

Otter Creek Christian Camp

MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMP Frequently Asked Questions

OCCC has been a well-oiled machine for 20+ years. But we are aware that not everyone knows the ins-and-outs of CAMP. Below are some of our FAQs to help you get a better grasp on what OCCC Middle School Camp 2021 may have to offer.

And please don't hesitate to ask us about any questions you have regarding your involvement or your student's involvement in camp (email dknox@ottercreek.org).

***Do all the boys really sleep in tents?**

Yes. Latimer Reservation is designed as a Boy Scout Camp. A portion of the camp consists of group cabins/lodges. And another portion consist of 46 2-man tents. They are large, canvas tents on 10x10 slabs of concrete. And all our boy campers and counselors sleep in these tents. The tents are very close in proximity to one another (we call it "Tent City") and the counselor tents are located next to the camper tents. There is a large bathhouse for the boys in Tent City to use.

***But what about bad weather and the boys in the tents?**

We are very careful about weather. We watch the radar and try to be ready for any impending storms. If it is just a thunderstorm or rain, they boys are fine in the tents. They stay dry. If we feel the weather will reach emergency status, we will move campers to the bathhouse or the mess hall.

***What about medication/injuries?**

We have doctors on staff, and their only role on the staff is to be the camp doctor. So they take a vacation from their job as a doctor to be a doctor for the week. They are awesome people. The doctors are responsible for the distribution of all medicines. They are "on call" at all times.

***Isn't 11:00pm a little late for these kids?**

It is a late bedtime for many 6-8th graders, but we are purposeful in being that late. We want our campers to be ready to sleep and to sleep well. The "get ready for bed" process will begin at 10pm, but lights go out at 11pm. Your student will be so amped up from being with friends and the joy of camp that they won't notice they passed bedtime hours ago.

***Can I come visit? Or can I at least send mail?**

We have a strict "no visitor" policy. There are minimal exceptions (baptisms, sickness). We value safety of our campers, and allowing multiple people to come and go does not fit with our plan for camp. All our staff has been

background checked and trained. It is a distraction to have other adults popping in and out of the picture. It can create homesickness (especially for those who don't get a visitor).

In regards to mail, we no longer run a "postmaster" service. If you want to send mail, label it and put it in your camper's luggage. They can open on their own. We don't distribute mail publicly.

***What if my child isn't what some would call "a good swimmer?"**

That's okay! There is plenty to do outside of the water. We do swim in a man-made lake. There is a roped-off boundary where campers are allowed to swim. They must pass a swim test on the first full day of camp in order to swim in that area without a PFD. If they don't pass, they can still swim there as long as they are wearing a PFD. If they are canoeing, kayaking, or another watersport, PFDs are required for all campers and staff.

***Can my child be with their best friend?**

Of course! There are many times in the day when they can be with them (assuming they, too, are at camp). But it's really hard to honor every request for a tent mate or bunk buddy. All campers will be in close proximity to other campers of their same grade and gender. Small groups are broken down in that way. We promise your child won't be alone and will have many daily opportunities to spend quality time with life-giving friends.

***Can I request a specific counselor?**

Yes, but honoring every request is really hard. Our goal is to create meaningful relationships between students and adults. And if your camper already has some of those relationships in place, then "glory to God" that even more of those relationships are budding this week! We promise we won't try and sabotage your camper's experience. We prayerfully consider each counselor and camper as we build the groups.

***What if my child wants to be baptized?**

Praise God!!!! There are always baptisms at camp, and it is such a beautiful thing to celebrate together. If you know before camp that this is going to happen, then just let us know and we can have plans made so that your family can join us for that celebration. If it comes up more "spontaneously" at camp, you will be contacted and we will create a plan that works best for your family.

**Sidenote: We do not offer an "altar call" at camp. There is a place for discussions about commitment in our small groups. But we intentionally avoid putting a camper in a position where they may feel emotionally manipulated. That is a part of our commitment to camper safety.

***Is my child expected to maintain their own personal hygiene?**

Yes. Please have conversations about this before camp. Set reasonable expectations. And pack soap.

***What if my child needs a nap?**

We all do! We have a “stay in your cabin” time after lunch. But the cabins/tents are off limits during the day (with the exception of needing to change clothes). We don't want students to be napping during the day and remaining awake at bedtime. We promise they will have more fun if they are awake when the rest of camp is awake and asleep when the rest of camp is asleep.

***Should I just tell my child that if they get homesick they can just call me and I'll come get them?**

Please help us in setting reasonable expectations. We deal with homesickness every year. And it's our hope that the campers who arrive at camp stay at camp. It gets really hard to keep them there if they feel they have an easy way out. As a parent, you can help us by having conversations prior to camp with your camper. Help them understand that it's okay to talk to their counselor or others about homesickness. Make sure they know that they are safe at camp and it's your hope that they have an awesome week there.

***Does T-Mobile get service in the area?**

Cell service is very poor at camp. But beyond that, we also really hope this can be a “technology free” camp. Phones create distractions. And we are not responsible for lost/stolen/broken phones. So we ask you to leave them at home. We will provide updates on Instagram (@ocyg_ms) and update Facebook so you can know all are well. But sometimes it's great to disconnect. Please help us in this. I know phones are cameras too, but disposable cameras or small digital cameras are great too! And we have a photographer at camp so we promise to get good pics of your kids.

***What do I need to send with my child to make sure they are equipped to pull off the ultimate camp prank?**

NO PRANKS. Camp has three rules. #1: No having fun at others expense. So...no pranks. We just don't do that. (For what it's worth, rule #2 is, “You break, you pay.” And rule #3 is, “Do everything without grumbling or complaining.”)

***What if my child is a picky eater?**

Our cooks do an incredible job at creating a kid-friendly meal. There is also a salad bar and a PB&J station at each lunch and dinner. You can help us by making sure your camper knows they can't survive off of canteen sugary goodness. If there are dietary restrictions we need to know about, please pass that info on to us.

***Do they need money?**

Nope. Just don't send it. It will get lost. The price you paid is all-inclusive.

***Is there an emergency plan?**

Yes. Our counselors and staff will be trained and students will be informed of where the safety shelters are located and what to do in the event of an emergency. We have air horns that are only sounded in the event of an emergency. As we've stated before, safety is truly a value for us at OCCC.