



MOUNT LUTHER

OFF-SITE DAY CAMP HANDBOOK

Bringing the spirit of Mount Luther in service to your church and community!

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Updated 03/04/08

What is Day Camp?

Day Camp brings Camp Mount Luther to your local church and community.

Day Camp is designed to introduce outdoor ministry to children without staying overnight away from home. Day camp can supplement your congregation's Vacation Bible School program, it can be used as the VBS, or it can be a separate entity altogether. It is not designed to replace programs already in existence at your church, but to enhance and add to your church's total ministry.

Day Camp is a unique blend of outdoor ministries and congregational ministry. The Mount Luther staff brings their own enthusiasm and leadership and teaching styles, a schedule, curriculum and resources. Your local volunteers bring similar gifts and add the knowledge of specific needs and community resources. Together, both camp and church make day camp an exciting and enriching experience for all.

Day Camp is renewal. The experience renews children and youth as well as adults and volunteers. Day camping can revitalize a Bible school, Sunday school, or any form of Christian education with new ideas, new faces, and a boatload of energy.

Day Camp is outreach. The experience can be offered to the entire community as well as your congregation. It can be an ecumenical experience; working with and serving in conjunction with other denominations can prove a rewarding and educational experience for all.

Day Camp is a powerful reflection of Christ's ministry of travel and discipleship. Camp counselors come into the life of the congregation to work with local volunteers and to share their gifts of ministry. Together this ministry works to meet the intergenerational needs of some of the community's most vital members.

Why Day Camp?

The purpose of Day Camp is to provide the local church and community with a quality Christian education experience on their home turf. While we do hope to energize participants about Camp Mount Luther's other programs, our primary objective is to excite them about their own faith and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What really makes Day Camp special is flexibility. Camp staff will work with each congregation to design a program that will meet the specific needs of the church. From the daily schedule, to meal options, to operating hours and special guests, Mt. Luther will work with you to devise the Day Camp plan that will provide the best experience for you and your church. We hope this manual will help as you consider and begin to plan *your* Day Camp.

Another asset is our staff. They are caring and committed young adults trained to lead Bible study, worship, song time, recreation, dynamics, and crafts. There will always be a Day Camp Director assigned to your site. This person serves as the primary contact for questions and concerns for the duration of the camp.

10 Reasons Why You Should Host a Day Camp:

- Day Camp is effective community outreach.
- For some, Day Camp will be the first time they hear the story of Jesus' love.
- Day Camp can be the first step to further involvement in the church and the Church.
- Day Camp deepens the faith of participants.
- Children are introduced to outdoor ministries in the familiarity of their own community.
- Day Camp provides a safe, healthy environment for community building.
- Day Camp ministers to families.
- Day Camp serves the congregation as members work together and renew relationships.
- Day Camp trains leaders with tangible experience.
- Day Camp enhances the congregational Christian education program.
- Day Camp is FUN!

What Happens at Day Camp?

Devotions: A time at the beginning of each day to introduce the daily theme through use of scripture, song, story, and prayer in a large group setting. This is typically 15-20 minutes in length.

Bible Study: This is small(er) group time where daily themes are addressed and focused on through scripture, activities and shared experience.

Song Time: Mt. Luther employees break out into song after meals, during worship and Bible Study... anytime! We love to teach and sing songs with campers and volunteers!

Games/Activities: Recreation time with campers focuses on the philosophy that everybody is a winner. This may include team-building activities, water activities, group initiatives, field games, and sports.

Snack: Once a day, every day, a snack should be provided with beverage for children and staff—just to keep the energy level up!

Crafts: This is time when campers can create a project that ties into the daily theme. Craft time provides an opportunity to take a part of the day camp experience home to be shared with others.

Nature Activity: Some time set aside for teaching the importance of and appreciation for all our natural resources is appreciated. Creation stewardship is an integral piece of Camp Mount Luther's core philosophies.

Lunch: A meal may be provided by the congregation and its volunteers, or by children and staff bringing bag lunches from home.

Staff Resource: Camp staff is available for one of the evenings to provide a program for Junior/Senior High youth and adults. We do request that it does not run beyond 10 PM (our staff needs rest). This needs to be scheduled with the camp's Assistant Director prior to June 1st.

Closing Worship/Praise Time: A closing worship will be held at the end of each day in either a large group or small group setting. This includes song, prayer, message, and a theme summary for the day.

Sample Schedule (should be adjusted to suit your site and intentions)

Day Camp for 1/2 day*

9:00-9:15 Opening Worship
9:15-10:15 Bible Study
10:15-10:30 Snack
10:30-11:40 Games/Crafts
11:40-12:00 Closing Worship

* This will work for a morning, afternoon, or evening Day Camp

Day Camp for whole day

9:00-9:15 Opening Worship
9:15-10:15 Bible Study
10:15-10:30 Snack
10:30-12:00 Games/Crafts
12:00-12:30 Lunch
12:30-1:00 Story/Quiet Time
1:00-2:40 Nature Activity/Field Trip
2:40-3:00 Closing Worship

Special Events

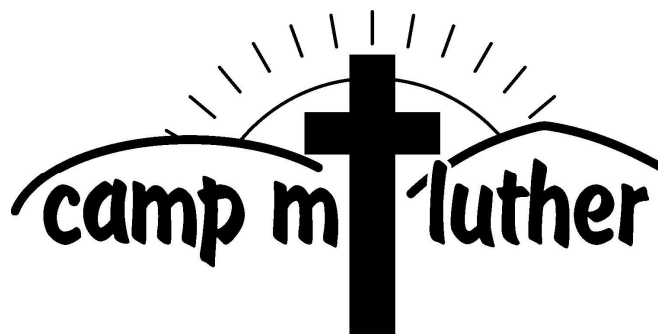
Special events are fun ways to break up the day and allow local people to share their talents with the children and youth. Special music, nature interests, craft interests, historical interests, singing at an assisted living facility, visiting shut-ins, different job sites and other places of special interest are just a few suggestions. You'll be amazed at the talent and creativity that can be found within your own congregation and community!

Special Guests: Arranging for people to come in and share their talents will add excitement to the day. Perhaps a naturalist can visit or bring in an animal(s). Local artisans, historians, and musicians work well too. The possibilities are endless!

Service Projects: A Christian lifestyle involves serving others. Campers can clean up the park, sing at a retirement home, paint garbage cans, help with the local food bank, etc... service learning experiences always prove both fun and rewarding.

Field Trips: If trips to educational sites are planned, arrangements must also be made for transportation and parental permission slips are required. Some popular ideas for field trips include trips to your local Fire Station, Ambulance Company, Post Office, pool, ice cream shoppe, parks and reserves, or any historical sites in your area.

Special Activities: Some more special activities that you may want to consider are: nature hikes, magic shows, origami crafts, balloon animals, slip n' slide, talking to church workers such as the organist or a traditional talent show!



How Do I Get Involved?

1. Contact the camp office. The Executive Director will visit the congregational education committee, council, or individuals to interpret the program if needed.
2. Select dates for the day camp to be held.
3. Select a local planning committee and coordinator and set up a pre-camp planning session with a camp staff member (job descriptions attached).
4. Talk with the Executive Director in April or May to review the program, adapt the program to fit local situations, and set the weekly schedule and special events.
5. Secure volunteers: one volunteer for every 10 campers. Volunteers should be over 18 although youth can be utilized as “junior counselors” or guest helpers.
6. Publicize the program within the church and/or community.
7. Ensure that the day camp site and facilities meet the necessary ACA and Camp standards (sample attached).
8. Distribute and collect camper registrations and camper health forms. Registrations need to be submitted early enough for planning of staff and materials. Health forms must be distributed at least two weeks prior to camp starting.
9. Forward the names and grade being entered of each camper registered to the camp office. You can give this list to the summer Day Camp Director.
10. Sit back and enjoy your Day Camp (or work really hard, making sure everything goes as planned)!

Mount Luther Responsibilities

Staff: Mount Luther provides 2-3 caring, committed, and trained staff; including a Day Camp Director.

Program: The curriculum used is the ELCA outdoor ministry curriculum, which provides the themes for devotions, bible studies, and worships. All other program facets will be administered by the Camp Mount Luther staff, unless otherwise directed by the site host.

Insurance: Mount Luther provides insurance for all paid staff.

Mount Luther Staff Shall:

- Assume final planning and decision-making responsibility for the Day Camp, with one staff member designated to be in charge (Day Camp Leader).
- The Day Camp leader will arrange for transportation to the site, determining exactly how long it takes to get to each site and make sure that staff is punctual (20 minutes early) to each day camp. He or she will also be available for staff concerns and will get the names and addresses of all campers attending day camp and give to our Mount Luther office manager (our day campers are put on our mailing list!). The leader will also make sure staff lunches

are taken care of. No Mount Luther employee should leave a day camp site until the end of the day.

- Be present at all planning meetings and Day Camp events, staying for their entirety.
- Be open to all ideas and suggestions to adapt the program so that it best serves the needs of the local church.
- Be prepared for your Day Camp having put in thoughtful planning ahead of time.
- Work with your volunteers to establish small groups for Bible Study (based on age) and use them throughout the week as an “extra set of hands.”
- Ensure that safety is of primary importance and be familiar with emergency procedures.
- Provide activities during down times.
- Follow all policies and procedures found in the Mount Luther GPS (Guiding Principles for Staff) and conduct themselves in the same manner that they would on-site at Mount Luther, including while staying at host families. They will be on their best behavior!

Congregational Responsibilities

Site: Church building or community parks are both great sites for a day camp program (you may need to reserve a picnic shelter ahead of time). A building must be available in case of inclement weather and a plan should be established to transport children from the park to the appropriate building. Immediate access to a storm shelter, telephone, restrooms and running water are also necessary, in accordance with ACA standards. (attached)

Housing For Staff: Staff shall be housed in private homes (host families) if the commute to and from camp is too time consuming. The host family would need to provide meals or have others in congregation help. Staff provide their own transportation, but are not permitted to transport campers. Depending on housing, they may need a ride to and from site.

Church Leaders: The church needs to secure a local coordinator, planning committee and daily volunteers. Refer to attached job descriptions. Local volunteers are critical to the success of your day camp. Each volunteer will work in partnership with a camp staff person leading a small group. Volunteers bring their own special gifts to enrich the experience and provide a tie to the local church as well as continuity for the youth when the experience has ended.

Camperships: The congregation may wish to provide camperships for participants requesting financial aid.

Insurance: The host needs to make certain that they have insurance to cover any use of their facilities and to cover potential liability involved in their co-sponsorship. Parents' insurance provides the first coverage for accident.

Cost: The host agrees to pay the current fee to Camp Mount Luther for Day Camp services.

Meals: The church can provide lunch or campers and staff will pack a lunch. Drinks and a snack should be available and can be donated by congregational members.

Minimum Participation: Your congregation must have at least 15 participants. If your enrollment will not require 3 Mount Luther staff members (refer to ACA ratios) we need to know at least 3 weeks in advance.

Job Descriptions

It is assumed that all Church Volunteers shall be dedicated to their ministry with people in the name of Christ. They shall seek to aid in the implementation of the program in such a way that it will be a faith development experience for all.

Congregational Day Camp Committee Shall:

- Make a list of goals and expectations.
- Offer suggestions and ideas to the program so that it best fits the needs and resources of the community.
- Select and secure the physical Day Camp site.
- Determine a local coordinator and volunteer church staff.
- Secure housing and meal arrangements for the Camp staff.
- Promote the Day Camp to the youth in the church and/or community.
- Plan for and arrange a congregational/family/community event for the closing program *if desired*.
- Attend a planning meeting(s) to prepare for the Day Camp

The Local Coordinator Shall:

- Serve as the liaison between the camp and the Church.
- Chair the meetings of the planning committee and seek to keep the work moving along.
- Provide a full list of camper registrations and related information as requested.
- Work with the staff in establishing emergency procedures and arrangement with local health care facilities.
- Coordinate the evaluation of the Day Camp. This person should also be there on Monday morning of the Day Camp week to collect any late registrations and money. **HEALTH FORMS SHALL GO TO LOCAL COORDINATOR.**

Program Volunteers Shall:

- Attend any training session.
- Work with the camp staff to plan and implement the program.
- Share specific skills by leading any group activities *if desired*.
- Work with a small group in cooperation with a staff member in leading Bible study.
- Participate at all times during the day camp (substitutes may need to fill in on occasion)
- Know the safety and emergency procedures. These should be written and given to all Day Camp staff.
- Do other tasks as needed; such as preparing and setting up snacks and lunches.



Guide To Selecting a Site

American Camp Association Standards Checklist for Day Camp:

Are the following minimum ratios of counseling staff to campers (according to age groups specified) adhered to for all sessions of operation?

<u>CAMPERS AGE</u>	<u>STAFF</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>DAY CAMPERS</u>
7-8 YEARS	1	TO	8
9-14 YEARS	1	TO	10

Are toilets adequate in number based on the following ratios?

- One seat for every 20 females
- One seat for every 20 males OR 1 seat plus 1 urinal for every 30 males.

Toilets need to be readily accessible at a community park or playground.

Are hand-washing facilities provided for the following ratios?

- One wash basin or equivalent per 20 persons
- Is there a telephone available for use?

Is the following information available on site for each camper and staff member?

- Full name of each individual
- Age (for all campers and all persons under 21)
- Home address and telephone number
- School grade (where applicable)
- Name, address, signature and telephone number of adult responsible for each minor
- Telephone numbers and/or persons to contact in case of emergency during the individual's stay at camp.
- Name and telephone number of individual's physician or health care facility

Are there written procedures in practice regarding (this is included in the registration form)?

- The release of campers who are minors to persons other than legal parent or guardian?
- The verification of absentees?

Is there a written risk management plan, which specifies: written procedures for accident preventions and reduction, and emergency management, which are implemented through the following (Camp staff will work on this with you in the pre-planning meeting)?

- Identification of risks and possible emergency situations
- Provision of protective devices when appropriate
- Reduction of such risks through camper and staff education
- Establishment and enforcement of regulations?

Day Camp Publicity

Day camp is a relatively new idea in most congregations. Interpretation should go far beyond the youth and families of potential campers. Day camp should be promoted frequently in church bulletins, newsletters, local newspapers, and local radio/TV public announcements.

Congregation Publicity

- List the Day Camp on the church schedule and calendar as early as possible. Thereafter, put in a brief announcement in church bulletins and newsletters, every 2-3 weeks.
- A brief but informative flyer should be prepared and distributed 4-6 weeks prior to the registration deadline to all church family units.
- Have one or two Temple Talks as part of Sunday Worship. They can be brief, 3-5 minutes in length. The first talk should explain Day Camp and the second should kick off registrations.
- Put up posters around the church, highlighting the Day Camp, including the dates and key activities.
- Invite congregational members to visit and/ or participate in Day Camp . An open invitation can be extended for folks to visit. A specific invitation to the closing program and meal should be made.

Community Relations

- Invite other area churches in the area to participate.
- Help these other churches and organizations with their own promotions

Youth Publicity and Registration

- Send out a letter to the parents of potential youth; include an informational brochure.
- Hold registration after Sunday worship for 2-3 weeks prior to the Day Camp. The parental release and registration form should be complete. A health history should be distributed to registrants and turned in before camp starts.
- Telephone calls or personal visits should be made to families of youth who have not registered.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS OF POTENTIAL DAY CAMPERS
(adapt this letter to fit your needs)

May 18, 2008

Dear Parents:

Greetings from _____ Lutheran Church!

Our church is planning an exciting new opportunity for Christian growth, that we hope your child(ren) will want to participate in... Day Camp! This Day Camp will be held on _____, for youth in grades K-8.

Our Day Camp is offered in partnership with Camp Mount Luther, the outdoor ministry that serves the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Camp staff, together with folks from our parish, will lead the experience! We will begin at 9:00 AM and conclude at 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Add any information regarding special events!!

The purpose of the Day Camp is to help your child(ren) grow in faith and strengthen their relationship with friends and fellow church members. This is one more way to share the gospel of Christ, in support of our regular church. The key is the camp staff, and some of the special resources they bring including: music, puppets, arts and crafts, games, Bible Study and nature activities.

We are writing to encourage your child(ren) to participate. The cost is \$____ (add information on camperships and registration procedures here). Please plan to register by_____.

Prayerfully consider this exciting opportunity for your child(ren). We hope they can share in the Day Camp, _____ (dates) _____ .

Sincerely,

signature
signature
signature

Day Camp/Christian Education/etc. Committee

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS (adaptable)

Health History

Camp Mount Luther requires a thorough health history and immunization record. In cases of questionable health, or at the discretion of the parents or camp health supervisor, a physical exam may be required.

Recreational Activities

There are a variety of rigorous indoor and outdoor activities under trained supervision, including playground and traditional activities, waterfront in some areas, nature hiking, and field trips as identified in each specific Day Camp. The development of the total person is an important part of the Day Camp program. Physical restrictions should be carefully noted.

Insurance

We do not provide sickness coverage. We request that your family's policy be used first (when possible) to cover accident or injuries.

What to Bring to Day Camp

Your child(ren) should dress casually each day. They should bring along sunscreen, insect repellent, water bottle, raingear/poncho and outdoor shoes in case of rain. Pack them in a backpack and mark everything with their name. Special field trips and activities will be noted the day prior, so your child(ren) can dress appropriately (hiking, swimming, etc.)

Day Camp Hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

5:00 p.m. Friday: There will be a special program and/or closing meal provided for all families.

*Youth should bring a **SACK LUNCH** along each day. Drinks will be provided.

* The Day Camp will be held at_____. To contact your child(ren) in case of an emergency call _____.

*Camp Mount Luther and _____ Lutheran Church are NOT responsible for lost or stolen articles.



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