are Capture the Flag, Foosball, Wild Kingdom, Dodgeball and a variety of sports. Groups also sing songs, perform skits, hike, bake cookies, tell stories, or just hang out together.

Day Camp wraps up each day at Big Tree, which is the time when the entire camp gathers together to enjoy skits, songs, and our weekly Big Spin. At 3:00 p.m., the campers and counselors walk together to carpool pick-up.

Lunch

Campers should bring a good, healthy lunch to camp each day. The lunch should include a drink in a non-breakable container. Please keep in mind that refrigeration is not available for camper lunches. There is no established snack break, so we encourage campers to eat a hearty breakfast. Most groups eat lunch around 11:30 a.m. The Parish of St. Matthew's is committed to caring for the environment. We encourage families to pack lunches that produce as little trash as possible. Periodically, a camp group will schedule a barbecue, and you will be asked to pack a hot dog or hamburger for your child. (Refrigeration is provided for barbecue lunches.) Ketchup and mustard are available, as well as s'mores for dessert. It is a good idea to stock up on hot dogs or hamburgers at the beginning of camp, so a barbecue does not require a last minute trip to the store.

Swimming

The swimming program is supervised by counselors, co-counselors and certified lifeguards. All campers are expected to be in the water for instruction each day. If there is a medical reason why your child should not swim, please send a note to camp with your child. We ask that campers and families commit to participation in the swimming program. Swim time is designed to be fun as well as improve skills. Free swim is provided occasionally.

Trips

Each group enjoys a limited number of off-campus trips. For the older groups, we offer two beach trips: one on the day before the Overnight, and the other scheduled by the counselors. The younger groups may schedule outings to places like Palisades Pizza, Will Rogers State Park, and the fire station. Groups may also hike in the local mountains. We provide all transportation for the trips in the camp van. Parents will be notified with an information slip before any camp trip.

Overnights

Overnights are available to our campers in Groups 5-8. Campers stay at camp after carpool and participate in arts and crafts, swimming and games, and then enjoy a barbecue dinner. After dinner, campers and their counselors watch a movie together, while the rest of the staff works to stage an incredibly elaborate, fun and secret adventure. The adventure changes every year, and it is not uncommon for the staff to start planning before Christmas! The evening ends with hot chocolate and a campfire. The campers and counselors "sleep" in sleeping bags on Big Field. A hearty breakfast is provided the next morning. Parents can pick up a very tired, but happy camper the next morning at 8:45 a.m.

Carpool

The Day Camp has developed a system for drop off and pick up that is designed to maximize safety, as well as to be courteous to the other people who live in the area. The instructions are included in this mailing. All families who participate in the Day Camp are expected to abide by the rules of this system. We will prepare a roster of camp families to facilitate carpool planning. The roster will be available for pick-up in the Day Camp office by the end of the first week of camp. If you do not want your address and phone number published on this list, please let us know by calling (310) 573-7787 ext. 160 or emailing us at daycamp@stmatthews.com before the first day of camp. We encourage everyone to carpool in order to reduce traffic.

First Day of Camp

Parents are encouraged to join us in the morning in the outdoor chapel area to see their child meet his or her group and counselors. There will be a brief question and answer session with the camp directors immediately following chapel on the first day. Any interested parents are welcome to attend.

SPECIAL DAYS at CAMP

The camp calendar (included in this mailing) lists several special days. Most of these days do not require that you prepare any differently for camp. Some of these days, like Costume Day, Tournament Day, or the overnights, do require that you pack differently for camp. Each special day will be described in the weekly camp paper and a note will be sent home with additional instructions. A brief description of each special day is included in this mailing.

Word Day: Each group creates a carnival booth on Big Field. Campers bring change to spend at the carnival. The money raised goes to charity.

All-American Hot Dog Cookout: The camp provides hot dogs, lemonade and chips to everyone for lunch to celebrate our nation's birthday.

Olympic Day: A day of track and field type events. Wear athletic shoes.

Costume Day: Campers wear costumes to camp based on a theme chosen by their group. The campers come dressed accordingly and then perform a song or skit with their group in the morning. The remainder of the day follows the regular camp schedule, so please bring clothes to change into.

!yaD sdrawkcaB: Backwards Day marks the halfway point of camp. We flip our swimming, music and arts and crafts schedule. Groups that had swimming in the morning will swim in the afternoon for the remaining three weeks of camp.

Tournament Day: A day filled with wacky games, and the ever-popular All Camp Water Fight! Campers should bring a water weapon that can be filled by placing it in a bucket. No water balloons are allowed.

Family Night: Families are invited to join us for an evening of camper skits and the beloved annual camp slide show! A detailed schedule will be sent home in the camp paper.

Thanksgiving Day: Our special day to give thanks and reflect on our summer together. We collect canned goods for the Westside Food Bank.