



Cedarkirk *A place apart to build up the body of Christ in love.*

CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

Frequently Asked Questions by Parents of Cedarkirk Campers

While you may not be the one who is physically here at camp, parents often have just as many questions and concerns about their child's camp experience. Parents play an important role in preparing campers to come to Cedarkirk. The following are some frequently asked questions by parents that may help enhance your child's camping experience:

What can my child expect during his/her camp experience?

While at Cedarkirk, your child will be part of a "family group" comprised of a group of boys (with their male counselor) and a group of girls (with their female counselor). It is with this family unit that the camper will do most of the camp activities. In the evenings, these small groups come together for worship, snacks, and an evening activity (such as a campfire, all-camp swim, or field games). Camp days are filled with a variety of activities including Bible study, the climbing wall, tubing, archery, the high ropes challenge course, swimming in the pool, canoeing, the low ropes initiative course, arts and crafts, singing, the zip lines, and a variety of games.

What kind of training has the staff received?

Cedarkirk believes that a quality staff is the "key ingredient" to a successful and safe camping experience. All of our staff members are enthusiastic and dedicated Christians who have been screened, selected, and trained to ensure an exciting and meaningful camp experience. The summer staff members are at least 18 years old and are all certified in first aid and CPR. The staff receives eleven days of intense training at the beginning of the summer and this continues with on-going instruction throughout the camp season. This training equips the staff with skills that enable them to create a physically and emotionally safe environment for all campers.

What are some of the best ways to prepare for the camp experience?

One of the best ways to prepare for camp is to have parents and children pack together. Work together with your child in selecting clothes and packing the items on the "What-To-Bring" List. The Directors of Cedarkirk have many years of experience in their field and spent a lot of time compiling this list for you... PLEASE READ IT! Far too many children arrive at camp unprepared. Many parents remember their summer camp experience as sunny afternoons by the pool and have forgotten the chill of an overnight camping experience and the occasional rains. By packing together, your child will be aware of what they have brought for use throughout the week. It is not necessary to spend money on new clothes for camp. Please remember that the camp environment can be rough on clothes. Other suggestions for packing include labeling the camper's belongings with his/her name and packing a plastic bag for dirty clothes. Packing together also provides an appropriate time for talking about what to expect at camp and about any concerns or fears your camper might have. You may want to share your experiences at summer camp or what you hope they will get to experience during their stay at Cedarkirk. It is important to let your child know that you are interested in what will be happening at camp and will be anxious to hear what he or she has learned after camp. This may be an opportunity for you and your child to talk and to pray about any concerns or fears they may have about camp.

How can I help with homesickness?

Homesickness is the distress caused by actual or anticipated separation from home or beloved objects. During their time at camp, almost 95% of all campers will experience some kind of feelings related to this separation; even adult staff experience these feelings to some degree. The good news is that homesickness is common and most campers have a wonderful time at summer camp. Cedarkirk staff members are well trained to respond to homesick campers.

There are also a number of ways parents can help head off homesickness before the camper arrives. These include:

- Include your child in preparing, packing, and planning for camp.
- Use a wall calendar to chart how many days until camp and note how many days the camper will be at camp.
- Talk about homesickness with your child.
- Talk about the things they might miss, but also the new friends they may make and activities that they will get to experience.
- Talk about the length of the camp in perspective to other positive overnight experiences, such as staying over at a friend's or relative's house.

- Set-up a time to practice staying away from home overnight.
- During the camp, send mail to your child that highlights how proud you are and that does not stress how much you miss them.
- Try to avoid planning stressful events just before or during the camper's stay (such as moving, a divorce or separation, or the departure of a family member for military service).
- Try to avoid making deals or promises with your child. Do not suggest that your child can call home if he/she gets homesick. It is our policy that campers are not allowed to use the phone. Campers are also not permitted to bring mobile phones to camp. If your child gets a bad case of homesickness or if there is a medical problem, a Director at Cedarkirk will get in touch with you right away.

If a child is sent home from camp due to homesickness, please help your child understand that homesickness is a perfectly normal part of the growing process and never something for which a camper or parent should be ashamed. The camper will already be dealing with guilt and embarrassment about leaving camp.

How can I communicate with my child?

Whether it is a piece of mail, an email, or a fax, campers love to receive word from home! The first full day of camp is an excellent time for mail because not everyone gets a letter on that day. Why not write a letter early so that it will be here on the first full day of camp? That letter would need to be mailed before the child leaves for camp or discreetly passed to a staff member during opening check-in. Faxes and email are quick ways to send messages to your child. If you would like to send your child a "care package," please send puzzles, comic books, or stuffed animals; please do not send snacks. Cedarkirk provides all of the snacks your child will need and your extra goodies can attract bugs into the cabins or lodges. Write to your child and let them know that you are thinking of them and that you are proud of them. The camp address is:

[Camper name and Group Number/Camp Session]
 Cedarkirk
 1920 Streetman Drive
 Lithia, FL 33547

You can also fax letters to (813) 689-9170 or email to kirkcampermail@cedarkirk.com. Please include the camper's full name in the subject line and limit all email and faxes to one page in length. We are unable to process attached files. Please read "How can my child communicate with me?" below if you want to receive a reply back from your camper by fax or email. Phone use is not available for campers, but we will make sure they receive any emergency phone messages.

How can my child communicate with me?

Parents always want to hear from their child and are often disappointed if they do not receive a letter. There are two ways that your child can contact you during his/her stay at Cedarkirk. Your child can send letters or postcards. It is particularly helpful if campers bring postcards or envelopes that are pre-addressed and stamped. Summer campers can also send faxes or email home to their loved ones. At opening check-in, special sheets will be sold (a packet of three for \$1.00) which campers can use to write messages. Completed pages can then be faxed or emailed to friends and family. As mentioned above, it is our policy that phone use (including personal mobile phones) is not available to campers.

At Cedarkirk, we hope to provide the best environment for your child. If there is any information that would help us to care for your camper better, please let us know prior to their arrival or let their counselor know at opening check-in.

We are looking forward to your visit to Cedarkirk!